



الجمهورية العربية السورية

Syrian Arab Republic

**Statement by Ambassador
Milad Atieh
Permanent Representative of the
Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW
For the Ninety-Ninth Session of the Executive Council**

**Agenda Item 7(c)- Elimination of the Syrian Chemical
Weapons Programme**

The Hague, 8-11 March 2022

Courtesy Translation

Madame Chairperson,

Firstly - Regarding the reports of the Director General and the Syrian monthly reports.

Syria has clarified in all its monthly reports the subjective information contained in the reports of the Director-General of the Organization, especially the last six reports (reports with numbers 101, 100, 99, 98, 97, 96), which formed the ground and the pretext for making false accusations against Syria, that have no basis in reality. Despite this, the Director General continued to issue monthly reports that did not include accurate information. Which prompted H.E. Dr. Faisal Miqdad, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates - Head of the Syrian National Committee, to respond in two letters addressed to the Director-General, wherein, he objectively and accurately addressed the errors and non-objective information contained in these reports. I quote what was stated in the first letter exchange in December 2021, “It is reprehensible that the Director General’s monthly reports have become an essential part of the false campaign waged by Western countries against Syria, and even an instigator against it. It represents a clear departure from the duties entrusted to him under the Convention and what was stipulated in the First paragraph of Article 8, which affirms that the States Parties to this Convention established the Organization “in order to achieve the object and purpose of this Convention to ensure

the implementation of its provisions”, as well as what was stipulated in paragraph /46/ of Article 8, and therefore the organization should not be a source of inaccurate reports, or a source of fabricated or fraudulent information. The Director General should also be the most keen to implement the provisions of the Convention, and he should be an honest and neutral party and not take sides or adopt a hostile stance against a State Party to serve the political agendas of some countries, as he is a representative of all the States Parties to the Organization and the highest authority in the Technical Secretariat.

Secondly - Concerning the "Declarations Assessment Team"

Before starting to talk about this team and its report submitted to the current session of the Council, my delegation would like to address fixed and basic issues:

1. The DAT was created to help Syria finalize its initial declaration. It is not an investigation or inspection team.
2. Some of the technical and scientific issues discussed between the Syrian National Authority and the DAT are related to different technical and scientific interpretations, and therefore it is a process that cannot be resolved quickly and selectively.
3. Syria has never once, over the past eight years, refused the visit of the DAT, and the process of arranging these visits was usually

subject to arrangements agreed upon by the two sides, in accordance with the obligations of each of them.

4. On November 20, 2018, H.E. Dr. Miqdad, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs then, and Head of the Syrian National Authority, agreed with the Director General, to continue consultations in order to move forward on all issues related to the Syrian file through structured and constructive dialogue. Accordingly, Syria has worked with the utmost seriousness and constructive cooperation and continues to do so. Syria presented to the Technical Secretariat of the Organization many procedures and measures of transparency that are not stipulated in the Convention to resolve issues related to its initial declaration, and submitted to the OPCW, and more so than any state party to the Convention, unparalleled facilitations for the DAT. This team, according to the statistics it mentioned in its report before you, conducted dozens of visits to the announced sites, took hundreds of samples from them, interviewed more than a hundred people connected to the Syrian chemical program, held more than 100 technical meetings, and the Syrian National Authority has submitted hundreds of documents. Since 2016, in particular, until now there have been many achievements and much progress made in resolving unresolved issues.

The practices and the positions of some Western countries regarding the file of the Syrian initial declaration, we would like to mention the following facts:

- Some Western countries have turned the DAT and its reports into a tool for pressure and political blackmail and directing false accusations against Syria.
- what helped those countries apply this political agenda, is their reliance on fragmented and incorrect information contained in some reports issued by the Organization and the Director General, about the Syrian initial declaration, and preempted everything and leveled its false accusations.

Regarding the 25th Round of Consultations I would like to clarify the following:

1. Many Western countries have accused Syria of obstructing and even refusing to hold this round of consultations. Unfortunately, we say that the Director General's recent reports have been formulated in a way that suggests that the Syrian Arab Republic refuses to hold the round of consultations No. /25/. It included, until recently, a clear text stating that Syria refuses to grant all members of this team the necessary visas to enter Syrian territory. This never happened. Those countries have built hasty and wrong

positions and have leveled false accusations against Syria, and they have not bothered to search for the truth.

2. The truth, ladies and gentlemen, is that Syria, in all its correspondence with the Technical Secretariat, was emphasizing the holding of this tour, and welcomed its convening in Damascus or in The Hague, according to what was proposed by the TS of the Organization.
3. When the Technical Secretariat requested that this round be held in April and May 2021, the Syrian National Authority and its Head had pre-planned commitments, including those related to important internal Syrian constitutional entitlements.
4. We were surprised by the announcement of the Director-General, during his briefing before the Security Council on June 3, 2021, to suspend sending the DAT to Syria until after the summer of 2021. Syria expressed, in its monthly report No. 92 dated 7/15/2021, its regret over the suspension of this round as it has a real interest in closing this file and finalizing it, to prevent its exploitation and politicization, and because it had nothing to hide about its chemical program.
5. Without going into too much detail, and during the subsequent correspondence, Syria confirmed that it was ready to receive this team at the time the Technical Secretariat deems appropriate. At the same time, Syria requested the replacement of one of the team members with any other member that the Technical Secretariat

sees fit. However, the Technical Secretariat responded on November 10, 2021, that it would not deploy this team until after Syria granted all its members the required visas.

6. On March 1, 2022, the Syrian Mission to the OPCW in The Hague, received a request from the Technical Secretariat, expressing its willingness to deploy the DAT to Syria. On March 3, 2022, the Technical Secretariat was informed that the Note Verbale of the Technical Secretariat is currently under study by the Syrian National Authority, and that the TS will be informed accordingly regarding the latest developments.

This is what happened in a nutshell. The question now is who is really blocking the holding of this round of consultations? In 2017, Syria had previously asked the former Director-General to replace two members of one of the inspection teams, and this sovereign request was taken into account, and there was none of this commotion.

An important question that must be raised is there really no experts and inspectors in the Organization other than the one Syria requested to be replaced? If the intentions are sound, then the sovereign viewpoint of the State Party must be respected. Certainly, Syria has its objective reasons for taking this position.

Do you not notice with me that there is a bad intention in this matter? Syria has been dealing with this team since 2013, and throughout this long period it has never hindered the work of this team, and this is evidence of its desire and sincere intention to finish this file.

Thirdly: Regarding the Fact Finding Mission's Team (FFM)

At a time when the FFM receives blind support from some countries for obvious political reasons, Syria has expressed on more than one occasion, along with many other countries, its concern about the serious flaws in the working methods of the FFM, and its deviation from the essence and texts of the Convention, the Verification Annex and the terms of reference for its work (Technical Secretariat Note Verbale No. S/1255/2015 dated 10 March 2015). The Facts and practical experience with the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), since it began issuing its reports, on some of the alleged incidents, have repeatedly demonstrated that it operates in an unprofessional and partial manner.

Unfortunately, the objective observations directed at the working methods and reports of this team did not receive any attention from the Technical Secretariat and some Western countries. However, this mission continued to issue false reports whose conclusions are questionable, below are some observations on the work of this mission without having changed its approach so far:

1. Most of the incidents that are being investigated happened many years ago; so where is the application of the requirements for a fair and impartial investigation of incidents in which evidence and witnesses are outdated and without samples or evidence?
2. The FFM does not visit the site of the alleged incidents, instead conducts its investigations remotely, and relies in preparing its reports on open sources and without any physical evidence or legitimate chain of custody for samples as required by the terms of reference.
3. The FFM deliberately ignores all the reliable information provided by the Syrian government, the States Party to the agreement, about incidents of the use of toxic chemicals, at a time when it adopts all that terrorist groups offer under their various names or parties declaring hostility to Syria.

