



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WORKING COLLECTIVELY TO ENSURE CHEMICAL SECURITY

On 30 November 2023, the Conference of the States Parties of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at its Twenty-Eighth Session adopted the decision “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use and the Threat of Future Use.” (C-28/DEC.12). Pursuant to paragraph 3 of Article XII of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), the decision recommends that States Parties take certain collective measures, including to prevent the transfer of certain chemicals and dual-use equipment to the Syrian Arab Republic.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) has an important role to play in the implementation of the decision as it is requested to enhance and report to the Executive Council (the Council) on capacity-building programmes to facilitate the sharing of best practices for developing national measures to prevent the transfer of toxic chemicals, their precursors, and related materials, where such transfer risks supporting the use or development of chemical weapons or any other activity inconsistent with the Convention. The decision also requests the Secretariat to report to the Council regarding types of cooperation and assistance it could provide to assist States Parties in developing national measures to prevent such transfers.

Furthermore, in accordance with the decision, the OPCW Director-General is to report to the Council on information available to the Director-General on transfers of scheduled chemicals to the Syrian Arab Republic by States Parties, as well as to any other States Parties that the OPCW may identify in the future as responsible for chemical weapons use.

United States Actions to Support Collective Measures Recommended in Operative Paragraphs 7(a) and (b) of C-28/DEC.12

The items listed in United Nations document S/2006/853* (dated 7 November 2006) and Corr.1 (dated 14 November 2006) are dual-use items that are highly relevant to the development of chemical and biological weapons. As a member of the Australia Group export control regime, the United States requires a United States Department of Commerce export license for the export of these items to most destinations, including the Syrian Arab Republic. This allows the United States Government to help ensure that, if exported, the goods are used for their intended, peaceful purposes and are not diverted to chemical or biological weapons purposes.

Since it is a destination of particularly serious proliferation concern, the United States of America also requires a United States Department of Commerce export license for the export of most dual-use items to the Syrian Arab Republic. This includes highly relevant chemicals such as chlorine, which the Assad regime has used as a weapon repeatedly since joining the Convention, and high-purity isopropanol, which is a key sarin precursor.



Both bilaterally and multilaterally, the United States of America provides support in the form of capacity building for legal and regulatory mechanisms, export licensing processes, chemical industry know-your-customer best practices, customs and law enforcement, and border security to prevent the transfer of dual-use chemicals and equipment to dangerous State and non-State actors, including the Syrian Arab Republic. This includes engaging over 55 OPCW States Parties annually on a bilateral, multilateral, and regional basis to raise threat awareness and build institutional, workforce, and procedural capacity via trainings, workshops, study visits, and exchanges to help meet their obligations under United Nations Security Council resolution 1540, other Security Council resolutions, and international agreements.

The United States of America believes that harmonising these export controls among States Parties would have a substantial impact in impeding the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons programmes and would help to meet obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 and under the Convention. We encourage States Parties that do not do so already to adopt similar controls. To support members and partnering States Parties, the Australia Group has many export control-related resources available on its website (www.australiagroup.net) including its Guidelines document, common control lists, and handbooks.

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