



Security Council

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Letter dated 27 June 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixty-ninth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) (see annex). The report covers the period from 24 May to 23 June 2019.

Pursuant to the framework of the structured dialogue agreed between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic, the Declaration Assessment Team continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. The outcomes of the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of technical consultations between the Team and the Syrian Arab Republic, held from 18 to 21 March 2019 in The Hague and from 10 to 17 April 2019 in Damascus, respectively, will be reported to the OPCW Executive Council at its ninety-first session.

On 28 May 2019, the Technical Secretariat briefed the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention on the status of the structured dialogue and on the implementation by the Technical Secretariat of all activities related to the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

The Director-General reported that the second round of high-level consultations to continue the structured dialogue had been postponed following the receipt from the Syrian Arab Republic of a note verbale dated 23 April 2019, in which it reiterated its position that it did not recognize or accept the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention at its fourth special session on 27 June 2018. In the note verbal, the Syrian Arab Republic further stated that it would not issue a visa to the Coordinator of the Investigation and Identification Team to enable him to travel to Damascus. In response, on 9 May 2019, the Director-General sent a letter to the Syrian Arab Republic in which he communicated his decision to postpone the round of consultations and invited the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to reconsider its position.

As I have stated repeatedly, the use of chemical weapons by anyone and anywhere is intolerable, and impunity for their use is equally unacceptable. It is imperative to identify and hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons. Unity in the Security Council is essential to achieve this urgent obligation.

(Signed) António Guterres



Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled “Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme” prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the OPCW Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and the United Nations Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council. My report covers the period from 24 May 2019 to 23 June 2019 and also covers the reporting requirements of the Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(Signed) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “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. This, the sixty-ninth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 May to 23 June 2019.

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

6. 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) On 12 June 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its sixty seventh monthly report (EC-91/P/NAT.4, dated 12 June 2019) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC M 34/DEC.1.

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

7. 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

8. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

9. Pursuant to the framework of the Structured Dialogue agreed between the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic on all chemical weapons-related issues, the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of technical consultations between the DAT and the Syrian Arab Republic took place, respectively, between 18 and 21 March 2019 in The Hague, and between 10 and 17 April 2019 in Damascus. During the twentieth round of consultations, all outstanding issues were discussed and re-grouped, with a view to developing a plan of future activities aimed at further clarifying these issues. The DAT subsequently deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic between 10 and 17 April 2019 for the twenty-first round of consultations.

10. During this visit, the DAT held a number of technical meetings with the Syrian National Authority, conducted one interview, and also conducted field visits to five sites from which it collected a total of 33 samples for analysis by OPCW designated laboratories. In the course of one of the field visits, the DAT noted the absence of remnants of destroyed production equipment and chemical munitions that the Syrian Arab Republic and DAT had agreed in 2015 to preserve at their original locations, to keep them available for activities aiming to help clarify gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration and subsequent submissions. During a visit to a previously declared CWPF, the DAT also observed the presence of several undestroyed cylinders. The DAT requested the Syrian Arab Republic to retain these items untouched at their current location until further notice. The outcome of these two rounds of consultations and the related field activities will be reported in further detail to the Council at its Ninety-First Session.

11. The DAT will continue to analyse all information collected and received, including the results of the analysis of samples collected during the twenty-first round of consultations, together with any further information that may be provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and/or collected from possible future DAT deployments, and will report to the Council accordingly.

12. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat continues 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. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat conducted the third and fourth rounds of inspections at the Barzah and

Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in November and December 2018, respectively. Samples were taken during both inspections for analysis in OPCW designated laboratories. The results of these analyses were received and subsequently shared with the Syrian Arab Republic.

