



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 9 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of a briefing provided by Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam in connection with the video-teleconference on the “The situation in the Middle East (Syria)” convened on Thursday, 5 November 2020. Statements were also delivered by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, this briefing and these statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Inga Rhonda **King**  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Statement by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs,  
Izumi Nakamitsu**

I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Since my previous briefing, on 5 October 2020 (see S/PV.8764), the Office for Disarmament Affairs has continued to maintain regular contact with counterparts at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on its activities related to this matter. To date, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has not received any further information from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning issues related to resolution 2118 (2013) for this period.

As I previously informed the Security Council, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to impact the OPCW's ability to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic. Nonetheless, the Technical Secretariat has continued with its mandated activities related to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic in this regard.

The OPCW Declaration Assessment Team is persevering in its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration to the OPCW. In this context, I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the Declaration Assessment Team who deployed to Damascus from 22 September to 3 October 2020 to conduct the twenty-third round of consultations with the Syrian National Authority despite the COVID-19 pandemic and other logistical and security challenges. During this deployment, the Declaration Assessment Team collected samples to replace those taken during its previous deployment and discussed the current status of all outstanding issues. The outcome of these activities will be reported to the OPCW Executive Council in due course.

At this stage, due to the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain unresolved, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has assessed that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. I want to remind Council members that efforts to resolve these outstanding issues have been ongoing since 2014. As has been noted on many occasions, the confidence of the international community in the complete elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme depends upon these issues being finalized.

I have been advised that the OPCW Technical Secretariat still plans to conduct two rounds of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in 2020. However, the undertaking of further inspections to these facilities will be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to the finding of a Schedule 2 chemical detected at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC during the third round of inspections held in 2018, I understand that the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information or explanations that would enable the OPCW Technical Secretariat to close this issue.

I note that the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) is still in the process of studying all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and continues its engagement with the Syrian Government and other States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention with regard to a variety of incidents. Further FFM deployments will be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As I have previously informed the Security Council, on 1 October 2020 the OPCW Technical Secretariat issued the “Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria regarding the incident of alleged use of chemicals as a weapon in Saraqib, Syrian Arab Republic, on 1 August 2016”, which concluded that the analysis of all available data obtained up until the issuance of that report did not allow the FFM to establish whether or not chemicals had been used as a weapon in the incident.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat has also issued the “Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria regarding the incident in Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, on 24 November 2018”. According to the FFM report, all the information obtained and analysed, the composite summary of the interviews and the results of the laboratory analyses did not allow it to establish whether or not chemicals had been used as a weapon in the incident. A copy of both reports was shared with the members of the Security Council as document S/2020/1082.

The Investigation and Identification Team continues its investigations into incidents in which the FFM has determined that chemical weapons were used or likely used in the Syrian Arab Republic, and it will issue further reports in due course.

I take this opportunity once again to underscore my full support for the integrity, professionalism, impartiality, objectivity and independence of the work of the OPCW.

On 14 October 2020, the OPCW Director General submitted to the OPCW Executive Council a report entitled “Implementation of EC-94/DEC.2 on addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic”. That report states that the Syrian Arab Republic did not complete the measures set out in paragraph 5 of the decision within the 90-day period specified therein. A copy of that report was shared with the Security Council and with the General Assembly as document A/75/536-S/2020/1033, pursuant to paragraph 12 of the aforementioned decision of the OPCW Executive Council.

It cannot be repeated often enough: there is no justification for the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. There are no excuses for an inexcusable act. Those who have used chemical weapons must be identified and held to account. It is my sincere hope that members of the Council will unite on this issue.

**Annex II****Statement by the Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations, Mathias Bogaert**

I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Today, once again, the Council is discussing the subject of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Contrary to what some delegations may lead us to believe, this regular meeting is still very relevant and necessary. Resolution 2118 (2013), on the use of chemical weapons by Syria, was adopted by the Council seven years ago, in 2013. But to date, Syria has failed to take the steps necessary to make progress in its implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of resolution 2118 (2013). That was also the conclusion of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council in its July decision entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic”.

As an international community, we cannot accept this lack of progress.

Syria itself became a member of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 2013, after the regime had used chemicals as weapons in several indiscriminate attacks, causing immense suffering and death to its own population.

In order to secure a future without chemical weapons, we have the responsibility to protect and uphold the norms and rules to which we all agreed, as enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention. The CWC, the global norm against chemical weapons, is not only a legal agreement but also a moral declaration about the dignity of humankind. If we do not react when our own rules and core values have been violated, we invite a repetition of the use of chemical weapons.

Therefore, the OPCW undertook all possible efforts to engage with the Syrian authorities, in an independent, professional and factual way, to assist the authorities to take the necessary steps to implement the CWC and resolution 2118 (2013).

A joint OPCW-United Nations mission was established in October 2013. A Fact-Finding Mission was set up in 2014 to establish the facts surrounding the alleged use of toxic chemicals. Also in 2014, a Declaration Assessment Team was put in place to engage the Syrian authorities to resolve the identified gaps and inconsistencies.

But, as said before and confirmed today in the briefing, far too little progress has been made, owing to the lack of cooperation by Syrian authorities. To date, Syria’s declaration of chemical weapons remains incomplete. That leaves open the unacceptable possibility that Syria still maintains stockpiles of chemical agents, so those agents could be used again against the Syrian population. As Director General Arias said earlier,

“the full nature and extent of chemical weapons research and development activities are still unclear. Results of sample analyses taken by the [Declaration Assessment Team] are indicative of undeclared activities, including undeclared chemical-warfare agents and undeclared chemical-weapons-related activities.”

The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission concluded that chemical weapons had been used, or likely used, in at least 18 instances. The previous report of the Investigation and Identification Team concluded that the Syrian Arab Air Force was to be held responsible for the use of chemical weapons in March 2017. This latest report confirms the wider pattern and reminds us why it is absolutely essential that all outstanding issues be addressed conclusively, without any doubt.

Syria does not cooperate with the OPCW and does not allow the Team to access its territory.

In view of what I have mentioned, one can conclude only that this issue remains of prime importance to international peace and security, and thus to the Council. Furthermore, we look to the deliberations to be held at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of States Parties, beginning in December, to take any further measures in the absence of compliance with the CWC and the decisions of the Conference.

Beyond the measures taken by the OPCW, the perpetrators of those crimes should be held accountable. Only justice can prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons. It is our common responsibility to support all procedures and bodies that contribute to this, including by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, or by the International Criminal Court.

Finally, we deplore the recent attempts at misinformation and to polarize discussions in the Security Council. The Council should focus on the essence of the matter at hand, namely, Syria's unwillingness to comply with its obligations.

**Annex III****Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang**

[Original: Chinese and English]

I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing. I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, all parties should encourage the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to maintain good communication and cooperation with the Syrian Government. According to the latest report of the OPCW, between 22 September and 3 October the Syrian Government held the twenty-third round of technical consultations with the Technical Secretariat, during which all issues regarding the initial declaration were discussed. Before that, the Syrian Government also provided supplementary materials on some unresolved matters.

Syria, in its monthly report to the Executive Council, indicated its willingness to keep in touch with and maintain cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. The Syrian side has reiterated that Syria would work with the Technical Secretariat to resolve outstanding matters through a professional and transparent approach. Those developments and Syria's constructive approach all deserve to be recognized. China calls upon the international community to objectively view Syria's efforts and hopes that the Technical Secretariat will respond to Syria's request in a professional and transparent way.

Secondly, discussions on the Syrian chemical-weapons issue must respect facts and science and should not be based on the presumption of guilt. China supports the OPCW in conducting comprehensive, objective and just investigations into the relevant incidents, as mandated by the CWC, so as to arrive at conclusions that can stand the test of science and history, based on solid evidence.

For some time now, a number of independent experts have questioned the OPCW's report on the alleged use of chemical weapons. These questions are purely technical, and I hope that the OPCW will devote attention to them and provide professional, science-based and convincing answers. In the face of so many doubtful points, China is against jumping to any conclusions, or even taking hasty actions. Such an approach would not only be detrimental to the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) but would also damage the trust between the Syrian parties and affect the political settlement of the Syrian issue.

