



Security Council

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Letter dated 1 March 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixty-fifth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) (see annex). The report covers the period from 24 January to 23 February 2019.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat met with a delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic in Beirut from 4 to 8 February 2019 to review the implementation of various activities and discuss the next steps related to the inspections conducted by the Declaration Assessment Team, the fact-finding mission and the Scientific Studies and Research Center.

In the absence of additional information from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Technical Secretariat continues to be unable to resolve all the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the chemical weapons declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Both parties expressed their readiness to continue working to clarify all outstanding issues. It was therefore decided that a technical meeting would be held in March 2019 with a view to preparing a joint work programme.

I reiterate my calls for cooperation by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic with OPCW in resolving all outstanding issues related to the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and, in that regard, I look forward to the technical meeting. I hope that the dialogue held on that occasion between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Syrian authorities will enable them to find ways to move forward on all issues related to Syrian chemical weapons.

As I have stated previously, the use of chemical weapons is abhorrent, and impunity for their use is inexcusable. It is therefore imperative to identify and hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons. The United Nations stands ready to assist in ensuring this outcome.

(Signed) António Guterres



Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

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 decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 24 January 2019 to 23 February 2019, as well as the reporting requirements in Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(Signed) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme****Background**

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, adopted a decision entitled “Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria” (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General’s intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council’s discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled “Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General’s intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled “OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall “regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1”.

5. This, the sixty-fifth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 January 2019 to 23 February 2019.

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

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 15 February 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its sixty-third monthly report (EC-90/P/NAT.5, dated 15 February 2019) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

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

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

9. From 4 to 8 February 2019, the Secretariat met with a delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic in Beirut, Lebanon, to review the implementation of various activities, including those of the DAT. In the course of these discussions, both parties expressed their readiness to continue working to clarify all outstanding issues pertaining to the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration. In this context, it was agreed that a technical meeting would be convened in March 2019 with the goal of developing a joint plan of activities.

10. During the reporting period, the Secretariat did not receive any additional information from the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the outstanding issues pertaining to its initial declaration. Therefore, the Secretariat remains unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, and therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

11. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat continues to assess conditions for the conduct of inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat conducted the third and fourth rounds of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in November and December 2018, respectively. Samples were taken during both inspections for analysis in OPCW designated laboratories. Once the results of this analysis have been received, the Secretariat will report on the results of both inspections to the Council.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

12. As mentioned in paragraph 9 above, from 4 to 8 February 2019, the Secretariat met with a delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic in Beirut, Lebanon, to review the implementation of various activities and discuss next steps. The two parties discussed activities related to the DAT, FFM, and SSRC inspections. The Secretariat made a

presentation to the Syrian delegation on the implementation of the decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018), which was adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Fourth Special Session, and on expected upcoming activities. The Syrian delegation took note of the presentation, reaffirmed its position with regard to the decision, and informed the Secretariat that it would report to its National Authority. On 21 February 2019, the Secretariat conducted a briefing to inform States Parties of the outcome of these consultations.

13. With the meeting held in Beirut, and following a visit to Damascus in October 2018 by a delegation of the Secretariat, and a meeting in The Hague in November 2018 between the Director-General and the Head of the Syrian National Authority, discussions are continuing on ways forward on all Syrian Arab Republic chemical weapons-related issues, through a structured dialogue.

14. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide support to the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement concluded between the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

15. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

16. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 20.1 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

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

17. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution [2209 \(2015\)](#), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

18. On 6 July, the Secretariat issued a Note entitled “Interim Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018” ([S/1645/2018](#), dated 6 July 2018 and Corr.1, dated 10 July 2018). On 7 August, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic that provided comments on the interim report. The FFM continues to collect and analyse information with regard to the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma and will provide a final report on its findings in due course.

19. At the end of September 2018, the FFM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic to gather further information and conduct interviews regarding five reported incidents currently under investigation: two incidents in Kharbit Masasnah on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Qalib Al-Thawr, Al-Salamiyah on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus on 22 October 2017; and one incident in Al-Balil, Souran on 8 November 2017. The FFM is currently analysing the information collected with regard to these incidents and will report to the Council on the results of this analysis in due course.

20. In response to a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic dated 28 November 2018, the Director-General deployed an advance team to Damascus from 4 to 6 December 2018 to collect information provided by the Syrian National Authority regarding an incident of alleged use of chemicals as a weapon in Aleppo on 24 November 2018. The FFM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic from 5 to 15 January 2019 to conduct interviews and visit hospitals in Aleppo, and to receive samples provided by the Syrian national authorities in Damascus. The Secretariat is analysing the collected information.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic

21. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 addresses, inter alia, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference encouraged the Director-General to continue to provide regular updates on the FFM's operations, taking into account the need to protect the security and safety of Secretariat personnel.

22. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat is putting in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report.

23. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the next progress report on its implementation will be submitted to the Council at its Ninetieth Session.

Conclusion

24. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed; and the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.
