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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 new Syrian 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 delegation included the Deputy Director-General and, for the first time in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, a member of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). 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 from 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. As previously reported, 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 (OSM). The coordination and organisation of these activities through the OSM allow the Secretariat to carry out its mandates more efficiently and effectively in the Syrian Arab Republic, including, inter alia, verification of the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and the destruction of chemical weapons and related materials and equipment, establishment of the facts surrounding the allegations of use of toxic chemicals as weapons, identification of perpetrators in instances where use or likely use has been established in the Syrian Arab Republic, inspections mandated by the OPCW Policy-Making Organs, including the Scientific Studies and Research Centre, and other relevant activities. In channelling this work through the OSM, the Secretariat strengthens its capacity to organise and coordinate—both internally and externally—its activities in the Syrian Arab Republic and beyond.
7. Following two earlier deployments of Secretariat teams in March and April 2025, the first deployment of an OSM team to the Syrian Arab Republic took place from 12 to 17 June 2025. This deployment helped secure an agreement on the privileges and immunities of the OPCW and its personnel for the conduct of operations in the Syrian Arab Republic. This agreement was concluded through an exchange of letters between the Director-General of the OPCW and the caretaker Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, effective as of 16 June 2025.
8. A subsequent deployment, scheduled for July 2025, was postponed due to air strikes carried out on 16 July 2025. These attacks targeted, inter alia, several sites in Damascus, including the Syrian Ministry of Defence headquarters, a building in which consultations between the Secretariat and relevant Syrian authorities previously took place. This matter was addressed during the Sixty-Eighth Meeting of the Council on 22 July 2025, as convened by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson of the Council, following a request made by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the OPCW as acting on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, to receive and consider information on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.
9. During the reporting period, the Secretariat deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic twice: from 18 August to 2 September 2025, and from 17 to 22 September 2025. The deployment from 18 August to 2 September 2025 focused primarily on activities related to the verification of the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, while the deployment from 17 to 22 September 2025 focused on establishing the facts surrounding the allegations of use of toxic chemicals as weapons, and identifying perpetrators in instances where use or likely use has been established in the Syrian Arab Republic.

10. In the deployment from 18 August to 2 September 2025, the Secretariat's team held meetings with representatives of the Syrian authorities, including technical meetings with Syrian experts from the former National Authority. These engagements resulted in the provision of new information not previously disclosed to the Secretariat. The Secretariat's team also visited four locations that had not been previously declared to the Secretariat but were identified—through interviews and other sources—as potentially related to the Syrian chemical weapons programme. A sample was collected at one of these locations and is being prepared for transfer to two OPCW designated laboratories for analysis. Additionally, documents discovered at one of the visited sites are being processed, and will be analysed.
11. Regarding the results of the analysis of samples collected by the Secretariat in April 2025 at a previously undeclared location, which revealed indicators of chemical warfare nerve agents, the Secretariat informed the Syrian authorities that it will continue activities aimed at defining the full scope of chemical weapons-related activities conducted at this location and its potential declarability under the Convention.
12. Through its deployments, the Secretariat continues to gather and receive evidence regarding the extent of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Further details and outcomes of the Secretariat's deployment from 18 August to 2 September 2025 were provided during a briefing conducted by the Secretariat for States Parties on 30 September 2025 on the status of the Secretariat's mandated activities pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and in the Director-General's report (EC-110/HP/DG.2, dated 6 October 2025).
13. The shortcomings in the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration, along with all outstanding issues, continue to be addressed through the OSM. The Secretariat has initiated a comprehensive reassessment to determine the full extent of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. This includes conducting a complete inventory of all chemical weapons, related sites, equipment, munitions, and other programme components. These activities continue to be governed by the Convention, and subsequent obligations on the Syrian Arab Republic deriving from, inter alia, Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 (dated 27 September 2013) and EC-94/DEC.2 (dated 9 July 2020), and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).
14. On 27 August 2025, the Secretariat provided the Permanent Representation of Qatar, to the OPCW as acting on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, a model facility agreement and two examples of a draft agreed detailed plan for verification, and offered consultations on these documents as well as destruction technologies that might be used by the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy any chemical weapons that might be discovered.
15. 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 OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) through, inter alia, the monthly progress report entitled "Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme", and through reports detailing the activities of the FFM and findings regarding specific incidents of alleged use of chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic.
16. The FFM is continuing its work and will issue further reports in due course. It is also engaging in knowledge and skills transfer to relevant units of the Secretariat.

17. 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.
18. Following on the Secretariat's deployment that took place in June 2025 in the presence of the Chief Coordinator of the IIT, the Secretariat deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic from 17 to 22 September 2025. The team received information relevant to ongoing investigations, conducted a witness interview, and continued to plan future activities in coordination with the Syrian authorities.
19. Pursuant to paragraph 12 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, 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 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 rules and policies on confidentiality.
20. In addition, the Secretariat is finalising the necessary transfer of knowledge and skills from the IIT to relevant units and documenting 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.
21. In addition to substantive activities aimed at the implementation of its mandates, as described above, the Secretariat has been working on establishing an OPCW office in the Syrian Arab Republic. This will enable the Secretariat to commence planned rotations of Secretariat teams supported by all concerned units and consequently accelerate the pace of its activities in-country.
22. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions and pledges to the Trust Fund for Syria Missions stood at EUR 58.47 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, 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, the United States of America, and the European Union. This does not include the more than EUR 48 million received in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons in 2013 and 2014.

23. 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.
24. In accordance with paragraph 18 of decision 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.
25. Pursuant to paragraph 20 of decision 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 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.
26. 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 those who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons on its territory; and
 - (d) support for the procurement of software and equipment through the creation of a test and evaluation programme.
27. The Secretariat will continue to expand these activities in order to scale up its internal knowledge and expertise. 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.

28. In furtherance of paragraph 23 of decision 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.
29. 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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