



OPCW

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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR A. V. SHULGIN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(G)**

Mr Chairperson,

Literally just a few days ago, the Director-General informed States Parties of the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria regarding the incident that allegedly took place in the Syrian village of Ltamenah on 30 March 2017. This information is already being discussed outside of our Organisation. Meanwhile we—members of the OPCW—know practically nothing about what happened in Ltamenah. In this regard, our delegation has a number of questions, addressed first and foremost to the FFM's leaders. We want to make it clear that we are not asking for detailed information, but at the very least, the members of the Executive Council have the right to know about the key moments related to this incident.

1. Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention stipulates that States Parties are to conduct a national investigation into an alleged use of chemical weapons within their territories, while Article X sets out a State's right to request the OPCW Technical Secretariat to assist with said investigations. Was any such request submitted by Damascus? If not, then based on what information did the FFM begin its investigation into this chemical incident?
2. Did the FFM request any information about this incident from the Government of Syria?
3. Did the FFM visit the site of the incident? If not, then by whom and when were the samples and other evidence submitted? How and where were these collected? Is the FFM fully confident that the samples were collected directly from the specified village? In light of the fact that the information on this matter has come in over six months after the alleged use of toxic agent, is it not then logical to ask how these items were safeguarded and by whom?
4. Does the FFM plan to visit Ltamenah in the near future to conduct an independent collection of samples and to verify all of the circumstances on-site?

Do not take these as idle questions. Today, I am merely voicing the questions that the FFM experts posed to Russian military servicemen when an investigation into the known incident



involving chemical weapons (the use of sulfur mustard gas in the village of Um-Housh) was under way last year.

I would like to hope that we will receive explanations from the FFM experts that are as equally detailed as those provided by our servicemen on said episode.

We would be grateful for answers to these questions now, during this session—or the organisation of a special briefing on the matter.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighty-Sixth Session of the Executive Council and published on the Organisation's website.

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