

**OPCW****Executive Council**

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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****PROGRESS IN THE ELIMINATION  
OF THE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAMME**

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (the Council) at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.
2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled “Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities” (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation “in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1”.
3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled “Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria” (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015), noting the Director-General’s intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council’s discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled “Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General’s intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.
4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled “OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall “regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1”.



5. The Council, at its Ninety-Fourth Session, adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-94/DEC.2, dated 9 July 2020). In paragraph 12 of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall “regularly report to the Council on the implementation of this decision and decide[d] also that the Director-General shall provide a copy of this decision and its associated reports by the Secretariat to all States Parties and to the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly through the United Nations Secretary-General”.
6. The Conference of the States Parties (the Conference), at its Twenty-Fifth Session, adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021). In paragraph 8 of this decision, the Conference decided that the Director-General shall regularly report to the Council and States Parties on whether the Syrian Arab Republic has completed all of the measures contained in paragraph 5 of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2.
7. This, the 136th monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council and Conference decisions and includes information relevant to the period 24 December 2024 to 23 January 2025.

#### **Obligations undertaken by the Syrian Arab Republic as a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention**

8. The Syrian Arab Republic acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention) on 14 September 2013. The Convention entered into force for this State Party on 14 October 2013. To date, the work to verify the Syrian Arab Republic’s initial declaration of its chemical weapons programme has continued, and due to the numerous gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies uncovered by the Secretariat over the past 11 years, this declaration still cannot be considered as accurate and complete.
9. All legal obligations binding upon the Syrian Arab Republic as a State Party to the Convention remain valid, regardless of any change in government. Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (both dated 27 September 2013) continue to provide the legal framework for the Secretariat’s efforts under the Convention aimed at eliminating the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons programme.
10. The evolving political and security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic presents an opportunity for the Organisation to obtain clarifications on the full extent and scope of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The Secretariat continues to closely monitor the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, paying special attention to the status of its chemical weapons-related sites.
11. In a note verbale to the Secretariat (Ref. SQH.3.25.1, dated 7 January 2025), the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW informed the Secretariat and all Member States of the OPCW, pursuant to a formal request from H.E. Assad Hassan al-Shaibani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, dated 28 December 2024, that Qatar, after close consultation and coordination with the Director-General, has agreed to represent the interests of the Syrian Arab Republic before the OPCW until further notice. As a result, the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW has become the sole official channel of communication and the only valid interlocutor in The Hague between the Syrian authorities and the OPCW.

**Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1**

12. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:
- (a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.
  - (b) As at the date of the submission of this report, due to the continuously evolving situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, no monthly report was received from the Syrian Arab Republic regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1. The Secretariat has liaised with the Permanent Representation of Qatar as the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW on this matter, and will further report in due course.

**Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities**

13. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

**Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5**

14. Since the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention in September 2013, the Secretariat has engaged with the relevant Syrian authorities to clarify the gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies noted in the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration under Article III of the Convention. In April 2014, following up on this ongoing declaration clarification work, and taking into account the concerns raised by several countries regarding the completeness and accuracy of the Syrian declaration, the Director-General established a multidisciplinary team of experts, known as the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), to engage with the relevant Syrian authorities over any gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies in the declaration.
15. Since April 2014, the DAT has conducted 28 rounds of consultations with the Syrian National Authority and two limited deployments to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian authorities, in accordance with the Convention, Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-81/DEC.4, EC-83/DEC.5, and EC-94/DEC.2, Conference decisions C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018) and C-25/DEC.9, as well as United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).
16. As a result of the work of the DAT, the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted 20 amendments to its initial declaration, declaring additional and previously undeclared elements of its chemical weapons programme. This includes an additional chemical weapons production facility, several additional chemical weapons research and development facilities, activities involving a number of previously undeclared chemical warfare agents, a substantial amount of previously undeclared chemical munitions, and other supplementary information about all of the elements of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

