



Security Council

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Letter dated 25 July 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the seventieth 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 June to 23 July 2019.

The Declaration Assessment Team continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and is analysing all the information collected and received during the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of technical consultations, conducted in March and April 2019. The outcome of this work will be reported to the OPCW Executive Council.

During the ninety-first session of the OPCW Executive Council, held from 9 to 12 July 2019 in The Hague, the OPCW Director-General reported on the results of the third and fourth rounds of inspections at the Barzah and Jamraya facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre, conducted in 2018. During the third round of inspections, a chemical listed in schedule 2 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention was detected in one of the samples taken at the Barzah facilities. The OPCW Technical Secretariat was informed that the Syrian National Authority had initiated an investigation into the issue and would inform the Technical Secretariat of its outcome. The fifth round of inspections was conducted from 5 to 13 July 2019 and the outcome will be reported to the Executive Council in due course.

The OPCW Director-General submitted to the Executive Council at its above-mentioned session a report entitled “Progress in the Implementation of Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 on Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use”. In addition, the OPCW Technical Secretariat circulated a note entitled “Work of the Investigation and Identification Team Established by Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (Dated 27 June 2018)”, setting out the composition of the Team, its focus and the methodology of investigation, as well as the expectation for full cooperation from all States parties.

As I have stated repeatedly, the use of chemical weapons by anyone and anywhere is intolerable, and impunity for their use is equally unacceptable. It is imperative to identify and hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons. Unity in the Security Council is essential to achieve 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 OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and United Nations 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 June to 23 July 2019 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(Signed) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

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

Note by 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 seventieth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 June to 23 July 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 22 July 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its sixty-eighth monthly report (EC-92/P/NAT.1, dated 22 July 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 Technical 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. Two Notes were submitted to the Council at its Ninety-First Session entitled “Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team” (EC-91/HP/DG.2, dated 1 July 2019) and “Outcome of Consultations with the Syrian Arab Republic Regarding its Chemical Weapons Declaration” (EC-91/DG.23, dated 5 July 2019). The Director-General reported on the results of the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of consultations and on the field activities that had been conducted in the Syrian Arab Republic during the twenty-first round of consultations.

10. The DAT is analysing all information that was collected and received during these consultations and field activities. The outcome of this work, together with any further information that may be provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and/or collected from possible future DAT deployments, will be reported to the Council accordingly.

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. The Director-General reported on the results of these inspections to the Council at its Ninety-First Session in the document entitled “Status of Implementation of Executive Council Decision EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016)” (EC-91/DG.17, dated 26 June 2019).

12. During the third round of inspections, a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical (ethyl ethylphosphonate) was detected in one of the samples taken at the Barzah SSRC facilities and reported as an uncertainty and an issue requiring further attention. According to the reports of the two designated laboratories that conducted the analysis, the chemical detected “could be the primary hydrolysis product of a Schedule 1.A.01 or 1.A.03 chemical”. The Secretariat was informed that the Syrian National Authority has initiated an investigation on this issue and that it will keep the Secretariat informed of its outcome.

13. During the 2018 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 that the nature and scope of such activities shall be notified to the Secretariat prior to their commencement so that they can be taken into consideration during the inspection planning process.

14. The Secretariat conducted the fifth round of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah SSRC facilities from 5 to 13 July 2019. The outcome of these inspections will be reported to the Council in due course.

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

15. 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.

16. 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

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. 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.

19. 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 authorities in Damascus. The Secretariat is analysing the collected information.

Activities carried out by the Technical 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

20. 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.

21. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat has established the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), which has initiated its work 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. The Secretariat circulated for the information of States Parties a Note entitled “Work of the Investigation and Identification Team Established by Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018)” (EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019), setting out the composition of the IIT, its current focus and methodology of investigation, as well as the expectation for full cooperation from all States Parties.

22. 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-91/DG.20, dated 1 July 2019) to the Council at its Ninety-First Session.

Supplementary resources

23. 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 22.4 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

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; inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah sites of the SSRC; 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 the Structured Dialogue with the Syrian Arab Republic.
