



**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
NORTHERN IRELAND AT THE OPCW 110TH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Tuesday 7 October

***Delivered by H.E. Christopher Rampling – UK Permanent Representative to the
OPCW***

Mr Chair,

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to His Excellency, Director-General Fernando Arias for his timely and substantive update to this Council, for his leadership and to the Deputy Director-General for all her work too. I also extend my thanks to you Mr Chair, for your steadfast leadership of this Council during a pivotal moment in this Organisation's history.

Mr Chair,

Our shared vision to rid the world of chemical weapons rests on our capacity and willingness to confront breaches of the Chemical Weapons Convention whenever and wherever they occur. Russia's growing and brazen violations in Ukraine continue to undermine the principles this Council was established to uphold. In July, Dutch and German intelligence services concluded that Russia is escalating its use of chemical weapons. Ukraine has now reported over 10,000 breaches of the Convention since the onset of the full-scale invasion in 2022 – which is a grim milestone that this Council must not ignore.

As His Excellency, the Director-General has highlighted three Secretariat reports have confirmed multiple violations across the Ukrainian frontline. Member States have urged the Secretariat to attribute these breaches under already existing mandates, and we strongly endorse Ukraine's request for OPCW assistance to identify perpetrators. The Secretariat should act swiftly. Attribution is essential for the

Council to fulfil its core mandate: to take measures to redress what is flagrant and destructive non-compliance.

We also remain deeply concerned by reports of chemical weapon use in Sudan. We welcome ongoing discussions between the United States and the Republic of Sudan and encourage Sudan to investigate allegations thoroughly.

Mr Chair,

While the global risk of chemical weapon use continues to grow, the Syrian Arab Republic and Secretariat are intensifying efforts to rid the country and the region of Assad's terrible chemical weapons legacy. This is despite the extraordinary challenges Syria faces as it transitions towards a stable and democratic future. The UK is grateful for the substantive update from the Director-General today and all this work.

The Secretariat has deployed to Syria on five separate occasions since last December, visiting both declared and undeclared sites. This work must continue to accelerate. The recent discovery of evidence of highly toxic nerve agent at a previously undeclared chemical weapons site is alarming and underscores the urgency of this mission. States Parties must help Syria and the Secretariat intensify procedural and operational planning, coordination and delivery to eradicate chemical weapon risks without delay. We agree with the Director-General that further financial and in-kind support is critical. In light of this, the UK has committed £2.8m since December last year.

This Council also has a central role to play. We thank Syria and Qatar for giving the Council the opportunity over several weeks to review and refine the critical Decision on Expedited Destruction. This must pass by consensus this week.

The dedicated pursuit of accountability for all perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks must continue. The Syrian people, after all they have been through, deserve justice. We look forward to receiving the Secretariat report relating to the attack in Kafr Zita and the outcomes of other ongoing investigations.

Mr Chair,

The threat of chemical weapon development and use has never been higher. Strong leadership of a diverse and expert workforce, committed to gender equality, with adequate financial resources to meet the challenges of today and the future are essential for international security. The UK is therefore advocating for a strong budget that places tackling non-compliance at its heart. The UK also has full confidence in the current process to identify the next Director General. We must work constructively towards consensus for the strongest candidate.

Thank you.