



OPCW

Executive Council

Fortieth Meeting
28 March and 11 April 2014

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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR GEOFFREY ADAMS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE OPCW AT THE
FORTIETH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland aligns itself with the statement given by the distinguished Ambassador of Greece on behalf of the European Union. We welcome also the statements of all those who have highlighted their concern about the continuing delays to the process of the removal of chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic.

I begin by thanking the Director-General for his update today.

The operation to remove the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical stockpile has in recent weeks fallen further behind schedule. Although the shipment of materials to port has again been resumed, there is no reason to celebrate—over 40% of the chemical stockpile remains in the Syrian Arab Republic. We look to the Syrian authorities to expedite the removal of their stockpile, to eliminate the threat that these weapons pose to the Syrian people.

I should like to thank the Director-General for his continued commitment to this task. Together with the whole OPCW staff, along with representatives of the United Nations and the staff of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, you have made great steps toward ensuring the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Your work is being taken forward in the most difficult of circumstances and the United Kingdom remains fully supportive of your efforts.

We would like to recall the statement made by the President of the United Nations Security Council on 6 February and the statements of the Secretary-General and the Coordinator of the Joint Mission, all of which make clear that the Syrian Arab Republic has sufficient material and equipment necessary to carry out multiple ground movements to ensure the expeditious removal of chemical weapons material. The United Kingdom notes that two consignments of material have been moved in recent days. We like others, however, are gravely concerned that the Syrian Arab Republic, having failed to meet both the target for the removal of Priority 1 material which passed on 31 December last year and then the target for the removal of the remaining material on 5 February, seems likely also to miss the revised date of 13 April, which is just two days from now. There is therefore a very real risk that the 30 June deadline for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons will not be met. Given the relative



lack of progress, it should be clear to all that if this deadline is missed, responsibility will lie squarely with the Syrian authorities. The international community has taken all practical steps, incurred substantial costs and invested significant time and effort to help expedite the completion of this task. We now look to the Syrian Arab Republic to deliver.

The United Kingdom notes with concern a number of reports which allege that chemical weapons have again been used in the Syrian conflict. These allegations have not been independently investigated. Nevertheless, the international community will not have full confidence that the Syrian Arab Republic is complying with its Chemical Weapons Convention's obligations and is not responsible for such attacks while questions surrounding the Syrian declaration remain unresolved. These questions must be fully addressed, and the Syrian programme must be verifiably and completely destroyed for chemical weapons to be eliminated as a threat to the Syrian Arab Republic's people.

To conclude, may I reiterate the United Kingdom's gratitude for the continuing excellent work of the OPCW and the Joint Mission, and pay tribute to all those States Parties that have provided resources toward this effort, either in-kind or in cash. Our collective intent is to make the world a safer place. We have together done our part. The Syrian Arab Republic must fulfil its commitments. When this Council meeting resumes, we hope and expect to hear that the operation to remove the declared Syrian stockpile is complete, and that the operation to eliminate the chemicals is underway. In addition, we expect to hear that significant progress has been made to ensure the destruction of the former chemical weapons production facilities.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Executive Council meeting.

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