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**ALBANIA, ANDORRA, AUSTRALIA, AUSTRIA, BAHRAIN, BELGIUM, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CANADA, COSTA RICA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GEORGIA, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND, IRELAND, ITALY, JAPAN, KUWAIT, LATVIA, LIECHTENSTEIN, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MALAYSIA, MALTA, MEXICO, MONACO, MOZAMBIQUE, NETHERLANDS, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, POLAND, PORTUGAL, QATAR, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, ROMANIA, SAN MARINO, SAUDI ARABIA, SENEGAL, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, THAILAND, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, TURKEY, UKRAINE, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND ZAMBIA**

**STATEMENT BY SIXTY-ONE CONCERNED STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION CONCERNING THE CONFIRMED USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

This statement is delivered by Canada on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Zambia.

The States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention subscribing to this Statement recall that the fundamental purpose of the Convention, as expressed in its preamble, is “to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons.”

We stress that in Ieper, Belgium on 21 April 2015, States Parties reaffirmed “their condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances”, expressed their “strong conviction that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable”, and underscored “their commitment to ensuring that non-State actors do not obtain chemical weapons or their means of delivery.”



We recall further that United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) established an OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups, or governments that were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors, or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in the Syrian Arab Republic, where the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) determines or has determined that a specific incident in the Syrian Arab Republic involved or likely involved the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical.

We express grave concern with the findings of the third and fourth reports of the JIM that: The Syrian Arab Armed Forces had been involved in the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in three cases in the Syrian Arab Republic: in Talmenes on 21 April 2014; in Qmenas on 16 March 2015; and in Sarmin on 16 March 2015; and that the so-called “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL) had been involved in the use of sulfur mustard in Marea, Syria, on 21 August 2015.

We demand that all parties identified by the JIM as having been involved in the use of toxic chemicals as weapons immediately cease any further use.

We express our deepest sympathy for the victims of chemical weapons attacks.

We continue to support the FFM’s investigation of all credible allegations of chemical weapons use, including additional allegations that have recently arisen, and call upon States Parties to provide the Director-General with any relevant information with respect to past or future allegations within the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic as reported by the JIM, in violation of the Convention, United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), and Executive Council decisions, and in contravention of well-established international standards and norms against such use, including international humanitarian law. We underscore the importance of the 11 November 2016 decision of the Executive Council, as well as the resolution on Chemical Weapons Convention implementation adopted 28 October 2016 by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, in safeguarding the integrity of the Convention in the face of elemental challenges to its object and purpose.

We express our strong conviction that every actor involved in these chemical weapons attacks must be held accountable.

We strongly support appropriate action by the United Nations Security Council to address the findings of the JIM in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015); to hold all those involved in these chemical weapons attacks accountable; and to deter further chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic. We also welcome the one-year renewal of the JIM’s mandate by the Security Council on 17 November 2016 to continue its work in investigating additional cases of confirmed use or likely use as determined by the FFM.

We emphasise that the involvement of the Syrian Arab Armed Forces in the use of toxic chemicals as weapons further underscores our grave concern regarding the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, as reported

by the Director-General, and we demand that the Syrian Arab Republic comply fully with its obligations under the Convention, EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013, EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

We express grave concern with the continued interest in the development, acquisition, and use of chemical weapons by non-State actors and the potential for this threat to increase over time, and underscore the essential role of the OPCW in preventing and responding to the threat posed by non-State actors to the object and purpose of the Convention.

We express our deepest appreciation to the leadership and staff of the JIM, as well as the Director-General and the staff of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, including the members of the FFM and the Declaration Assessment Team, for their dedication and professionalism.

We urge all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to subscribe to this Statement, and invite any additional delegation wishing to do so to contact the delegations of Australia, Canada, or the Netherlands before the adjournment of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

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