Thirdly, discussions on the Syrian chemical-weapons issue should be open, transparent and inclusive so as to avoid any politicization. Last month, due to objections by some members, the Council failed to invite the former OPCW Director General, Mr. Bustani, to deliver a briefing (see S/PV.8764). That is really disappointing. At that time, some members argued that Mr. Bustani had left the OPCW years ago, that he was not familiar with the Syrian chemical-weapons dossier and that, if anyone were to be invited, it should be the current Director General, Mr. Arias.

But what we find hard to understand is that those same members are now against inviting Mr. Arias to attend the Council's video-teleconference this month as a briefer. We call upon the relevant members to keep their positions consistent, refrain from double standards or imposing their position on others and to take an open and inclusive attitude to the diverging views arising in the Council's deliberations.

The Investigation and Identification Team has been mired in controversy since its establishment. The so-called decision requiring the Syrian Government to resolve

all outstanding matters and issues within a time limit has not received unanimous support. All parties need to take a responsible approach and step up dialogue and consultation to seek consensus, instead of creating greater division or even using the OPCW as a political tool to suppress or target a country's Government.

China urges the Director General of the OPCW and the Technical Secretariat to facilitate greater dialogue and consultation among States parties and maintain the tradition of consensus-based decision-making. A single vote, when the parties remain divided, will intensify the confrontation between the States parties, dampen the atmosphere of cooperation and undermine the authority and long-term interests of the OPCW.

In addition, just now in his statement, the representative of the United States launched groundless accusations against China, which is completely unacceptable. The United States representative used the term "responsible nations" several times in his statement. That is a great term. We would hope that, before using that term, the United States would reflect on what it has been doing and saying for some time now on the international stage and on whether it is a responsible nation. I think the world sees that clearly and will judge for itself. Before its representative uses the term "responsible nations" anew, the United States should stop interfering in Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, stop politicizing the chemical weapons issue in Syria and stop stoking confrontation and conflict in the Middle East.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate that China will continue to play a constructive role on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier.

**Annex IV****Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing this afternoon.

We would like to start by recalling that, shortly after the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) confirmed the destruction of the stockpiles and 27 chemical-weapon production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

However, despite that historic success, there have been recurrent allegations of the use of chemical weapons and several reports by different OPCW investigation teams confirming that some of those incidents had indeed taken place and providing convincing evidence of the chemical agents used and the way in which the attacks were perpetrated. That leads us to the conclusion that stocks of toxic chemical agents, particularly sarin and chlorine, remain on Syrian territory.

In that regard, the Dominican Republic continues to urge Syria to cooperate fully with the OPCW with a view to finding a tangible solution to the long-standing issues remaining, including those related to its initial declaration.

Furthermore, we understand that all State parties to the Convention have the obligation to comply with the agreed commitments without prejudice and to abide by the decisions of the bodies entrusted to them, including the Conference of the States Parties and the OPCW Executive Council.

In that regard, it is regrettable that the Syrian Arab Republic has not complied with any of the measures contained in the Executive Council decision of 9 July, which was based on the conclusions of the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team. We therefore continue to encourage the Syrian authorities to obtain the necessary assistance from the OPCW Technical Secretariat with a view to achieving full compliance with the Convention.

Furthermore, we take note of the recent twenty-third round of consultations between the Syrian authorities and the Declaration Assessment Team in Damascus, and we hope that those consultations will continue and produce results that will constitute significant progress on this dossier.

In addition, we note the recent reports issued by the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) on the incidents of alleged chemical weapons use in Saraqib in 2016 and in Aleppo in 2018. Those reports concluded that the information examined did not make it possible to establish whether or not chemical agents had been used as weapons in those incidents.

We reaffirm our full confidence in the professionalism, impartiality and objectivity of the FFM's work and findings, and take this opportunity to urge Member States to provide the necessary information to assist the various ongoing investigations.

The Dominican Republic reiterates its firm and principled position condemning the use of chemical weapons in any place, by any person and under any circumstances. Their use is unjustifiable and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

It also represents an undeniable threat to international peace and security. Preventing the use of chemical weapons is therefore the responsibility not only of the Syrian Arab Republic but also of the international community. We therefore urge all Member States to provide their full support and cooperation in that regard and to fulfil their commitments in accordance with the Convention and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Our fundamental joint objective must be to prevent the use of toxic chemicals as weapons, to completely destroy their stockpiles and to identify the perpetrators and hold them accountable for actions that contravene international law.

**Annex V****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt**

I thank the High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Progress on this file is indeed hard to achieve. The eighty-fifth monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) states yet again that there are still outstanding issues relating to Syria's chemical weapons declaration. The OPCW Technical Secretariat's assessment is clear: the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, the respective OPCW Executive Council decision and resolution 2118 (2013).

As we have stressed before, this is not just a technical or theoretical issue, but rather indicates that Syria has not declared and destroyed all of its chemical weapons and their production facilities and continues to pose a threat to international peace and security.

Moreover, we learn from the Director General's monthly report that the Syrian Arab Republic failed to complete the measures contained in the Executive Council's 9 July decision within the set timeline. We also understand that there was no effort whatsoever to cooperate with the OPCW or even respond to its offer of assistance.

A complete lack of cooperation with the OPCW must have consequences, and that must be addressed through appropriate action at the OPCW Conference of State Parties at the end of this month.

As to the work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), we note the recent reports regarding incidents in Saraqib and Aleppo. We acknowledge the professional and thorough investigations done by the FFM and their evidence-based results.

We remain highly concerned about impunity. It is imperative to ensure accountability and end impunity for each and every use of chemical weapons. We owe it to the victims to bring the perpetrators of these abhorrent crimes to justice. Accountability is equally instrumental for sustaining the global norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Let us face it — the global prohibition of chemical weapons is under threat. In recent years, we have witnessed the appalling use of chemical weapons in several places. On 6 October, the OPCW confirmed that the substance that was used to poison Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was a chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group. We reiterate our call for Russia to investigate the crime thoroughly and in full transparency, bearing in mind Russia's commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The international community should not tolerate the use of chemical weapons and the concomitant threats it poses to international peace and security. In that regard, Estonia supports the European Union autonomous sanctions regime specifically designed to fight the proliferation of chemical weapons. We hope the Security Council does not remain silent and instead addresses the non-compliance with its resolutions.

**Annex VI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing. As has been the case every month for far too long, we are once again witnessing a complete lack of cooperation by the Syrian regime. I wish to emphasize three points.

First, last July, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) called on Syria to comply with its obligations and gave it 90 days to remedy the situation. The Director General of the OPCW accordingly sent us a report a few days ago, which takes stock of the implementation of that decision (see S/2020/1033, annex). The report is two pages long and its conclusion is clear: no, and I stress no, progress has been made. That must be a matter of concern to us. We hope that the Conference of the States Parties, which will begin on 30 November in The Hague, will fully draw conclusions from the report.

In 2013, the Syrian regime committed to cooperating with the OPCW transparently and in good faith. The least one can say is that it has not kept its word. Seven years after the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), we still do not know the state of Syria's chemical stockpiles.

Secondly, I would like to recall that the regime's repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people unfortunately needs no further proof. In April this year, following a rigorous investigation, the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team issued a damning report, which establishes that chemical-weapon attacks were carried out in Ltamenah in March 2017 by elements of the regime's air force.

In that context, I wish to stress the professionalism and impartiality of the OPCW and condemn all attempts by those who seek to discredit the organization, which is so important to our collective security.

Finally, I wish to stress that the use of chemical weapons, wherever, whenever, by whomsoever and under whatever circumstances, is unacceptable and constitutes a crime that threatens all humankind. The re-emergence of chemical weapons is one of the most serious threats with which we have to deal in the Security Council. The Council made that clear in its presidential statement S/PRST/2019/14, of November 2019.

As President Macron recalled on 21 September, “[t]aboos that were thought to be inviolable have been lifted”. No impunity in that regard can be tolerated. That is why France, along with 40 other countries and the European Union, has been leading the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons since 2018. Restoring the credibility of the prohibition regime is also one of the conditions for a just and lasting peace in Syria on the basis of resolution 2254 (2015).

**Annex VII****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Christoph Heusgen**

I cannot help but start with yesterday's horrible shelling by the Syrian regime of villages in the Idlib area. Eight civilians were killed and 13 civilians were injured. Mr. Mark Cutts, United Nations Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, said:

“Today's violence compounds an already dire situation on the ground in Idlib, where millions of civilians remain in urgent need of life-saving assistance. COVID-19 continues to spread in the overcrowded camps, the rains have started again and the bitter winter temperatures will soon set in.”

