

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



STATEMENT BY

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Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
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Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by welcoming the initiative by you and the Director-General to convene this meeting. This Executive Council must remain seized with the Syria file until the international community has confidence that Syria has met its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, Executive Council decisions and UN Security Council Resolution 2118. This Special Meeting is not only appropriate but indeed very necessary to allow the Council to fulfill its mandate. It also gives member States the opportunity to express their support for the efforts of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Although the declared chemicals have been removed from Syria and most have already been destroyed, the fact remains that three important aspects of the efforts to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons program remain to be satisfactorily resolved. First and most problematic is that Syria has continued to use chemical weapons after joining the Convention. This is the sad and inescapable conclusion that fifty-two States Parties to the Convention have reached, based on the key findings and conclusions of the Fact Finding Mission. As long as credible allegations of chemical attacks by Syrian government forces continue to arise, the Council must take steps to ensure that they are fully investigated and that Syria comes into compliance with the Convention.

We must continue to support the OPCW Fact Finding Mission. The members of the Mission deserve our recognition and gratitude for their courage under fire and for their professional work in documenting the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in three villages in northern Syria. We look forward to receiving their third report before the end of November on the April and May 2014 attacks on three villages. The Council should promptly consider that report and take appropriate action. Furthermore, the allegations of use in August 2014 bear a strong resemblance to the previous attacks and need to be investigated in an equally systematic way. Thus, the work of the Fact Finding Mission must continue beyond the issuance of this third report. We also call on others to abandon efforts to cast false shadows on the veracity of the Fact Finding Mission's work.

Let me repeat my country's position that we condemn any use of chemical weapons by anyone, under any circumstance. We support the investigation of any credible allegations of CW use by any party. But that should not distract international attention away from the Syrian regime's confirmed use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in April and May. Syria must uphold its responsibilities under the Convention, EC decisions and UNSCR 2118.

A second issue of serious concern is the lack of confidence in the completeness and correctness of the Syrian declaration. The concerns on which the Council has been briefed by the Technical Secretariat must be fully resolved. Frankly, these concerns cannot be

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adequately addressed without documentation to substantiate the information provided by Syria. My delegation looks forward to an update from the Declaration Assessment Team on the status of its consultations with Syria.

Finally, elimination of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities is also a key element in building confidence that the Syrian chemical weapons program has been completely eliminated. My delegation finds it disappointing that the destruction of the twelve chemical weapons production facilities originally declared by Syria is likely to fall significantly behind schedule. Work required to start destruction should have begun by now.

While there may be reasons that explain delays in the signing of contracts, it is hard to understand why Syria has not started the basic preparatory work it can do on its own. This situation underscores the continuing need for the Council to remain vigilant and exert pressure on Syria to achieve tangible results. The generous contribution of donors to the destruction of the twelve CWPFs is commendable. These are costs for which Syria is responsible under the Convention. Syria should not take such assistance for granted, nor believe that the patience of this Council or the international community is without limits.

In addition to the twelve well-known facilities, Syria has two others that also must be destroyed. Syria has presented a destruction plan for its former ricin production facility, which is located in contested territory. Unfortunately, this facility has never been inspected by the Technical Secretariat. We believe it is very important for the Technical Secretariat to inspect the facility, as required by the Convention, to verify the Syrian declaration and the status of declared equipment before the destruction plan is implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me stress that it is the responsibility of the international community, the Executive Council and the Technical Secretariat to hold Syria accountable for fulfilling its obligations under the Convention, the decisions of this Council, and UN Security Council resolution 2118. This requires this Council to continue to convene special meetings regularly, to exercise vigilance over Syria's fulfillment of these obligations and to support the work of the Technical Secretariat. My delegation stands ready to work with all other delegations to ensure that Syria fulfills completely its obligations. No other outcome is acceptable to the United States. No other outcome should be acceptable to this Council or the broader international community.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I ask that this statement be issued as an official document of the Council and be posted in the OPCW external server and its public website.