



Ireland

Statement by Mr Frank Groome, Head of Multilateral Affairs,

Permanent Representation of Ireland to the OPCW

At the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the State Parties

(Part II)

20 – 22 April 2021

Agenda item 9(d) – Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use

Mr Chairperson,

Mr Director-General,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ireland fully aligns itself with the joint statement delivered by the Ambassador of Norway and the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will add the following in a national capacity.

Ireland fully supports the Draft Decision “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (C-25/DEC/CRP.10) tabled before the present session of the Twenty-Fifth Conference of the States Parties (the “Conference”) to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the “Convention”) today.

The increase in the use of chemical weapons in recent years has seriously threatened to undermine the universal prohibition on these weapons, as enshrined in the Convention. The use of these weapons is an affront to the international rules-based system on which we all depend for our security and wellbeing, and the international community, as a whole must work to hold accountable those who are responsible for such abhorrent acts. Ireland has been clear and unequivocal in our condemnation of these attacks and we have long maintained that the integrity and strict application of the Convention must be fully guaranteed.

The establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) was an important first step in efforts to uphold the international norm against chemical weapon use, and to ensure accountability for these attacks. We thank the IIT Coordinator Mr Santiago Oñate and commend the ongoing work of the IIT team.

The first IIT report published last year concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Air Force used chemical weapons on three separate occasions in Ltamenah, Syria in March 2017. In response, the OPCW Executive Council adopted a decision in July 2020 that established clear steps to be taken by Syria in order to ensure full compliance with the Convention.

As a State Party to the Convention and as a current member of the United Nations Security Council Ireland has repeatedly called upon Syria to address these compliance issues. Regrettably, Syria has failed to address any of the concerns raised and has consistently failed to cooperate fully with the Technical Secretariat's ongoing investigations. This pattern of Syrian evasion and sporadic cooperation is unacceptable and must end.

The Draft Decision tabled before the current session of the Conference is a proportionate response to Syria's continuing failure to comply with its obligations under the Convention. We also believe this decision helps to uphold and protect the integrity of the Convention itself.

Ireland will vote in favour of the Draft Decision, and we encourage all States Parties to support its adoption.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the OPCW public website.

Thank you.

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