The non-governmental organization Save the Children reported that one girl, aged 4, died on her way to school in the town of Ariha, south of Idlib. Two more children were killed in Kafraya and a fourth, a 10-year-old boy, in the city of Idlib. Dozens of other people were wounded. A primary school in Kafraya, run by a partner of Save the Children, was hit by shelling and shrapnel while around 150 children were in their classrooms. As a consequence, Save the Children suspended work in two vaccination centres that it supports in Idlib. As a result, the delivery of vaccines to children will be impacted, requiring more efforts to follow up with children who had appointments. The centres provide vaccination support for 500 children each month.

The Syrian regime bears responsibility for yet another brutal murder of civilians. Supporters of the regime also bear a heavy responsibility. Instead of reigning in the regime and preventing it from killing its own civilians, Iran and Russia continue to allow them to do that. By preventing the opening of humanitarian crossing points, Russia and China also make the very dire situation even worse.

Let me come back to the intervention of the Russian Federation. When I listened to it, I thought that I was in the wrong movie theatre here. There is no crisis of trust in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). As the Security Council has just heard, one speaker after another supports the OPCW and its work. The OPCW enjoys the full trust of the international community with the exception of Russia and its cronies. It is Russia that undermines the credibility of the OPCW by continuously shielding the Al-Assad regime. I have not heard one word of regret from the Russian Ambassador for the thousands of people whom the Al-Assad regime has killed with chemical weapons. There is no one who doubts that Al-Assad has done that. Russia continues to protect Al-Assad and tries to continue to undermine the OPCW.

I have mentioned here before, and I would highlight again, that Russia was caught red-handed in 2018 when it launched a cyberattack against the OPCW. I think that the Russian Federation should have a serious conversation with its First Committee representative, because my Deputy was in the First Committee and responded to the attacks that were launched against us (see A/C.1/73/PV.15). It is in Russia that Mr. Navalny was poisoned with Novichok. We are waiting for Russia to investigate it and provide the OPCW with the information that we provided to the organization.

Let me also say that it is a pity that we seem to have added another layer of discussion and division to this complicated file. In addition to providing cover for the Al-Assad regime whenever possible, our Russian colleagues now also feel the need to put into question the format of our regular meetings. We are always ready to discuss which meeting format is best suited to help us to achieve our goal to hold Syria accountable and ensure compliance with resolution 2118 (2013). But

the question of the meeting format and the briefers to invite has become another smokescreen to protect the Al-Assad regime from international scrutiny. In the Russian Federation's intervention, while it was criticized that Mr. Fernando Arias, Director General of the OPCW, did not attend today, it forgot to mention that there was a good reason for him to come next month. At the end of the month, as several speakers have underlined, the Conference of the States Parties will take place, and the meeting after the Conference is the right point in time for Mr. Arias to brief the Council.

These are attempts to distract attention from the simple need to get the Syrian regime to stop the use of chemical weapons against its own citizens once and forever, to fully disclose its chemical-weapons programme and to fully cooperate with the OPCW. Unfortunately, Russia is not helping with any of those tasks, and is instead devising ever new distractions to make our work more difficult.

Since we last met (see S/PV.8764), we have received two official communications from the OPCW. One is the eighty-fifth monthly report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) (see S/2020/1056, annex). So, for the eighty-fifth time, we have now heard that Syria is stalling and obstructing investigations — full stop. We have also received a letter (see S/2020/1033, annex) on the implementation by Syria of the decision of the OPCW's Executive Council in The Hague in July. Unfortunately, the analysis is the same — there is no progress. Al-Assad has chosen to ignore the Executive Council decision, as he has chosen to ignore resolution 2118 (2013) and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

And still, we are hearing time and again from the Syrian regime and those supporting it that Damascus is in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. That is simply not true. There are facts, and there are authorities on chemical weapons — and that is the OPCW. I urge Russia to finally use its considerable influence over Damascus — the Syrian regime must stop the use of chemical weapons against its own citizens for good, fully disclose its chemical-weapons programme and fully cooperate with the OPCW. By coming with this text on the OPCW week after week, Russia will not succeed in undermining the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, a very important stakeholder in international institutions.

The Al-Assad regime in Syria has killed its own people using chemical weapons. Russia has shielded Al-Assad, including by ending the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in 2017, the very mechanism that had been set up to examine the use of such weapons.

We all have a responsibility to safeguard and support the Chemical Weapons Convention and its guardian, the OPCW — a central pillar of the global disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation architecture. The re-emergence of chemical weapons, as we have seen in Syria and in other cases, must not be tolerated. The use of those despicable weapons undermines the international non-proliferation architecture, and we will not accept impunity for those who use or develop toxic agents, regardless of where such agents are being used. We will continue our efforts to push for accountability. There can be just and lasting peace in Syria only if the perpetrators of these most heinous crimes are brought to justice.

## **Second statement by the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Christoph Heusgen**

I must say that I just cannot believe my ears. I would recommend that Mr. Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, look at the Caesar photographs of the prisons in Syria. I do not know if he was present in the

Security Council when I cited the witness in the Koblenz trial who was responsible for the transport of hundreds of corpses of Syrian civilians (see S/PV.8764). They were buried in mass graves. I am happy to provide that information to him again.

Mr. Nebenzia has been very careful in not discussing the fact that the Syrian regime has been caught killing its own civilians with chemical weapons. There is no doubt that Syria has used chemical weapons. Even Russia does not doubt that.

With regard to Mr. Navalny, this is a typical Russian reaction. I just recall what I mentioned before — Russia's cyberattack on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The timing of that, by the way, was in connection with the Skripal case.

Coming back to Mr. Navalny, in the spirit of full transparency, Germany shared a shortened version of a classified analysis by the OPCW on the Navalny poisoning (S/1906/2020) with all Member States. That version omits any specific details regarding the structural characteristics of the toxic chemical that was used. That approach has been carefully considered and is guided by non-proliferation concerns.

Together with Belgium, Estonia, France and the United Kingdom, we sent a letter (S/2020/960) to the Secretary-General and to the Security Council in which we call on Russia to disclose urgently, fully and in a transparent manner the circumstances of the attack against Mr. Navalny and to inform the Council. Russia has the evidence and medical samples needed for an investigation in its own country. It is therefore upon Russia to launch a full and transparent investigation. Russia does not want to imply that Mr. Navalny was poisoned in Germany, or that he poisoned himself.

We therefore take note of the Russian announcement to cooperate with the OPCW. We call on the Russian Federation authorities to fully cooperate with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation. I urge Russia to stop blaming others, to stop undermining the OPCW and to finally acknowledge the reality that the Syrian regime is responsible for mass murder and for killing its own population with chemical weapons. The Syrian regime is responsible for yesterday's killing of eight civilians, four of whom were children.

## Annex VIII

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

We thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing.

My delegation notes that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat is continuing its mandated activities related to the Syrian chemical-weapons programme despite the travel restrictions due to the coronavirus disease pandemic. We appreciate the efforts to ensure the continuity of the relevant activities in that regard without compromising the safety and the health of the OPCW personnel.

We note the eighty-fifth monthly report of the Director General of the OPCW (see S/2020/1056, annex). In that regard, we wish to highlight the following points.

First, my delegation appreciates the holding of the twenty-third round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority in Damascus last month. Indonesia hopes that more substantive discussions can be held regularly to address all the outstanding issues regarding Syria's initial declaration. My delegation has been consistent in encouraging constructive engagement and dialogue between the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW. Indeed, the continued consultation and cooperation between both parties cannot be further emphasized.

Secondly, we recognize that the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) continues to study all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We note the recent report of the OPCW FFM regarding the incident in Saraqib in August 2016 and in Aleppo in November 2018 (see S/2020/1082, annex). Both reports stated that the results of the analysis of all available data did not enable the FFM to establish whether or not chemicals had been used as weapons in the incidents.

My delegation looks forward to receiving future results of the FFM's work. Without comprehensive analysis, it is always important to avoid the temptation to jump to any conclusion and adopt a one-sided interpretation of the OPCW technical reports.

Thirdly, the support of all relevant parties, including the Security Council, based on good faith and without politicization of the issue, is key to advancing the progress of this dossier.

