

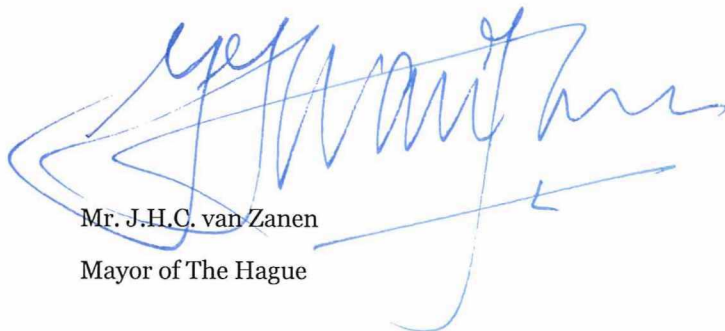


## **Statement on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare**

In the Spring of this year it was precisely 105 years ago that a terrible chapter opened in the history of humanity, when the world's first large-scale chlorine gas attack took place not far from the Belgian city of Ypres. The age of chemical warfare had begun. Chemical weapons have spread death and destruction many more times since then. Fortunately, since 1997 the global community has had a body which oversees their eradication: the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Hague considers it a great honour that this unique organisation is based here. The OPCW's presence in The Hague is one of the reasons why we may call ourselves the international city of peace and justice. The world is that bit safer, thanks to the OPCW. I therefore have the greatest respect for the women and men who have contributed to that work and who continue to do so. Because it is not without its risks. The OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work, and rightly so.

The threat posed by chemical weapons is as great as ever and remains undiminished. We therefore have to do everything in our power to hold this threat in check. This is a duty not only to ourselves and the future generations who will inhabit this planet. But also to all the people who have fallen victim to these weapons ever since that wretched day on Thursday 22 April 1915. The Hague will therefore always continue to strive for a world without chemical weapons.



Mr. J.H.C. van Zanen  
Mayor of The Hague