



OPCW

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SLOVAKIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ROMAN BUŽEK
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SLOVAKIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Slovakia aligns itself with the EU Member States statement delivered by Ambassador Kaili Terras of Estonia. My country finds it extremely regrettable and worrisome that time and again the international community is confronted with the continued use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as a weapon by one of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The use of sarin and sarin-like chemicals in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017, as confirmed by the Joint Investigative Mechanism's (JIM) seventh report is totally unacceptable. As well as the previous at least three confirmed cases of the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Armed Forces the Khan Shaykhun case constitutes a violation of international law as well as of the provisions of the Convention.

This Organisation has been created, among other tasks, to prevent cases like these. Slovakia highly commends and supports the measures adopted by the OPCW's Technical Secretariat. Slovakia fully supports and commends OPCW's Fact-Finding Missions professionalism.

Let me reiterate that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, be it State or non-State actors, anywhere and under any circumstances is unacceptable and must be rigorously condemned. Those responsible for such acts must be held accountable.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic failed to fulfil its obligations following from the Convention. Slovakia joins the appeal of the EU Member States and other like-minded countries to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to provide without delay a comprehensive and complete declaration of its chemical weapons programme and to immediately adopt all the necessary measures including unhindered access of the OPCW inspectors to all relevant facilities.

Regrettably, recently we have been informed about another case of the use of sarin in Ltamenah "more than likely" conducted by the Syrian Armed Forces. This case has to be investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

Another case of sulfur mustard attack described by the JIM's seventh report was conducted by ISIL/Da'esh. This case is another proof of the importance of the OPCW's engagement in the field of non-State actors' activities and in the field of prevention of the re-emergence of



the chemical weapons. This case has to be investigated thoroughly by relevant OPCW mechanisms.

I request my statement to be circulated as an official document of this meeting and be placed on OPCW external server and public webpage.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.

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