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Lettre datée du 11 décembre 2020, adressée au Secrétaire général par le Représentant permanent de la Fédération de Russie auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire tenir ci-joint le résumé, établi par la présidence, de la séance publique du Conseil de sécurité organisée selon la formule Arria sur la mise en œuvre de la résolution 2118 (2013) du Conseil et l'affermissement de l'autorité de l'Organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques, présidée par la Fédération de Russie et la République populaire de Chine le 28 septembre 2020 (voir annexe).

Je vous serais reconnaissant de bien vouloir faire distribuer le texte de la présente lettre et de son annexe comme document de l'Assemblée générale, au titre du point 103 de l'ordre du jour, et du Conseil de sécurité.

(*Signé*) Vassily **Nebenzia**

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Merci de recycler

Annexe à la lettre datée du 11 décembre 2020 adressée au Secrétaire général par le Représentant permanent de la Fédération de Russie auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies

Résumé, établi par la présidence, de la séance publique du Conseil de sécurité organisée selon la formule Arria sur la mise en œuvre de la résolution 2118 (2013) du Conseil et l'affermissement de l'autorité de l'Organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques, présidée par la Russie et la Chine le 28 septembre 2020

Introduction

Le 28 septembre 2020, la Fédération de Russie et la République populaire de Chine ont organisé selon la formule Arria une réunion du Conseil de sécurité sur la mise en œuvre de la résolution 2118 (2013) du Conseil et l'affermissement de l'autorité de l'Organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques, qui s'est déroulée en ligne par visioconférence et a été diffusée en direct sur plusieurs plateformes. L'enregistrement vidéo peut être consulté sur la chaîne YouTube de la mission russe à l'adresse https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCyPR4-HQ7s.

Le Représentant permanent de la Fédération de Russie, Vassily Nebenzia, et le Représentant permanent adjoint de la République populaire de Chine, Geng Shuang, ont présidé le débat, en présence de tous les autres membres du Conseil, dont 13 ont fait des déclarations. La réunion a enregistré une participation remarquablement élevée avec plus de 100 personnes, 30 délégations auprès de l'Organisation ayant contribué activement aux débats.

Les participants ont entendu des exposés présentés par des experts internationaux indépendants qui s'intéressent de près aux questions relatives au dossier chimique syrien : Ian Henderson, ancien chef d'une équipe de mission d'établissement des faits de l'Organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques (OIAC) dans l'enquête sur l'incident de Douma ; Aaron Maté, journaliste indépendant et collaborateur de *The Grayzone* et *The Nation* ; Theodore Postol, professeur émérite de science, technologie et sécurité internationale au Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

L'intention des organisateurs de la réunion était de faciliter un échange ouvert, inclusif et objectif sur la situation concernant la mise en œuvre de la résolution 2118 (2013) du Conseil et les moyens possibles de renforcer le régime de non-prolifération des armes chimiques et l'autorité de l'OIAC suite à une série de révélations sur les mauvaises pratiques de son Secrétariat technique. L'objectif premier était de dialoguer dans un cadre ouvert avec l'ensemble des membres de l'ONU et des experts indépendants sur les questions relatives aux méthodes d'enquête et aux conclusions de l'OIAC, ainsi que sur les mesures visant à remédier aux lacunes en matière d'administration, d'infrastructure et de politique du Secrétariat technique de l'OIAC dans le traitement du dossier chimique syrien et à affermir ainsi l'autorité de l'Organisation et sa capacité à mettre en œuvre son mandat.

La réunion avait également pour but de renforcer la transparence des discussions du Conseil sur ce dossier, qui, sur la base d'une proposition de la Fédération de Russie en septembre, a été ouvert au grand public pour la première fois depuis deux ans. Dans le même ordre d'idées, il s'agissait de faire connaître à un public international plus large le point de vue technique d'experts indépendants, dont certains ont une vaste expérience sur le terrain.

Une note de cadrage contenant des informations générales sur le dossier a été diffusée en amont de la réunion. Il y était rappelé qu'en 2014, tous les produits chimiques déclarés par la Syrie ont été retirés de son territoire et détruits, mais que les pays occidentaux ont ensuite affirmé que le gouvernement syrien continuait à utiliser des armes chimiques. Toutefois, les mécanismes d'enquête (la mission d'établissement des faits, le Mécanisme d'enquête conjoint et l'Équipe d'enquête et d'identification) n'ont pas fourni de preuves convaincantes à cet égard. En outre, de nombreuses préoccupations ont été exprimées quant à leur composition déséquilibrée sur le plan géographique, leur méthodologie imparfaite et leur manque d'attachement au travail, ainsi qu'à leurs conclusions infondées, qui remettent en question l'impartialité et l'intégrité de leurs rapports. Dès le début, les rapports du Secrétariat technique présentaient des anomalies scientifiques clairement évidentes pour les observateurs extérieurs. Ces disparités n'ont jamais été clarifiées par le Secrétariat technique. Depuis des années, les scandales suscités par ses mauvaises pratiques s'accumulent. On peut citer par exemple le rapport sur l'incident de Douma du 7 avril 2018, dont il a été révélé que le contenu avait clairement été manipulé. Des questions se posent également concernant les activités de l'Équipe d'évaluation des déclarations et sa négligence des preuves fournies par la partie syrienne. Les appels lancés aux responsables du Secrétariat technique pour qu'ils prennent des mesures afin de redresser la situation sont restés sans réponse jusqu'à présent.

Les faits susmentionnés concernant le dossier chimique syrien remettent en question la crédibilité du Secrétariat technique de l'OIAC en tant qu'organe indépendant chargé de superviser la mise en œuvre de la Convention sur les armes chimiques.

Exposés

Dans ses observations liminaires, M. Henderson, fort de ses 12 ans d'expérience en tant qu'ancien chef d'équipe d'enquête de l'OIAC, a exprimé son point de vue de première main sur les conclusions du rapport de la mission d'établissement des faits sur l'incident de Douma survenu en avril 2018. Il s'est référé à la déclaration qu'il avait faite lors de la précédente réunion organisée selon la formule Arria le 20 janvier 2020 et a rappelé que les conclusions ne reflétaient pas la situation réelle. M. Henderson s'est dit préoccupé par le fait que l'enquête sur cette affaire était contrôlée et a souligné qu'il était prêt à fournir, sur demande, des informations suffisantes pour une enquête technique transparente.