17. Under the Convention, the Syrian Arab Republic must declare all chemical warfare agents produced and/or weaponised at former declared chemical weapons sites that were declared as never having been used to produce and/or weaponise such agents.
18. To date, the DAT has raised and reported a total of 26 outstanding issues, of which seven have been resolved, while the other 19 remain open. The substance of the 19 outstanding issues remains a serious concern to the Secretariat, as it involves large quantities of chemical warfare agents and munitions that were reportedly destroyed or otherwise consumed prior to the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention, the fate of which cannot be fully verified by the Secretariat. It also involves potentially large quantities of chemical warfare agents, the production of which has not been declared by the Syrian Arab Republic to the Secretariat.
19. In addition to the above 19 outstanding issues, in accordance with Council decision EC-94/DEC.2 the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to declare all remaining chemical agents—including sarin, sarin precursors, and chlorine not intended for purposes not prohibited under the Convention—as well as CWPFs and other related facilities. This also includes the facilities where chemical weapons—including the precursors, munitions, and devices used in the March 2017 attacks in Ltamenah—were developed, produced, stockpiled, and operationally stored for delivery.
20. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is continuing to assess conditions for the conduct of inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports.
21. As mandated by paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat conducted the eleventh round of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) from 12 to 20 November 2024. The final inspection reports for the Barzah and Jamrayah SSRC facilities were issued at the end of November 2024.
22. As previously reported, the twelfth round of SSRC inspections was planned to take place from 11 to 17 December 2024, but was cancelled on 4 December 2024 because of the deteriorated security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.
23. With regard to the issues that remain open from previous inspections, namely the presence of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical in the sample collected during the November 2018 inspection, and the origin and usage of a chemical of a dual-use nature observed by the inspection team during the September 2022 inspection at the SSRC Barzah facilities, the Secretariat has not received any new information that might resolve these issues.
24. The Secretariat stands ready to engage further on these matters with the relevant Syrian authorities and international partners as needed.

**Other activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic**

25. On 26 December 2024, the Director-General held telephone consultations with H.E. Assad Hassan al-Shaibani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, which were aimed at facilitating a deployment of OPCW experts to the Syrian Arab Republic. The Director-General has also continued to consult with high-ranking officials of the United Nations.
26. In a note verbale to the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW as acting on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic (No. NV/ODG-651/24, dated 22 January 2025), the Secretariat recalled the Director-General's proposal to deploy a team of experts from the Secretariat in Syria to engage with Syrian experts on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier; this was also conveyed through a letter from the Director-General dated 14 January 2025 addressed to the Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic. The note verbale contained the "OPCW Secretariat's 9-point Action Plan for Syria". The Note also recalled the acceptance of the Director-General of the informal offer made by the Syrian Foreign Minister to visit Damascus, which would allow the Director-General to brief, inter alia, high-ranking members of the Syrian Government and Syrian experts as needed. As no experts were appointed from the Syrian side that would allow for interaction with the Secretariat team, and as the team's deployment to the Syrian Arab Republic could not take place, the Director-General proposed two dates to the Minister to visit Damascus. As at the date of this report, the Secretariat was still awaiting a response to this proposal.
27. In a separate note verbale to the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW as acting on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic (No. NV/ODG-652/25, also dated 22 January 2025), the Secretariat emphasised the importance of securing the chemical weapons-related locations and materials therein, with the aim of ensuring the implementation of the Secretariat's mandate under the Convention and assisting the Syrian Government in managing the risks and hazards posed by chemical weapons.
28. The Secretariat, in Note Verbale No. NV/ODG-636/24 to the Syrian Arab Republic (dated 9 December 2024), reminded the Syrian Arab Republic of its continued obligations under the Convention and requested that it fulfil its obligations. Furthermore, the Secretariat requested that the Syrian Arab Republic once again declare all sites and activities as listed in Council decision EC-94/DEC.2. The Secretariat also requested updated information regarding:
  - (a) the security and integrity of declared chemical weapons research, development, production, storage and testing sites/locations;
  - (b) any movements, changes, or incidents involving materials and/or documentation from these sites/locations; and
  - (c) the measures being implemented to ensure compliance with the Convention under present conditions.
29. Receipt of this note verbale was acknowledged by email the same day, with embassy personnel informing the Secretariat that the current situation in the Syrian Arab Republic did not permit them to forward the note at that time. The note verbale was shared with all States Parties.

30. In accordance with Rule 12(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council, the Director-General requested that a meeting of the Council be convened to address the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in relation to the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Subsequently, the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Council was held on 12 December 2024, during which the Director-General delivered a statement on the matter. The Council noted a Note circulated by the Secretariat (EC-M-66/S/1, dated 9 December 2024) containing Note Verbale No. NV/ODG-636/24, and noted the statement by the Director-General. The Council decided to remain seized of the matter.
31. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide support to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement concluded between the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic. This Agreement facilitates the Secretariat's mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and to any subsequent decision or resolution of the relevant organs of the OPCW or the United Nations, as well as any bilateral agreements concluded between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic. As at the date of this report, due to the continuously evolving situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the process of finalising a six-month extension of the Agreement could not be completed. The Secretariat has engaged with the Permanent Representation of Qatar to the OPCW on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic to address this matter.

