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STATE OF PALESTINE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RAWAN SULAIMAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE TO THE
OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Dear colleagues, members of delegations,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Ambassador of El Salvador as he takes the position of Chairperson of the Executive Council. We are all confident that his experience and competence will enable him to steer the deliberations of this session towards the desired objectives. We pledge our unwavering support to the Chairperson as we strive to implement all the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by H.E. Mr Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW, in his capacity as the coordinator for the Group of Members States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are State Parties to the Convention and China.

Today, 193 States have committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention, making it the world's most far-reaching international disarmament treaty for eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. While this is an impressive achievement in itself, it does not satisfy our ultimate goal of ensuring a world permanently free of chemical weapons. The efficiency of the Convention lies in the absolute universality of its application.

Achieving universality and ensuring the consistent and indiscriminate application of the Convention must remain at the forefront of our agenda. Successive sessions of the Conference, including its special sessions to review the operation of the Convention, reviewed the action plan on universality, reaffirmed its validity, urged the remaining States not Party to join the Convention, and requested the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to continue with its implementation.

In particular, the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention reiterated that the universality of the Convention is essential to achieving its object and purpose and to enhancing the security of States Parties, as well as international peace and security.



Achieving real peace in the Middle East begins with making this region free of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. In this regard, the State of Palestine expresses its concern that Israel is currently in possession of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, without being subjected to any oversight or accountability mechanism, including by those who claim to be concerned by the presence of such weapons elsewhere in the region.

Israel's belligerent tendencies and aggressive tactics, compounded by its presence as an illegal occupying power in the State of Palestine, provide all the more reason for Israel not be exempted from international monitoring that other States are subjected to.

We therefore call on Israel to accede to the Convention. Signing the Convention without acceding to it, conveniently gives it some of the rights but none of the obligations.

My country's delegation wishes to remind this distinguished Council of the objectives for which this Convention has been established, i.e. the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, and their destruction. As an international organisation, we are governed by the fundamental principle of attributed powers; the OPCW can only act within the competences that the States Parties have conferred upon it in the Convention. Hence, all States Parties must act within the legal scope of the Convention, and this distinguished Council must reject emphatically any attempt by anyone to impose their political agendas and include issues that are outside the scope of the provisions and principles enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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