



UK Delegation to the OPCW

**97th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE ORGANISATION FOR
THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6C ELIMINATION
OF THE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAMME**

Thank you Mr Chair,

My delegation was very grateful for the in-person briefing last week by the Heads of the DAT, IIT and FFM. We are hopeful that with the easing of pandemic related restrictions it will be possible to hold more regular meetings where we can discuss the details of recent reporting on Syria's chemical weapons programme.

It is troubling that, as reported by the Director General, Syria has not responded since April to efforts by the Technical Secretariat to arrange a further round of consultations with the DAT. As we all know Syria is legally obliged, under the Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 2118, to cooperate in full with the Technical Secretariat. Ignoring repeated requests for visas are not the actions of a cooperating State Party.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the unresolved issues in Syria's initial chemical weapons declaration, which have risen again to 20. In the latest case the DAT has found clear evidence of a previously undeclared chemical warfare agent in large storage containers. The presence of a neat chemical warfare agent in large storage containers at this location suggest that the production of this agent was on a significant scale. Syria has always denied it ever produced this agent.

And where is it now? Where are the thousands of missing chemical munitions and large quantities of chemical agents? Why is the regime denying the evidence laid before it, as detailed in the DAT report? It can only be deliberate. A deliberate and sustained effort to hide the retention of a chemical weapons capability. A capability which raises the likelihood of further use of chemical weapons and the risk of chemical weapons falling into the hands of others.

Mr Chair,

The Conference of States Parties considered the evidence accumulated over the last eight years of repeated chemical weapons use in Syria and set out in simple terms how the situation can be rectified. Syria must grant visas for the Technical Secretariat staff to visit Syria. This is fundamental to any notion of 'cooperation'. Syria must also take the steps set out by the Executive Council and comply with its obligations. The DG has described the next steps he plans to take. We fully support him and his professional teams in their continued efforts.

Thank you Mr Chair