



Eighty-Fourth Session
7 – 9 March 2017

EC-84/NAT.24
7 March 2017
ENGLISH only

TURKEY

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MR A. ALPER YÜKSEL
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

I also wish to offer our condolences to the Dutch delegation on the passing away of Ambassador Jan-Lucas van Hoorn.

At the outset, I would like to thank Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his extensive update today, which was a comprehensive 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. We appreciate their relentless efforts regarding the ongoing operations of the OPCW especially in Syria.

As the Executive Council is well aware, the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) with its third and fourth reports attributed responsibility to the regime for using chemical weapons on several occasions.

However, the use of toxic chemicals and chemical weapons by the Syrian regime in Syria remains undiminished. This systematic violation of the regime continues in defiance to the existing international rules, norms and obligations, first and foremost to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Shamefully, first time in its history a State Party, which became a member of the OPCW after using sarin gas against its own people in Ghouta in 2013, has officially been attributed responsible for using chemical weapons against innocent civilians.

We wish to underscore that the use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and besides, it constitutes a war crime. The regime must be held accountable in line with the findings of the JIM report, without delay.

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

Unfortunately, inaction of the international community in this sense, has strengthened the culture of impunity in Syria.



The international community must now realise that the lack of necessary sanctions, even after JIM's report, will encourage the regime for further use of chemical weapons in defiance of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We appreciate that the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) provided the States Parties with a recent report outlining its work since June last year. Clearly, the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the regime's declaration point out to the fact that the mission of total elimination of chemical weapons in Syria is far from over.

The DAT's efforts are of critical importance because of the fact that the regime and the terrorist organisations which may have access to the regime's facilities should never have the capability to use or produce chemical weapons neither today nor in the future.

Therefore, once again, 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.

Unfortunately, so far any measure taken by the international community in order to prevent use of chemical weapons in Syria has not resulted positively.

The regime has continued to use primarily chlorine gas and other types of chemical weapons by blatantly violating the United Nations Security Council resolutions of 2118 (2013), 2209 (2015) and 2235 (2015).

The regime insisted on not understanding the Director-General's engagement in accordance with the Eighty-First Session of the Executive Council decision and it has added new doubts, discrepancies and new issues to the ongoing declaration question, instead of removing them.

The picture has been graver after the failure of cooperation by the regime, even after the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council decision which stipulates intense inspection activities by the Technical Secretariat in the undeclared chemical weapons facilities of the regime.

Turkey expects that the Fact-Finding Mission to investigate the repeated chlorine gas attacks of regime in several Syrian cities including 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. Let me add that Turkey will continue to counter Da'esh and other terrorist organisations with resolve and success.

Turkey strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons as well as toxic chemicals by anyone, be it a State Party or a non-State actor and a 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.

Turning to Libya, Turkey welcomes the completion of the removal of remaining Category 2 chemical weapons from Libya.

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

Turkey endorses the activities of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors and we expect that States Parties and the Technical Secretariat act together to facilitate producing useful relevant and practical recommendations.

On a final note, 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 in the future is necessary.

To this end, holding the perpetrators of this crime accountable is crucial for the future credibility of the OPCW which is one of the most successful multilateral organisations in this field under the able leadership of the Director-General, Ambassador Üzümcü.

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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