13. During the third round of inspections, a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical was detected in one of the samples taken at Barzah and reported as an uncertainty requiring explanation from the Syrian Arab Republic. According to the reports of the two designated laboratories, the chemical detected could be the primary hydrolysis product of a Schedule 1.A.01 or 1.A.03 chemical. During the fourth round of inspections, there were no indications of any activities that were inconsistent with the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic. The results of the third and fourth rounds of inspections will be reported to the Council at its Ninety-First Session, and the Secretariat is currently planning for the fifth round of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities.

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

14. On 28 May 2019, the Secretariat briefed States Parties on the status of the Structured Dialogue and on the Secretariat's implementation of all activities related to the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The Director-General delivered opening remarks at the briefing, in which he updated States Parties on recent developments in the progress of the Structured Dialogue.

15. The Director-General reported that the second round of high-level consultations to continue the Structured Dialogue had been initially planned to take place in Damascus from 8 to 10 May 2019. In response to a note verbale from the Secretariat that proposed participants and an agenda for the meeting, which included the Coordinator of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and issues related to the IIT, on 23 April 2019, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr Faisal Mekdad, sent a letter to the Director-General that reiterated the Syrian Arab Republic's refusal to recognise the decision of the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference") C-SS-4/DEC.3, (dated 27 June 2018), entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use". The note verbale further stated that the Syrian Arab Republic refused to accept any of the implications and effects of the decision, and that as a consequence of its position, the Syrian Arab Republic would not issue a visa to the Coordinator of the IIT to visit Damascus.

16. On 9 May 2019, the Director-General sent a letter to Deputy Minister Mekdad that recalled that all States Parties and the Secretariat have an obligation to implement decisions adopted by the Conference, and that invited the Syrian Arab Republic to reconsider its position regarding decision C-SS-4/DEC.3. In the letter, the Director General also communicated his decision to postpone the second round of consultations under the Structured Dialogue, and he invited a delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic to The Hague for further consultations on this issue.

17. In his remarks at the briefing on 28 May 2019, the Director-General further addressed questions regarding the disclosure of an internal document relating to the FFM report entitled "Report of the Fact-Finding Mission Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018" (S/1731/2019, dated 1 March 2019). The Director-General's remarks on this matter have been published on the OPCW website.

18. Following the Director-General's remarks, the Secretariat briefed States Parties on the status of activities being implemented by the FFM, IIT, and DAT, and with regard to the biannual inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities at the SSRC. The Secretariat will continue to provide regular briefings to States Parties on the

status of progress in the Structured Dialogue and on all activities being implemented by the Secretariat with regard to the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

19. 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.

20. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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

21. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution [2209 \(2015\)](#), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

22. At the end of September 2018, the FFM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic to gather further information and conduct interviews regarding five reported incidents currently under investigation: two incidents in Kharbit Masasnah on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Qalib Al-Thawr, Al-Salamiyah on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus on 22 October 2017; and one incident in Al-Balil, Souran on 8 November 2017. The FFM is currently analysing the information collected with regard to these incidents and will report to the Council on the results of this analysis in due course.

23. In response to a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic dated 28 November 2018, the Director-General deployed an advance team to Damascus from 4 to 6 December 2018 to collect information provided by the Syrian National Authority regarding an incident of alleged use of chemicals as a weapon in Aleppo on 24 November 2018. The FFM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic from 5 to 15 January 2019 to conduct interviews and visit hospitals in Aleppo, and to receive samples provided by the Syrian authorities in Damascus. The Secretariat is analysing the collected information.

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

24. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 addresses, inter alia, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference encouraged the Director General to continue to provide regular updates on the FFM's operations, taking into account the need to protect the security and safety of Secretariat personnel.

25. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat has established the IIT, which has initiated its work 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 has not issued a report.

26. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the next progress report on implementation of that decision will be submitted to the Council at its Ninety-First Session.

Supplementary resources

27. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which include the work of the DAT and IIT, and the biannual inspections of the SSRC. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 21.1 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Conclusion

28. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed; and the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3. These activities will continue to be implemented within the framework of the Structured Dialogue with the Syrian Arab Republic.
