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Rif Memory Association, Morocco
Presentation to 21st CWC Conference of States Parties (CSP)
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
The Hague, Netherlands
28 November – 2 December 2016

Mister Chairman, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, OPCW and CWC Coalition Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honour for me and a pleasure to be with you today and be able to speak on behalf of our Association for the first time in this distinguished conference. Thank you for this opportunity that has come true thanks to the support of Dr. Paul Walker. I must congratulate him for involving civil society in the activities of the CWC coalition.

Let me take this opportunity to reaffirm our adherence to the values of the CWC. We feel fully committed to the principles and aims of CWC, namely eliminating weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties.

Mister Chairman,

We believe that civil society can play a major role in achieving these aims as it is so close to citizens and can exert at the same time, pressure on states and authorities. It can also promote public awareness of the Chemical Weapons Convention and diffuse its teachings. The aims of our Association concerning the use of chemical weapons are identical. This will urge us to work for their achievement as part of civil society.

We commit ourselves to unveiling historical truth about chemical warfare and to making it available to researchers, collecting, diffusing and encouraging studies about the effects of chemical weapons on the inhabitants and the environment. We are intending to carry on with the work we have been doing, namely raising awareness about the dangers of chemical weapons and their effects on civilians and the environment, organizing seminars on this same topic, giving lectures and presentations in meetings and schools about chemical warfare, and publishing articles in newspapers and electronic media.

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Mister Chairman,

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According to the Convention, States Parties are committed to destroying any stockpiles of chemical weapons they may hold and any facilities which produced them, as well as any chemical weapons they abandoned on the territory of other States Parties in the past. We do believe that there are remains of mustard gas in the Rif's soil and water, dating from the Rif war from 1921 to 1927. The danger of this gas can last for decades as well as its effects. That is why we appeal to you all to work for eliminating this danger and compensating for damages caused to the inhabitants and the environment. Pressure can be exerted on States Parties to ensure full access to information and military archives, to guarantee the freedom of investigation of the effects of chemical warfare with the help of experts from all over the world, to carry out projects for the aim of detecting contaminated areas and destroying remains of chemical substances, and to conduct scientific studies on the long term effects of mustard gas and the possibility of mutation of cancerous germ cells through genes heredity.

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Thank you for your kind attention, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the external server and website.

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