Dans son exposé, M. Maté a donné suite aux questions soulevées par M. Henderson. De son avis, l'OIAC est actuellement confrontée à un grave scandale et son autorité est compromise puisqu'elle a été manipulée pour justifier rétroactivement le bombardement de la Syrie par trois membres du Conseil de sécurité après l'incident de Douma. Il a également rappelé que la direction de l'OIAC avait exercé des représailles contre deux inspecteurs chevronnés, dont Ian Henderson, qui avaient contesté les conclusions du rapport de la mission d'établissement des faits. Dans son analyse, M. Maté a restitué de manière très détaillée la réécriture du rapport initial de la mission, qui a plus tard été remplacé par une version qui différait fortement des conclusions initiales. Il a souligné que le rapport initial ne concluait pas à une attaque chimique, mais évoquait la possibilité d'un incident non lié à des produits chimiques. Cependant, explique-t-il, ces conclusions ont été écartées, car le Secrétariat technique a subi des pressions de la part de plusieurs États. En conséquence, il a été affirmé dans le rapport rendu public qu'il y avait des « motifs raisonnables » de croire qu'une attaque chimique au chlore avait eu lieu à Douma. En outre, M. Maté a attiré l'attention sur le fait que la direction de l'OIAC avait non seulement ignoré la demande des deux inspecteurs ayant participé directement à

l'enquête d'enquêter sur les allégations de fraude scientifique, mais également essayé de les présenter comme incompétents et de minimiser leur rôle.

M. Maté a appelé le Directeur général de l'OIAC à se pencher sur ces mauvaises pratiques, à rencontrer toute l'équipe d'enquête sur l'incident de Douma et à examiner tous les éléments de preuve concernant l'incident, y compris ceux qui avaient été exclus des conclusions finales.

Dans son intervention, M. Postol s'est concentré sur les anomalies techniques du rapport de la mission d'établissement des faits concernant l'incident de Khan Cheïkhoun du 4 avril 2017. Il a affirmé que toutes les principales conclusions du rapport étaient, d'un point de vue technique, réfutées par les preuves qui y étaient citées. Il a illustré ses propos par une présentation visuelle détaillée.

Comme le montrent ses diapositives, les photos satellites ne révèlent aucun signe des dommages causés sur les sites qui auraient été bombardés. Les éléments de preuve concernant la chèvre qui aurait été empoisonnée lors de l'attaque sont contestés, car les images montrent des traces au sol et une corde au cou de la carcasse, ce qui laisse présumer que la chèvre a été empoisonnée au préalable puis traînée jusqu'à cette zone. L'analyse montre également que le cratère prétendument causé par une bombe aérienne serait plutôt un cratère d'artillerie produit par l'explosion d'une roquette sur le trottoir. L'intervenant a également mis en doute la présence de personnes ne portant pas de protection anti-sarin dans le cratère immédiatement après l'attaque présumée au cours de laquelle la substance aurait été utilisée, ce qui, dans la réalité, causerait une exposition au produit toxique entraînant la mort.

Pour conclure, M. Postol a fait observer que le rapport sur Khan Cheïkhoun est, de par sa nature, le même que celui sur Douma.

Déclarations des États Membres

En tant que coorganisatrice, la Chine a souligné dans ses remarques liminaires qu'elle soutenait l'OIAC dans l'accomplissement de son mandat conformément à la Convention sur les armes chimiques et que toutes les enquêtes devaient être menées de manière objective, équitable, impartiale et professionnelle. En ce qui concerne le dossier chimique syrien, la délégation chinoise a demandé qu'une discussion technique plus approfondie soit menée à La Haye pour éviter toute décision prématurée. Au sujet des déséquilibres dans la prise de décisions de l'OIAC, la Chine a fait remarquer que le fait de pousser à un vote alors qu'il existait encore des divergences importantes ne faisait que provoquer la confrontation et nuire à la coopération. Elle a souligné que ce qui nuit réellement à l'autorité de l'OIAC est le fait de négliger les opinions divergentes, et estime que cette approche est préjudiciable à la réputation, au fonctionnement et au développement à long terme de l'Organisation.

Les États-Unis, le Royaume-Uni, la France, l'Allemagne, la Belgique, la Pologne, la Lettonie, l'Estonie, le Danemark [au nom des États nordiques et baltes (Estonie, Finlande, Islande, Lettonie, Lituanie, Norvège et Suède)], l'Italie, le Canada (au nom de l'Australie et de la Nouvelle-Zélande), les Pays-Bas, l'Irlande, la Turquie et le Luxembourg ont exprimé leur soutien sans réserve aux activités de l'OIAC et précisé que, selon eux, l'Organisation s'acquittait de ses devoirs au service de la communauté internationale de manière professionnelle, objective et impartiale. Ils ont souligné leur pleine confiance dans l'expertise, l'impartialité et l'indépendance des équipes d'enquête du Secrétariat technique de l'OIAC et rejeté toute tentative de contester leur réputation.

Certaines de ces délégations ont qualifié la réunion d'exercice de désinformation visant à attaquer le travail professionnel de l'OIAC et à détourner

l'attention du non-respect par la Syrie du régime de non-prolifération des armes chimiques, refusant ainsi d'avoir un échange constructif avec les intervenants.

La Syrie a fermement rejeté les allégations de certaines délégations concernant son utilisation d'armes chimiques. Elle a qualifié ces accusations d'instrument de pression contre elle et appelé les États Membres à mettre fin aux manipulations de l'OIAC et à la politisation du dossier chimique syrien. À titre d'exemple des mauvaises pratiques actuelles du Secrétariat technique de l'OIAC, la délégation syrienne a également rappelé le mauvais traitement des échantillons sensibles qui ont été collectés afin de résoudre les questions en suspens concernant la déclaration initiale soumise par la République arabe syrienne.

Dans leurs interventions, l'Afrique du Sud, la République dominicaine, le Viêt Nam, l'Indonésie, la Tunisie, le Brésil et le Nigéria ont réaffirmé leur position et condamné l'emploi d'armes chimiques, quels qu'en soient le lieu, l'auteur ou les circonstances, et appelé au renforcement de la coopération et du dialogue entre les États parties. Certaines de ces délégations ont souligné que toute enquête sur une éventuelle utilisation d'armes chimiques devait être menée de la manière la plus complète, objective et impartiale possible afin de fournir des preuves irréfutables, et regretté la politisation excessive de l'OIAC. Certains États Membres ont aussi souligné qu'il était impératif que les États parties continuent d'avoir confiance dans l'impartialité de l'OIAC en tant que seule autorité internationale techniquement compétente dans ce domaine et qu'il ne devait y avoir aucune ingérence politique dans ses travaux. L'Indonésie a également demandé aux participants s'ils avaient des propositions concrètes à faire à l'OIAC pour renforcer son régime de vérification.

