



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Sixth Meeting
9, 17, 23, and 24 November 2017

EC-M-56/NAT.15
9 November 2017
ENGLISH only

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY MR REZA POURMAND TEHRANI
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
TO THE OPCW AT THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the main victim of the chemical weapons, condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is seriously concerned regarding the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups and in this regard, we condemn the use of chemical weapons by Daesh in Um-Housh on 15 September 2016.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the seventh report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) could devise no satisfactory way of unravelling this predicament in the investigation. We do believe that the findings of the JIM should rely on verifiable and independent sources and refrain from ambiguity and vagueness.

My delegation does believe that some inconsistencies and discrepancies in the seventh report of the JIM indicate the possibility of the staged incident in Khan Shaykhun and its findings cannot be considered as reliable outcomes. Furthermore, the FFM violated the basic principle of the “chain of custody”. This principle, as recorded in the Chemical Weapons Convention and in OPCW documents, suggests that representatives of this Organisation should collect samples themselves and monitor their safety along the way to the designated laboratories for analysis.

Moreover, it's common knowledge that comprehensive coverage set in order to reach professional goals is a critical part of every international inspection team's task. The report is based on data and testimonies provided by various unknown NGOs with unreliable information, in which, the investigation team itself admits its decision to neither visit the incident scene, nor collect samples.

The investigation of the use of chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhun has not been inclusive, objective, or comprehensive in a balanced manner and must be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In accordance with Part XI of the Verification Annex to the Convention, my delegation underlines that the following elements should be taken into consideration:



First, it was expected that immediately upon receipt of the request made by the Syrian Arab Republic, taking into account the safety, for an investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons, the inspection team had been dispatched at the earliest opportunity. In case of no dispatching within 24 hours from the receipt of the request, the Council shall be informed about the reasons for the delay, rather than receiving such a clarification on 17 October 2017.

It is worth mentioning that despite the clear and high Chemical Weapons Convention standards, the FFM and the JIM refused to visit the scene of the incident in Khan Shaykhun, as well as the Shayrat airbase allegedly linked to the use of chemical weapons. The FFM referred to the lack of necessary security conditions in Khan Shaykhun.

The FFM narrowed its mandate and reduced it solely to determining whether sarin was used or not. This interpretation of the mandate fundamentally contradicts the relevant decisions of the Executive Council which were fully supported by the United Nations Security Council resolutions 2209 (2015) (paragraph 5) and 2319 (2016). In fact, the mandate of the FFM in accordance with these decisions is “to examine all available information concerning the allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria”.

Second, collecting samples of importance in the investigation of alleged use, including toxic chemicals, is undeniable essential and failure to do this undermines the credibility and final conclusion of the report.

The JIM concluded that the samples taken in Khan Shaykhun contain chemical markers and specific substances that were allegedly used only in the Syrian Arab Republic's military chemical programme. The fact that the Syrian formula itself and relevant technologies are not a secret has been widely neglected.

In the context of a full and comprehensive investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons, it is totally clear that each analysis should be on environmental sampling, its documentation and, specifically, on-site inspection as the main pillars of investigation. The quality of sampling has an extensive influence in determining whether the investigation will provide the required information to develop an appropriate report and a concrete conclusion, and failure of the expedition team to do so is absolutely unacceptable.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes, once again, the level of cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic with the Technical Secretariat to resolve the outstanding issues to fulfil its obligations and commitment under the Convention. The Syrian Arab Republic, despite facing the difficult situation, has shown its determination to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat in a transparent manner. It was clearly reflected in the JIM report that the Syrian Arab Republic has provided all information and materials requested by the team. Furthermore, it was granted the request for access to all places. We believe that instead of politicising the Syrian issues, it is the duty of the States Parties to assist the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic through enhancing its national capacity.

In closing, Mr Chairperson, may I request that this statement to be circulated as an official statement of the Fifty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council and be posted on the both external server and public website.

Thank you.