

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FATMA CEREN YAZGAN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
TO THE OPCW AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Agenda item 5 – General debate

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report and the Technical Secretariat for its continued dedication in implementing the mandate of this Organisation. I would also like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership in guiding the work of this Council.

These are unprecedented times for the global security environment. We will continue to support the efforts for a peaceful settlement to the ongoing crisis in the Middle East since the attacks on February 28th, so that it does not metastasize further and deeper.

Mr. Chair,

In such times, upholding multilateral instruments against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction becomes ever more important. As such, the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable and must never be allowed to re-emerge. It is therefore incumbent upon all States Parties to fully comply with their obligations under the Convention and to support the work of the Organisation in ensuring effective verification and accountability. Allegations of non-compliance are a matter of concern.

Mr. Chair,

The risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction persists. As such, Türkiye welcomes the openness of the government of Syria for cooperation and supports continued cooperation between Syria and the Technical Secretariat in order to ensure that all remnants of chemical weapons, terrible legacy of the Assad era, are declared, verified and ultimately destroyed. Addressing the remnants of chemical weapons and related risks is essential not only for Syria's recovery but also for regional and international security.

We acknowledge the progress on the ground thanks to Syria's determination and professionalism of the Secretariat personnel with dozens of sites visited, several interviews conducted and many samples collected.

Challenges such as lack of expertise and capacity gaps as well as the problems on the ground persist.

This is why it's urgent to support Syria so that they are able to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. We believe that a constructive and pragmatic approach will best serve our shared objective of tangible progress on the ground. Engagement should remain supportive, focused on practical outcomes and the gradual strengthening of institutional capacity.

Syria has our full support. We continue our technical work to support Syria in the elimination of chemical weapons.

We also welcome the (fifth) IIT report on the chemical attack in Kafr Zeita in 2016, concluding with reasonable grounds to believe that an Assad era Syrian Arab Air Force helicopter dropped a cylinder of chlorine gas which injured 35 people. We commend Syria's efforts in preparing this report which is the first it has cooperated with since 8 December 2024. Türkiye has long supported accountability efforts in Syria.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to achieving a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

Under the challenging circumstances, OPCW's technical work to ensure the peaceful use of chemical industry as well as chemical safety and security remains important.

We note the Director-General's report on the status of the OPCW's contribution to global anti-terrorism efforts and commend the Organisation's continued work in this area, including organizing training programmes aimed at preventing the misuse of chemicals.

We also express our appreciation to the Director-General and the OEWG-T for underscoring the need for Member States to enhance risk assessments, cooperation and response mechanisms in addressing the threat posed by the potential misuse of commercial and agricultural drones for chemical terrorism.

Mr. Chair,

Among others, we also welcome the Report of the Scientific Advisory Board's Temporary Working Group on Artificial Intelligence and take note of its recommendations. In particular, we recognise the importance of ongoing monitoring of developments in AI, strengthening the OPCW's technical expertise, and promoting the responsible application of AI in support of verification activities and chemical weapons non-proliferation.

Mr. Chair,

As I conclude, we would like to highlight the significance of the universality of the Convention. We call on those states who are not yet a Party to the Convention to join at the earliest convenience and without any preconditions.