



The 22nd Conference of the State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention

The Hague, The Netherlands, 27 November to 1 December 2017

The Statement of Tehran Peace Museum

And the Society for Chemical Weapons Victims Support (SCWVS) from Iran

By: Elaheh Pooyandeh

Mr Chairperson

Director General

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to speak at this plenary session of the 22nd Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, on behalf of Tehran Peace Museum and the Society for Chemical Weapons Victims Support (SCWVS), from Iran.

Please allow me to begin by extending our appreciation to the Director General Ambassador Üzümcü.

Since beginning his term of office at OPCW in 2010, this organization has succeeded in achieving its goals to a great extent. In specific, I would like to appreciate Ambassador Üzümcü's efforts in supporting survivors of chemical warfare in difference aspects. We hope that such approach and success would continue during the future administration of the OPCW.

We also would like to thank the ongoing efforts of the Technical Secretariat of OPCW, as well as all State Parties in advancing the goals of the CWC during the last year.

Excellencies

Created by SCWVS, Tehran Peace Museum follows two important missions. First is to raise awareness about the devastating impacts of wars and violence, with a focus on the use of chemical weapons. And second is to promote a culture of peace and non-violence.

These goals are perused through many different methods, including the permanent exhibitions of our museum, various workshops and educational programs, our Art for Peace Gallery and our network of Iranian and non-Iranian partners. Our programs are designed for different target groups and we reach hundreds of ordinary people, youth, tourists and delegations each year.

What makes such programs unique is the active engagement of survivors of chemical warfare in Tehran Peace Museum as the volunteer guides. Despite suffering from long term consequences of exposure to chemical warfare, these survivors narrate our exhibitions and share their life stories with our visitors, only to emphasis why a world free of chemical weapons matters. Through years, these volunteer guides have inspired hundreds of individuals, especially young people and they continue to do so.

We believe that, as the most successful disarmament treaty, the CWC can be a solid role model for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. But there is something to be learnt from Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, too.

The survivors of atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Hibakushas) have been the face and the voice of advocacy for abolishment of nuclear weapons. We believe that there is even a greater potential for that regarding CWC and we encourage OPCW and States Parties to take that into their consideration.

We, at TPM are benefiting from this potential through our different projects including written oral history articles and documentaries. We hope that OPCW can expand its activities in this direction as well and hopefully assist us in our future projects including the registration of all Iranian victims of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson

Gladly, today the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in any forms by anyone is a very strong norm of the international community. Such norm requires all involved actors to work closely together in good faith.

CWC must become a completely universal treaty with no more delay.

In putting a stop to any future use of chemical weapons, all political considerations should be put aside and all members of the international community should join hands rather than confrontation.

We also believe that the ones who have used chemical weapons, especially in the recent conflicts should be held accountable for their actions and with no hesitation.

At the end, I would like to invite Mr. Ali Jalali Farahani, a survivor of chemical weapons, to join me and share his remarks with you.

“In the name of God

Ladies and Gentlemen

I was exposed to mustard gas in 1988, when I was 24 years old. Due to my extraordinary condition, immediately after, I was dispatched to Japan for treatment.

When I woke up 70 days later in a hospital in Tokyo, I realized that I haven't seen my first child's birth and I have missed many other great moments because of my injuries since then.

But when I choose to recall memories, I prefer to refer to the ones that make me feel hopeful for a better future, an era in which no more human would suffer from chemical weapons.

I recall the kindness of the Japanese medical staff who proved humanity cannot be overlooked. I recall my conversations with many young people about what chemical weapons are and why they should not be used.

Thinking about all the wonderful moments I have had at Tehran Peace Museum, raising awareness about chemical weapons, I feel I have made a change in the world and it fills me with pride.

So now, talking to you, the ones who are representing all nations, I wish you can also do the best in your power, so you would have the same feeling as me at the end of your work!

Thank you for your attention!”