Indonesia also notes the report of the OPCW Director General, dated 16 October, regarding the implementation of the OPCW Executive Council decision, adopted on 9 July 2020 (see S/2020/1033, annex). In addition, we note the response letter, dated 4 November, from the Syrian Arab Republic to the Director General of the OPCW and Syria's commitment to continue working with the OPCW Technical Secretariat. Again, enhancing communication and coordination between the OPCW and the Syrian authorities is of the utmost importance.

Before concluding, Indonesia wishes to emphasize the importance for the Council to continue the discussion on this issue in a comprehensive manner, consistent with the ongoing process in The Hague. My delegation believes that our monthly discussion in the Council must add value to the relevant work of the OPCW and eventually assist in permanently closing this issue. We believe that this idea is becoming more relevant now, especially prior to the convening of the Conference of the States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention in The Hague by the end

of this month. In that regard, the unity of the Council is something for which we all must strive.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to once again state my delegation's firm position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody and under any circumstances cannot be justified and that the perpetrators must be held accountable.

**Annex IX****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: French]

I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I would like to reiterate once again my country's commitment to the firm rejection of the use of all non-conventional weapons under any circumstances. We are of the view that joint and concerted efforts should be made by all Member States to prevent and deter the use of such weapons in accordance with international norms, including the Chemical Weapons Convention and other relevant multilateral and bilateral treaties.

My delegation takes note of the continuing efforts of the Syrian Government to shed light on the use of those weapons on its territory through its communications with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Security Council and its willingness to continue to work with the Technical Secretariat, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. As I said last month, as a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Syria deserves to be supported by the other Member States in fulfilling its obligations. My delegation reiterates its call on Council members to avoid any politicization of this issue and to create the conditions for the peaceful and technical handling of the results of the investigations. This would undoubtedly facilitate the establishment of truth, and therefore the reporting.

Furthermore, continued engagement between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Government could help to resolve the issue of Syria's initial declaration, and ultimately advance the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and resolution 2118 (2013).

My delegation is pleased to see in the report of the Secretary-General that the twenty-third round of consultations, which took place in Damascus between the DAT and the Syrian authorities, was fruitful (see S/2020/1056, annex). This collaboration could not only help resolve the issue of the initial declaration but also advance the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team.

As we have stated on several occasions, the allegations of armed terrorist groups in Syria possessing chemicals that could be used in attacks must necessarily be given due consideration. My delegation also reiterates the same appeal to the United Nations and the OPCW Technical Secretariat in view of the potential danger, should that information be confirmed.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its support for the OPCW, which is essential to the United Nations disarmament programme and whose contribution has led to the virtual elimination of chemical weapons declared by the States that possessed them.

In addition, the composition of any team investigating all listed incidents must be inclusive and participatory in order to ensure that the findings are not contested.

We hope to see OPCW missions in Syria resume full deployment once the restrictive measures taken as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic are lifted.

**Annex X****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

[Original: Russian]

We thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for presenting the reports of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see S/2020/1056, annex) and the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (see S/2020/1082, annex) in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The report of the Director General on the July decision of the Executive Council was not a revelation for anyone. It predictably accuses the Syrian Arab Republic of non-compliance with that decision. That outcome was also predictable. It was obvious, from the very beginning, that this decision was unrealistic and its only one goal was to make Damascus look even worse in the eyes of the international community. No one cares to understand that Syria was being asked to do the impossible. The condition could not be met even in theory, as it required previously undeclared chemical weapons and facilities that were allegedly related to them to be declared within 90 days. These were the very facilities that were destroyed, which was verified, and not a single OPCW inspection since 2013 has been able to demonstrate the opposite.

We have repeatedly expressed our detailed criticism of that decision, as well as the report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team on the incidents in Ltamenah in March, 2017, which the decision was based on. The decision itself was pushed through the Executive Council by a very small margin. The Investigation and Identification Team report is politically biased, factually unreliable and technically unconvincing. It cannot claim to be any sort of expert investigation. However, even that pseudo report, when touching upon the military situation in Ltamenah and Hama in March and April 2017, comes to the conclusion that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces had no need — even hypothetically — to use chemical weapons.

We agree with the authors of the report on that point. At that time, the Syrian army's offensive had been successful in Hama governorate and had regained control of most of its territory. There was no reason, even in theory, for the Syrian army to use chemical weapons and thereby draw the fire onto itself. In any case, logic has not been a part of the arsenal of our Western colleagues for a long time now. If it were, they would have to admit that conclusions on a number of high-profile cases of alleged chemical-weapon use, baselessly ascribed to Syria, and recently also to Russia, lie outside the bounds of common sense.

It is telling that Western colleagues had started to call upon the Security Council to punish Syria as early as in July, long before this report of the Director General was issued. In other words, they understood perfectly well that Syria stood no chance of complying with the July decision of the OPCW Executive Council. We hope that the other Security Council members take a critical approach to the current developments and will refuse to participate in this farce that threatens to undermine the authority of the Council.

The last time (see S/PV.8764), we drew attention to the fact that, in the cover letter transmitting the monthly report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), the Secretary-General all of a sudden used the language of that biased and unrealistic decision of the OPCW Executive Council that it is imperative “to hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons” and that it allegedly requires the unity of the Council to uphold this “urgent obligation”. Regrettably, we are seeing the same situation repeat itself. Condoning such biased approaches does not do the

Secretariat any favours. It is even more inappropriate to directly and publicly side with those who besmirch Syria, while knowing how unfounded, or at least dubious, such allegations are. We cannot allow distorted and politicized phrases of warning to seep into reports published on behalf of the Secretary-General. This is a matter of his personal authority and of the authority of the United Nations as a whole.

We are concerned by the inclusion of accusatory paragraphs on outstanding issues with regard to the initial declaration, especially now that we have learned from former OPCW inspector Henderson during the Arria Formula video-teleconference on 28 September 2020 that the Technical Secretariat leadership is instructing the Declaration Assessment Team to keep those issues open. Syrians will never be able to close those issues with such an approach. Let me also recall that, according to the same experts, many States encountered similar problems when filing their declarations at the initial stage of joining the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, in those cases they were interpreted as minor drawbacks that did not undermine the integrity of the declarations. We are therefore seeing that the Technical Secretariat's treatment of Damascus is biased. Why is the Secretariat participating in such political games?

Moreover, it is unclear on what basis Western delegations are trying to initiate a detailed discussion of Syria's initial declaration at the Security Council. The Hague has the prerogative to address these issues. Information that States submit in the framework of initial declarations is strictly confidential. It should not be discussed publicly, especially not in New York. This looks like another clumsy attempt to catch Syria red-handed.

The Fact-Finding Mission reports on the incidents in Aleppo in November 2018 and Saraqib in August 2016 are another example of the double standards being used by the OPCW Technical Secretariat. Those documents were prepared only upon our repeated insistence. At the same time, for over a year we and the Syrian side had been bombarded with requests for more information. Something was always lacking; the Technical Secretariat encountered new insurmountable obstacles; samples were lost and, at some point, we became exhausted with trying to prove that we had transmitted all the materials. Why did the investigation of those incidents take so long and become so complicated? Perhaps it was because the Syrian army, not the opposition, was accused of using chemical weapons. Of course, we have no illusions that the Fact-Finding Mission would adopt a principled and unbiased approach. The mission could not establish the use of chemical weapons by opposition groups. There was no need for the Technical Secretariat to pretend that it was conducting an investigation. It could have issued its conclusion at the outset and admitted that it would not even consider a scenario in which the Syrian opposition might have used chemical weapons.

We are seeing our Western colleagues increasingly resort to the practice of fabricating accusations of the use of chemical weapons to punish inconvenient countries everywhere. Just yesterday, the First Committee adopted an extremely politicized and confrontational draft resolution on the Chemical Weapons Convention (see A/C.1/75/PV.12). At one time, that document was genuinely consensus-based and aimed at strengthening the integrity of the organization. Now it has lost all of its initial meaning and become another biased instrument used by the West to impose sanctions. What is especially telling is the inclusion in the draft resolution of the paragraph about the incident with Russian blogger Alexei Navalny. During the general debate in the First Committee, we asked the German party a number of concrete questions on that matter. However, there was no response. The "highly likely" paradigm does not favour citing facts and providing answers. Instead of frank and direct talk, our Western colleagues pretend that Russia's guilt has already been proven. We are seeing this tactic being used in the context of the Skripal incident.

