



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Fortieth Meeting  
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**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY-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,

We welcome the update today by the Director-General on the progress of removing Syria's chemical weapons, as well as his most recent progress report.

But we can only be gravely concerned by the fact that, two days after the date Syria set itself to remove its chemical weapon stockpile from its territory, chemical weapons material remains. This is yet a further failure as Syria had already failed to meet both the original target for the removal of Priority 1 material which passed on 31 December last year, and also the target for the removal of the remaining material on 5 February. We consider that there is now a very real risk that the 30 June deadline for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons will not be met.

If this deadline is missed, responsibility will lie squarely with the Syrian authorities. While the security of these removal operations is a concern, security cannot be allowed to become an excuse for inaction.

The fact that Syria has shipped over 90% of the chemicals is not material when both the Danish and Norwegian cargo ships sit in the Mediterranean both waiting for their final deliveries. Destruction of the stockpile can only begin when the loading of each vessel has finished and the necessary transportation has happened. 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. But Syria has yet to complete its part of the job. Our patience is wearing thin.

We look to Syria to deliver without further delay.

I should like to reiterate our thanks to the Director-General for his continued commitment to this task, despite these setbacks. 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.



The United Kingdom has said before that we are concerned about a number of recent reports which allege that chemical weapons, specifically chlorine, have again been used in the Syrian conflict. These allegations have not been independently investigated, and we think it essential that they are. In this context, we welcome the information in the Director-General's progress report and his update this morning that a fact-finding mission will be initiated this week. We believe that the Director-General has the requisite mandate to make such an undertaking and welcome his initiative in this regard.

Likewise, we agree with the Director-General on the importance of the ongoing consultations between the OPCW and Syrian authorities, relating to the accuracy and completeness of their declaration, which are an essential further step to ensure that there is full Syrian compliance with its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations.

Also on the agenda of this Council Meeting is the issue of Syria's production facilities and the combined plans for the destruction and verification of these facilities. It is high time that this issue is also resolved. Syria's failure so far to destroy these facilities represents a further deadline missed. We urge Syria to come to the table prepared to see these facilities physically destroyed, in line with the Convention.

All these issues must be fully addressed, and the Syrian programme must be verifiably and completely destroyed, in order to eliminate the threat that Syria's chemical weapons pose, especially to Syria's own people. The international community cannot have full confidence that Syria is complying with its Convention obligations, while substantial questions surrounding the Syrian declaration remain unresolved and credible allegations continue to be made that Syria's use of these weapons is continuing. The Executive Council, the United Nations Security Council and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission must each maintain their proactive and vital input and work together collaboratively until this final goal is achieved. Continued effective cooperation will be essential to the successful completion of this task.

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

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