



OPCW

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DECISION

EXPEDITED ON-SITE DESTRUCTION OF ANY REMNANTS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

The Executive Council,

Recognising that the new political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic has presented the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) with an opportunity to establish an effective working relationship with the Syrian Arab Republic, after more than 11 years of obstruction from the former Syrian regime;

Acknowledging the instrumental role played by Qatar and by the Director-General as a result of his visit to the Syrian Arab Republic on 8 February 2025—during which he was received by the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic, who expressed their commitment to fully cooperating with the OPCW and to fulfilling the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention)—and **recognising** that their initiatives served as critical steps in advancing efforts to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria, and laid the groundwork for cooperation with the Syrian Arab Republic, based on mutual trust and transparency;

Recalling that, following the fall of the former Syrian regime on 8 December 2024, the Executive Council (the Council) at its Sixty-Sixth Meeting decided to remain seized of the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in relation to the Syrian chemical weapons programme (EC-M-66/2, dated 12 December 2024 and Corr.1, dated 8 January 2025);

Recalling also United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) regarding elimination of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, paragraph 10 of which authorises Member States of the United Nations to acquire, control, transport, transfer, and destroy chemical weapons identified by the Director-General, consistent with the objective of the Convention;

Recalling further the decisions by the Council on the destruction of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including on the “Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons” (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013) and on the “Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities” (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013);

Recalling further the object and purpose of the Convention and **reaffirming** the importance of its full and effective implementation in a manner that promotes cooperation, transparency, and trust among States Parties;



Recalling that the Convention entered into force for the Syrian Arab Republic on 14 October 2013;

Welcoming the commitment expressed during the 108th Session of the Council by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic to work with the Secretariat and other States Parties towards the complete elimination of the former Syrian regime's chemical weapons programme in accordance with the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under the Convention, and **welcoming also** the steps taken by the new Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to support and facilitate the work of the Secretariat, despite the challenges facing the country after 14 years of war;

Welcoming further the conclusion of an agreement on the privileges and immunities of the OPCW and its personnel for the conduct of operations in the Syrian Arab Republic, through an exchange of letters between the Director-General and the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, effective from 16 June 2025;

Recognising that the secretive nature of the former regime's chemical weapons programme continues to pose significant challenges to the Syrian Arab Republic in identifying and eliminating any remaining chemical weapons, production facilities, and related materials and equipment, and **recognising also** that these challenges are compounded by gaps in documentation, limited institutional memory and technical expertise, economic constraints, insufficient equipment, security threats posed by remnants of the former regime and terrorist groups, and the impact of air strikes—including those targeting suspected sites—on efforts to preserve or assess relevant materials;

Welcoming in this regard the efforts of the new Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to overcome these obstacles by extending, since the fall of the former regime, significant cooperation and on-the-ground support to the OPCW Secretariat to the best of its current abilities, as acknowledged by the Secretariat in recent reports, including the granting of unfettered access to sites and personnel, expedited visa issuance, and operational security support;

Recognising that the Syrian Arab Republic has a vested interest in investigating and holding to account perpetrators of any use of chemical weapons on its territory;

Recognising also the specific circumstances in the Syrian Arab Republic and **determined** to ensure that the activities necessary for the destruction of any remaining elements of the chemical weapons programme on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic are conducted in the most efficient and safe manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and in particular Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex thereto;

Underscoring the importance of refraining from actions that may impede or delay the efforts of the Secretariat or the Syrian Arab Republic to identify and eliminate any remaining elements of the former regime's chemical weapons programme;

Recalling the impacts of such actions as raised by the Director-General (EC-M-68/DG.1) and Member States during the Sixty-Eighth Meeting of the Council on 22 July 2025, which was convened by the Director-General, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Council, following a request from the Permanent Representative of Qatar on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic on 16 July 2025, in response to developments that have disrupted OPCW-related activities and exacerbated challenges for the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat since 8 December 2024;

Recognising that, owing to the challenges mentioned above, the Syrian Arab Republic will require assistance from OPCW Member States, under Syrian leadership, to support efforts to identify, assess, and destroy chemical weapons;

Recalling the Notes by the Secretariat on “The Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in Relation to the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme and the Way Forward” (S/2376/2025, dated 26 February 2025), on “Estimated Costs of OPCW Mandated Activities to Resolve the Remaining Issues Surrounding the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme” (S/2397/2025, dated 29 April 2025), and on the “Call for Voluntary Contributions to Participate in Financing the OPCW Activities in the Syrian Arab Republic” (S/2413/2025, dated 5 June 2025);

Noting the Concept Plan submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic on 29 July 2025 (under cover of Note Verbale SQH.25.TS.Syr.7 from the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW) and the Note by the Secretariat on the “Review of Chemical Weapons Destruction Technologies and an Outline Plan for Their Selection in Support of the Destruction, Including Expedited Destruction, of Syrian Chemical Weapons Subject to Verification by the Technical Secretariat” (S/2428/2025, dated 24 July 2025);

