



IRELAND

Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Ann Derwin,

Permanent Representative of Ireland to the OPCW

At the One Hundredth and Eight Session of the Executive Council

4 – 7 March 2025

Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished delegates,

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

I will add the following in my national capacity.

I would like to begin by thanking Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Andrés Teran Parral of Ecuador and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Council for their leadership in guiding the preparatory work for this session.

Chairperson,

For over a decade, the Syrian Arab Republic was called upon repeatedly to comply with its obligations under the Convention and to provide a full and accurate declaration of its chemical weapons programme to the OPCW. A decade of obfuscation, inconsistencies, and setbacks. In the face of all this, the OPCW's commitment to working towards the closure of Syria's chemical file never faltered. Now we know that this could never be realised under the Assad regime. The change in the political context on the ground has ignited hope for a better future for all Syrians, where they can live in peace and no longer be at risk of being subject to chemical weapons attacks.

We welcome the engagement of the Syrian transitional authorities with the OPCW to date. Although the situation continues to evolve, we underline the importance of the OPCW being granted unfettered access to declared and potentially undeclared sites, to ensure that all chemicals prohibited by the Convention are destroyed. In this context, it is of paramount importance that all relevant sites, chemical weapons stockpiles, and evidence is preserved, without any interference from state or non-state actors. We support New Zealand and Mexico's draft decision on rehiring, to ensure that the DG has the needed flexibility to retain relevant expertise for the very demanding work that lies ahead.

Chairperson,

Ireland reiterates its full support for the impartiality and professionalism of the Technical Secretariat and its various Syria missions, including the Declaration and Assessment Team, the Fact Finding Mission, and the Investigation and Identification Team. The skills and expertise of these various teams cannot be understated, as their work will be crucial in bringing facts to light regarding Syria's chemical weapons programme under the Assad regime. We call on all States Parties to firmly stand behind the Organisation and the TS at this critical juncture, and provide their unconditional support to all of the Syria missions.

Chairperson,

We are deeply concerned by the second report of a Technical Assistance Visit to Ukraine, which again confirmed the presence of riot control agents "CS" on the battlefield. This comes on top of multiple requests by States Parties and Executive Council members to receive a credible response from Russia regarding reports alleging their use of riot control agents in Ukraine. In the absence of a real answer, the TS has yet again confirmed that riot control agents are in fact being used in Ukraine. We commend the TS' arduous work, especially in light of the challenging security conditions on the ground, and commend Ukraine's steadfast and meticulous engagement in the process.

Ireland condemns in the strongest terms the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare and urge the Secretariat to make a timely attribution of this serious treaty violation.

Chairperson,

The significance of the OPCW's work has never been clearer in the face of increased threats to the use of chemical weapons around the world. It is vital that a close eye be maintained on conflict zones and that credible allegations be fully investigated no matter where they occur. We also once again welcome the

Director General's commitment to monitoring the situation in Gaza and to remaining vigilant of any developments in the Middle East regarding the use of chemical weapons.

Chairperson,

The question of AI impacts on the implementation of the CWC and the work of the OPCW continues to grow and so we also welcome the inclusion of emerging technologies as a fixed agenda item for all future sessions of the Executive Council. It is critical that we continue to work with urgency to identify practical recommendations and measures to meet new opportunities and challenges arising from technological advances. In that regard, we look forward to the outputs of the new Temporary Working Group on Artificial Intelligence.

Chairperson,

Incorporating a gender lens in the Technical Secretariat's work remains a priority for Ireland and we encourage gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the Organisation's work. We welcome the attention that has been paid to this issue and the commitment by the Director General to advance gender equality in the Organisation. It is imperative that women's participation and inclusion in our work and that of all people from underrepresented regions and backgrounds, remains high on the agenda.

Chairperson,

Ireland would like to express its full confidence in the work of the Technical Secretariat, and the effective leadership of the Director General Arias. As States Parties, it is our duty to support the TS in seeing the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and for it to be posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.