Regarding the report of the alleged Kafr Zeita incident (1 October 2016)

Based on the initial reading of the report, we would like to make the following observations:

1. The report bases its conclusions on an alleged cylinder that it received from the "White Helmets terrorist group" long after the

- alleged incident, and it is not equipped with explosives or detonation system, nor an aerodynamic stabilization system.
2. The report also relied on bad actors, who are described as “first responders” again, (the White Helmets), and the testimonies of medical personnel, nearly 5 years after the alleged incident. Despite all this, the mission fell into the trap of inconsistency and apparent contradiction in the testimonies of the "White Helmets", witnesses and medical staff, who sometimes saw a barrel fell, and at other times two barrels...etc.
 3. With regard to environmental and biological samples, the FFM acknowledges that it did not personally obtain any of these samples, and that it did not visit the site of the accident, and thus it violates the simplest rules of fair and impartial investigation stipulated in the CWC and the terms of reference for the work of this mission.
 4. As for the open sources, on which the mission relied, we returned to them from the margins mentioned in the report, and it became clear to us that the vast majority of these sources are websites belonging to the so-called “Syrian opposition.
 5. In its report, the FFM ignored all of what the Syrian National Authority provided during the previous period, including documented testimonies of five witnesses which the FFM interviewed during their visit in April 2021, in addition to documented information that was provided to the mission’s

team in five Notes Verbales during the period from 2017 to 2020.

6. All the pictures of the alleged cylinder and its parts and the image of the hole confirm that there is no scientific or physical evidence that the cylinder was the result of being thrown from the air, and the FFM team was required to consult specialists in the physical, engineering and mechanical fields to ensure the validity of these allegations, not to build them blindly. In the event of a random fall of the cylinder, and due to the absence of an aerodynamic stability system for the cylinder, from a scientific point of view, most of the cylinder body, not just the front, should have been affected.
7. As for the alleged crater, it appeared circular and homogeneous in all its aspects, and it was clearly not the result of the cylinder hitting the surface of the ground, and what was stated in the report contradicts the truth from the physical and mechanical aspects, and confirms that the cylinder was placed manually. This applies to the two ventilation holes of the command center of terrorist groups, of which the report did not include pictures.

With all of the above, let us state the truth embodied in the following:

The play about the use of chemical weapons in Kfar Zeita is similar to a play by the French writer Samuel Beckett (Waiting for Godot's return), as the vague, truncated and scattered dialogue is without coherence, or balance. Just like the Kafr Zeita play. Only the FFM seems to have figured who "Godot" was: the Syrian Arab Army. The FFM never conducted an investigation. It instead collected data from sources, the vast majority of which are suspicious and hateful, and some of them have links to implementation the agenda of some Western countries, and yet, somehow they were able to analyze the data? How is that possible? The mission subjected the information and data it had obtained, and molded it in a way to "confess" what it wanted. The conclusions did not convince anyone except those who agree with it politically and ideologically, not professionally, honestly and justly. An honest investigation is the search for the truth.

A question that I pose for everyone is: why would the Syrian Arab Army use a barrel or cylinder of chlorine that will at most only lead to difficulty breathing because according to the false play scenario it was thrown in an open area, when a traditional weapon achieves more progress in the field?

I tell you in all honesty, as soon as the report was issued, and before even reading it, we knew what the conclusion reached by the mission will be, not because we are astrologers, but because we know the truth. It quotes from a previous report the same content and the same conclusion only changing the main players. One of the phrases that comes to our minds is "there are reasonable grounds to believe." It's a redundant and sickly repetition that reflects recklessness, even adolescence, in the investigations. Or, it might be that, based on all the information it obtained and analyzed, the mission was unable to establish whether or not chemicals were used as a weapon in the incident.

It is no longer a secret that the goal of these reports and plays is to put Syria under permanent pressure, political, diplomatic, legal, economic, financial and humanitarian, with the aim of having it perpetually occupied and drowning in the face of these pressures and their repercussions on its interior, and to legitimize that through reports and decisions which are unfortunately issued by this Organization. What is required is to achieve the maximum amount of misinformation, intimidation, and forgery.

It was indeed remarkable what happened in the briefing session, held by the Security Council on January 5, 2022, to discuss the monthly report of the Director-General No. 99, where the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations

stated at that session: during its last visit to Syria the previous month, the Fact-Finding Mission's Team collected basic information on four incidents of chemical weapons use in 2017. This information helps hold the Syrian regime accountable for the use of chemical weapons, and that supports the upholding of the Chemical Weapons Convention.... The question is, who conveyed this information, if true, to the ambassador? Is this the conclusion that the mission must compulsorily write in its report, just like in the case of the Douma incident?

I thank you, and ask that you please consider this Statement as an Official document of the Ninety-Ninth Session of the Executive Council, and publish it on the public website and Catalyst Internal database.