



Security Council

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Letter dated 28 March 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixty-sixth 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 present report covers the period from 24 February to 23 March 2019.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat and representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic held a new round of technical consultations from 18 to 21 March 2019 at OPCW Headquarters in The Hague. In the course of these consultations, all outstanding issues pertaining to the initial declaration made by the Syrian Arab Republic were reviewed and prioritized for further action, and a road map for future activities was developed.

In the absence of additional information from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Technical Secretariat remains 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. The Technical Secretariat encouraged the Syrian national authority to use the technical consultations held in The Hague as an opportunity to resolve the outstanding issues pertaining to the declaration and expressed its readiness to continue providing assistance in this regard.

During the above-mentioned meeting, further consultations were held between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic on the report of the Fact-Finding Mission regarding the incident of alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018 (issued on 1 March 2019), and on the methods of work of the Mission in the framework of the structured dialogue.

I reiterate the need for full cooperation by the Syrian Government with OPCW in resolving all the outstanding issues related to the declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to the results of the technical consultations held in March 2019, and I hope that the dialogue between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian authorities contributes to finding ways to move forward on all Syrian chemical weapons-related issues.



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. Unity in the Security Council is fundamental to fulfilling this urgent obligation.

(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 February to 23 March 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-sixth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 February 2019 to 23 March 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 March 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its sixty-fourth monthly report (EC-91/P/NAT.1, dated 15 March 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, through a structured dialogue, to clarify all outstanding issues pertaining to the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration.

10. In this context, a new round of technical consultations between the Secretariat and representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic was convened from 18 to 21 March 2019 at OPCW Headquarters in The Hague. In the course of these consultations, all outstanding issues were reviewed and prioritised for further action, and a road map for future activities was developed. The Secretariat will report on the results of these discussions and on next steps in due course.

11. Prior to the aforementioned consultations, the Director General submitted a report entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-90/HP/DG.1, dated 4 March 2019) to the Council at its Ninetieth Session. The report stated that, since the issuance of the last report of the Director General on the work of the DAT (EC-89/HP/DG.2, dated 1 October 2018), the Syrian Arab Republic has not provided any new information that could contribute to resolving any of the outstanding issues identified in relation to its initial declaration and related submissions. It therefore concluded that 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 and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1. The Secretariat encourages the Syrian National Authority to use the ongoing technical consultations as an opportunity to reach tangible outcomes in resolving the outstanding issues pertaining to its declaration, and stands ready to continue providing its assistance in this regard.

12. The Director General submitted a report entitled "Status of Implementation of Executive Council Decision EC-83/DEC.5, Dated 11 November 2016" (EC-90/DG.12, dated 27 February 2019) to the Council at its Ninetieth Session. The report stated that, 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. The report further stated that, 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.

13. The report noted that, in the course of conducting these inspections, the Secretariat observed some ongoing construction activities at both inspected locations, as indicated by the Syrian Arab Republic during the pre-inspection briefing in Damascus. In this regard, the Syrian Arab Republic was advised, and subsequently agreed, that the Secretariat should be notified of the nature and scope of such activities prior to their commencement so that they can be taken into consideration during the inspection planning process.

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

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.

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

16. 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.

17. 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).

18. The Secretariat subsequently issued the final report on this incident entitled “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018” ([S/1731/2019](#), dated 1 March 2019). The report concluded that the evaluation and analysis of all the information gathered by the FFM provide reasonable grounds that the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon took place. The report further concluded that this toxic chemical contained reactive chlorine, and that the toxic chemical was likely molecular chlorine. The Secretariat provided States Parties with a briefing on this report on 5 March 2019, and will provide written answers to questions submitted in writing by States Parties regarding the report.

19. During the aforementioned meeting with the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic that took place from 18 to 21 March 2019, the delegation and the Secretariat held further consultations regarding the Douma report and the FFM’s methods of work in the framework of the structured dialogue.

20. 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.

21. 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

22. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018) entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” addresses, inter alia, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “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.

23. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat is establishing an Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and putting in place other 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.

24. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Director General submitted a report entitled “Progress in the Implementation of Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 on Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (EC-90/DG.14, dated 7 March 2019) to the Council at its Ninetieth Session.

Supplementary resources

25. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which include the work of the DAT and IIT, and the biannual inspections of the SSRC. 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 Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Conclusion

26. 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. These activities will continue to be implemented within the framework of a structured dialogue with the Syrian Arab Republic.