Le Bélarus, Cuba, le Venezuela, le Nicaragua et l'Iran ont réaffirmé leur ferme attachement au régime de non-prolifération des armes chimiques tout en exprimant leur profonde inquiétude quant à la politisation de l'OIAC et en appelant à la préservation de la nature technique de son mandat. Selon certaines de ces délégations, l'OIAC traverse actuellement une crise de crédibilité. Il a été indiqué que l'OIAC est exploitée par certains pays dans le but de satisfaire leurs ambitions politiques étroites et que ses mécanismes d'établissement des responsabilités sont instrumentalisés pour violer la souveraineté de la Syrie. Les participants ont également souligné qu'une approche non transparente et politiquement motivée de la mise en œuvre de la Convention sur les armes chimiques était inacceptable.

Débat

Les trois intervenants ont exprimé leur surprise et leur profond regret face à la réticence de certains participants à examiner les preuves scientifiques qui remettent en cause l'impartialité et la crédibilité des travaux du Secrétariat technique.

M. Henderson a souligné que, lorsqu'il a découvert que les conclusions de la mission d'établissement des faits sur l'incident de Douma ne reposaient pas sur des données scientifiques ou techniques, il a présenté un exposé complet à la délégation de l'un des États occidentaux, qui en avait fait la demande. On lui a ensuite dit que la question était très grave et serait signalée en très haut lieu, mais que l'on ne pouvait rien y faire.

En réponse à une question sur la voie à suivre, M. Henderson a mis en évidence trois problèmes qui devraient être résolus afin de remédier à la crise actuelle au sein du Secrétariat technique de l'OIAC. Premièrement, il faut améliorer la structure hiérarchique des missions de l'OIAC déployées en Syrie : actuellement, celles-ci dépendent de facto en droite ligne du Chef de cabinet du Directeur général et sont donc soumises à d'influentes délégations occidentales, les États-Unis en tête. Deuxièmement, il faut modifier les méthodes de travail du Secrétariat technique afin

d'éviter de ne retenir que des extraits parmi les avis fournis par des experts anonymes soigneusement sélectionnés. Troisièmement, il faut s'assurer que toutes les conclusions sont fondées sur des preuves scientifiques.

Concernant les activités de l'équipe d'évaluation des données, M. Henderson a noté que les déclarations initiales de nombreux États présentaient les mêmes problèmes que celle de la République arabe syrienne, mais n'avaient jamais fait l'objet du même niveau de critique. Selon lui, l'approche du Secrétariat technique concernant la déclaration initiale syrienne consiste à « garder le dossier ouvert » et à « maintenir la pression ».

En réponse à l'allégation selon laquelle le débat dénigrait l'OIAC, M. Maté a souligné que sa mission était de défendre l'OIAC contre l'exploitation. Il a de nouveau appelé le Directeur général de l'OIAC à rencontrer les deux inspecteurs ayant pris part à l'enquête sur l'incident de Douma.

M. Postol a exhorté les délégations à engager des discussions techniques et des délibérations scientifiques plutôt que de politiser la question en réaffirmant leurs positions nationales.

Recommandations

Malgré les vues divergentes exprimées par les participants dans leurs interventions, les points suivants ont été retenus en vue d'un examen plus approfondi :

a) L'examen des questions relatives à la mise en œuvre de la résolution 2118 (2013) du Conseil de sécurité et aux activités de l'OIAC en séance publique s'est avéré utile et est très demandé par les États Membres. Il est dans l'intérêt commun d'assurer le suivi des délibérations dans un cadre ouvert ;

b) Tout débat sur ces questions devrait être dépolitisé, inclusif et fondé sur des preuves scientifiques. La contribution des experts indépendants est précieuse pour dresser un aperçu plus objectif et équilibré de la situation. Le grand public devrait avoir un accès ininterrompu à ces données factuelles. Toute tentative d'étouffer des opinions « gênantes » est inacceptable ;

c) Il est toujours nécessaire que le Conseil examine les questions liées à l'OIAC afin de remédier aux graves lacunes dans les travaux du Secrétariat technique qui nuisent aux efforts de coopération visant à mettre en œuvre la résolution 2118 (2013). À cette fin, les autorités de l'OIAC doivent participer activement à un échange ouvert et franc avec les États Membres.

Conclusions

La réunion a prouvé la valeur de la participation d'experts indépendants aux discussions sur le dossier chimique syrien et les activités de l'OIAC dans ce domaine. Le public a pu obtenir des preuves scientifiques de première main émanant de sources indépendantes réputées. Toutefois, les questions concernant les mauvaises pratiques du Secrétariat technique resteront sans réponse tant que les autorités de l'OIAC n'auront pas apporté de précisions exhaustives. La poursuite de l'examen de ces questions dans le cadre de séances publiques du Conseil permettra de surmonter les malentendus, de rétablir la confiance et d'affermir l'autorité de l'OIAC.

Pièce jointe

Attachment

Statements of the participants

(those received by the announced deadline

of October 6, 2020)

Remarks by Ambassador Geng Shuang
at the Arria-Formula Meeting

"Implementation of UNSCR 2118: Upholding the Authority of the OPCW"

Opening Remarks

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

I welcome all of you to this Arria-Formula Meeting on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2118. We believe it is a good opportunity for us to hear the views and opinions from independent experts.

As a state party to the *Chemical Weapons Convention*, China firmly opposes the use of chemical weapons for any purpose by any country, organization or individual under any circumstance. Stockpiled and abandoned chemical weapons should be destroyed.

China supports the OPCW in fulfilling its mandate in accordance with the CWC. All investigation should be conducted in an objective, impartial, and professional manner, to reach conclusions that withstand the test of time and truth.

Regarding the chemical weapon issue in Syria, we need to re-emphasize the importance of strengthened dialogue and consultations between the OPCW and the Syrian Government.

It is appreciated that the two parties maintain regular contacts and have held technical consultations. We take note that the Permanent

Representative of Syria has sent a number of letters to the President of the Security Council, providing information on possible chemical weapon attacks by terrorist groups. We call on the OPCW to pay close attention to the information and follow it up in its monthly reports.

As there are still questions and doubts around certain cases, China calls for more in-depth technical discussions in the Hague before any premature actions be taken.