Let me pose a direct question to our Western colleagues. Do they realize the results of their acts? We are witnessing symptoms, if not the metastasis, of a severe disease — a large-scale crisis of confidence at the OPCW. The consequences of such a disastrous situation extend far beyond the organization. This is not a critique of the results of particular investigations; it is a systemic problem, which, unless solved, will not allow the OPCW to function normally and reliably.

We have accumulated a critical mass of challenges to the OPCW Technical Secretariat and leadership. Proof of manipulation and falsification in its reports has become too overwhelming to ignore. Let me remind the Council that our claims regarding the report of the Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (FFM) on the April 2017 incident in Khan Shaykhun were ignored despite abundant evidence that the incident had been staged. We are still waiting for an explanation from the Technical Secretariat regarding various instances of manipulation in the FFM report on the events in Douma in April 2018, as well as a response from the Director General on how he is going to address the exposed irregularities. Many direct and concrete questions asked by Mr. Ian Henderson, Mr. Aaron Maté and Mr. Theodore Postol during an Arria Formula meeting on 28 September were left unanswered. Again, there has been complete silence regarding the facts raised in the statement made by Mr. José Bustani, whom our colleagues failed to silence in October.

That is why Russia continues to insist that such files be discussed in the open. We are glad we have already managed to ensure that three times, even though they would always covertly try to prevent it. As we have said on many occasions, neither Syria nor — we hope — members of the Security Council have anything to hide from the global community.

It is regrettable and very telling that OPCW Director General Arias is not taking part in this meeting, even after our Western colleagues explicitly stressed, at the previous meeting on the same item (see S/PV.8764), the importance of his participation. We remember perfectly well that this was why they were so hysterical and unwilling to accept our proposal of having former Director General Bustani as a briefer. Now a month has passed, but incumbent Director General Arias has not yet briefed the Security Council.

If the OPCW leadership is entirely proper, professional, and unbiased in its actions with regard to the Syrian chemical file, as Western delegations claim, then it surely has nothing to fear. It should be more interested than anyone to respond to all the criticism. If the criticism is inadequate, the OPCW should counter it. The more it tries to evade this conversation, the more everyone is inclined to think that the OPCW leadership has something to conceal.

We hope that Director General Arias will summon up his courage to respond to these questions in December. Let me state right now that there are many questions and we see no reason why we should not pose them in an open meeting.

The times when we could technically discuss a Director General's reports on the progress of resolution 2118 (2013) are long gone. At stake now is the authority, integrity and fate of the OPCW. Only those who enjoy impunity and stage chemical-weapons provocations stand to benefit from systemic OPCW problems remaining unsolved.

Like all responsible members of the international community, Russia remains committed to the goals of the CWC and recognizes its responsibility with regard to the future of the OPCW and the global chemical-weapons non-proliferation regime. That is why we will continue to stand up for objective investigations and oppose disinformation and blatant lies.

## **Second statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

In response to the statements made today by the representatives of Germany and, in particular, the United Kingdom, regarding allegations we hear time and again in the form of “Russia did such and such a thing and must be held to account”, we agree with only one thing — the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and, if it really took place, the guilty must be punished. Beyond that, we agree with nothing else that has been said.

The situation with regard to Mr. Navalny and the Skripals has again been raised. Let me remind the Council what many have started to forget or prefer not to remember at all — the bulk of our questions relating to the Skripal incident remained unanswered. The British side would rather ignore them because it has already proclaimed that Russia is to blame, saying “Why delve into detail? Everyone knows that it is highly likely”. However, I think we will find a way to refresh the memory of our British colleagues of those issues and to demand answers to the questions raised.

The situation with Alexei Navalny unfolds along the same lines — a conclusion is made, a verdict pronounced, and Russia just needs to confess. In the meantime, our German colleagues avoid answering our very basic questions. Ambassador Heusgen asserted that the German side had answered all the questions we posed to them in the First Committee. I have here our representative’s First Committee statement, which contains those questions. The German delegation has not answered them.

On Syria, some try to convince us that everything has been proven and that Damascus just needs to confess and repent. But here is the point — nothing has been proven. The IIT’s falsification is not a proof. The IIT is their play toy for manipulation. Sadly enough, the OPCW is starting to be used for the same purpose. We have just seen our German colleague employ a classic case of propaganda. As if trying to mesmerize the audience, he says over and over that there is no crisis of confidence, that the Al-Assad regime killed its subjects with chemical weapons, among other ways, and that this is a verified fact that Russia is covering up. Our response is that it is a nice try at hypnosis, but it is not persuasive enough.

We stress to Mr. Heusgen that nothing has been proven or the proof convinces only those who ended up plunging Syria into the abyss of civil war. Or does Germany live under alternative laws of physics and logic that make it take for granted tales and fables worthy of the Grimm brothers? Experts cite dozens of concrete and obvious discrepancies in OPCW investigations; Germany ignores them. Those who took part in the investigations point to blatant fabrications; Germany does not care. If we stick to this approach of ignoring the elephant in the room, we will not only fail to uncover the truth, but — as I warned — will ultimately discredit the OPCW.

## **Third statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

In response to the Permanent Representative of Germany, I had a chance to visit the Caesar exhibit in in 2018. I saw those photographs at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., where we were invited by Nikki Hailey, who served back then as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations. We can discuss the so-called Caesar report issue on another occasion, since it is not directly related to the Syrian chemical dossier, which we are discussing today. We

can discuss it with Mr. Heusgen in a bilateral format or devote a separate meeting to it.

With regard to Syria and the case to which Mr. Heusgen was referring, I would once again like to draw the Council's attention to the statement made by the Russian representative in the First Committee, which is full of questions that have remained unanswered.

With regard to what he said on that matter and the role of Germany in the Navalny incident, the case to which Mr. Heusgen was referring, I think that he has revealed himself. In his statement, he emphasized that the German side deliberately redacted the chemical formula of the substance that — based on the allegations of the German side — might have been used to poison Alexei Navalny, which we had requested. His is trying to persuade us that we are blaming others, but I think that is exactly what he is doing. The bigger part of his intervention was about allegations against Russia. The issue of Syria was overshadowed by that.

I would also like to remind the Council that the OPCW report concluded that the substance that was allegedly used to poison Mr. Navalny is not on the prohibited chemical weapons list, under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Mr. Heusgen's assertion that it had been done for reasons of confidentiality is, of course, redundant.

The formula is absolutely necessary, so we will continue to insist that it be provided. I also confirm that the Russian Federation is today in consultations with the OPCW on how to proceed and cooperate on that issue.

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**Annex XI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines begins by reiterating that the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone constitutes an abominable violation of international law. Chemical-weapons atrocities cannot be ignored and impunity cannot be encouraged. Perpetrators must be held accountable.

Therefore, allegations of the use of chemical weapons should never be dismissed. Investigations must be thorough and conducted in accordance with best practices to ensure that all findings can withstand rigorous scrutiny.

We continue to support the critically important mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and continue to emphasize that it bears a tremendous responsibility and must therefore take measures to ensure that its views and activities are impartial, independent and free from politicization.

We have taken note of the 9 July Executive Council decision and the 14 October report regarding the implementation of that decision. We look forward to a substantive discussion on that issue at the CWC's Conference of the States Parties.

We have also taken note of the recent report (see S/2020/1082, annex) of the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the alleged use of chemicals as a weapon in Saraqib on 1 August 2016. We are in the process of reviewing that report in a comprehensive manner.

The Council should not overlook the many notifications by the Syrian Government that various armed groups operating in Syria may be preparing to use chemical weapons. We have an obligation to duly consider that possibility and to make an assessment in that regard in order to protect the lives of civilians.

## **Annex XII**

### **Statement by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations**

Let me begin by thanking Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing.

The use of chemical weapons undermines the international norms against the production, use and stockpiling of such weapons, established under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The alleged use of chemical weapons by a State party to the CWC, is a very serious matter. If proven, it would constitute a material breach of obligations under the Convention.

South Africa remains committed to its international obligations as a State party to the CWC and as a member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In that regard, South Africa reiterates its long-standing position against the use of chemical weapons. No cause can ever justify the use of any weapon of mass destruction by any actor under any circumstances.

In order to ensure that States Parties adhere to their obligations, it is imperative that they have full faith and confidence in the work and processes of the OPCW. As the only technically competent international authority in this area, external interference or manipulation of its work should not be tolerated.

