



OPCW

Executive Council

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7 May 2015

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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR CHRISTOPH ISRANG
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE OPCW AT THE
FORTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Mr Chairman, your leadership in guiding our work during the sessions of this Council in the past 12 months has been commendable. As this is the last Executive Council meeting over which you will be presiding, I would like to thank you for your able chairmanship of all our proceedings, your patience and your professionalism.

Let me seize this opportunity to thank the Technical Secretariat as well as Belgium for the excellent preparation and organisation of the dignified commemoration ceremonies in Ypres on the 21 and 22 of April. Germany is well aware of its historic responsibility. In this context, I would like to inform this Council about the international conference “100 Years of Chemical Warfare Research, Deployment, Consequences” which was recently organised by the Max Planck Society in Berlin. The symposium examined key aspects of chemical warfare from the first research on and deployment of chemical weapons in World War I to the development and use of chemical warfare during the century hence.¹

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by Ambassador Māris Klišāns, Permanent Representative of Latvia. We welcome the update given by the Director-General.

Germany, among others, has called for this special meeting given the ongoing reports on the continued use of chlorine as a weapon in the Idlib province in northern Syria. The facts are compelling and deeply disturbing: the use of chlorine as a weapon seems to be continuing even after the decision of this Council at its Forty-Eighth Executive Council Meeting, after the adoption of resolution 2209 (2015) by the United Nations Security Council and its Chapter VII provisions condemning in the strongest possible terms any use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Syria. Yet, reports about the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon by the Assad regime continue to come in. We reiterate our condemnation of the use of chlorine gas as a chemical weapon by the Assad regime – as the Council of the EU Foreign Ministers did in its conclusions on 16 March. This constitutes a blatant violation of

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For further information see <http://www.100-jahre-giftgaskrieg.de>



international law and may even amount to a war crime. Without any doubt, it is a shameful crime against humanity. This also constitutes an unacceptable defiance of this Organisation, the decisions of this Council and of the United Nations Security Council.

In this light, we fully support the decision by the Director-General to continue the work of the Fact-Finding Mission. Germany firmly believes that all credible allegations of chemical weapons use must be investigated. We expect a first report on the findings of this Fact-Finding Mission at our next regular meeting.

The fact that Syrian authorities have so far not allowed an OPCW fact-finding team to come to Syria and to investigate its own allegations regarding the possible use of chlorine as a weapon by non-State actors is not acceptable. We call on Syria to cooperate fully and to support the FFM – or to withdraw the allegations.

We have carefully studied the fourth status report of the Declaration Assessment Team. We thank all members of the DAT for their professionalism, courage and commitment to their mission. The conclusions we draw from this and the three previous reports confirm our deepest concerns: the list of open questions, discrepancies and even growing contradictions has become longer and longer with each new report. Let me state clearly: these issues are of utmost importance to us. Without a credible assurance that the Syrian chemical weapons programme has been completely and irreversibly destroyed, without sufficient confidence that Syria is in full compliance with its obligations under the Convention, the Executive Council's decisions and United Nations Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015), we will not be able to close this file. We have already addressed the details of our serious concerns in the closed session of this special meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank the Director-General for informing this Council that on Thursday of last week, 30 April 2015, GEKA in Munster, Germany completed the destruction of all remaining Syrian HD Hydrolysis Effluents and related solid waste materials.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Council meeting and be posted to the OPCW website.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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