We object hasty accusations to alleged use of chemical weapons in the absence of hard evidence. In January, the Russian Delegation hosted an Arria-Formula meeting, revealing the gaps and inconsistencies in the Douma report. Up to now, there are still many question marks. The establishment, composition and working methods of IIT are controversial as well. Therefore China voted against the draft decision in the 94th Executive Council along with two other members, and 9 members abstained on it. The decision is far from widely supported. Many countries believe it is improper to jump to conclusions, and relevant State Parties need to continue technical discussions.

It is our consistent position that State Parties should bridge differences through dialogue, and maintain the established practice of making decisions based on consensus in the OPCW.

The OPCW should make every effort to strengthen mutual trust among State Parties and carry on the tradition of making decisions based on consensus. Pushing for a vote while there is still significant divergence, will only incite confrontation and undermine cooperation. Some countries claim that raising different views will harm OPCW's authority. On the contrary, what really harms the authority of the OPCW is neglecting different views.

It will also undermine the reputation, functioning and long-term development of the OPCW.

As the discussion in the Hague is going on, we are surprised to see a Security Council draft resolution on this file. It is even more surprising that certain country insists on convening consultations, in total disregard of Council members' concerns. Such practice is detrimental to the settlement of the chemical weapon issue in Syria, the momentum of the political process, and the unity of the Council.

Bearing in mind the above questions, I would like to thank the briefers for their presence and look forward to their professional perspectives.

Thank you.

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Closing Remarks

I would like to thank the briefers again for their remarks, which contributed positively to this meeting and to this dossier. The information provided by the three briefers was revealing and shocking. It exposed the political manipulation behind this dossier. We hope it could be shared with the OPCW and would be taken into account in future discussions.

It is our consistent position that the disagreements among State Parties should be resolved through technical discussions, instead of rushing to conclusions. Germany and some other western countries questioned the motivation of Russia and China in hosting this Arria Formula meeting. They should read the concept note more carefully. What the briefers shared with

us is based upon science. But some western countries did not respond to facts and evidence, only blindly rejected and slandered the information provided by the experts. There is no logic in their statements, nor did they respect facts and science, which further exposed their political agenda. We call on all sides to adopt a scientific, objective and responsible attitude in discussing the chemical weapons issue in Syria .

Thank you.

Statement by Ian Henderson to the Arria-formula Meeting of the UN Security Council on 28 September 2020

1. I attend this meeting in response to requests from delegations to provide my personal experiences as an OPCW inspector. I shall briefly clarify my situation here, and what I can or can't do. I am attending in my individual capacity, as a scientist and former OPCW Inspection Team Leader with more than twelve years' impartial and committed service. I remain impartial, and would therefore kindly request that you don't refer to my role, nor that of any other Douma Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) inspectors, as being part of anyone's disinformation campaign.

2. I was not directly involved in the Ltamenah FFM. Whilst I have studied those three cases, including the FFM reports and the subsequent report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), it would be inappropriate for me to provide opinion on that topic at this meeting. I was, however, directly involved in the Douma FFM investigation, and will answer questions on that topic as best I can.

3. At the previous Arria-formula meeting on this topic, I provided a written statement which subsequently became public. The summary report of the engineering study on the Douma cylinders is also publicly available. Therefore, there is little further I need to add on the details of my involvement and findings.

4. I speak for myself, but I know there are other Douma FFM inspectors who hold similar concerns. As a scientist, I cannot be convinced by the only defence of the Douma FFM report being one that states "we had the best (anonymous) experts; therefore, the case is closed; believe us, trust us". There is a strong alternative case, resulting from the findings of inspectors in Douma and Damascus, that has demonstrated facts and science that point towards a different outcome. But in my case, I am not imploring you to believe me, to believe us, despite the significant volume of information now available on Douma. All we have been saying all along, is that surely there are now sufficient clear contradictory facts and information to justify a transparent technical enquiry, aimed at clarifying what happened in Douma, conducted in a manner that demonstrates scientific rigour and integrity.

5. But the lockdown on Douma remains impenetrable. Our hope, therefore, remains that there is someone with the scientific discipline and integrity to recognise the possibility that something may have gone amiss with the Douma FFM investigation and report. And, perhaps more importantly, we continue to hope that there is someone willing and able to do something about it.

Ian Henderson

PRESENTATION

by Mr. Theodore Postol,
Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology
and National Security Policy
at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
at the Arria formula meeting of the Security Council:

**"Implementation of the UNSCR 2118:
Upholding the Authority of the OPCW"**
on September 28, 2020

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NEW ZEALAND
PERMANENT MISSION

Canada

United Nations Security Council Arria Formula Meeting on the Implementation of UNSCR 2118: Upholding the Authority of the OPCW

Statement by Ambassador Bob Rae, Permanent Representative of Canada, delivered on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and Canada

September 28, 2020
AS DELIVERED

Dear colleagues,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following countries: Australia, New Zealand, and my own country, Canada.

Our countries remain deeply concerned by the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and we add our voices to what others have said today - there can be no political solution and there can be no sustainable peace if there is impunity for crimes of war.

Even more worrying is the morally indefensible position taken by some here today that the regime's abhorrent abuses can be ignored by attacking the very institutions that are meant to hold Syria to account.

The OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT)'s conclusion regarding the March 2017 sarin and chlorine attacks brings the regime's record of chemical weapons use to seven confirmed cases and, by direct implication, establishes that the regime failed to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities.

We welcome the OPCW Executive Council's decision of July 2020 to address Syria's possession and use of chemical weapons and we strongly encourage the Conference of the States Parties to take action if Syria does not comply with the decision within the 90-day timeframe established by the Council.

The irony of bringing this debate back towards the UN Security Council is not lost on us. It was Russia's refusal to allow the Joint Investigative Mechanism to continue its work that led States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to put in place arrangements to identify perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria, in full compliance with the Convention. In doing so, States Parties sent a very clear message that we would not allow any of the permanent members of the Council to shield the users of chemical weapons. At the same time, States Parties demonstrated their confidence in the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat to undertake the difficult and dangerous work assigned to it – not to reach political conclusions, but to identify the facts.

The international community has shown that the collective stand against impunity is strong. We cannot allow this to be undermined by efforts to sow confusion and doubt about the OPCW's mandate and expertise. We are watching, I have to say, I'm certainly watching today, with growing concern coordinated actions across several multilateral fora to discredit and undermine the OPCW. This meeting is simply the latest in a series of such efforts, which include misinformation campaigns, smear campaigns against staff, and efforts to starve the organization

of vital financial resources. In its agenda for this meeting Russia has asked "what can be done to uphold the authority of the OPCW?" Well our answer is direct and quite simple – "stop undermining it".

