

NGO Joint Statement

**Addressing the problem of old and abandoned,
buried, and sea-dumped chemical munitions**

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Chairperson, Director-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Colleagues,

It is widely admitted that decaying toxic, abandoned, sea dumped and buried chemical weapons pose persistent and serious threats to the inhabitants of the regions where these chemical weapons were abandoned. They also pose a risk to human health and damage marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Pursuant to the convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction, each state party undertakes to destroy all chemical weapons it abandoned on the territory of another state party, in accordance with the provisions of this convention. (par. 3, article I, CWC).

All State Parties continue to work for a world free of chemical weapons, and the OPCW is celebrating the successful destruction of the declared CW. Yet, a lot should be done to destroy the non-declared ones.

In accordance with the convention, any country to be considered as the abandoning state party, should provide all necessary technical means, facilities and resources to destroy the abandoned chemical weapons in the country that suffered from the effects of such chemicals.

We have positive antecedents to learn from, represented by the joint efforts of Japan and China a decade ago, to destroy the Japanese abandoned chemical weapons in China, and the recent cooperation between Germany, Poland and Lithuania to detect and destroy German sea dumped chemical weapons.

Other countries can benefit from this experience and good will, as is the case of Spain and Morocco. OPCW can be of great help supervising the whole process of detecting and destroying the abandoned, buried, and sea-dumped chemicals.

Besides the necessary technical means, facilities and resources to destroy the abandoned chemical weapons, Spain in this specific case, is also urged to provide maps of the regions where chemical weapons were used, abandoned or dumped, and any necessary information to help detect them for further destruction.

There are two sites that are discernible thanks to historical evidence, and both represent a serious threat to the inhabitants nearby and to the marine ecosystem of the Mediterranean Sea. One is near Nador where the chemical factory known as La Maestranza, produced mustard gas during the Rif war, the second is in Al-Hoceima where the Spanish landing took place in 1925. Unsurprisingly, these two regions suffer nowadays from the highest cancer rates in the whole of Morocco.

For better achievement of this goal, it is highly recommended that other States Parties get involved, providing their experience and expertise. Guidance and supervision of the OPCW are essential for the success of the project, and the local support of the CWC Coalition is crucially needed.

I request this statement be a part of the record of the 29th Conference of States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention.