

**MEXICO****ON THE FIRST REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION AND IDENTIFICATION TEAM
OF THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

The Government of Mexico recognises the importance of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018, which was approved by the Conference of the States Parties and led to the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (ITT) and the appointment of highly-qualified, multidisciplinary, and professional staff to identify, in an independent, impartial, and objective manner, the origin of the chemical weapons involved in nine incidents that took place in Syrian territory.

Mexico condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of weapons of mass destruction and finds the use of chemical weapons by any person, in any place, and under any circumstances to be inadmissible and unjustifiable.

It stands to emphasise that all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, without exception, have repeatedly expressed support for eliminating all chemical weapons, preventing their re-emergence, and demanding that those who do use them are held accountable. It is understood that the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances shall be considered a crime against humanity, and a violation of both human rights and international law.

Mexico reiterates its confidence in multilateralism, while stating its position that any violation of the absolute prohibition of the use of chemical weapons must have consequences, and those responsible must be held accountable.

Mexico recognises the Director-General and the staff of the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the support they have provided to the IIT. Thanks to this support, the IIT was able to submit its first report on the use of chemical weapons in Syria on 8 April 2020, which the Council will analyse in order to determine next steps.

Mexico is concerned about the findings of the IIT's first report, which point to violations by the Syrian Government of its international obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Neither as a collegiate body nor as representatives of the international community can we accept that chemical weapons continue to be used without consequences. The OPCW and the Executive Council must continue to ensure the full application of the Convention. As States Parties, we must demand that the perpetrators are brought to justice for these atrocious actions and prevent them from happening again.



In line with Article VII of the Convention and resolution 2118 (2013) of the United Nations Security Council, we reiterate the call for the Syrian Government to fulfil its obligation to cooperate with the investigations of the FFM about the incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons, and with the IIT, the members of which were denied visas and access to the places that needed to be inspected in order to gather evidence and testimonies. At the same time, Syria and some other States Parties repeatedly insist on the need to conduct these investigations on-site in order to gather necessary evidence and testimonies.

In order to dispel any concern regarding the events and address its own request, Syria has the opportunity to demonstrate that it is willing to fulfil its international obligations by committing—as it doing with the DAT—to fully cooperating with the OPCW and the members of the IIT, with ultimate goal of ensuring that as much evidence as possible has been collected and facilitating interviews with witnesses.

For Mexico, any draft decision on this matter should include the Executive Council's request that the Government of Syria permit access to all the locations related to the Ltamenah incidents, hand over all evidence that it is able to, and grant access to question witnesses of the events.

Mexico supports the efforts of the Technical Secretariat, the IIT, and the Director-General, which are led in an impartial and independent manner with the sole purpose of advancing towards the elimination of chemical weapons.

The States Parties to the Convention should defend its integrity, strengthen the Organisation, and demand compliance with the Convention, without losing sight of the fact that the international community and the victims hope that these weapons will never be used again.

The most effective way to reach this goal is by demanding that all those who have used chemical weapons are held accountable, and by sending the message that actions of this nature cannot go unpunished.

The States Parties to this Council should promote consultations in order to make recommendations to the Conference of the States Parties, as well as to different authorities and international organisations (the Security Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations Secretary General, the Human Rights Council, the Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic) to ensure an unequivocal international response and the absolute disavowal of the use of these weapons.

In line with international law, Mexico is and will continue to be a committed advocate of peace. We therefore encourage this Executive Council to fulfil its mandate and to promote and strengthen the letter and the spirit of the Convention.

I request that this statement be considered an official document submitted in response to the Director-General's presentation of the report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team, and published on the Organisation's external server and public website.

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