Canada, Australia and New Zealand reiterate our strongest support for the OPCW, whose impartial, independent, professional and thorough investigative work is invaluable in bringing the perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria to the bar. We stand by the highly professional work of the OPCW's Fact Finding Mission (FFM) and Declarations Assessment Team (DAT). We stand by the legitimacy of the IIT and the credibility of its evidence-based and independent conclusions. To question the objectivity, impartiality, integrity or capacity of the OPCW and its investigative bodies is in fact, to prejudice the fight against chemical weapons.

Nordic-Baltic statement at the United Nations Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting 28 September 2020.

Implementation of UNSCR 2118: Upholding the Authority of the OPCW

Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Martin Bille Hermann

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to be speaking on behalf of Nordic-Baltic countries Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania Norway, Sweden and my own country Denmark.

Mr. Chairman,

The re-emergence of chemical weapons is one of the most urgent threats to international peace and security and has to be dealt with firmly and collectively. Impunity for breaches of the global norm against chemical weapons must not be tolerated.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the recent assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia by a military chemical nerve agent of the "Novichok" group. Any use of chemical weapons, under any circumstances, is a clear breach of international law and contrary to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the use of all chemical weapons. We reiterate our call on Russia, as a matter of urgency, to be fully transparent and to bring those responsible to justice, bearing in mind Russia's commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The prohibition on Chemical Weapons continues to be challenged – deliberately, and on the assumption of absence of accountability. But violations of the Convention must have consequences. It is exactly for this reason that a number of essential decisions – as foreseen by the Chemical Weapons Convention – have been taken.

The use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic led to the establishment of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission and the Joint Investigative Mechanism. Highly professional and competent bodies designed to deal with use of Chemical Weapons. At the same time, it was clear that Syria had not fully declared its Chemical Weapons

Programme. To remedy this violation of the Treaty, the OPWC established the Declarations Assessment Team.

At a special session of the conference of States Parties, it was decided to task the OPCW Technical Secretariat to set up arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons (CW) in the Syrian Arab Republic (SAR). This was a direct consequence of the Russian veto of the continuation of the JIM. Just as it was beginning to deliver results.

The Declarations Assessment Team, The Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team are instrumental in preserving the integrity of our Chemical Weapons Convention and in upholding the global ban on chemical weapons.

We commend the extraordinary high degree of professionalism of these mechanisms. The quality and competence of the staff is beyond reproach. Their tenacity and courage – working in adverse and sometimes hostile or dangerous situations – is admirable. The impartiality and integrity above questioning. We can only congratulate the OPCW Director-General in having assembled teams of exceptional quality that complements his own efforts and that of the Technical Secretariat in general.

We firmly reject attempts to discredit or bring into disrepute the OPCW and the work of the Technical Secretariat. Such attempts against the international community's efforts in securing accountability and preventing use of Chemical Weapons are deeply concerning.

To us the law is clear. The decisions to set up mechanisms in order to investigate the facts in Syria are in full accordance with the Convention. The investigations and the assessments by the Fact Finding Mission, by the Declarations and Assessment Team and the Investigative and Identification Teams are well established and beyond any reasonable doubt. We strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force as concluded by the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). The Syrian Arab Republic should return to full compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention in accordance with the clear and verifiable parameters as set up by the Executive Council in its decision of 9 July.

We reiterate our full confidence in the technical expertise, objectivity, impartiality and independence of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its Investigation and Identification Team.

Mr. Chairman,

This concludes my statement.

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DE LA FRANCE AUPRÈS
DES NATIONS UNIES
À NEW YORK

Liberté
Egalité
Fraternité

REUNION DU CONSEIL EN FORMAT ARRIA – SYRIE / ARMES CHIMIQUES

**DÉCLARATION DE M. NICOLAS DE RIVIÈRE,
REPRÉSENTANT PERMANENT DE LA FRANCE AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**

New York, 28 septembre 2020

Tout d'abord, je voudrais remercier la Fédération de Russie et la Chine. Il est très rare qu'elles proposent de tenir une réunion en format « Arria », je remarque que cela devient une habitude sur le dossier chimique syrien. Je regrette seulement que la réunion d'aujourd'hui se réduise à un exercice de désinformation.

Permettez-moi tout d'abord de rappeler une évidence : à la base de la discussion d'aujourd'hui se trouve le fait très simple et évident que le régime syrien, en août 2013, a gazé 1 300 hommes, femmes et enfants pour renforcer sa mainmise militaire. Et cela n'est contesté par personne.

Depuis lors, du sarin, du chlore et d'autres armes chimiques ont été utilisés et continuent de l'être, en Syrie et ailleurs. La réémergence des armes chimiques dans le monde, et pas seulement en Syrie, est l'une des menaces les plus graves auxquelles nous sommes confrontés aujourd'hui.

C'est pourquoi je regrette que chaque fois que le régime Assad est incriminé, des efforts systématiques soient entrepris pour le protéger, pour semer la confusion et paralyser l'action internationale. En 2017, le renouvellement du mécanisme conjoint d'enquête, le JIM, a été bloqué à trois reprises par un veto. Aujourd'hui, l'équipe d'enquête et d'identification de l'OIAC est discréditée sous le couvert d'une soi-disant expertise scientifique parce qu'elle fait précisément ce que la communauté internationale attend d'elle : elle enquête sur les incidents et identifie les responsables de manière tout à fait professionnelle, impartiale et indépendante. Son rapport publié le 8 avril sur les attaques à l'arme chimique à Latamneh est particulièrement accablant pour les unités des forces aériennes du régime.

En 2013, le régime syrien s'est engagé à coopérer en toute transparence et en toute bonne foi avec l'OIAC. Et il faut le dire : le régime n'a pas tenu sa parole. Il est grand temps qu'il fasse la lumière sur l'état de ses stocks. A l'initiative de la France, le Conseil exécutif de l'OIAC a décidé en juillet dernier de donner 90 jours à la Syrie pour redresser la situation. Il est encore temps. Nous appelons la Syrie à coopérer sans délai avec le secrétariat de l'OIAC et à révéler son programme chimique militaire.

Il y a vingt-trois ans, l'OIAC a été créée pour être un pilier de notre sécurité collective mondiale.

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Elle a prouvé sa valeur. Il est honteux de chercher à la discréditer sous prétexte que ses conclusions ne sont pas conformes à la version des faits que la Syrie et certains membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité veulent donner.

