



AUSTRALIA

**JOINT STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND NEW ZEALAND
AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(F)**

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to deliver this intervention on behalf of Canada, New Zealand, and my own country, Australia.

In its second report, dated 12 April 2021, the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team reached the conclusion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that on 4 February 2018 a military helicopter of the Syrian Arab Air Force, under the control of the Tiger Forces, hit eastern Saraqib by dropping at least one cylinder. The cylinder ruptured and released chlorine over a large area, affecting 12 named individuals.

These latest findings are yet another example of the concerning pattern of violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") by the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties decided to suspend several rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention. We supported this decision to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to come into compliance with its Convention obligations.

We are disappointed that the Syrian Arab Republic still has not completed any of the measures stipulated in paragraph 5 of EC-94/DEC.2, however we encourage the Syrian Arab Republic to continue engagement with the OPCW.

We commend the Technical Secretariat's tireless commitment to working with the Syrian Arab Republic to complete these measures. We hope in response that the Syrian Arab Republic will engage in good faith with the Secretariat to complete its initial chemical weapons declaration once and for all.

Thank you.

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