



Security Council

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Letter dated 28 April 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the nineteenth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present letter covers the period from 23 March to 22 April 2015.

With respect to the destruction of the remaining 12 chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, all four underground structures that are accessible have now been verified by OPCW as destroyed. In addition, four of seven hangars have now been prepared for destruction with explosives. Resources have been mobilized to begin drilling at the fifth hangar. One underground structure and two hangars remain inaccessible for security reasons.

Dialogue between OPCW technical experts and the Syrian authorities continues with regard to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent amendments. The Declaration Assessment Team of OPCW is planning its ninth visit to the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its clarification of outstanding issues. In view of the importance of this matter, I welcome the continued consultations between OPCW and the Syrian authorities and reiterate my previous calls for ongoing cooperation in that regard.

The work of the fact-finding mission that is looking into allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is ongoing and OPCW experts are closely analysing all available information. I profoundly regret that such allegations continue to be raised and there can be no ambiguity regarding the seriousness with which they must be considered. I call again for the perpetrators of such acts to be brought to justice and I reiterate that any use of chemical weapons, by any party and under any circumstances, is utterly abhorrent.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex urgently to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) **BAN** Ki-moon



Annex

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled “Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme”, prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council. My report covers the period from 23 March to 22 April 2015 and also covers the reporting requirements contained in Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(Signed) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.
2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled “Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities” (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation “in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1”.
3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, also adopted a decision entitled “Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria” (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015).
4. This, the nineteenth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 March to 22 April 2015.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress within the reporting period by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:
 - (a) With respect to the destruction and verification of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) (seven aircraft hangars and five underground structures) in the Syrian Arab Republic as per Council decision EC-M-43/DEC.1 (dated 24 July 2014), the timeline for destruction of one underground structure and two aircraft hangars may become protracted should they remain inaccessible due to the security situation near these sites. Nevertheless, all four of the underground structures that are accessible have been verified by the OPCW as destroyed, and the drilling to accommodate the explosive charges has been completed at four of the five accessible aircraft hangars. The contractor’s resources have been mobilised to begin drilling at the fifth accessible hangar. The destruction of these hangars can commence once the supplier has delivered the required explosives.
 - (b) On 17 April 2015, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its seventeenth monthly report (EC-M-49/P/NAT.1, dated 17 April 2015) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

(c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1(e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. As reported previously, all declared chemicals have been removed from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, and all declared stocks of the Category 1 chemicals have been destroyed. A total of 93.1% of the Category 2 chemicals has now been destroyed, representing a combined total of 98.6%, including the isopropanol previously destroyed in the Syrian Arab Republic. The status of the destruction of the remaining Category 2 chemical (hydrogen fluoride (HF)) and effluents is as follows:

(a) A total of 43.8% of the HF has been destroyed at Veolia ES Technical Solutions, LLC in the United States of America and at Mexichem UK Limited in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. As the destruction at Veolia ES is currently on hold pending the resolution of technical issues, an accurate forecast about its completion date cannot be provided at this time.

(b) A total of 76% of the DF effluent and 93.8% of the HD effluent produced by the neutralisation process on board the United States Vessel MV Cape Ray has been destroyed by Ekokem in Finland and at the GEKA facility in Germany, respectively. Destruction activities are progressing in Finland and Germany, and are expected to be completed by the end of June 2015.

7. The Secretariat will continue to brief States Parties in The Hague on the aforementioned destruction activities. Timelines for the completion of the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons were provided in the overall report on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme (paragraph 25 of EC-76/DG.16, dated 4 July 2014), which was noted by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

8. In the context of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has continued and three OPCW staff members were deployed as part of that Mission as at the cut off date of this report. Ambassador José Artur Denot Medeiros of Brazil, as the Special Adviser to the Director-General on Syria, continued his meetings with senior Syrian officials, UNOPS staff, and the United Nations Designated Official in Syria during his visit from 21 to 23 March 2015.

9. The Director-General has continued to communicate with senior representatives of the States Parties hosting a destruction facility or providing assistance with the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and with senior officials of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

10. The Secretariat and the Syrian authorities have continued to cooperate on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration, as encouraged by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session (paragraph 6.17 of EC-76/6, dated 11 July 2014). During its eighth visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, which occurred between

22 March and 3 April 2015, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continued its technical consultations and interviews with key principals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme, including discussions on the analytical results of the samples taken during its visits in December 2014 and January 2015. Samples from three sites that were taken during the latest visit of the DAT are being kept under seal in Damascus and, together with future samples, will be transported to the OPCW Laboratory and then to the designated laboratories for analysis. The DAT will continue its consultations during its next visit, which is currently scheduled to take place from 17 to 29 May 2015.

11. Regarding the implementation of additional special monitoring measures in accordance with Notes EC-M-43/DG.1/Rev.1 (dated 21 July 2014) and EC-M-40/DG.2/Add.1 (dated 20 July 2014), the construction of the base monitoring stations at the four underground structures has been completed, as has the installation of cables at these sites. The training of the operators by Aquila Technologies on the installation, operation, and maintenance of the special monitoring system began on 20 April 2015 at OPCW Headquarters in The Hague and is expected to continue until 1 May 2015. The Secretariat is in receipt of the first set of the special monitoring system equipment to be installed in the Syrian Arab Republic, and is currently concluding the administrative and technical arrangements with the operators with respect to the aforementioned activities for which they are being trained. The arrangements include the conditions, such as the requirement for certain activities to be conducted in the presence of OPCW staff, and the related time frames (for example, the installation schedule, and so on).

Supplementary resources

12. The total contributions of EUR 50.3 million in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons and the contributors thereto remained unchanged from the previous report.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

13. A follow-up to the information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic in December 2014 alleging a number of incidents involving the use of chlorine remains pending. The Secretariat has responded to the State Party's further queries concerning team composition, the terms of reference, and the working methods of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). An FFM team stands ready to travel to Damascus upon receipt of clearance from the Syrian authorities.

14. With regard to the recent allegations of use of toxic chemicals in Idlib province, the Director-General has expressed his serious concerns. The FFM is examining all available information and will be guided in continuing its work by Council decision EC-M-48/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution 2209 (2015).

Conclusion

15. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the destruction of the eight remaining CWPFS and on making the special remote monitoring system operational in the four underground structures. The DAT and the FFM will also continue their work in the Syrian Arab Republic.