Monsieur le président,

L'utilisation d'armes chimiques est un crime qui menace l'humanité entière. Comme vous le savez, c'est aussi une menace pour la paix et la sécurité internationales, comme l'a déclaré à l'unanimité ce Conseil dans sa déclaration présidentielle de novembre 2019. Il ne peut y avoir d'impunité. C'est pourquoi nous soutenons le mécanisme international indépendant et impartial et c'est pourquoi la France est à la tête du partenariat international contre l'impunité pour l'utilisation des armes chimiques. Tous les pays qui le souhaitent peuvent rejoindre ce partenariat, qui n'est ni un instrument anti-syrien ni un club de pays. Par cet engagement, ils démontreront leur attachement au droit, à la stabilité internationale et à la justice.

Je vous remercie./.

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SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN ARRIA FORMULA - SYRIA (CHEMICAL)

STATEMENT BY MR NICOLAS DE RIVIÈRE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

=TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH=

New York, 28 September 2020

First of all, I would like to thank the Russian Federation and China. Proposing to hold an Arria-formula meeting is very rare on their part. I notice that this is becoming a habit on the Syrian chemical file. I just regret that today's meeting is reduced to a disinformation exercise.

Let me first of all recall the obvious: at the root of today's discussion is the very simple and plain fact that the Syrian regime, in August 2013, gassed 1,300 men, women and children to strengthen its military hand. And this is not disputed by anyone.

Since then, sarin, chlorine and other chemical weapons have been used and continue to be used, in Syria and elsewhere. The re-emergence of chemical weapons in the world, and not just in Syria, is one of the most serious threats we face today.

That is why I regret that every time the Assad regime is incriminated, systematic efforts are undertaken to protect it, to sow confusion and paralyse international action. In 2017, the renewal of the Joint Investigation Mechanism, the JIM, was blocked three times by a veto. Today, the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team is being discredited under the guise of a so-called scientific expertise because it is doing precisely what the international community expects of it: it is investigating incidents and identifying those responsible in a fully professional, impartial and independent manner. Its report published on 8 April on the chemical weapon attacks in Latamneh is particularly damning for the regime's air force units.

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In 2013, the Syrian regime committed itself to cooperate in transparency and good faith with the OPCW. And it must be said: the regime has not kept its word. It is high time for it to shed light on the state of its stocks. At France's initiative, the OPCW Executive Council decided last July to give Syria 90 days to redress the situation. There is still time. We call on Syria to cooperate without delay with the OPCW Secretariat and to reveal its military chemical programme.

Twenty-three years ago, the OPCW was created to be a pillar of our collective global security. It has proven its value. It is disgraceful to seek to discredit it on the pretext that its conclusions are not consistent with the version of the facts that Syria and some permanent members of the Security Council want to give.

Mr. President,

The use of chemical weapons is a crime that threatens all humanity. As you know, it is also a threat to international peace and security, as this Council unanimously stated in its presidential statement from November 2019. There can be no impunity. This is why we support the International Independent and Impartial Mechanism and this is why France is leading the international partnership against impunity for the use of chemical weapons. All countries that so wish can join this partnership, which is neither an anti-Syrian instrument nor a club of countries. Through this commitment, they will demonstrate their commitment to the law, international stability and justice.

Thank you.

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Statement by H. E. Ambassador Eshagh Al Habib
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
At the United Nations Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting
On "the Implementation of UNSCR 2118: Upholding the Authority of the OPCW"
New York, 28 September 2020

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In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful,

Mr. Chairman,

I thank the Permanent Missions of Russia and China for organizing this meeting.

As the main victim of the large-scale, most systematic and frequent use of chemical weapons in contemporary history, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

Likewise, as an active country in the negotiations of the chemical weapons convention and a party thereto, Iran is a genuine strong advocate of promoting the balanced, full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention as well as upholding the integrity and authority of the OPCW.

Historical cases have taught us that the authority of no instrument or institution can be upheld without strict adherence of all parties and participants to the rules of the game, and the CWC and OPCW are not exceptions.

Partial implementation or discriminatory application of treaties as well as the exploitation of international institutions or abuse of their process act like a poison pill for their authority and effective performance. This is more dangerous regarding conventions and organizations on non-proliferation and disarmament as they relate to the security of nations.

The living example is the politicization and polarization of the OPCW following the consideration, by that Organization, of the Syrian chemical weapons dossier, initiated by a group of the CWC's States Parties to further their politically-motivated objectives.

To that end, Western countries first accused Syria of the use of chemical weapons and later abused the OPCW to develop purportedly technical reports and pseudo-legal justification to supposedly substantiate it.

They first used the unprofessional and yet biased work of the Fact-Finding Mission that was based mostly on unauthorized and open sources. Later, they followed their

objective through the non-consensual decision on the establishment of the so-called attribution mechanism, the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). While such a proposal had required the amendment of the Convention, it was adopted by the affirmative vote of even less than half of the States Parties and also in the absence of the representatives of 87 States Parties.

Now, to advance their goal, they are referring to a technically defective report of the IIT, prepared without on-site investigation or due regard to the chain of custody.

Such unproductive policies and destructive practices of Western countries have divided the States Parties, and by turning the Organization into a battlefield of unfruitful disputes among the Member States, have adversely affected the efforts for the full and effective realization of the Convention's object and purpose.

For instance, it now deflects the attention from the very purpose of the Convention, namely the elimination of chemical weapons, which is yet to be realized due to blatant failure by the sole major Possessor State Party.

All these events happened against the backdrop that in 2014, the head of the Joint Mission to Eliminate Chemical Weapons in Syria, presenting her final report to the Security Council, confirmed that Syria has fulfilled all its commitments and that its entire chemical stockpiles have been destroyed. Later, the OPCW confirmed the destruction of the entire chemical stockpile of Syria and all its 27 production facilities.

Likewise, they also continue to ignore the Syrian government's significant cooperation with the OPCW and the UN, including providing over 80 monthly reports and large amount of information it provided to the OPCW. Such cooperation is still going on.

Despite that, the Security Council has held over 80 monthly meetings on the subject with no result, as such meetings are only used to demonize Syria based on unsubstantiated allegations.

To avoid further erosion of the OPCW's credibility and undermining of the CWC's authority and effectiveness, this trend needs to discontinue. We need to do whatever in our power to restore the OPCW's real position and focus on promoting the CWC's full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Arria formula meeting

Implementation of UNSCR 2118: Upholding the authority of the OPCW

Mr President, I thank you for giving us the opportunity to offer our remarks on the state of implementation of Security Council Resolution 2118. Italy is deeply concerned about the re-emergence, starting in 2013, of the use of chemical weapons in different geographical areas, particularly conflict-ridden countries, such as the Syrian Arab Republic.