Cognisant that, as set out in Note S/2428/2025 and the Concept Plan of 29 July 2025, there may be exceptional situations in which chemical weapons materials discovered at a site cannot be reliably secured for storage and/or in which items cannot readily and safely be relocated to a consolidation site, and that as a result the expedited on-site destruction of discovered chemical weapons or materials may be required, and that in such cases it will be necessary for the Syrian Arab Republic, in consultation with the Secretariat and any States Parties providing support for destruction activities, to assess and coordinate the appropriate course of action;

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic; and

Determined for the sake of all humanity, through the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons;

Hereby:

1. **Welcomes** the recent positive cooperation by the new Government of the Syrian Arab Republic with the Secretariat, and the designation of a national team to facilitate implementation of the Syrian Arab Republic’s obligations under the Convention;
2. **Welcomes also** the work of the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic to assess potential chemical weapons-related sites in the Syrian Arab Republic, and **requests** the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic to continue to advance work towards the identification, declaration, and verified destruction of any remaining chemical weapons, production facilities, or related material and equipment, including by preparing for and carrying out expedited on-site destruction of chemical weapons on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic in exceptional cases as provided below;
3. **Requests also** the Syrian Arab Republic, in consultation with the Secretariat, to determine when challenging and/or hazardous circumstances prevent the secure storage or handling of any chemical weapons discovered at a site and to determine when on-site destruction of such chemical weapons can be carried out safely and on an expedited basis;

4. **Requests further** the Secretariat to work with the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure that the methods to be used for such expedited on-site destruction processes include and take account of, inter alia, a verification process in line with applicable requirements, the necessity of assigning the highest priority to ensuring safety of people and to protecting the environment, and the necessity of preserving evidence related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic;
5. **Decides** that, in situations in which the Syrian Arab Republic, after consultation with the Secretariat, including to ensure its ability to conduct necessary verification, determines that the criteria described in paragraph 3 of this decision are met, the Syrian Arab Republic may proceed both with the expedited on-site destruction of the relevant chemical weapons, subject to the requirements under paragraph 4 above and the declaration of the relevant chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic and its verification by the Secretariat, and with destruction carried out under the Secretariat's verification, on the basis of a destruction plan and a plan for verification agreed by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat, in line with the relevant provisions of the Convention;
6. **Decides** that, where expedited on-site destruction is carried out in accordance with paragraphs 3 to 5 above, the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic may conclude the necessary arrangements, including destruction plans and agreed plans for verification, without prior approval from the Council, and that the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic shall notify the Council promptly of the conclusion of any such arrangements and provide the details thereof;
7. **Underscores** that the selection of methods for the destruction of chemical weapons must ensure that such methods meet the requirements of paragraphs 12, 13, and 14 of Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex to the Convention, and take into account the necessity of preserving evidence related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic;
8. **Requests** the Secretariat, following the declaration of any chemical weapons that do not meet the conditions for expedited on-site destruction described above to work with the Syrian Arab Republic to further develop plans for destruction and verification in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention and for consideration of the Council as required;
9. **Calls upon** States Parties in a position to do so to provide, upon request, appropriate technical assistance and equipment, training, funding and capacity-building support to the Syrian Arab Republic, in order to help address the technical and institutional challenges and to facilitate efforts under the leadership of the Syrian Arab Republic to identify and safely destroy any remaining elements of the former regime's chemical weapons programme, in accordance with the objectives of the Convention, and **requests** the Secretariat to include in its reports to the Council information on any support provided and received in this regard;
10. **Recognises** that the purpose of this decision is to respond to the specific circumstances in the Syrian Arab Republic and that this decision does not create any precedent for the future;

11. **Decides** that the item “Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme”, placed by the Council on the agenda of all of its future sessions through decision EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016), shall henceforth be referred to as “Elimination of any Remnants of the Assad-Era Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme”, in recognition of the distinct historical and institutional context in which the chemical weapons programme was developed and operated under the former Syrian regime and of the ongoing efforts of the new Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the OPCW and to fulfil the country’s obligations under the Convention;
12. **Decides also** that the Secretariat is no longer required to conduct inspections twice a year at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC), as previously decided by the Council (paragraph 11 of EC-83/DEC.5), but that the Secretariat may still inspect those facilities as it deems appropriate for the purpose of carrying out its mandate in accordance with the Convention and relevant decisions of the Council;
13. **Requests** the Secretariat, in carrying out independently its mandates related to the Syrian Arab Republic, to work with the Syrian Government to collect and preserve evidence related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, noting that such efforts should also contribute to accountability efforts led by the Syrian Government;
14. **Encourages** the Conference of the States Parties, in view of the recent positive developments, to revisit decision C-25/DEC.9 (dated 21 April 2021) concerning the suspension of the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention, in the event of continued and sustained progress in the elimination of any remaining chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic;
15. **Decides** that the Director-General shall regularly report to the Council on the implementation of this decision, including reporting on any expedited on-site destruction that occurs in accordance with paragraphs 3 to 5 of this decision; and
16. **Decides also** to remain seized of the matter.