



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Eighty-Third Session  
11 – 14 October 2016

EC-83/NAT.8  
11 October 2016  
ENGLISH only

**GERMANY**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTOPH ISRANG  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO  
THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Thank you for giving me the floor. Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the delegation of Slovakia.

Please also allow me to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report earlier this morning. His outstanding work is crucial to the success of this Organisation. I would also like to commend the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their excellent work - often performed in difficult circumstances.

This Organisation is about ending the threat posed by chemical weapons. This is the main purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention to which all members subscribe. In the almost 20 years of its existence, the OPCW, which means we, the OPCW family, have achieved a lot. Declared stockpiles of chemical weapons have been reduced significantly. Most recently, we worked hand in hand to find a way to destroy the chemical weapons precursors that had remained in Libya. Every drop of destroyed chemical weapon agent is a success, as it reduces the threat that chemical weapons are used.

However, sadly, there are continuous reports from the Syrian Arab Republic about the use of chemical weapons. As we all know, the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission has confirmed several times already that chlorine gas has been used in the Syrian Arab Republic. Now, the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has concluded that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces are responsible for the use of chemical weapons in two cases in the Syrian Arab Republic and also concluded that the so-called ISIL has used chemical weapons once.

While it is no surprise to us that a barbaric group of merciless people such as the so-called ISIL does not recognise any limits regarding the weaponry it uses, it is shocking that a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, a State Party represented in this Organisation, has used chemical weapons and therefore violated the Chemical Weapons Convention. Germany also remains concerned over the growing number of gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration to the OPCW. All of them have to be resolved.



The JIM's findings put this Organisation at a crossroads. In fact, the JIM's findings exert a lot of pressure on this Council. The Chemical Weapons Convention's most fundamental rule, the rule not to use chemical weapons, has been violated. This simply cannot go unanswered. It goes far beyond the Syria file.

This is why Germany supports the draft decision proposed by the delegation of the United States of America. To condemn use, to strengthen verification and to suspend certain privileges for a certain time is the very least we have to do to show the world that we do not accept a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We have all acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to achieve one main goal: to rid the world of chemical weapons and to make sure that these barbaric weapons cannot be used anymore, anywhere. It is up to us to live up to that goal. The Chemical Weapons Convention can only be as strong as its States Parties.

If we are talking about the use of chemical weapons, no delegation in this room should remain neutral or look for a "balanced approach". We have to stand up and take sides, the side against chemical weapons. What else has to happen before we take action?

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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