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**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MILAD ATIEH PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW AT THE  
TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES  
PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, on his election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I also take this opportunity to express profuse thanks to the representative of the Kingdom of Norway, Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, for his professional and competent steering of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan at this session on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

My country's delegation regrets that this technical organisation is once again dragged into geopolitical and security issues of a regional and international nature and is deflected away from the goals for which it was established. This was evident in the previous sessions of the Executive Council, which were turned by the United States of America and some Western States into a platform for levelling false accusations against Russia of using or preparing for the use of chemical weapons, as they did with Syria over the past nine years. In this context, Syria supports Russia's right to defend itself and protect its national security in response to aggressive Western policies. Russia is not only defending itself. It is also defending the world, the principles of justice and humanity, and the right of all to a world that rejects the logic of hegemony and unipolarity. Syria's position in support of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine was and will always remain based on firm political, moral, and legal considerations and principles.

It has been almost ten years since Syria made its sovereign decision to join the Chemical Weapons Convention, implementing all that was required of it thereunder, despite the challenging and very complicated circumstances that Syria has been going through. Throughout this period, Syria has always affirmed its categorical rejection of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances. All this notwithstanding, Syria is still facing campaigns of scepticism and false accusations that are unprecedented in the history of this Organisation, and that are waged by the United States of America and some Western States, with the aim of achieving hostile political goals that they were unable to achieve through a direct and indirect war against my country. These campaigns are still ongoing to this moment. This serious challenge facing the OPCW does not concern



Syria alone. It is a broader global problem of a systematic nature because the Organisation has turned into a tool for political manipulation, which has diverted it from its technical and professional nature, and thus from its credibility. Yet, Syria has never ceased to cooperate fully with the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat and teams in the framework of the implementation of its obligations.

In this context, and given its commitment to continuing its cooperation with the OPCW, Syria has been keen to hold a high-level meeting between Dr Faisal Mekdad, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Head of the Syrian National Authority, and the Director-General of the OPCW. Syria has recently made constructive proposals in this regard, the last of which was in October 2022. Syria reaffirms its keenness to hold this meeting as soon as possible.

Chemical terrorism threats from terrorist groups and non-State actors pose a serious threat to the security and stability of States Parties. Syria calls on all Member States of the OPCW to step up international efforts to confront this very serious threat. It has become clear that Western States seek to cover up the crimes and practices of terrorist groups in Syria. This erroneous approach has encouraged those terrorists to commit more heinous crimes against Syrian citizens and to prepare for new crimes involving the use of toxic substances in order to blame them on the Syrian government. Syria has consistently kept the OPCW and the Security Council informed of the continued preparations by terrorist groups and the 'White Helmets' terrorist group for false-flag chemical attacks, especially in the rural areas of the governorates of Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Latakia. Unfortunately, this important information did not receive any attention from the Technical Secretariat and many Western States.

Western States continue to pursue an approach that undermines the work of the OPCW. Not only did they commit a grave and documented violation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, but they also contributed to unprecedented divisions within the OPCW, by resorting to voting to impose decisions, away from consensus. The Syrian case was the most obvious example of the way these States have dealt with the OPCW and how they attempt to politicise it. Not only did these States commit crimes against the Syrian people, with some of them occupying Syrian territories and plundering Syrian people's resources in a flagrant and unconcealed manner, destroying their capabilities, and besieging and starving them through unilateral coercive economic measures, but they have also supported terrorist organisations that have shed Syrian blood for almost eleven years, without any moral or legal deterrent. They carried out direct military aggressions against Syrian territory, under false pretexts. On top of all that, they made tireless attempts to reproduce and fabricate false accusations and lies and resorted to disinformation against Syria within OPCW Policy-Making Organs. Accusing Syria of impeding the convening of the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the experts of the Syrian National Authority and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) is perhaps the best evidence of the politicisation of the work of the DAT and therefore the Organisation. Syria welcomed the holding of this round and agreed to all proposals of the Technical Secretariat. All that Syria requested was the replacement of one DAT member with any member that the Technical Secretariat and the Director-General deem fit for the task. In return for Syria's cooperation and positive engagement, the Technical Secretariat made the deployment of the DAT conditional on Syria's agreement to grant the required visas to all DAT members. Nevertheless, Western States continue to accuse Syria of impeding the work of this team, whereas it is the OPCW Technical Secretariat that hinders holding the twenty-fifth round of consultations. The Technical Secretariat has a very large number of technicians and experts who can carry out this task.

On more than one occasion, the Syrian Arab Republic, along with many States, has made objective observations regarding the working methods of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the reports it has issued so far. Yet, Syria has cooperated with FFM teams, providing them with all the facilitations required for the success of their missions; the latest example being the full cooperation and all the facilitations that Syria has provided to the FFM team during its most recent visit to Syria this November. In this context, the Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the professionalism and credibility of the FFM are contingent on the correction of the flaws marring its approach and working methods, its compliance with the provisions of the Convention, its abidance by its professional standards and the Terms of Reference agreed upon with Syria, and proving that its future reports will be unbiased, unlike its previous misleading and fabricated reports on the Khan Shaykhun incident (2017), the Aleppo incident (2018), the Saraqib incident (2018), the Douma incident (2018) and the scandals and falsifications related to that incident's report which were clear to all. The government of my country calls on the United States of America and its Western allies to stop exerting pressure on the FFM team and refrain from covering up the crimes of terrorists and their arm, "the White Helmets" group in that regard.

The Syrian Arab Republic still considers illegitimate the decision establishing the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), as it was given a mandate that is contrary to the provisions of the Convention and constituted a serious precedent by delegating to a technical organisation issues that are under the purview of the Security Council. Therefore, Syria, along with other States, does not recognise the legitimacy of this team and its work and refuses to fund it and to grant it access to the confidential information that the Syrian authorities had provided to the Organisation and to the Security Council. It, therefore, rejects any and all of its past and future outputs.

Achieving the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention is a very important step in ensuring the establishment of an effective global regime against chemical weapons. However, this will not be achieved without obligating Israel to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and other international agreements related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the Syrian Arab Republic regrets that the sponsoring States of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are impeding any effort to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in order to protect Israel and keep it outside any international control over its nuclear, chemical and biological facilities.

The United States and its allies, notably the European Union, continue to follow a policy of economic terrorism against Syria, namely the unilateral coercive measures, in clear violation of Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the United Nations Charter, and the principles and rules of international law. What is serious in this regard is that those States claim falsely that they are concerned for human rights in Syria. Not only are they imposing these measures, but they are also waging campaigns of immense pressure on other States dealing with the Syrian State and all its institutions. This negatively affected the life of Syrian citizens and led to the inability to cater for the most basic needs of Syrian citizens such as medicines, medical equipment, electricity, oil, food, education supplies and many other essential needs. We cite, in this regard, Alena Douhan, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, who affirmed in her initial report prepared after her 12-day visit to Syria and published by the United Nations a few days ago, that unilateral sanctions and the ensuing severe economic stress have had catastrophic effects across all walks of life and on all primary and secondary sectors in Syria, including health, education and culture. She indicated that continuing to impose these measures

on Syria amounts to crimes against humanity committed against the entire Syrian people. In this context, Syria calls upon the OPCW and the States Parties to assume their responsibilities and ensure the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention, and to urge the United States of America and its allies to stop violating and undermining the provisions of the Convention and to lift the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria.

In this context, Syria calls for international cooperation to confront the illegal restrictions imposed by these countries on the transfer of scientific technology for peaceful purposes to developing countries, subjecting some others to illegal unilateral coercive measures, with the aim of preventing them from achieving economic development and scientific progress for their peoples, and preventing them from using chemistry for peaceful purposes, in clear violation of the provisions of the Convention and international law.

I thank you and I request that this statement be considered an official document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on the OPCW's public website and Catalyst.

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