



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Forty-Second Meeting  
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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. MIKULAK  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE  
OPCW AT THE FORTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

Last September, nearly nine months ago, the United States of America and the Russian Federation achieved a diplomatic breakthrough founded on their joint determination to ensure that Syria's chemical weapons would no longer threaten anyone. Within days, this breakthrough was anchored in historic decisions by this Council and the United Nations Security Council for the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme in the soonest and safest manner. In recognition of the extraordinary circumstances, this Council set a firm target: the complete elimination of all of Syria's chemical weapons material and equipment in the first half of 2014 under stringent verification measures. Now the end of this period is mere days away and this Council is obliged to make a factual conclusion: that Syria has not met its obligation to remove the remaining 8 percent of chemical weapons materials, and has deliberately frustrated the Council's efforts to complete destruction by 30 June. In fact, this Council has seen a parade of timelines that Syria has missed since this effort began. Syria even missed the timeline it proposed for removal of all declared chemicals by 27 April.

The Executive Council will convene its Seventy-Sixth Session shortly after 30 June. At that session, the Council needs to review objectively the implementation and fulfillment by Syria of its obligations under the 27 September 2013, decision, subsequent decision, and the Chemical Weapons Convention, taking into account what has been accomplished and what has not. And then the Council will need to decide how to deal with the factual situation, to ensure that Syria complies with its obligations. The Council will need to evaluate performance, not rely on promises or speculate on motives.

Mr Chairman,

Over the last nine months, the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention have mounted an extraordinary international effort to assist Syria in meeting its obligations. States Parties have made very substantial contributions to the OPCW and United Nations' voluntary funds and committed ships, port facilities, and equipment at considerable expense. They have demonstrated not only extraordinary commitment in taking on a financial obligation that rightfully should be borne by Syria, but also extraordinary patience as Syria has ignored one target date after another over the last six months, including dates that it set itself. Meanwhile,



the international team has been poised and ready, waiting to carry out its mission of assisting Syria with destroying its chemical weapons.

In past meetings, many delegations, including my own, have stressed their concern that Syria was dragging its feet on removing chemicals from its territory and on physically destroying its chemical weapons production facilities. Concerns about lack of Syrian performance have grown since the last meeting of the Council on 22 May 2014. We are now three weeks closer to the deadline for the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons program, and no further chemicals have been transported to Latakia. We certainly hope this will take place before 30 June. Concerning the destruction of the remaining twelve declared production facilities: the fact remains that actual destruction of the facilities has not started – and won't be finished for months – even though it was supposed to be completed in March. For weeks Syria refused to negotiate while simultaneously using the absence of a Council decision as an excuse for doing nothing. We are interested on the paper on the results of the 19 May and 20 discussions, which was presented yesterday, a month after the discussions took place. We look forward to reviewing these results. Syria has squandered many months now that could have been used to fulfill its obligations. This inaction is inexcusable, and raises serious concerns about Syria's readiness to meet its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations in full.

Furthermore, questions and concerns about Syria's declaration continue to exist. Any gaps and inconsistencies which create doubts about its accuracy and completeness must be addressed. Under the exceptional circumstances in which Syria joined the Convention, Syria's declaration must be fully corroborated and carefully scrutinised by the Technical Secretariat and States Parties. Syria has the burden of building international confidence that it has declared its entire chemical weapons programme and in July the Council will need to assess whether or not such confidence exists and what to do if it does not.

It was certainly the expectation of the United States and other members of the Council that the elimination of Syria's entire chemical weapons programme would be completed by 30 June 2014. Regrettably, a substantial amount of work remains; Syria has deliberately frustrated the Council's efforts to complete destruction by 30 June. The Council will need to acknowledge that Syria has not met its obligations to remove these dangerous materials so that they can be destroyed.

Unexpectedly, at this meeting the Council must consider the summary report of the Technical Secretariat fact-finding team, which was distributed yesterday. We have all been concerned of the many allegations of chemical weapons use, reportedly involving chlorine, coming out of Syria in recent weeks. We have supported the work of the Fact-Finding Mission established by the Director-General. The report of the Fact-Finding Mission deems these allegations to be very credible and that they "cannot be dismissed as unconnected, random, or of a nature attributable to purely political motives." The report further finds that the evidence supports the conclusion that "toxic chemicals, most likely pulmonary irritating agents such as chlorine, have been used in a systematic manner in a number of attacks." In recent weeks, the United States of America and others have expressed concern that the Syrian Government was behind these chemical weapons attacks. The findings of the Fact-Finding Mission seriously heighten these concerns. The systematic nature of the attacks, the intended targets and other publicly available information all point to one likely perpetrator—the Syrian Government. Who else would benefit? Who else could carry out such systematic attacks?

The Council has repeatedly condemned use of chemical weapons by anyone and we will need to do it again. But the Council will also need to consider whether that is truly enough under these circumstances. Since the report appeared only yesterday, and given the implications regarding Syrian compliance with the Convention, we all need to read the report and consult our capitals for instructions. Its findings - and the very serious issues that it raises - cannot wait for the next regular session of the Council in July. For that reason, I am requesting that this meeting of the Council be suspended at the end of the day today and then reconvened later this week to deal with this issue.

The eyes of the world have been upon the OPCW and this Council since last September, and will remain on us until we have truly finished what we started and Syria has met its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations. The Council must consider how best to advance its original mandate on this subject – the complete elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this meeting of the Council and that it be posted on the OPCW's public website and external server. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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