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### JAPAN

#### **REPORT ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE ACW PROJECT IN CHINA IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DECISION EC-67/DEC.6 REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JUNE – 31 AUGUST 2024**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This update is submitted in accordance with Executive Council (the Council) decision EC-67/DEC.6 (dated 15 February 2012) and describes the progress of the Abandoned Chemical Weapons (ACW) destruction project (the ACW project) in China from 1 June to 31 August 2024. Japan has been carrying out the destruction of ACW to fulfil its obligation under the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention) and has invested significant financial and personnel resources to make all possible efforts.
- 1.2 Japan has proceeded with the project in accordance with Council decision “Destruction Plan beyond the Year 2022 for the Chemical Weapons Abandoned by Japan in the People’s Republic of China” (EC-101/DEC.2, dated 4 October 2022), which was jointly submitted to the Council in 2022.
- 1.3 During the reporting period, Japan, in close consultation with China, continued to make its utmost effort to make further progress in the ACW project.

#### **2. CHALLENGES OF THE ACW PROJECT**

- 2.1 The ACW project entails various challenges. Excavation and recovery operations are conducted in various locations, including mountainous areas, riverbeds, and urban districts. Most ACW items are highly corroded or deformed as a result of remaining underground or underwater for a long time. Therefore, maximum caution and technical expertise are required for all processes from excavation to destruction. In addition, due to harsh weather conditions, many ground operations in northern China cannot be carried out in wintertime.
- 2.2 While providing all financial resources, Japan relies on the cooperation of China for various tasks such as the selection, design, and construction of destruction site facilities, the transportation of ACW, various domestic coordination and administrative procedures, the procurement of explosives, and the security of ACW storehouses and destruction facilities. In addition, since the project is carried out on Chinese territory, it must be implemented in compliance with laws and regulations of China.



- 2.3 As the accurate number and location of ACW in China are unknown, Japan has provided China with all available information, including burial locations, material used for chemical weapons production, the deployment of former Japanese army personnel, the location of their arsenals and depots at the end of the Second World War, and records of testimonies by former Japanese military personnel.
- 2.4 Japan places the highest priority on the safety of the local community and personnel, as well as the protection of the environment, in order to move this unprecedented project forward, which involves dangerous tasks.

### **3. PROGRESS OF THE ACW PROJECT DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD**

#### **3.1 Destruction of ACW at mobile destruction facilities (MDFs):**

##### **The Harbin site**

- (a) The destruction operation in Harbin started on 7 May 2019. After being suspended due to the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the operations resumed in 2022.
- (b) The operations in 2024 started on 29 April. During the reporting period, 1,172 ACW items were destroyed, and the total number of ACW destroyed at the Harbin destruction site had reached 6,970 as at the cut-off date of this report.

##### **The Wuhan site**

- (c) ACW items stored in the storehouses in Guangzhou and Jiujiang were consolidated to the storehouse in Wuhan and the destruction operation in the High-Mobility Destruction Facility (HMDF) at a Wuhan MDF site started on 15 May 2024. During the reporting period, 3,278 ACW items were destroyed.
- (d) The total number of ACW items destroyed through MDF projects reached 48,925.

##### **The Xinzhou site**

- (e) ACW items stored in the storehouses in Jincheng, Bayannaer were consolidated to the storehouse in Taiyuan, and are expected to be destroyed with the HMDF in Xinzhou or its alternative sites after the completion of its destruction with the HMDF in the Wuhan site.

#### **3.2 ACW project in Haerbaling:**

##### **Excavation and recovery**

- (a) Excavation and recovery operations in Haerbaling began in December 2012.
- (b) After the suspension of operations since early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the excavation and recovery operations were resumed on 12 May 2021.
- (c) During the reporting period, excavation and recovery operations were conducted.

## **Destruction**

- (d) The destruction operation in Haerbaling commenced in December 2014.
- (e) After the suspension of operations since early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the destruction operation was resumed on 19 May 2021.
- (f) During the reporting period, 8,894 ACW items were destroyed by the Static Detonation Chamber (SDC) and Controlled Detonation Chambers or Haerbaling Large Chambers (HLCs), which were launched in October 2022.
- (g) The total number of ACW items destroyed at the Haerbaling destruction site had reached 56,480 as at the cut-off date of this report.

### 3.3 Investigation, excavation, and recovery operations, and transportation operations in various areas:

During the reporting period, the excavation and recovery operations were conducted in Jiamusi and Mudanjiang.

## **4. MEASURES TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Given the nature of the project, Japan attaches great importance to consultations with China in order to move the project forward effectively for both States Parties. During the reporting period, the bilateral consultations were conducted.
- 4.2 The on-site inspection was resumed last year after it had been suspended until the end of 2022 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan continues to make the utmost effort to advance the ACW project while ensuring its transparency.
- 4.3 In order to select and confirm the technology and facilities to be used for the destruction of the ACW (mixture of yellow agents and other substances) stored at Liaoyuan, a portion of the material was transported to Haerbaling in March 2024. Test operations were conducted through the SDC and HLC from 16 to 23 April 2024. The situation regarding the cutting and transportation of samples was declared in August 2024.
- 4.4 Japan welcomed the Council delegations to the Mudanjiang excavation and recovery site and the Haerbaling destruction site, co-hosted with China, in September 2024. This helped improve the understanding of the progress on ACW projects, especially the accelerated rate of excavation, recovery, and destruction operations over the last few years.

## **5. EFFORTS TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS IN THE DESTRUCTION PLAN**

- 5.1 Regarding the medium- to long-term plan of the excavation and recovery at Jiamsui, Shangzi, and Hunchun, several rounds of consultations have been held between the Japanese and Chinese authorities since 2023. Unfortunately, the plan has not yet been finalised due to ongoing discussions between the two parties to reconcile their respective claims. As the plan is to be made by mutual agreement, any unilateral criticism, such as the assertion that Japan is solely responsible, is unacceptable.

- 5.2 Japan and China have launched a working group to address human resource and technical issues that could affect the ACW projects over the medium to long term. Constructive discussions have taken place between Japan and China. Moreover, some measures developed therein have already been applied to excavation and recovery operations, making significant contributions to improve the efficiency of these operations.
- 5.3 The Japanese side has collected as much information as possible on the location of the ACW and provided it to the Chinese side. Although it is getting more difficult to find such information, as 79 years have passed since the end of the Second World War and the dismantling of the former Japanese Army, Japan continues to conduct a search and close readings of accessible documents.
- 5.4 The total number of declared ACW items as at the cut-off date of this report is 127,425. The total number of destroyed ACW items as at the cut-off date of this report is 105,405.
- 5.5 Due to the inherent uniqueness of the ACW project, there are many difficulties in its implementation. However, Japan remains committed to making its fullest possible efforts to destroy ACW in China in accordance with the Convention, and to closely cooperate with China and the OPCW to this end.

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