South Africa strongly supports multilateralism and the international rule of law, which includes the non-discriminatory and consistent application of the provisions of relevant multilateral instruments and the preservation of the international norms against weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons.

As indicated on a number of occasions, South Africa will continue to work for the depoliticization of the relevant management and decision-making structures established under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and also towards ensuring that States parties are held accountable for any violation of their obligations on the basis of credible, impartial and incontrovertible evidence.

States parties to the CWC should therefore unite in preserving the international norms against chemical weapons and the provisions of the Convention, along with its consistent and non-discriminatory implementation. We encourage the Government of Syria to cooperate with the OPCW in resolving all outstanding issues in order to enable the international community to have confidence in the peaceful nature of Syria's chemical activities.

The only sustainable solution to the Syrian question remains the achievement of a political solution through an inclusive Syrian-led dialogue aimed at achieving a political transition reflective of the will of the Syrian people, with guaranteed protections for all groups within Syrian society.

As long as there is no progress on the political front, the already precarious humanitarian catastrophe in Syria will further deteriorate and there will be further loss of life and destruction. All parties to the conflict owe it to the people of Syria to find an alternative to the ongoing conflict.

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**Annex XIII****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, Tarek Ladeb**

I would like to thank Mrs. Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing.

The use of chemical weapons is morally reprehensible and defies all norms of international law. It is an issue of serious concern to the international community, as well as a crime. The international community needs to act collectively and with resolve so as to hold accountable those who use chemical weapons and rid the planet of these horrific weapons of mass destruction.

Tunisia's remains steadfastly committed to the chemical-weapon disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We firmly condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, under any circumstance, by whomsoever — be it a State or non-State actor — and call for perpetrators to be held to account.

Tunisia supports the important technical mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in verifying the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), including in the Syrian Arab Republic. We welcome the continued efforts and engagement of the OPCW with the Syrian authorities, particularly in the light of the latest deployment of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team in Syria for the twenty-third round of consultations, despite the impact of the coronavirus disease on OPCW-mandated activities,

We urge the Syrian Government to continue its cooperation and dialogue with the OPCW in order to resolve all outstanding issues and fulfil its obligations under the CWC and resolution 2118 (2013).

It is also essential that all allegations of chemical-weapon use in Syria undergo thorough, impartial and credible investigations in order to identify those responsible for such use and properly ascertain issues of compliance.

We take note of the ongoing process at the OPCW decision-making organs, which have reached advanced stages with regard to assessing Syria's compliance with its obligations under the CWC in the light of the conclusions of the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team and the ensuing proceedings of the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties. The aim continues to be for the international community to work together, with determination and in accordance with the CWC, in order to uphold the total ban on the use of chemical weapons.

Finally, Tunisia reiterates that only collective, coordinated and united action, including that of the Council, can eventually bring to a close the file on Syrian chemical-weapon use and contribute to resolving the Syrian conflict.

**Annex XIV****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

Let me congratulate you, Madam President, on taking up your position. It is good to have a fellow Commonwealth member in the chair.

May I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing and, through her, the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for his eighty-fifth monthly report (see S/2020/1056, annex), and the OPCW Technical Secretariat for its ongoing work in professionally and dispassionately implementing the tasks assigned to it by the OPCW Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

On 8 April, the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team issued its first report. In that report, it found the Syrian Arab Air Force responsible for three chemical attacks in Ltamenah in 2017, in which it used chlorine and sarin. Those findings bring the number of chemical-weapon attacks for which the United Nations and the OPCW has found the Syrian regime responsible to seven. It was yet further evidence that Syria had retained a chemical-weapon stockpile beyond the agreed date of destruction, with the intent and ability to produce and use them, and that Syria's initial declaration was incomplete. It was another reminder of the real threat this posed to Syrians and to the international non-proliferation regime.

In response, in a decision on 9 July, the OPCW Executive Council requested that the Syrian authorities declare the facilities used for the Ltamenah attacks and the chemical weapons it currently possesses and resolve the outstanding issues with its initial declaration. In addition to the six years that Syria has already had to do that, the Executive Council granted it an additional 90 days.

It is with great regret to note, as confirmed by the OPCW Director General on 14 October, that Syria failed to take the required steps. It is with further regret that the Syrian regime did not even see fit to respond to the Director General's letter notifying it of the action requested of Syria.

We strongly condemn the failure of Syria to comply with yet another Executive Council decision. As recommended in that decision, the Conference of the States Parties should now take appropriate action to address Syria's failure to comply with the Executive Council decisions and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The failure to comply with the 9 July decision represents yet another failure to comply with the fundamental terms of resolution 2118 (2013), the issue before the Council today. In that resolution, we decided that, in the event of non-compliance, including the use of chemical weapons, we would impose measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. For the Security Council not to take action would be a dereliction of its duty and would undermine its authority. It is incumbent on all of us to uphold the Security Council's authority under the United Nations Charter. Syria's continued non-compliance is a proven threat to international peace and security.

Turning to the Director General's monthly report, I want to welcome the ongoing tireless work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, particularly in the light of the limitations imposed by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Regarding the work of the Declaration Assessment Team, we welcome that it was able to travel to Syria at the end of September for further consultations and to resolve issues with samples collected in a previous deployment. Regarding the

additional information and amendments to Syria's declaration referenced in last month's report (see S/2020/961, annex), we understand that these are still being assessed by the OPCW. We will wait for further reporting from the OPCW before we welcome any progress.

As the latest monthly report states, Syria's declaration cannot be considered accurate and complete, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, Executive Council decisions and resolution 2118 (2003). Further amendments to the declaration are yet more evidence that the initial declaration was incomplete. I would like to stress once again that Syria needs to cooperate fully with the OPCW and make progress on all outstanding issues.

I would like to touch on some points raised by the Russian Ambassador. We in the United Kingdom are gravely concerned by the poisoning of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny, with a nerve agent from the Novichok group. I remind colleagues on the Council that a similar chemical weapon was used in Salisbury, United Kingdom, resulting in death and severe injury. It is unacceptable that these weapons have been retained, and even worse that they have been used. Under the Chemical Weapons Convention, the poisoning of an individual through the use of a nerve agent is considered a use of chemical weapons. And, as the Council reaffirmed last November in presidential statement S/PRST/2019/14, any use of chemical weapons — anywhere, at any time, by anyone and under any circumstance — is unacceptable and a threat to international peace and security, and those responsible must be held to account. Russia must urgently conduct a full and transparent investigation into the use of a banned chemical weapon on its territory. We must not allow this behaviour to become normalized. Russia must fully cooperate with the relevant institutions, including the Security Council.

I am afraid that it is not difficult to understand Russia's motives for constantly attacking and seeking to undermine the OPCW.

**Annex XV****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Richard Mills**

I would like to thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing and for her inspiring concluding words.

The Security Council has met now on innumerable occasions — before and after the unanimous adoption of resolution 2118 (2013) — to discuss the Al-Assad regime's repeated use of chemical weapons, its contempt for the resulting international response and its failure to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The regime's conduct is not in question. Repeated investigations by the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism and the recent report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team have established the facts. Al-Assad's forces are responsible for horrific atrocities and immeasurable human suffering.

As we just heard, the barbaric use of chemical weapons is an unacceptable security threat to all States, and when weapons of this nature are used, all members of the Council must take decisive action to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Al-Assad's enablers, including the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran, share that responsibility with all of us. How can those Governments defend the grotesque reality that Syria's air force has repeatedly dropped sarin and chlorine bombs on civilians and, in the same breath, claim that they support international norms against the use of chemical weapons? It just does not add up.

Tragically, the politically divided place that we all find ourselves in today gives little reason to believe that accountability for this wretched conduct is within reach. The Council is blocked from fulfilling its mission by permanent members who are intent upon protecting a client at all costs, including the lives of many innocent Syrian women, men and children. And, unless and until those members alter their behaviour, Al-Assad has little reason to alter his.

So it is hardly surprising that the Al-Assad regime has been unresponsive, as we have heard, to the OPCW Executive Council's demands that it declare facilities where chemical weapons were developed, produced and stockpiled; that it reveal its remaining chemical-weapons stockpile and production facilities; and that it cooperate with the OPCW to account fully for its chemical-weapons programme. This charade has gone on since 2013, when Syria joined the OPCW.

