

**SWEDEN****STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN AT THE
EIGHTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(G)**

Thank you Mr Chairman,

The distinguished ambassador of Australia underlined in his opening statement yesterday that we must never let violations of international law in Syria become simply an order of business which this Council can live with. Clearly, that is particularly true for the use of nerve gas, which typically results in large numbers of casualties. We would note once more that all Syrian nerve agents were supposed to have been shipped out of Syria in 2014, according to the Syrian chemical weapons declarations.

Upon publication of the latest Fact-Finding Mission report, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström issued a statement in which she said, and I quote,

“I condemn in the strongest terms the use of nerve gas in Khan Sheikhoun on 4 April... This is the first confirmed case since the atrocious attack in Al-Ghouta in August 2013 where nerve gas has been used in the armed conflict in Syria, and once more the lives of numerous civilian victims have been claimed.”

“I welcome the thorough and professional work of the OPCW and look forward to the investigation and identification of those responsible, which will now be carried out by the Joint Investigative Mechanism. The use of chemical weapons in Syria is unacceptable, and violates international law. Those responsible must be brought to justice. Impunity is not an option”.

Sweden welcomes the fact that the UN Security Council resolution stood united around similar points, as delivered to the press by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations following last Thursday’s meeting in the UN Security Council on the Syria chemical weapons issue.

As States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we have a responsibility to condemn in no uncertain terms all retention, production, transfer and use of chemical weapons; we have a responsibility to promote multilateral solutions to global problems involving chemical weapons and not to sow doubts as to the professionalism of the OPCW secretariat; and we have a responsibility always to stand unequivocally on the side of innocent victims of chemical weapons, whether in Iraq, Syria or elsewhere.



This is why Sweden, like all the Nordic countries, has chosen to support the declaration on this agenda item just referred to by France on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries. This is also why Sweden, like all the Nordic countries, has provided vital political, financial and technical support not only to the Fact-Finding Missions, but to all UN and OPCW missions involved in the Syria chemical file, and will continue to do so for as long as it takes until we finally see an end to the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

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