

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION C-SS-4/DEC.3 ON  
ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE**

1. The Conference of the States Parties (the Conference), at its Fourth Special Session, adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). In paragraph 24 of the decision, the Conference decided that “the Director-General shall provide a copy of this decision and a report on its initial implementation to all States Parties and to the United Nations Secretary-General within 30 days of this decision and thereafter provide a report on progress to each regular session of the Council”, in reference to the Executive Council (the Council).
2. In furtherance of paragraph 7 of the decision, the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) continued its engagement with the Syrian interim authorities to clarify all gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies noted in the Syrian Arab Republic’s initial declaration and subsequent submissions.
3. As previously reported, the Secretariat established contacts with the Syrian authorities through the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW as acting on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic (Ref. SQH.3.25.1, dated 7 January 2025). The Director-General of the OPCW was invited by caretaker Foreign Minister H.E. Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani to visit the Syrian Arab Republic, an invitation that he accepted. The Secretariat’s delegation, led by the Director-General, met with the interim President and the caretaker Foreign Minister in Damascus on 8 February 2025. The Syrian authorities expressed their intention to cooperate with the OPCW and fulfil their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention).
4. On 21 February 2025, the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW, in its capacity as acting on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, delivered to the Secretariat a letter by the Syrian caretaker Foreign Minister (SQH.s.TS.125, dated 21 February 2025), addressed to the Secretariat, stating that the new Syrian authorities had appointed a Point of Contact on issues pertaining to chemical weapons. The Secretariat established communication and continued to engage with the Point of Contact on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier.
5. On 5 March 2025, the caretaker Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, delivered an in-person statement at the 108th Session of the Council (EC-108/4, dated 5 March 2025). In his statement, the caretaker Foreign Minister reaffirmed the commitment of the Syrian authorities to dismantle any remains of the chemical weapons programme developed under the previous regime, as well as



to ensure that justice is achieved for the victims, and to establish robust international standards to prevent the recurrence of chemical weapons use.

6. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat team—comprised of the members of Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), supported by various other units within the Organisation—deployed three times to the Syrian Arab Republic, in March, April, and June 2025.
7. In the course of the March and April 2025 deployments, the team conducted meetings with the Syrian authorities aimed at organising future activities, including establishing an OPCW office in the Syrian Arab Republic, declaration-related technical meetings, and field visits.
8. Throughout the meetings, the Secretariat explained its mandates in the Syrian Arab Republic and discussed various legal, administrative, logistical and operational matters related to the implementation of these mandates. The Secretariat emphasised the importance of the privileges and immunities agreement, the establishment of an OPCW office in the Syrian Arab Republic, and joint planning work for its future activities. The Syrian authorities undertook to finalise these arrangements at the earliest opportunity.
9. Regarding field activities, the DAT visited nine locations—four previously declared facilities and five sites potentially linked to the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The Secretariat collected samples from one of the suspected sites and transported them to OPCW Headquarters. Analysis of the samples by designated laboratories is currently under way. In addition, the DAT obtained new information through technical-level meetings, which is currently being analysed in conjunction with previously gathered data on the Syrian chemical weapons programme.
10. On 29 April 2025, the Secretariat issued a Note on “Estimated Costs of OPCW Mandated Activities to Resolve the Remaining Issues Surrounding the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme” (S/2397/2025). This Note provides further details on the new situation in the Syrian Arab Republic since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, including the recognition by the Syrian transitional government of all the mandates entrusted to the Secretariat by the decisions of the OPCW policy-making organs, as well as the associated tasks carried out by the DAT, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). The Note focuses on the Secretariat’s estimates of costs of OPCW-mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, including operational costs and capacity-building assistance related to measures to prevent the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons and training and equipment to enable the Syrian National Authority to respond to and investigate chemical weapons issues and incidents effectively. The Note also underscores the importance of in-kind contributions from States Parties or international actors that could provide timely and effective support to OPCW operations in the Syrian Arab Republic. Finally, as highlighted in the Note, all of the Secretariat’s mandates in relation to the Syrian chemical weapons programme stand and deployments will continue to be carried out without deprioritising any of them.
11. On 23 May 2025, the Secretariat conducted a briefing for States Parties on the status of the Secretariat’s mandated activities pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, during which details of the March and April 2025 deployments were provided.

12. Since 1 June 2025, the Director-General has reorganised the conduct of the Secretariat's activities, inter alia in the Syrian Arab Republic, through the Office of Special Missions. For the purposes of activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, these include the mandates of the DAT, the FFM, the IIT, inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre, as well as any other relevant activities in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Office of Special Missions comprises a core team of staff members who were previously involved in the work of the DAT, the FFM, and the IIT, and will coordinate its operations with all relevant units within the Secretariat, as well as with States Parties, as necessary.
13. The first Office of Special Missions team deployment to the Syrian Arab Republic took place from 12 to 17 June 2025. The outcome of this deployment will be reported in due course.
14. On 5 June 2025, the Secretariat issued a "Call for Voluntary Contributions to Participate in Financing the OPCW Activities in the Syrian Arab Republic" (S/2413/2025). The Note includes additional background on the work to verify the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration, and refers to multiple cases of chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic documented by the Secretariat, as well as the identification of perpetrators of such use in a number of these cases by the Secretariat. The Note provides updated estimates on the cost of activities in the Syrian Arab Republic for the remainder of 2025 and estimated funding requirements for 2026 and 2027.
15. As reported in the Note referenced above (S/2413/2025), the Syrian authorities have informed the Secretariat that they do not have the knowledge needed to identify what elements of the Syrian chemical weapons programme have not been declared. The Note further underscores that the Secretariat will need to visit and assess more than 100 sites across the Syrian Arab Republic, including military facilities, airfields, and research centres, all of which may be in varied, and hazardous, states of disarray, damage, or destruction. The Syrian authorities will need to declare all chemical weapons related items, sites, and equipment as they are discovered, and the Secretariat will need to verify this declaration.
16. With regard to the status of the Syrian initial declaration, together with all outstanding issues, it will be reassessed by the Secretariat after the Secretariat defines the full extent of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, including conducting an inventory of all chemical weapons, chemical weapons sites, equipment, munitions, and other components of the programme. The Secretariat will determine whether and when the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention, Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 (dated 27 September 2013) and EC-94/DEC.2, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).
17. Consistent with paragraph 8 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, and following current practice, the Secretariat continues to update States Parties on the operations of the FFM through, inter alia, the monthly progress report entitled "Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme", and through reports detailing the FFM's activities and findings regarding specific incidents of alleged use of chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic.

