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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 137th monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council and Conference decisions and includes information relevant to the period 24 January to 23 February 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. As previously reported, 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 current political 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 and to ensure long-term compliance with the Convention. 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. Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, caretaker 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.

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. Through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Secretariat has continued to address the shortcomings in the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration.
15. Prior to the change of Government in the Syrian Arab Republic, the total number of outstanding issues reported by the Secretariat since 2014 stood at 26. Of these, seven had been resolved while 19 remained unresolved. The substance of the 19 outstanding issues remained a serious concern to the Secretariat as it involved large quantities of potentially undeclared or unverified chemical warfare agents and chemical munitions. In addition to this, the Syrian Arab Republic had yet to complete all of the measures specified in paragraph 5 of the Council decision adopted on 9 July 2020 (EC-94/DEC.2).
16. During the intersessional period, the DAT continued to gather and receive information from open and other sources regarding the Syrian chemical weapons programme and locations that may have housed chemical materials or declarable activities.
17. Once official working-level contacts are re-established, the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic may resume. Subsequently, a first meeting is planned to put in place the necessary administrative, logistical, and security arrangements for deploying the Secretariat's technical experts. Only such arrangements can allow for the deployment of a larger mission, consisting of a reinforced DAT and other relevant experts, with the aim of determining the full extent of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, including an inventory of all chemical weapons, chemical weapons sites, equipment, munitions, and other components of the programme.

18. This necessitates visits to chemical weapons-related locations, interviews with relevant personnel, and the gathering and analysis of relevant documentation.
19. The number of chemical weapons-related locations to be visited by the Secretariat is high. They include 27 declared locations and more than 100 other suspected chemical locations identified in the decisions of the policy-making organs, either brought to the Secretariat's attention by States Parties or identified through the work of the Secretariat over the past 11 years of activities.
20. Equally so, a large number of individuals should be interviewed and vast documentation needs to be gathered and analysed.
21. The above activities require significant resources and multiple subteams that would operate on a rotational basis. These teams require appropriate support, both at the OPCW Headquarters and in the Syrian Arab Republic.
22. The above activities might result in the discovery of new, previously undeclared elements of the chemical weapons programme, including additionally declarable chemical weapons, facilities, chemical munitions, and equipment. The Secretariat stands ready to assist the Syrian Arab Republic in verifying these newly discovered elements and in incorporating them into the initial declaration, as is required under the Convention.
23. At the same time, such newly discovered elements would be subject to destruction obligations and related plans and procedures for their verifiable destruction. Depending on the approved destruction methods and modalities, dedicated operational arrangements, funding, and required support will need to be proposed by the Secretariat, in consultation with States Parties and the Syrian Arab Republic.
24. In addition to the above, the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic needs to ensure continued support and facilitations of activities aimed at investigating allegations of use of toxic chemicals as weapons by establishing facts and identifying perpetrators, as mandated.
25. The Secretariat remains committed to delivering on its mandate to verify the full implementation by the Syrian Arab Republic of all declaration requirements under the Convention, decisions of the OPCW policy-making organs, and United Nations Security Council resolutions, and will continue to engage with the Syrian authorities on this matter.

Implementation of Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5

26. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat conducted the eleventh round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) from 13 to 19 November 2024.
27. The Secretariat will continue to conduct the SSRC inspections as part of its future activities in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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

28. As previously reported, 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.
29. On 26 December 2024, the Director-General held telephone consultations with H.E. Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, caretaker Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, which were aimed at facilitating a deployment of OPCW experts to the Syrian Arab Republic. During those consultations, the Director-General requested, inter alia, that the Syrian caretaker authorities secure chemical weapons-related locations and materials therein. He also requested the caretaker Minister to appoint a team of experts to receive and engage with the Secretariat experts. The Director-General additionally has continued to consult with high-ranking officials of the United Nations.
30. On 8 February 2025, at the invitation of Syrian caretaker Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, the Director-General, accompanied by a high-level delegation from the OPCW that included members of the DAT, the FFM and, for the first time, the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), visited Damascus to meet both with Syrian interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa and caretaker Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani.
31. On 21 February 2025, the Director-General received, through the Embassy of Qatar, a letter from Syrian caretaker Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, stating that Mr Ibrahim Olabi has been appointed as “the Ministry’s focal point for chemical weapons matters”.
32. On 21 February 2025, the Director-General sent a letter to the Permanent Representations of all members of the Council, providing information on the activities carried out by the Secretariat in relation to the current situation vis-à-vis the Syrian caretaker authorities and the Syrian Arab Republic’s obligations under the Convention, as well as on the additional financial and human resources needed to carry out any future missions in the Syrian Arab Republic. The letter also announced that the Secretariat was preparing a Note on the outcome of the Director-General’s visit to Damascus on 8 February 2025, which would be circulated to the Council at its 108th Session (to be held from 4 to 7 March 2025).
33. 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.

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

34. 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.
35. 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

36. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018), the Secretariat established the 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.
37. 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.
38. The IIT has been closely monitoring the ongoing developments and stands ready to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic as, for the first time since the establishment of the IIT, a member of the team was granted access to the Syrian Arab Republic as part of the OPCW delegation that visited Damascus on 8 February 2025.

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

39. 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.
40. At the end of the 90 days, the Syrian Arab Republic had not completed any of these measures.
41. With regard to the inspections mandated by paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2, the Secretariat continues to closely monitor the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic with a view to deploying for this purpose, provided that favourable security conditions are met.

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

42. 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.
43. 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.
44. 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

45. 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

46. 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. This does not include the more than EUR 48 million received in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons in 2013 and 2014.

47. 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 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. As noted above, the Secretariat is preparing a Note in advance of the 108th Session of the Council on, inter alia, the required support, arrangements, and resources for upcoming activities.

Conclusion

48. The future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will focus on engagement with the Syrian caretaker authorities 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 caretaker authorities in fulfilling all of the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under the Convention.

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