

**A joint statement of non-governmental organizations
in supporting victims of chemical weapons**

The rights and health of victims of chemical weapons

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Tehran Peace Museum

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Excellencies, Director General, Colleagues of the CWC Coalition, Ladies and Gentlemen

This statement is presented on behalf of the non-governmental organizations supporting the victims of chemical weapons.

The immediate and long-term needs of chemical weapons victims require urgent attention. The main priority is providing medical assistance, specifically for the treatment of long-term health effects. National medical communities struggle to understand and provide adequate care for the unique needs of victims of chemical weapons. Therefore, we call upon the international community and organizations such as the OPCW to encourage CWC States Parties, individuals, and organizations to contribute to the OPCW Trust Fund for CW victims. This will enable the OPCW Technical Secretariat to conduct more activities under the auspices of the International Support Network for CW victims.

To address both the short-term and long-term health effects, States Parties should actively support CW victims by providing evidence based medical treatment programs in their home countries, organizing events to raise awareness at the national level regarding victims of chemical weapons, exchanging information on experiences related to treatment of victims of chemical weapons, facilitating materials and equipment-related assistance to States Parties, and conducting more awareness-raising programs regarding the consequences of the use of CW.

Moreover, we recommend prioritizing and providing financial support to research projects on the treatment for long-term health effects through international cooperation programs, including the WHO and OPCW, providing financial support for victim assistance projects conducted by NGOs, and establishing rehabilitation centers for the victims of chemical weapons. The issue of physical and mental health is the primary concern of CW victims, who face numerous problems. These include respiratory disorders, vision problems, corneal burns, skin burns, reproductive health problems, birth defects, and psychological issues, for which they require ongoing treatment, medicine, and hospitalization, often for several decades.

We also call on the OPCW Technical Secretariat to plan and conduct further activities and projects in line with the CSP decision for the establishment of an International Support Network for CW victims, including:

- Organizing the second symposium on treatment of CW victims, challenges and hopes following the successful experience of the 1st Symposium in 2018, and in line with the recommendations set out in the Symposium declaration, which is available on the OPCW website.
- To follow the recommendations of the 1st OPCW Medical Symposium Declaration, which was suggested by the world medical experts regarding the health priorities and needs of CW victims.

We stand ready to actively participate in the work focused on chemical weapons victims' needs, or any victims' assistance projects organized by the OPCW in this regard.

The presence of chemical weapons victims in this conference and its side events plays a significant role in raising awareness of the severity of the victims' injuries and suffering. Chemical weapons victims participate in this global coalition every year to ensure that what happened to them will never happen to anyone else.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Director General for paying special attention to the issue of victims and NGOs active in this field, as well as providing support for the programs of the International Support Network for CW during his leadership of the organization.

Thank you, and we request that this statement be made part of the official CSP-30 proceedings.