18. The FFM is continuing its work and will issue further reports in due course. It is also engaging with knowledge and skills transfer to relevant units of the Secretariat.
19. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat established the IIT to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report.
20. The IIT is continuing its investigations and will issue further reports in due course. The IIT has been closely monitoring the ongoing developments in the Syrian Arab Republic, and has continued planning and preparing for deployments to the Syrian Arab Republic. This included the identification and prioritisation of persons and locations of interest to its ongoing investigations, as well as of new potential sources and repositories of information and documentation. In June 2025, members of the IIT travelled to the Syrian Arab Republic, as part of a broader delegation of the Office of Special Missions. It held meetings with relevant Syrian transitional authorities, in which Syrian support to ongoing and future IIT investigations, and broader coordination on matters of accountability for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, was extensively discussed.
21. Pursuant to paragraph 12 of the Conference's decision, the IIT also continues to preserve and review information and evidence collected during its investigations for the purposes of transferring it to the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM). In this process, paramount importance is accorded to the applicable rules and procedures of the OPCW governing the protection, control, and release of confidential information and evidence, including measures to protect the witnesses' identifying information in line with their informed consent. All transfers of information to the IIIM are being implemented in a manner consistent with the OPCW's rules and policies on confidentiality.
22. In addition, the IIT engages in transfer of knowledge and skills to relevant units of the Secretariat, while developing strategies to document all technical and scientific findings and processes underpinning its investigations. These include investigative methodologies for the identification of perpetrators; selection and recruitment of, and engagement with, independent experts; combined use of different scientific and technical domains to support the identification of perpetrators; and techniques for the holistic assessment of different sources of information, evidence, and technical expertise.
23. The voluntary funding requirements for the IIT for 2024–2025, as specified in the Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2024–2025 (C-28/DEC.9, dated 29 November 2023), have been set at EUR 1,320,877 for 2024 and EUR 1,322,831 for 2025. Contributions and pledges have been received from Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the European Union.

24. The Secretariat will continue to keep States Parties informed of activities and progress with regard to the Syrian chemical weapons programme through existing reporting modalities, as mandated, and through briefings, as deemed appropriate.
25. In accordance with paragraph 18 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat continues to develop options for further assistance to States Parties to help prevent the chemical weapons threat posed by non-State actors, and to aid States Parties' contingency planning in the event of a chemical weapons attack. Taking into consideration, inter alia, the decision of the Council entitled "Addressing the Threat Posed by the Use of Chemical Weapons by Non-State Actors" (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017), the Secretariat has continued to build on existing activities related to preparedness, prevention, and response.
26. Pursuant to paragraph 20 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Director-General, if requested by a State Party investigating possible chemical weapons use on its territory, can provide technical expertise to identify those who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors, or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons. Accordingly, the Secretariat continues to work to ensure that it has the necessary capabilities to respond to such State Party requests, including through assessing relevant forensic tools and capabilities that may be useful in fulfilling them.
27. As reported previously, the Secretariat is implementing a series of capacity-building measures to expand the existing skills of relevant Secretariat staff. These measures include, inter alia:
  - (a) training to further build investigative capabilities in areas such as crime scene management, witness interviews, evidence collection, and forensics;
  - (b) the revision of job descriptions to recruit applicants with the skills and knowledge to match the evolving needs of the Secretariat;
  - (c) through internal and external consultations, the assessment of potential additional investigative tools and capabilities that could be useful for the Secretariat if called upon to assist a State Party in identifying perpetrators, organisers, sponsors, or otherwise, of chemical weapons use on its territory; and
  - (d) support for the procurement of software and equipment through the creation of a test and evaluation programme.
28. The Secretariat will continue to expand these activities in order to scale up knowledge and expertise within the Secretariat. The capabilities provided by the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology continue to further reinforce these efforts, including in the adaptation and transition of the Inspectorate Division to facilitate the readiness and flexibility of staff resources to support all types of missions and training. The Secretariat has developed specific projects, which are listed in the Note entitled "Anticipated New Programmes and Activities at the Centre for Chemistry and Technology" (S/2102/2022, dated 30 September 2022) and expanded upon in the Note entitled "Update on Programmes and Activities at the Centre for Chemistry and Technology" (S/2304/2024, dated 8 July 2024). States Parties are invited to consider providing voluntary contributions to support these priority projects.

29. In furtherance of paragraph 23 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat will continue to prioritise the realisation of the universality of the Convention, on the understanding that this goal is essential to achieving its object and purpose, to enhancing the security of States Parties, and to international peace and security. The Director-General continues to call upon all States Parties to support the Secretariat's efforts in this regard.
30. At its Twenty-Eighth Session, the Conference adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use and the Threat of Future Use" (C-28/DEC.12, dated 30 November 2023). The Secretariat has been integrating reporting requirements on the elements in the decision concerning the Syrian chemical weapons dossier into its existing reporting.

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