As if the use of chemical weapons were not bad enough, the Syrian people are starving and their communities have been destroyed. Humanitarian relief is constrained and neighbour countries struggle to accommodate swelling refugee populations. Responsible Governments behave responsibly. They promote and protect the human rights and the well-being of their citizens. They cooperate with their neighbours to pursue peace, security and prosperity. They comply with their international obligations, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Syrian regime has failed on all of those basic obligations.

Responsible nations must stand united against the conduct of the Al-Assad regime and its gallery of supporters. While the Council is impeded by Russia and China, the effort elsewhere to pursue accountability must be sustained. We must take all available action at the upcoming OPCW Conference of the States Parties. We must document the Syrian regime's atrocities with precision. We must give voice to those displaced and preserve their histories. And we must spotlight the conduct

of the regime's enablers wherever possible and demand that they answer for their behaviour. The victims of Al-Assad's chemical-weapons attacks deserve nothing less from us.

**Annex XVI****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Pham Hai Anh**

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013).

First of all, let me begin by re-emphasizing Viet Nam's consistent policy of supporting complete disarmament and non-proliferation on weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. We would like to reiterate our categorical condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in any form, by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances or for any reason. Obligations of State parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) must be fully respected.

As a member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Viet Nam fully supports the work of the organization as entrusted by the CWC. We will continue to encourage the OPCW's endeavours in order to assist State parties in the full implementation of the Convention. To ensure tangible outcomes, the OPCW's investigations into any possible use of chemical weapons must be conducted in a most comprehensive, impartial and non-politicized manner to find conclusive and irrefutable evidence.

Regarding the matter of chemical weapons in Syria, we share the concern of the international community over the alleged use of chemical weapons affecting civilians' lives and living environment.

Viet Nam takes note the continued cooperation between the OPCW and Syria in the past years, as well as during the recent reporting period, as mentioned in the eighty-fifth report of the Director General of the OPCW (see S/2020/1056, annex).

Viet Nam is pleased to see that both sides have been able to retain their engagement given various challenges created by the coronavirus disease pandemic. In particular, we welcome the conduct of the twenty-third round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority in Damascus in late September and early October. We also take note of the submission of monthly reports by Syria to the OPCW Executive Council, as well as the engagement of OPCW mechanisms in relation to various other incidents.

The clarification of outstanding issues remains crucial with a view to putting an end to this long-standing issue. However, it is undesirable that there is still a lack of substantial progress in term of cooperation between the two sides. That is reflected in various monthly reports as well as the most recent report on the implementation of the 9 July OPCW Executive Council decision (see S/2020/1033, annex). For that reason, we call on the two sides to step up their efforts at cooperation. We believe that continued engagement is the most viable way to address remaining gaps and work towards the full implementation of resolution 2118 (2013).

In finding a solution to the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, we note with regret that there is strong disagreement among various parties. Viet Nam would therefore like to stress the vital importance of unity on this matter, both among CWC State parties and among Security Council members. Only when there is constructive and non-politicized engagement in dialogue and cooperation can there be a tangible solution to bridge the differences. We also look forward to further deliberation on this matter at the upcoming Conference of the State Parties to the CWC.

In conclusion, needless to say, the only path towards ending the current crisis in Syria is through a comprehensive political settlement, in full accordance with

principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. All issues need to be dealt with in a most comprehensive manner to find a durable solution.

**Annex XVII****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi**

I would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

Iran attaches great importance to the full, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and underlines the need for upholding the authority, credibility and legitimacy of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its Technical Secretariat.

As a major victim of chemical weapons in contemporary history, Iran condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Every effort should be made to prevent any use of these horrific weapons.

These objectives, however, can be realized only if all available tools are applied genuinely, professionally and, above all, without politicization or discrimination of any kind.

Nevertheless, unfortunately, what we continue to observe here in the Council and in the OPCW in the past several years is that a group of Member States has chosen to systematically abuse the relevant process in order to advance their own politically motivated objectives at any price whatsoever. Citing a series of unsubstantiated allegations, they are abusing these bodies against the Syrian Government and ignoring the progress achieved so far by that country in the implementation of its obligations.

The fact is that, in her final report to the Council in 2014, the head of the Joint Mission to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria confirmed that Syria had fulfilled all its commitments and that its entire chemical stockpiles had been destroyed. This was confirmed later by the OPCW itself.

Up to now, Syria has provided the OPCW with 83 monthly reports and large amounts of information, and in a letter dated 4 November 2020 to the OPCW Director General, declared its commitment to continue to work with the Technical Secretariat to resolve outstanding issues as soon as possible — the latest example being the recent holding of the twenty-third round of consultations between the Syria and the Declaration Evaluation Team to resolve the pending issues in Syria's initial declaration.

Despite such cooperation by Syria, some Western countries are pursuing an unproductive policy here in the Council and in the OPCW, resulting only in division in both and the erosion of their legitimacy and credibility. Furthermore, it has weakened professionalism and consensual decision-making process in the OPCW, adversely affecting the efforts for the full and effective realization of the very purpose of the CWC, namely, the elimination of chemical weapons, which is yet to be realized due to the blatant failure by the United States, as the sole major State party that possesses them, to destroy its chemical weapons.

The credibility of the OPCW is at stake. Every effort must be made to restore its authority and promote the full and non-discriminatory implementation of the CWC.

**Annex XVIII****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations, Bashar Ja'afari**

[Original: Arabic and English]

Let me congratulate you, Madam President, and your friendly country, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on presiding over the work of the Security Council for the current month. We have full confidence in your successful stewardship of its work, and I thank you for holding this open meeting on the so-called chemical file.

First, I would like to express our categorical rejection of what Mrs. Nakamitsu said about not receiving any response or new information from the Syrian Government prior to today's briefing. That is completely false, as yesterday we sent her two emails that included the most important information and updates with regard to Syrian cooperation. That is in addition to the information contained in an official letter, dated 4 November 2020, sent by Syria's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates to the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in response to his inquiries. Furthermore, Syria is currently hosting a delegation of experts and inspectors, who arrived on 3 November and will remain until 24 November. Syria cooperates fully with the OPCW and provides its experts with protection, security, safety and unrestricted access to all the places they wish to inspect. This is the seventh round of inspection. The reports of the sixth round confirmed that there are no chemicals or any activities at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre that are prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I have attentively listened to the statements delivered by my colleagues during this meeting. While we express our deep appreciation for the positions of members that adhere to the principles of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and that share our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction at any time, place and under any circumstances, our position — along with those members — simply focuses on the need to move away from politicizing these important issues and to preserve the technical nature, credibility and professionalism of the OPCW's work.

However, I am surprised by the surreal and absurd scene that the representatives of Western countries tirelessly repeat in their insistence on adhering to Goebbels principles of propaganda that they know well and persistently deny all facts, evidence and proof that confirm the erroneousness of their claims.

The manner in which some Western Governments deal with matters related to the situation in my country, whether related to political, humanitarian or chemical issues, reminds me of the novel penned by the famous Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson entitled *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Those Governments are trying hard to assume the role of Dr. Jekyll, the good character, when they preach about noble values and principles and voice out resonant slogans. In reality, however, and in their dealings with other countries, they behave like Mr. Hyde, the evil character who does not hesitate to commit various crimes while relishing in the suffering of his victims. As a result of their direct involvement in the terrorist, political, economic and financial war on my country, the Governments of these countries are directly and undeniably responsible for the suffering of the Syrian people over the past nine years.

Even when it comes to our discussion on arms control and the prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, there is a deep gap and rupture in the positions of the Western countries that destroyed Iraq under the guise of pretexts

that have been proven to be fallacies. Those same Governments have been waging a campaign of misinformation and fabricating accusations against my country for years now, even as they provide the Israeli occupation military and technical support to strengthen its arsenal of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and defend Israel in international forums in order to perpetuate Israel's violations of the relevant international agreements and instruments.

Is the task of maintaining international peace and security as permanent and non-permanent members of the Council consistent with that schizophrenia, selectivity and double standards? What of the lessons of history, the testimonies and reports of Hans Blix, Scott Ritter, David Kelly and José Bustani, and other documents that expose the manipulation of certain Governments in that regard to serve their agendas at the expense of international peace and security and the lives and well-being of the Syrian people? What about the facts and proof provided by former OPCW inspector Ian Henderson, Professor Theodore Postol and Mr. Aaron Maté during the Arria Formula meeting held on 27 September, thanks to a much-appreciated Russian initiative? I also remind the Council of the scandal when Western countries prevented Mr. José Bustani from speaking (see S/PV.8764).