Italy's policy has always been centered on a firm rebuke of the use of chemical weapons, anywhere, at any time, by anyone, and under any circumstance. And we believe, without exception, that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

Since the creation of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission mechanism in 2014, OPCW inspectors have attested to numerous cases of use of chemical weapons in Syria. More recently, the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to the OPCW Executive Council and to the UN Secretary-General, regrettably confirmed the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force on 8 April 2020.

This meets with Italy's strong condemnation and, conversely, with Italy's strong support for the Executive Council Decision, taken in July 2020, to address the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic (EC-94/DEC.2 of 9 July 2020) and to urge the Country to adopt all measures required by this Decision.

The use of chemical weapons must not be tolerated. The end of impunity is crucial for credible, effective deterrence, and we will continue to support efforts towards ensuring accountability for those responsible of these heinous crimes. In this spirit, Italy has joined and actively supports the work of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Italy also remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the OPCW. We reiterate our full confidence in the technical expertise, objectivity, impartiality and independence of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its Investigation and Identification Team.

The international community, as a whole, shares the responsibility to enforce the prohibition of chemical weapons and uphold the global chemical non-proliferation regime, which is a basic building block for international peace and security.

I thank you

Statement by H.E. Mr. Andrejs Pildegovičs

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia

at the UN Security Council Arria – formula meeting on

the implementation of UNSC resolution 2118

28 September 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chair, dear Vassily,

I am honoured to participate in this Arria – formula meeting on pressing issue of the use of chemical weapons. My delegation was intrigued to hear about independent experts investigating OPCW's methods and conclusions, but to our disappointment, the information on briefers was not released until the very day of this debate. Furthermore, their interventions did not fulfill our expectations for an objective and impartial assessment on today's subject.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic States, and supports the statement by the PR of Estonia.

We are gravely concerned by the repeated attempts by Syria and of a few States, including those of a Permanent Member of this Council, to challenge the authority and integrity of the OPCW. There is no doubt that the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, in spite of challenges posed by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) are fulfilling their duties in the service of the international community in a professional, objective and impartial manner. We express our strong political support to this important organization and encourage all States Parties to provide a predictable financial base for its future work in 2021.

We are deeply concerned about the continued non-compliance by certain States with their international obligations on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. This is why the EU strongly supported the establishment of an international attribution mechanism to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons.

Latvia condemns the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force as concluded by the first report of the OPCW IIT this year. We support the decision that sets clear and verifiable parameters for action and we urge the Syrian Arab Republic to take all measures required to redress the situation in the given timeframe. Impunity for these heinous acts will not be tolerated.

The use of chemical weapons is completely unacceptable under any circumstances.

Thus, we express our outrage about the hypocrisy and cynicism of one of the founding Member States of the UN holding a meeting on the implementation of UNSCR 2118[1] while independent specialized laboratories have confirmed the poisoning of opposition leader in Russia Alexei Navalny by a military chemical nerve agent of the "Novichok" group on its soil.

Instead of fully cooperating and stepping up transparency, we are once more witnessing a page from Russia's disinformation playbook. We saw it in 2018 in the Salisbury case and we see it now. We deplore how Russia desperately attempts to allegedly link the origins of Novichok with other counties, including Latvia while trying to avoid disclosing the circumstances of the assassination attempt and bringing those responsible for this criminal act to justice.

The international Community cannot remain silent when the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law are manifestly violated. We call on the UN Security Council, all Member States to demand accountability, a prompt investigation and justice to be served. An adequate response from the international society and relevant bodies should follow immediately. Latvia, together with other Member States of the European Union will continue to follow these issues closely and consider their implications in the OPCW as well as in a wider international context.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[1] Upholding the Authority of the OPCW.

GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Représentation permanente auprès
des Nations Unies

28 September 2020

Security Council Arria-formula meeting on the implementation of UNSC resolution 2118
"Upholding the Authority of the OPCW"

28 September 2020

Speech/intervention by Tatiana Konieczny
Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the United Nations

Thank you Mr Chairman.

Much has been said already, so I will be brief.

Implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 is a matter of utmost importance to us all. Luxembourg was an elected member of the Security Council when the resolution was adopted unanimously, seven years ago.

Luxembourg would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate its full confidence in the technical expertise, objectivity, impartiality, professionalism and independence of the OPCW's Director General and Technical Secretariat as well as its Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

A limited number of States have criticized the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and later the work of the IIT since the very first reports on the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It is important to remember that the FFM and IIT, under the supervision of the OPCW, had to step up because the extension of the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint-Investigative Mechanism, the JIM, was blocked by a veto in the Security Council on 24 October 2017. This happened after the JIM concluded that the Syrian Arab Republic forces were responsible for using chemical weapons.

The OPCW has to be commended for the way in which it has addressed allegations regarding the methodology of the investigation teams and the impartiality of their reports. The OPCW carried out a transparent and thorough investigation following those allegations. The results were made public on 6 February 2020 and they speak to the professionalism of the Organization.

The report of the IIT clearly shows that the investigations were conducted with the utmost care, expertise, impartiality, and transparency.

We would object to those criticizing the IIT for not investigating on the ground in Syria. Indeed, in spite of many good-faith attempts, the Syrian authorities have blocked all visa requests of the investigators.

Despite the numerous obstacles it has been facing, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has continued to ensure an exemplary quality of its work.

More broadly, we sincerely hope that the international norm prohibiting the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances will be re-established, which would ultimately make the need to use fact-finding missions and international investigations an occurrence of the past.

I thank you for your attention.

Intervention of

Ambassador Dr. Bashar Ja'afari

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic

At the Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting on

The "implementation of UNSC resolution 2118: Upholding

the Authority of the OPCW"

New York 28/9/2020

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Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to thank my colleague Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Zhang Jun Permanent Representative of People Republic of China and the colleagues in their Missions for holding this meeting.

I would like also to thank the briefers for the information and insight they provide us.

We really appreciate the efforts of the friendly member states in the Security Council that seek to distance this sensitive file from politicized considerations. However, this will not be an easy task as the OPCW Technical Secretariat and UN Office for Disarmament Affaires are fulfilling western political agendas duo to the immense pressure by some member states, led by the United States, UK and France, in order to maintain the

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chemical weapons file as a tool of pressure and blackmail against Syria and Russia.

