



Statement by the OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare

29 November 2023, The Hague, Netherlands

As the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), it is with a sense of solemnity that I issue this statement on the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare.

This year, our observance holds special significance as we reflect on important milestones realised by our Organisation, which the OPCW Member States have repeatedly highlighted throughout this week of the Conference of the States Parties.

We must acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. The degraded geopolitical environment and the threats associated with misuse of new and emerging technologies have heightened the risk of the re-emergence of toxic chemicals being used as methods of warfare. As the Organisation intensifies its focus on preventing re-emergence, it is imperative that we maintain vigilance and continue to respond resolutely to their use. In this respect, the inauguration of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology this year in the presence of H.M. Willem-Alexander, King of the Netherlands, will assist in addressing these matters.

As we tackle the existing and emerging challenges to the Chemical Weapon Convention, we must continue to bear in mind the deep humanitarian aspect of our mission. The suffering of victims, from World War One to the present, will continue to sustain our determination to ensure that toxic chemicals are employed exclusively for peaceful purposes. Preventing re-emergence means preventing new victims of chemical weapons – the goal we are all ultimately striving towards.

On this Day of Remembrance, let us seize this opportunity to recall that 193 States Parties to the Convention have made a solemn commitment to never develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, transfer or use chemical weapons. As we honour the memory of those killed and injured in chemical warfare, let us renew this commitment to ensure a world permanently free of this abhorrent means of warfare.