The Syrian Arab Republic once again reaffirms that it did not use chemical weapons. Syria no longer has chemical weapons. Furthermore, Syria continues to be committed to cooperating with the OPCW, its Technical Secretariat and its Declaration Assessment Team in order to settle all outstanding issues, permanently close this file as soon as possible and remove it from the circle of games and media misinformation.

In that context, we kindly remind the Council that, despite the difficult security conditions that we went through years ago and the grave challenges posed by terrorist organizations and transnational terrorists and their operators, Syria was able to cooperate with the United Nations in New York and at the OPCW in The Hague in order to fulfil its commitments arising from its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013. That cooperation resulted in the disposal of the entire Syrian chemical stockpile and the destruction of the related production facilities. Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the joint mission of the OPCW in charge of eliminating chemical weapons in Syria, delivered that news to the Council in her briefing five years ago in June 2014, and it was confirmed by the documents issued by the OPCW Technical Secretariat, the latest of which is the eighty-fifth monthly report of the Director General (see S/2020/1056, annex), issued on 10 October.

Despite those assurances and the fact that representatives of the Western countries witnessed with their own eyes the destruction of the Syrian chemical-weapon stockpiles from the American ship *M/V Cape Ray* and several European ships, some Member States have maintained their hostile stance towards my country.

Those Member States sought to escalate political pressure and, without any verification, launched unilateral and tripartite acts of aggression that, inter alia, completely destroyed civilian facilities such as the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre, although the OPCW and its teams have repeatedly searched the Centre and confirmed that it was not used to carry out any illegal activities.

Moreover, the same Member States established illegal mechanisms, approved in violation of the law and the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, such as the so-called Investigation and Identification Team, and relied on the Team's reports, which lacked all credibility and professionalism. One example is the fabricated report about Ltamenah incidents. In addition, these States ignored the information provided by both the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation

in support of the decision issued by the OPCW Executive Council at its ninety-fourth session, and imposed artificial dates and deadlines that do not match the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, leading up to the current United States Administration submitting an escalatory draft resolution in the Council aimed at promoting its agendas and imposing them by pressure and threat.

That brings us back to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The United States of America, which claims to be keen on arms control and non-proliferation and has submitted to the Council a draft resolution against my country, is itself the only State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention that still possesses huge stockpiles of such weapons — ever since the Second World War — and refuses to destroy them. Furthermore, the United States, along with its allies, has sought to cover up the crimes of terrorist organizations and their use of chemical weapons and toxic gases against Syrian civilians and Syrian Arab Army forces.

That was again fully evident in the report of the Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic with regard to the Aleppo incident that took place on 28 November 2018, in which terrorist organizations used chemical weapons that resulted in the injury of 125 civilians and military personnel. The Mission concluded that those facts were in question and advanced the bewildering claim that it was unable to determine whether chemicals were used in that attack, despite evidence to the contrary provided by the Syrian and Russian Governments. Would the Fact-Finding Mission have adopted the same position if it could have attributed responsibility to the Syrian Government instead?

My country is committed to continuing to cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Declaration Assessment Team to resolve all outstanding issues. To that end, on 4 October, my Government sent an official letter to the Director General of the organization, which included responses to his inquiries regarding the implementation of the decision of the ninety-fourth session of the Executive Council, as concerns the incidents in Ltamenah. On 15 October, my country submitted its eighty-third monthly report to the Technical Secretariat on activities related to the destruction of chemical weapons and their production facilities. Last September, the tripartite cooperation agreement between the Syrian Government, the United Nations and the OPCW was extended for a period of six months, starting 30 September. From 28 September to 1 October, the twenty-third round of consultations was held between the Syrian Government and the Declaration Assessment Team, which visited Damascus, and the Syrian Government provided it full access to all facilities to ensure the success of its mission. Despite all that information, some colleagues in the Council and Mrs. Nakamitsu are claiming that the Syrian Government is not cooperating with the OPCW or with the Declaration Assessment Team.

Considering the positive action taken by my country, we call on all Member States of the OPCW to reject the politicization of the technical character of the organization and to address all serious defects in its work that could undermine its status and credibility. In the interest of preserving the mandate and credibility of the United Nations, we also call on the High Representative for Disarmament, Izumi Nakamitsu, to act with professionalism, impartiality and objectivity and not to ignore the information we submit to her.

My Government renews its support for the Russian Federation with regard to allegations made by Western countries on the Navalny case, and the Skripal case before that.

In conclusion, it is unfortunate that the minimal rules of etiquette in diplomatic discourse are absent, especially in the approach of my colleague the Permanent Representative of Germany. We assumed that, after almost two years of serving as

a non-permanent member of the Security Council, his performance would improve and his language would become more polished and refined. Fortunately, history indicates that Germany was in a state of war with my country at the beginning of the Second World War, when it invaded my country alongside the French proxy Vichy regime forces. Syria declared war on Nazi Germany and participated with the allies in establishing the United Nations in 1945. History teaches us also that our two countries maintained good relations since Nazism was eliminated. However, in his statements, the German Permanent Representative persists in using overly hostile language towards my country, as if we were in a state of war. Contrary to the convictions and delusions of the Permanent Representative of Germany, we do not believe we are in a state of war against Germany.

## Annex XIX

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Feridun Hadi Sinirlioğlu**

I would like to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this meeting, and High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The eighty-fifth report (see S/2020/1056, annex) of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) underlines once again the need for further work to eradicate the danger of the use of weapons of mass destruction in Syria.

The Syrian regime continues to flout its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, thus undermining the international community's efforts to bring the regime to account for its well-documented crimes against humanity.

The identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the regime's fraudulent declaration remain unresolved, in contravention of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013).

The outstanding issues related to the initial declaration of the Syrian regime must be resolved in full cooperation with the Declaration Assessment Team. The regime must declare the full extent of its chemical weapons programme to the OPCW without further delay.

The 9 July decision of the OPCW Executive Council was a crucial step forward in addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime.

We express our grave concern over the non-implementation of this decision by the Al-Assad regime within 90 days, as set out in that decision and as also indicated by the report of the OPCW Director General of 14 October 2020. Turkey looks forward to further measures, particularly during the next session of the Conference of States Parties, to address the failure of the Syrian regime to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons and production facilities in a fully verifiable manner.

The Security Council must act urgently and in unity on this crucial issue. That would be the only guarantee to prevent the future use of chemical weapons by the regime against its own people.

The Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (FFM) is working on the remaining investigations as they relate to chemical weapons use in Syria. We look forward to seeing the results of those investigations. We note the reports of the FFM on the Saraqib and Aleppo incidents, released on 1 October 2020. The FFM report on the allegations of a chemical weapons attack in Aleppo in November 2018 proves the unfounded nature of the regime's allegations. These unsubstantiated claims are aimed at nothing but diverting attention from Syria's well-established culpability in a number of chemical weapons attacks.

Turkey reiterates its full support for the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and looks forward to the publication of its next report. We once again underline our confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, the DAT, the IIT and the FFM. Their invaluable efforts need to be supported, instead of being hindered or discredited.

We would like to reiterate our call for accountability in Syria. The reports of the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the FFM, and most recently the IIT report on Ltamenah, provide sufficient basis on which we can act to end impunity. The IIT is working meticulously to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria and we commend its efforts.

We also fully support the cooperation between the OPCW secretariat and the International, International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM). The efforts of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic are also invaluable and contribute to the investigation of chemical weapons use in Syria.

We should not allow attempts that jeopardize the norm against the use of weapons of mass destruction. As part of our collective duty, we must all urge the Syrian regime to cooperate with the OPCW. The Al-Assad regime has resorted to conventional weapons and chemical weapons alike during a decade-long war against its own citizens. We appeal to the Security Council to act in unity and enforce the implementation of its resolution 2118 (2013).

Finally, I would also like to recall the special responsibility of those who have influence on the Syrian regime in this regard. History will judge us not only by what we have done, but also by what we have not done. We need to act decisively in order to ensure accountability in Syria. This is our historic responsibility to the victims of those chemical attacks.

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