



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

At the Fifty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council

9 November 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.

We join States in expressing our horror and condemnation at the confirmed use of chemical weapons in Syria by the Syrian Armed Forces and ISIL, identified as responsible for these abhorrent attacks by the Seventh Report of the OPCW UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). This repeated use of chemical weapons represents a dangerous weakening of the universal norm against their use. The development and use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone – state or non-state - anywhere, anytime, and under any circumstances is absolutely unacceptable.

The findings show that the Syrian regime was responsible once again for a chemical weapons attack, in April 2017 at Khan Sheikhoun for the release of sarin, and that ISIL was responsible for the use of sulphur mustard on two occasions in September 2016 at Um-Housh.

Ireland urges the UN Security Council to renew the JIM's mandate, to enable it to maintain its investigative capacity. We would like to encourage all States Parties to adopt a constructive and proactive approach to the work and findings of the JIM. During these considerations, we hope that the victims of chemical weapons, both past and present, are kept at the forefront of minds. Any attempts to undermine the JIM's work impacts directly on the lives of these civilians who have already suffered so much.

Ireland stresses the importance of full compliance with the CWC and its declaration and verification regime. In becoming a State Party in 2013, Syria made commitments that it must honour and obligations it must meet – without delay. We believe that the widespread condemnation of those who breach their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention must be matched by action, and that to safeguard against impunity, those responsible for these war crimes and crimes against humanity must be referred to the International Criminal Court to face the appropriate consequences.

Ireland continues to support and trust the efforts and work of the OPCW, including the Joint Investigative Mechanism, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). It is deeply troubling that, in this, the 20th year since the establishment of the OPCW and entry into force of the CWC, their work proves to be so urgent and necessary. We recognise and greatly appreciate the continued professionalism and tireless commitment of the Director-General and the staff of the OPCW.

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

I thank you Mr Chairman.