



Statement by the Director-General of the OPCW on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare, 30 November 2021

The observance of the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare was decided by the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2005.

This was subsequently affirmed by the Conference in 2015, following the Centennial Commemoration of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons at Ieper, Belgium.

Since then, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) dedicates a day to pay tribute to those who have suffered by this insidious weapon.

Our collective resolve to ensure the permanent banishment of a weapon which has caused unspeakable torment for so many remains as strong as ever.

The plight of the victims of chemical warfare and the horrors they experienced drove the international community into comprehensively addressing the total ban of horrifying weapons.

It took time, decades in fact, of difficult and complex negotiations, involving numerous governments and other stakeholders.

Eventually, in 1993 the Chemical Weapons Convention was opened for signature. In 1997 it entered into force becoming hard international law.

Concerted actions were required to implement the Convention and attain concrete, tangible results that have had real security benefits for all.

Twenty-four years later, the fruits of those efforts are clearly discernible.

With around 99 percent of declared stockpiles of chemical weapons destroyed to date and 193 States as party to the Convention, the world is safer and more secure.

Thousands of individuals today and in the past have devoted themselves to realising these monumental achievements.

It is the memory of those we have lost to chemical weapons that has been a catalyst for our drive to unwaveringly uphold the norm against their use.

While we take this moment to remember them, let us rededicate ourselves to the object and purpose of the Convention and to the OPCW's vision of a world free from the threat and use of these abhorrent weapons.
