



Statement by H.E Ambassador Kevin Kelly, Permanent Representative of
Ireland to the OPCW

At the Fifty-Fifth Meeting of the Executive Council

5 July 2017

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Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Estonia on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland would like to express deep concern in relation to the confirmation contained in the recently published FFM report, that sarin nerve gas was used in the attack in Khan Sheikoun in Idlib province on the 4th of April 2017. Echoing the sentiments expressed in a statement issued today by Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Simon Coveney TD, Ireland condemns in the strongest possible terms this barbaric attack and our thoughts are with the victims of this horrendous crime.

The confirmation that sarin nerve gas was used in April 2017 represents another dangerous weakening of the norm against chemical weapon use. Their development and use is completely contrary to the international community's firmly held position that the development and use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, anytime, and under any circumstances is absolutely unacceptable. We once again reiterate that those responsible for this appalling act and for all the war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria must be held accountable.

Ireland would like to put on the record our appreciation and support for the work of the OPCW and the FFM, and would like to encourage all States Parties to adopt a constructive and proactive approach to their work and these findings. We urge the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), to promptly identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Khan Sheikoun, so that they can be held to account for this appalling crime against humanity.

Ireland equally expects that the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism will identify those responsible for an incident in Um-Housh on 16 September 2016, in which the FFM concluded that two victims were exposed to sulphur mustard.

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

I thank you Mr Chairman.