



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Fiftieth Meeting  
23 November 2015

EC-M-50/NAT.4  
23 November 2015  
ENGLISH only

**NEW ZEALAND**

**STATEMENT BY H. E. AMBASSADOR JANET LOWE  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FIFTIETH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Mr Chairperson,

I will be brief.

We gather today to discuss the contents of the three Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) reports published by the Technical Secretariat on 29 October.

New Zealand wishes to thank the Director-General and Technical Secretariat staff for their highly professional work in difficult circumstances. The reports which they have produced must be commended for their depth and quality.

New Zealand read the FFM reports with close interest, and is deeply concerned with the findings.

Regarding the incidents in Marea in August 2015, the FFM concluded “with the utmost confidence that at least two people were exposed to sulfur mustard”, and additionally that it is “very likely” that the effects resulted in the death of an infant.

Regarding the incidents in the Idlib region between 16 March and 20 May 2015, the FFM reported that “taken in their entirety” sufficient facts were collected to conclude that several incidents “likely involved the use of one or more toxic chemicals-probably containing the element chlorine-as a weapon”, resulting in the death of between six and eight people.

Taken with the previous findings of the FFM, we are led to the conclusion that there has been a disturbing pattern of use of chemical weapons in Syria by the Syrian Government.

It is important that the Executive Council consider these reports carefully and respond appropriately.

New Zealand hopes that the Council can take a decision on the reports at this session. As we have said repeatedly, the international response must match the seriousness of these allegations, and those responsible must be held to account.



These developments highlight the importance of the work of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. New Zealand fully supports the work of that mechanism.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.

--- 0 ---