



Statement by the OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare

27 November 2024, The Hague, Netherlands

The Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare is an annual opportunity for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to pay tribute to those who have suffered and perished as a result of this truly abhorrent weapon.

It serves as a reminder of the human cost of chemical weapons and the enduring responsibility of the international community to ensure such atrocities are never repeated.

We mark this solemn occasion at a time of significant global challenges.

The international security environment is increasingly degraded, with rising tensions, conflicts, and a troubling erosion of disarmament and non-proliferation norms.

Despite the total destruction of all declared chemical weapon stockpiles under the Chemical Weapons Convention, their use and threat of use by both state and non-state actors over the past decade demonstrates that our work is far from over.

At the same time, we stand at the threshold of profound and far-reaching change, driven by rapid advances in science and technology.

These innovations hold vast potential to revolutionise industries and improve countless human lives.

However, they also present new risks, particularly if exploited for malicious ends.

Strengthening the safeguards against the misuse of emerging technologies and making certain they are harnessed only for peaceful purposes is among the key priorities of our time.

On this day, we reaffirm our shared commitment to the goal of the Convention: a world free of chemical weapons, where science serves humanity and not destruction.

Let us honour the memory of the victims by redoubling our efforts to uphold these principles, fostering international cooperation, and maintaining our vigilance in the face of evolving challenges.

Working together, we can turn remembrance into action, ensuring that future generations no longer live under the threat of chemical weapons.