#### **Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria**

32. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 4 February 2015 and 23 November 2015, respectively), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.
33. The FFM is continuing its work and will issue further reports in due course.

#### **Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic**

34. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat established the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism did not issue a report.
35. The IIT is continuing its investigations in accordance with the Note entitled "Work of the Investigation and Identification Team Established by Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (Dated 27 June 2018)" (EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019) and will issue further reports in due course. In accordance with paragraph 12 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat will continue to preserve and provide information to the mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016), as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations. Further, the Secretariat will continue to integrate knowledge and expertise from the IIT, in line with the Convention and decisions adopted by the policy-making organs, into standard operations.

36. The Secretariat is closely monitoring ongoing developments in the Syrian Arab Republic, as these may result in improved access to evidence and witnesses relating to the perpetrators of incidents of use of chemical weapons falling within its purview. The IIT stands ready to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic if and as soon as it is granted access to the country.

**Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-94/DEC.2**

37. In paragraph 5 of decision EC-94/DEC.2, the Council decided:
- to request, pursuant to paragraph 36 of Article VIII of the Convention, that the Syrian Arab Republic complete all of the following measures within 90 days of this decision in order to redress the situation:
- (a) declare to the Secretariat the facilities where the chemical weapons, including precursors, munitions, and devices, used in the 24, 25, and 30 March 2017 attacks were developed, produced, stockpiled, and operationally stored for delivery;
  - (b) declare to the Secretariat all of the chemical weapons it currently possesses, including sarin, sarin precursors, and chlorine that is not intended for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as well as chemical weapons production facilities and other related facilities; and
  - (c) resolve all of the outstanding issues regarding its initial declaration of its chemical weapons stockpile and programme.
38. At the end of the 90 days, the Syrian Arab Republic had not completed any of these measures.
39. With regard to the inspections mandated by paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2, the Secretariat is monitoring the current security situation and will inform the Syrian Arab Republic when it is prepared to deploy for this purpose.

**Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Conference of the States Parties decision C-25/DEC.9**

40. In paragraph 7 of decision C-25/DEC.9, the Conference decided, after careful review, and without prejudice to the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under the Convention, pursuant to subparagraph 21(k) of Article VIII and paragraph 2 of Article XII of the Convention, to suspend several rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention.
41. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference decided, inter alia, that the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic suspended in accordance with paragraph 7 of decision C-25/DEC.9 are reinstated by the Conference once the Director-General has reported to the Council that the Syrian Arab Republic has completed all of the measures stipulated in paragraph 5 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the date of this report, the Syrian Arab Republic had not completed any of these measures.

42. The Secretariat will continue to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic with regard to the completion of said measures and will continue to report to the Council as mandated.

**Decision on addressing the threat from chemical weapons use and the threat of future use**

43. As previously reported, at its Twenty-Eighth Session, the Conference adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use and the Threat of Future Use” (C-28/DEC.12, dated 30 November 2023). The Secretariat is reporting on the elements in the decision concerning the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons dossier in accordance with existing reporting obligations.

**Supplementary resources**

44. The Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which presently include the work of the DAT and the IIT, as well as the biannual inspections of the SSRC and the two sites identified in paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions and pledges to this fund stood at EUR 48.1 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.
45. Given that the Syrian chemical weapons programme still needs to be declared to its full extent and destroyed by the Syrian Arab Republic, with the corresponding verification by the Secretariat, the Organisation will need to rely on support from States Parties for additional financial and human resources to carry out any future non-routine missions in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat will also continue to adapt its presence in the Syrian Arab Republic as appropriate, in line with its anticipated activities.

**Conclusion**

46. The future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will focus on engagement with the Syrian Transitional Government to identify the best way for the Secretariat to continue implementing its mandates in accordance with the Convention and all relevant OPCW decisions and United Nations Security Council resolutions, as well as to support and assist the Syrian Transitional Government in fulfilling all of the Syrian Arab Republic’s obligations under the Convention.