



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

Statement by Finland, Agenda Item 6(f)
Ambassador Ilkka-Pekka Similä
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW
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Mr. Chairperson,

Finland fully aligns with the statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

Finland welcomes the release of the third report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) on 27 January.

The report focuses on the chemical weapons attack that took place on April 7, 2018 in Douma. It concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that at least one helicopter of the Syrian Arab Air Force, under the control of the Tiger Forces, dropped two chlorine cylinders, which hit two residential buildings in a central area of the city. The attack killed 43 named individuals, ten girls, nine boys, seventeen women and seven men, and affected dozens more.

We applaud the IIT for the thorough investigation conducted as well as for the high quality of this report. So far, the IIT has identified the Syrian regime as the perpetrator in five chemical weapons attacks. Altogether, the UN and the OPCW have now independently attributed nine cases of chemical weapons use to the Syrian regime. These attacks have

taken place before and after Syria became a States Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Finland condemns in the strongest possible terms the Syrian regime's repeated use of chemical weapons.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances is a violation of international law and can amount to the most serious of international crimes - war crimes and crimes against humanity. Syria must immediately comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as relevant decisions of the OPCW Policy-Making Organs and UN Security Council resolutions. This also entails full cooperation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat, including the IIT.

Mr. Chair,

Impunity is not an option. Those identified as responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. The IIT's investigations and reporting contribute to efforts to end impunity for the use of chemical weapons. We express our full support and appreciation for the professional, impartial and independent work carried out by the IIT, and we look forward to the upcoming reports.

I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the external server and public website.

Thank you.