The same hostile governments continue their attempts to cast artificial doubts about the solid and established facts, which proved that the Syrian Arab Republic no longer possesses any chemical weapons and that it has not and will not use them. Furthermore, they refused to admit that the activities of the "Joint Investigative Mechanism – JIM" and the "Fact-Finding Mission – FFM", along with their reports were neither impartial, professional, nor balanced, but rather failed to provide scientific and factual documented evidence of any accusation leveled against Syria. Not to mention the remote Hollywood investigations conducted by the JIM and the FFM without visiting the crime scene, and the failure of the authors of their reports to provide any proof or scientific evidence regarding the validity and integrity of the chain of custody of evidence that has been used in

directing false accusations against the Syrian Arab Republic.

Having said that, allow me to take advantage of the presence of scientific experts with us in this meeting, in order to benefit from their experience regarding some questions that OPCW TS, is still trying to avoid answering:

1- To what extent the criteria for the reliability of the "chain of custody" apply to the methods used by experts of JIM and FFM, when they remotely investigated some of the incidents in Syria from Turkey? And how can they rely on so-called "open sources" and terrorist entities, namely the "White Helmets" terrorist organization, who happened to be the first to be present where the alleged crimes took place, and who happened to be the party that collected and transferred the so-called evidences?

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2- How can anyone rely on the conclusions reached by the JIM and FFM while they used in their reports speculative and uncertain terms such as “likely” or “unlikely” while evaluating scientific and factual elements?

3- How can we explain that OPCW experts refused the Syrian request to collect samples from the “Al-Shuyrat” air base? As you know, the US claimed that this base was used in “Khan Sheikhoun” bombing, in order to justify its aggression against it? In this regard, can technical experts explain the scientific possibility of bomb falling from a warplane over the alleged site of this accident, while it was flying at a distance of five kilometers away from this site?

4- Regarding the alleged "Douma" incident, is it not scientifically impossible for a cylinder to fall from the sky and collide with the roofs of houses without exploding or being deformed? Even when it fell on a bed inside a room, no damage was caused neither to

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the bed or the furniture nor the glass in this room, it is a miracle!

5- How can the OPCW lose sensitive samples that were collected in order to solve the outstanding issues regarding the Syrian Declaration? The OPCW TS informed the Syrian side on June 22, 2020, about a leakage of these samples. Yet, and until today, the OPCW TS is unable to provide a clear explanation regarding this leakage.

6- Didn't massive legal and procedural violations and abuses occur when the OPCW violated the Convention and established a so-called "Investigation and Identification Team - IIT" in June 2018? I am talking here about the non-consensual decision that was taken by an artificial majority and in the absence of the representatives of 87 member states from the vote!

Allow me here to invite you to read the report published by "The Gray Zone" entitled "Leaked docs expose

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massive Syria propaganda operation waged by Western governments' contractors and media". This report reveals scandals about hundreds of millions of dollars that Western governments, namely the US and UK, have spent from taxpayers' money to establish and finance platforms, networks and media institutions, especially the "White Helmets", in order to promote distorted media propaganda against the Syrian government.

Mr. President,

It seems that the school of Gobbles, the Nazi propaganda minister , is still open until now and many of its graduates hold higher degrees in the literature of lying , the art of distorting scientific facts and sophistry philosophy that is anti- science and specialist experts who know well what they are talking about. These scientists support their talk with scientific evidence based on long experience and moral principle that is against Gobbles propaganda.

Unfortunately, colleague representatives of NATO alliance states insist to refuse opinions of scientists and attempt to empty the purpose of this meeting. Insisting on wrongful allegations is even worse than wrongdoing itself because it indicates principal mis-intentions, weak claims, and the absence of moral vision.

History is full of a series of scandals fabricated by the Same Gobbles graduates to destroy many member states, such as the invasion of Vietnam, Libya, Iraq, and the attempt to invade Cuba, and my own country Syria.

Mr. President,

We in Syria are realistic and pragmatic, and we will continue to work with the OPCW's Technical Secretariat within the limits of respecting and preserving the Convention and without prejudice to our national sovereignty. And we believe that the time has come to permanently put an end to the manipulation and politicization of this files and close it for good.

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Thank you.

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Statement
by
Mr. M. Mevlüt Yakut
Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey
at the
Security Council Arria-formula Meeting on
"Implementation of UNSCR 2118: Upholding the Authority of the OPCW"
New York, 28 September 2020

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for organizing this meeting and providing a platform to discuss this issue of utmost significance.

At the outset, I would like to underline that Turkey condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. This is a serious violation of international law and a crime against humanity.

The case of Syria remains highly worrisome. It has become clear during 10 years of Syrian conflict that there is no guarantee to prevent the recurrence of chemical weapons attacks, due to the regime's complete disregard of human lives, let alone its obligations emanating from the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Indeed, the regime's repeated crimes have been well documented on several occasions since 2013.

The adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) was an important step in the aftermath of the gruesome attack in Ghouta in August 2013, which left hundreds of innocents dead and many more injured.

Unfortunately, 7 years after its adoption, the objectives of this resolution are yet to be fulfilled. This is mainly due to the ongoing gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies resulting from the initial chemical weapons declaration of the Assad regime. We continue to expect full implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

While the regime has evaded its responsibility stemming from this resolution, its record for the use of chemical weapons has been constantly growing. There is a clear correlation between its non-compliance and growing sense of impunity.

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We cannot let the regime perpetuate the illusion that it has no chemical weapon stockpiles. The regime must be urged for a swift and result-oriented cooperation with the OPCW.

A strong message by the members of the Security Council is critical in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

We are all entitled to our own opinions, but not to our own facts.

OPCW Technical Secretariat, the Fact Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) perform a critical role in a scientific manner by identifying the perpetrators of the chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

The Ltamaneh report of the IIT clearly established the responsibility of the Syrian regime air force in three chemical weapons attacks that took place in March 2017.

This report is an important step to ensure that those responsible for the chemical weapons attacks in Syria are held accountable for their crimes.

Likewise, we look forward to the conclusion of the ongoing investigations carried out by both the FFM and the IIT on other cases.

Turkey reiterates its strong support for the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT).

We have full trust in the professionalism and impartiality of the FFM and the objectivity of its reports. We sincerely believe that it would serve no party's interest to question the credibility of the FFM.

Turkey is among the co-sponsors of the decision adopted during the 94th Executive Council of the OPCW. This decision is a crucial step in addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime.

This decision sets clear deadlines for the regime in order to return to full compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I would also like to recall the responsibility of the parties who have influence on the Syrian regime in this regard.

Turkey will continue to support the steps taken by the international community, first and foremost the UN and OPWC, for ensuring full accountability in Syria.

Thank you.

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