



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(C)
ELIMINATION OF THE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAMME**

Mr Chair,

My delegation was very grateful for the in-person briefing last week by the Heads of the Declaration and Assessment Team (DAT), Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and Fact-Finding Mission (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 the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

It is troubling that, as reported by the Director-General, the Syrian Arab Republic 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 the Syrian Arab Republic is legally obliged, under the Chemical Weapons Convention and United Nations 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 of Great Britain and Northern Ireland remains deeply concerned by the unresolved issues in the Syrian Arab Republic'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. The Syrian Arab Republic 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 the States Parties considered the evidence accumulated over the last eight years of repeated chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic and set out in simple terms how the situation can be rectified. The Syrian Arab Republic must grant visas for



the Technical Secretariat staff to visit. This is fundamental to any notion of 'cooperation'. The Syrian Arab Republic must also take the steps set out by the Executive Council and comply with its obligations. The Director-General has described the next steps he plans to take. We fully support him and his professional teams in their continued efforts.

Thank you.

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