



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

**Statement on behalf of the Republic of Finland
Delivered by Ms Sari Uusi-Rauva, Deputy Permanent Representative to the OPCW**

**At the Fifty-Eight Meeting of the Executive Council of the OPCW
16 April 2018**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to the statement made by Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union, I would like to make the following remarks from a national perspective.

Mr Chairperson,

The news from Syria has once again been devastating. The reported chemical weapons attack on 7 April in Douma was a truly horrific act, and was promptly condemned as such by our President, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The missile strikes conducted by the United States, United Kingdom and France were a direct response to this atrocity. The use of chemical weapons must have consequences, and we must do whatever we can to prevent further attacks. Impunity is not an option.

What is particularly alarming in Syria is the repeated pattern that seems to emerge.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria, by the Syrian Arab Republic and by Da'esh, has been clearly confirmed by the JIM. These acts, proven beyond doubt, not only constitute a breach of international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention, but clearly also amount to the most serious of international crimes – war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This simply has to stop. Those responsible must be held to account.

Mr Chairperson,

Finland fully supports the investigation conducted by the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission team in Douma. We commend the OPCW for acting so swiftly. As always, ensuring the safety of the team should be our prime concern.

The FFM investigation is, however, not enough. We must also be able to bring about accountability for the crimes committed. Accountability is absolutely vital for upholding the norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Therefore, the expiration of the mandate of the JIM in November 2017 is indeed a grave concern. The United Nations Security Council must agree on a way to take forward the essential work of the JIM. Unfortunately all attempts so far have failed due to the repeated use of veto.

As the international community, we simply must do better.

Mr Chairperson,

To conclude I would like to inform you that Finland has today joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, established in Paris on 23 January. We encourage all State Parties of the CWC, not yet members of the Partnership, to join in its important work.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.