



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 29 November 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the seventy-fourth 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 October to 23 November 2019.

I note that the Declaration Assessment Team continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues related to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic to OPCW. In this context, and in order to build upon the work carried out during previous consultations, the Team deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic to conduct the twenty-second round of consultations from 14 to 23 October 2019. The outcome of this work will be reported to the OPCW Executive Council accordingly.

I note that, pursuant to OPCW Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Technical Secretariat conducted its sixth round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamraya facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre from 6 to 11 November 2019.

Furthermore, the OPCW Technical Secretariat is conducting an analysis of the explanation provided by the Syrian Arab Republic on 7 November 2019 regarding the chemical listed in schedule 2 that was detected in one of the samples taken at the Barzah facility during the third round of inspections.

The OPCW fact-finding mission is currently analysing the information collected during its deployment to the Syrian Arab Republic from 25 October to 5 November 2019 related to the incident in Aleppo on 24 November 2018 and the incident in Yarmouk, Damascus, on 22 October 2017. Moreover, the mission is planning further deployments and will report to the OPCW Executive Council on the results of its work in due course.

I note that the next progress report on the implementation of the decision to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic (C-SS-4/DEC.3) is to be submitted to the OPCW Executive Council at its ninety-third session, to be held from 10 to 13 March 2020.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Director General of OPCW, Fernando Arias, during his visit to New York on 6 November 2019 and reiterated my support for the work of OPCW.

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 October to 23 November 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 seventy-fourth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 October to 23 November 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 19 November 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its seventy-second monthly report (EC-93/P/NAT.2, dated 19 November 2019) 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.

#### **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. The DAT deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic from 14 to 23 October 2019 to conduct the twenty-second round of consultations. These consultations built upon the work carried out during the previous two rounds that had taken place, respectively, in March and in April 2019. The outcomes of this deployment, together with further information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and/or collected by the DAT, as well as the results of the analysis of information and samples obtained by the DAT during the previous rounds of consultations, will be reported to the Council accordingly.

10. 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 fifth round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in July 2019. The sixth round of inspections was conducted from 6 to 11 November 2019. The outcome of these inspections will be reported to the Council in due course.

11. During the third round of inspections, conducted in November 2018, a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical was detected in one of the samples taken at the Barzah SSRC facilities. After the Secretariat sent a request for clarification regarding this finding, the Syrian Arab Republic carried out an investigation into this issue and provided an explanation in a note verbale dated 7 November 2019. The Secretariat is conducting an analysis of this explanation and will reply to the Syrian Arab Republic upon completion of the analysis. The Secretariat will inform the Council of the progress made in clarifying this issue in due course.

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

12. From 4 to 6 November 2019, the Director-General visited the United Nations in New York to address the United Nations Security Council and meet with senior United Nations officials on issues related to chemical weapons and the Syrian Arab Republic. After his address to the Security Council on 5 November, which was followed by a

question and answer session, the Director-General held a bilateral meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General.

13. Pursuant to the Council decision entitled “Combined Plans for the Destruction and Verification of Twelve Declared Chemical Weapons Production Facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-M-43/DEC.1, dated 24 July 2014), the Secretariat deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic from 12 to 19 November 2019 for its fourth annual visit to five sealed underground structures previously verified as destroyed.

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 allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

17. The FFM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic from 25 October to 5 November 2019 to interview witnesses and collect further information regarding incidents that took place in Aleppo on 24 November 2018 and in Yarmouk, Damascus on 22 October 2017. The FFM is currently analysing the information collected from this deployment, is planning further deployments, and will report to the Council on the results of this work in due course.

#### **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**

18. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018) adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Fourth Special Session addresses, inter alia, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

19. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat established the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) 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 did not issue a report. The IIT has begun its investigations and reached out to States Parties requesting their cooperation.

20. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the next progress report on implementation of that decision will be submitted to the Council at its Ninety-Third Session, which will take place from 10 to 13 March 2020.

#### **Supplementary resources**

21. 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 30.2 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark,

Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, 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**

22. 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; and the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.

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