

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION****STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR A. V. SHULGIN PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE OPCW AT THE
NINETY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UNDER AGENDA
ITEM 6(H)**

We have carefully reviewed the updated information from the Technical Secretariat regarding the activities of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) investigating the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

First of all, as we have already stated repeatedly within the walls of our Organisation, the work methods of this special mission leave much to be desired. The FFM experts should carefully follow existing standards and stop systematically violating the chain of custody procedure. They need to be more consistent and efficient in conducting investigations. They must stop allowing obvious biases, where the focus of attention is for some reason set upon information about alleged chemical attacks provided by the Syrian opposition, while the information that is supplied by Damascus remains on the periphery. And it is altogether unacceptable when investigations into incidents in which the opposition is clearly to blame are either dragged out, or absolutely no conclusions are made at all.

In particular, this concerns the chemical attack in Aleppo on 24 November 2018. We would underscore that the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab republic promptly—back in January 2019—provided all the materials and evidence in our possession in order to assist the FFM. We made several statements, and we issued several notes to the Secretariat setting out the Russian position on the matter. Nevertheless, this issue remains open for some reason. Already two years have passed, but the Mission has yet to present the results of its work. This all goes to show that there are truly double standards at play in the FFM's work.

Second, we cannot agree with the tacit position of the Secretariat regarding what is, in our opinion, the main scandal that has been developing within the walls of the OPCW, namely the machinations involved with and irregularities in the FFM's report on the incident in Syria's town of Douma on 7 April 2018. This issue is far from closed and requires in-depth examination.

In particular, this is related to the fact that more and more fresh evidence of falsification and manipulation in the investigation into this incident continues to emerge in the public space. Recently, "The Greyzone" website came out with new publications containing information directly contradicting what we have heard from Secretariat officials. Avoiding discussions of this unseemly story is not an option. After all, the authority of the Organisation is at stake.



We call for inviting the two former Secretariat inspectors “A” and “B” in the near future and to meet with the three external, so-called independent experts that prepared the analysis that served as the foundation of the FFM’s Douma report. This will help paint the picture of what happened: did chlorine-filled canisters really fall onto the premises from the air, or were they placed there by hand, as one of the former inspectors insists? In this way, we will be able to turn the page and move forward.

We call upon the Secretariat to respond and state its position on this matter. We are interested in whether they can either confirm or deny the authenticity of the copies of internal service documents relating to FFM activities that have been made public.

We request that this statement be considered an official request to the Secretariat. We expect to receive a response either at the current Council session or afterwards.

Thank you for your attention, Mr Chairperson.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Fourth Session of the Council and published on the Organisation’s extranet and website.

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