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**TURKEY**

**STATEMENT BY MR KURTULUŞ AYKAN  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE OPCW AT THE  
EIGHTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his extensive update today, which, as usual, gives an invaluable overview and excellent guidance for the work of the Organisation.

I also wish to express our deep appreciation to the OPCW staff for their commitment and dedication to the work of the Organisation and their relentless efforts regarding the ongoing operations of the OPCW especially in Syria.

As the Executive Council is well aware, the use of toxic chemicals and chemical weapons by the Syrian regime in Syria remains undiminished even after the attribution of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in defiance to the existing international rules, norms and obligations, first and foremost to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

With the recent third report of the JIM, it has been definitely confirmed that the Syrian regime has not fulfilled its obligations and continued to use chemical weapons in the period following its use of sarin gas against the Syrian people in Ghouta, Damascus in 2013.

Shamefully, for first time in its history a State Party, which is not an ordinary member of the OPCW, has officially been attributed responsible of using chemical weapons against its own people.

The use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and besides, constitutes a war crime. The regime must be held accountable immediately in line with the findings of the JIM report.

JIM's findings clearly indicate that Turkey has been justified by its previous warnings.

Lack of action and further delays against the consistent non-compliance of the Syrian regime cannot be tolerated anymore. Unfortunately, inertia of the international community in this sense has strengthened the culture of impunity in Syria.



The regime should not be let to feel itself eluded from sanctions one more time. The lack of necessary sanctions, even after JIM's report, will encourage the regime and its accomplices for further use of chemical weapons in defiance of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Furthermore, considering the fact that the regime has heedlessly continued to use chemical weapons up to now, Turkey expects necessary steps be taken regarding the Syrian regime, which is a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, in order to hold the regime accountable by the necessary sanctions called for by this crime.

I reiterate that the Chemical Weapons Convention clearly stipulates that "individuals, entities, groups or governments involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical" must be held accountable.

The three cases which JIM recommended to investigate further should be conducted immediately.

These three cases, in which the regime is seen to be responsible, are Kafr-Zita 18 April 2014, Kumeneş 16 March 2015 and Binniş 24 March 2015.

In addition to this, as a responsible member of the international community, Turkey invites the OPCW, which is responsible for supervising the implementation of the Convention, to continue monitoring and reporting the gaps and discrepancies in the regime's declaration pertaining to its chemical weapons programme.

So far, unfortunately, any measures taken by the international community in order to prevent use of chemical weapons in Syria have not resulted positively. The regime has continued to use primarily chlorine gas and other types of chemical weapons by blatantly violating United Nations Security Council resolutions of 2118 (2013), 2209 (2015), and 2235 (2015).

The engagement which was realised by the Director-General in accordance with the decision adopted at the Eighty-First Session of the Executive Council, has added new doubts, discrepancies and new issues to the ongoing declaration question of the regime instead of removing them.

The picture has been graver after the failure of adopting a decision on the regime's declaration issue during the Eighty-Second Session of the Executive Council.

Turkey expects that the Fact-Finding Mission to investigate the repeated chlorine gas attacks of regime in Aleppo and Idlib.

The use of chemical weapons by Da'esh and its vicious terrorist acts have also been confirmed by the JIM, in its third report. Our efforts to counter Da'esh will continue with resolve.

Turkey strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons as well as toxic chemicals as a weapon in Syria or anywhere by anyone, be it a State Party, non-State actor or terrorist organisation.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, whether a State or non-State actor is a serious crime against humanity and whose perpetrators must be held accountable immediately.

Turkey welcomes the completion of the removal of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons from Libya. We would like to express our appreciation to the OPCW, the Libyan Government and several States Parties for planning the safe destruction of those chemicals.

We are pleased to note that the Budget and Programme 2017 will be considered at this session and referred to at the Twenty-First Conference of the States Parties for its approval.

We share the determination of the States Parties in furthering the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We believe that while maintaining the security and disarmament priorities of the Organisation, carrying out concrete deterrence measures against the re-emergence of chemical weapons and holding the perpetrators of them accountable will be crucial for the future credibility of the OPCW.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Council and be posted on the external server and the website.

Thank you.

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