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**BRAZIL**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR REGINA CORDEIRO DUNLOP  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Mr Chairperson,

Brazil would like to present the following preliminary conclusions on the seventh Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) report and its impact on the consideration of the chemical dossier in Syria:

We reiterate our strongest condemnation of the use of chemical weapons, under whatever justification or circumstances.

We regret the paralysis of the United Nations Security Council on the subject. This should not, however, be taken as a reason for inaction by the OPCW, in regard to examining violations to the Convention.

The creation of the JIM meant an important step towards the investigation of chemical incidents in the conflict in Syria, as its work is based on a Security Council resolution, the body primarily responsible for matters of international peace and security. Brazil has repeatedly emphasised that the JIM should work on the basis of independence and impartiality and that its composition should reflect a balanced regional representation.

After a careful analysis, Brazil would have comments on methodological and substantive aspects of the latest JIM report. Let me share some of them:

- We are concerned about the lack of visits to the places where the two incidents would have occurred. This omission could have jeopardised the integrity of the chain of custody and the consequent ability to attribute responsibility.
- Brazil is also concerned about the weight given to the testimony of witnesses that were not collected in the presence of all parties, which could open the report to accusations of inducing specific results.
- The late sending of JIM representatives to the air base of al-Shayrat and the decision not to collect samples do not assist, in our view, to create a solid basis for the central hypothesis that the incident in Khan Shaykhun would have been caused by a bomb launched by an aircraft.



- Brazil would have appreciated further analysis on some concrete data. For example, what would have been the effects of hundreds of kilos of sarin gas shortly after an alleged large sarin bomb explosion, not only on the first team of responders but also on the several eyewitnesses shown in photographs, without protection, in the vicinity of the crater.

For these reasons, among others, Brazil considers that the seventh JIM report did not present the necessary elements of proof for attributing responsibility for the chemical attack in Khan Shaykhun, on a solid basis.

Therefore, Brazil encourages the continuation of the verification activities by the JIM and the submission of a new report to supplement the existing gaps.

In order to contribute to the enhancement of the verification mechanisms, Brazil suggests greater emphasis on the observance of the criteria of balanced regional representation in the composition of the Fact-Finding Mission and the JIM. On the latter, it would be useful to reassess the principle of voluntary recruitment of its members and to give higher priority to considerations of technical expertise.

In parallel, it is fundamental to deepen the cooperation and the dialogue between the Secretariat, the JIM and the Syrian Government.

Thank you.

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