

**TÜRKİYE: STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SELÇUK ÜNAL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES UNDER AGENDA ITEM 8 – GENERAL DEBATE**

(The Hague, 25-29 November 2024)

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to thank H.E. Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan, Chairperson of the 28th Conference of States Parties, and H.E. Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral of Ecuador, Chairperson of the Executive Council, for their performance in fulfilling their respective duties.

And I would like to extend my congratulations to H.E. Ambassador Almir Šahović of Bosnia and Herzegovina on his election as the Chairperson of the 29th Conference of States Parties. We also express our gratitude for being elected as Vice-Chairperson from the WEOG along with Germany. The Chairperson will have my Delegation's full support in steering the Conference as we will work closely to conclude it successfully.

Today full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is more important than ever. Convention is being confronted with many challenges including the threat of use and re-emergence of chemical weapons. We should also add artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, if in the wrong hands, and current global security situation. The threat posed by chemical weapons to international peace and security can be eliminated only by ensuring full compliance to the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Türkiye is strongly committed to the Convention. It is a crucial pillar of our global disarmament and non-proliferation policy.

As an example of our work in this field, AFAD, Türkiye's disaster agency, has just organized the Third International CBRN Congress on 20-22 November 2024 in Ankara, Türkiye. We are pleased that the OPCW was represented at the Congress by Mr. Hong Li, Director of External Relations, as a key note speaker, as well as other international organizations. I would like to express our thanks to be part of the OPCW's Designated Laboratories as our Chemical Warfare Agents Diagnosis and Verification Laboratory (NPHRL) was designated for the analysis of authentic environmental samples. Turkish laboratories joined the OPCW list for the first time and will continue to participate in the Organization's official proficiency tests.

Chemical terrorism remains a concern. We support the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism chaired by Ambassador Madonsela of South Africa. We attended the Working Group's fruitful table-top exercise in July this year for the first time and will contribute to it to prepare and finalize the Action Plan.

We highly appreciate the active role of the OPCW in all fields under its mandate including destruction of chemical weapons, preventing their re-emergence and promoting international cooperation for the development of chemical industry. We commend the Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias for his leadership of the Organization.

We are glad to see support of the international community for the OPCW and its activities as we have seen it in the annual resolution at UN General Assembly First Committee.

Türkiye supports the Technical Secretariat's efforts to strengthen its capacity including by rehiring of former inspectors which would ensure retention and transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise. We highlight the importance of gender equality and fair geographical representation in this process. Türkiye also supports revised draft programme and budget for 2025 by the Director-General. The Organization should be provided the resources for effective implementation of the Convention.

On the other hand, we recall the attack by PKK affiliates to our building on 3 December 2021. We note the conviction of 4 intruders with prison sentences by the competent Dutch court and are following the process.

We hereby would like to extend our support and appreciation to the TS for enhancing the physical security measures of the HQ.

Mr. Chairperson,

The ongoing humanitarian crisis and grave violations of international law in Palestine and in particular in Gaza come to a catastrophic point. Along with other atrocities against civilians which amount to genocide, Israel's use of white phosphorus is only making the situation worse. While we understand it is not prohibited under the Convention, we should not allow exploitation of this status. We should have a moral obligation and monitor Israel's alleged and possible use of prohibited chemical weapons. We welcome that the Secretariat is monitoring all allegations of use of chemical weapons and stands ready to assist in accordance with the Convention. We welcome the ceasefire announced last night.

We support territorial integrity of Syria. We totally refuse the statement of the Syrian regime claiming my country as an occupier. We are fighting against PKK and DAESH terrorism. They should look at the other corners. We express our continued support for the Secretariat and its Syria missions in addressing the gaps and inconsistencies in Syria's declarations of chemical weapons as well as establishing the facts on the allegations of chemical weapons use and the perpetrators. While expressing our concerns with recent DAT findings, we also see insufficient level of cooperation by the Syrian regime. Instead of accusing us as occupier, they should first give credible reports to the Secretariat. Instability should end with the UN-led political process within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. Türkiye is working towards this goal.

Türkiye expresses its strong support for territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. We note Secretariat's report on the reported use of Riot Control Agents at the frontline in Ukraine. Since the outset of the war, we have been consistent in our view that a legitimate and just peace depends on diplomacy. In addition to our efforts for the Black Sea Grain Deal, Türkiye is supporting the current reconstruction efforts and leading the Food Security Working Group. Our efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict will continue.

Mr. Chairperson,

At the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare, I would like to underline Türkiye's commitment to accountability and prevention of impunity on use of chemical weapons. Türkiye has opened its gates to half a million Iraqis when they had been attacked. Likewise, we have opened our gates to Syrians who were attacked. We are determined to fight against impunity and ensure accountability of the use of these horrific weapons.

Thank you.