



FINLAND

**STATEMENT BY MR MIKAEL LANGSTROM COUNSELLOR
AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND
AT THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union.

The following remarks will be in my national capacity.

Finland has consistently condemned the use of chemical weapons and urged that those responsible must be held accountable, and we will continue to do so as long as these heinous weapons are used.

The use of chemical weapons is explicitly prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention. We need to remain clear that the use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone, anytime, anywhere and under any circumstances is clearly contrary to international law and may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. Those responsible for such horrific acts must be held to account.

Only relating to the first months of 2018 there are several allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In light of these most recent allegations and many similar reports over the past five years, there is a clear pattern of continuous use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We find this extremely worrisome. We fully support the professional and impartial work of the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission to study all available information relating to all the alleged instances of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The facts must be clarified and the truth unveiled.

The expiration of the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission (JIM) on 17 November 2017 has damaged efforts to bring about accountability for the use of chemical weapons. This is a grave concern to Finland. The United Nations Security Council must agree on how the essential work carried out by JIM could be taken over by a new mechanism established by the Security Council.

There is also an urgent need for the Security Council to respond to the JIM's findings. The Permanent Member States of the Security Council have a particular responsibility for bringing the perpetrators to justice. In this respect, we call on the United Nations Security Council to urgently ensure accountability for these crimes.



Finland expresses its deep concern regarding the reported use of a nerve agent in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Finland supports the United Kingdom and the OPCW in the endeavours to completely establish what has happened. It is important that the facts are clarified and those responsible are held to account.

Finland welcomes the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons established in Paris on 23 January 2018. The Partnership is an important complement to relevant multilateral processes and mechanisms.

To conclude I want to express Finland's appreciation for the work of the International Impartial Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic (IIIM), supported by Finland with EUR 1 million in 2017-2018. The work of the IIIM is highly relevant for bringing those responsible for the use of chemical weapons to justice.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

--- 0 ---