



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NICOLE SHAMPAINÉ**  
**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE**  
**OPCW AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Director General,  
Distinguished Ambassadors and Delegates,

The next 12 months promise to be pivotal for the OPCW as we consider issues with far-reaching implications for the future of this organization, including the way forward on Syria, elections of the next Director-General, and the biennial budget. So it is a good time for us to reflect on our common purpose as States Parties - we are here to rid the world of the threat of chemical weapons. This is the pledge our nations made when they acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. And it was the shared mission of those from all over the world who worked together to draft the Convention.

This is the goal that drives the United States at the OPCW. The Chemical Weapons Convention is among the most successful arms control treaties in the world, but if we want it to stay that way, we need to make decisions that uphold what it stands for.

Now is not the time to be complacent. As the Director-General told us this morning, the threats facing the drafters of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 are still very real today. The cost of failure is the erosion of the global norm against the use of chemical weapons and the prospect of new chemical weapons programs emerging.

Had the international community done more to pressure the Assad regime to cooperate meaningfully with the OPCW, instead of tolerating its facade of engagement for a decade, we would not be facing the immense challenge confronting the OPCW now. But we have been presented with a second chance. As Secretary Rubio underscored following his meeting with Foreign Minister al-

Shaibani, the Syrian people *were* the victims of chemical weapons. Now we must do right by them.

Despite the efforts of some States Parties to amplify the Assad regime's implausible denials, the Director-General's leadership ensured that essential work continued. The next Director-General's legacy will hinge on building on this example of addressing violations of the Convention even in the face of pushback, and accusations of "politicization" by those engaged in the development and use of chemical weapons. Such professionalism is critical to preserving the credibility of the OPCW.

While we are turning the page in Syria, the OPCW has now confirmed repeatedly the presence of chemical agents in munitions from the front lines in Ukraine. Russia's uses of chemical munitions, including the chemical weapon chloropicrin, are clear violations of the Convention. And the use of chemical weapons by any actor, anywhere - be it in Ukraine or elsewhere – should trouble us all.

We welcome the establishment of a technical committee by Sudan to investigate the U.S. determination that Sudan used chemical weapons, and we look forward to the conclusions of the committee. We call on Sudan to work with the OPCW so that it can return to compliance with its treaty obligations.

Iran's ongoing non-compliance with the Convention poses a grave threat to our pursuit of a world free of chemical weapons. Since 2018, the United States has raised serious concerns that Iran is pursuing pharmaceutical-based agents for offensive purposes, as detailed in leaked Iranian documents. We imposed sanctions on the Shahid Meisami Group and its director for their activities, including projects involving the testing and production of chemical agents for use as so-called incapacitation agents. The United States continues to call on Iran to cease this activity and verifiably and irreversibly destroy its chemical weapons program.

Finally, upholding the Convention also means ensuring States Parties can implement it. The United States is proud, in this regard, to be organizing a tabletop exercise and workshop for GRULAC countries next month focused on preventing and responding to chemical attacks, which we are co-hosting with Argentina. The United States is committed to providing concrete, practical support to strengthen implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.