



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9652nd meeting

Tuesday, 11 June 2024, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
China	Mr. Niu Xiaoqiang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
Guyana	Ms. Benn
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Dix
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 28 May 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/414)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 28 May 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/414)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2024/414, which contains the text of a letter dated 28 May 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: I thank Council members for the opportunity to brief them once again on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Since the most recent consideration of this matter by the Council (see S/PV.9562), and consistent with established practice, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with its counterparts in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat on activities related to resolution 2118 (2013).

Since the Council's previous meeting on this matter, the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic. At the time of the submission of the latest monthly report from the OPCW Technical Secretariat (see S/2024/414), the twenty-seventh round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority were under way

in Damascus. Furthermore, as a result of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth rounds of consultations, the OPCW Technical Secretariat assessed that sufficient information had been gathered to consider three outstanding issues as resolved. I am encouraged to see the positive impacts of that renewed cooperation, which began with the resumption of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority in October 2023 after a gap of more than two and a half years.

However, further cooperation is needed to resolve the remaining outstanding issues. Out of the 24 outstanding issues opened by the DAT since 2014, 17 remain unresolved as at the date of this monthly report. I wish to emphasize that I have been advised that the substance of those outstanding issues concerns and involves, inter alia, undeclared research, production and/or weaponization of unknown quantities of chemical weapons and significant quantities of chemical warfare agents and/or precursors and chemical munitions whose fate has not yet been fully verified by the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat has also advised that, in addition to the substance of the 17 outstanding issues previously reported by the DAT, serious concerns remain regarding the presence of unexpected chemicals in the samples collected by the DAT between 2020 and 2023 at several declared sites.

I urge all parties involved not only to maintain, but also to enhance cooperation going forward, so that all outstanding issues regarding the initial and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic can be resolved.

With regard to inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC), I have been advised that the OPCW Technical Secretariat is planning the next round of inspections in 2024. However, as at the date of this month's report, the Technical Secretariat has not received any new information that may resolve the issues related to the presence of a Schedule 2 chemical in the sample collected during the November 2018 inspection and to the origin and usage of a chemical of a dual-use nature observed by the inspection team during the September 2022 inspection at the SSRC Barzah facilities. The OPCW Technical Secretariat will further engage on those issues with the Syrian National Authority during the next round of SSRC inspections.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat has also requested information regarding the unauthorized movement of the two cylinders related to the chemical weapon incident that took place in Douma on 7 April 2018, which were allegedly destroyed in an attack on a chemical weapons production facility. I have been informed that, as at the date of this report, the Technical Secretariat has not received a response to that request.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat remains fully committed to implementing its mandate, aimed at verifying the fulfilment of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration obligations under the Convention, decisions by OPCW policy-making organs and, of course, Security Council resolutions.

However, as has been previously emphasized, full cooperation by the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW Technical Secretariat is essential to closing all outstanding issues. Considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain unresolved, at this time the OPCW Technical Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. I call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its cooperation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and to respond with urgency to all the Technical Secretariat's requests.

Earlier today, the OPCW Technical Secretariat issued a new report of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) regarding incidents that occurred on 9 August 2017 in Qalib Al-Thawr and 8 November 2017 in Al-Balil. The report concluded that the information obtained and analysed in line with the FFM's mandate was not sufficient to provide reasonable grounds for the FFM to determine that toxic chemicals were used as a weapon in the reported incidents. I understand that the FFM is currently preparing upcoming deployments and will report to the Executive Council on the results of its work in due course. The Investigation and Identification Team also continues its investigations into incidents in which the FFM has determined that chemical weapons were used or likely used in the Syrian Arab Republic and will issue further reports in due course.

As the Secretary-General has stated before, any use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and a clear violation of international law. I echo his calls to end impunity for all those who dare to use such weapons, especially against civilians. The United Nations will continue to

support all efforts to uphold the norm against chemical weapons and to relegate those dreadful weapons to history. I urge the members of the Council to unite on that issue and to show leadership in demonstrating that impunity for the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated. The Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to provide whatever support and assistance it can.

The President: I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Syria continues to blatantly ignore its obligations to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013). For the past decade, multiple — I repeat, multiple — independent investigations have concluded that the Al-Assad regime repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people. Still, the Al-Assad regime has yet to fully account for or destroy its chemical weapons arsenal, nor has it accepted responsibility for the atrocities caused by those weapons. To that end, we welcome the ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate Syria's residual chemical weapons capabilities in the face of continued obfuscation, and we look forward to its future reports. We continue to be impressed by the rigour that the OPCW brings to all its investigative efforts, meticulously collecting and analysing evidence from a multitude of sources to reach irrefutable conclusions. That important work is necessary so that those responsible for the attacks can be held to account. There can be no impunity for chemical weapons use.

The United States has long been concerned that the Syrian regime retains residual chemical weapons capability. And indeed, the OPCW continues to uncover new alarming evidence. Last month, the Director General reminded OPCW States parties of the presence of unexpected chemicals in samples collected by the Declaration Assessment Team between 2021 and 2023 across several declared sites. Such results clearly demonstrate that the Al-Assad regime has neither declared nor accounted for the full history and scope of its chemical weapons programme.

In the face of continued non-compliance, the OPCW Conference of States Parties adopted the forward-

looking decision invoking article XII, paragraph 3, of the Chemical Weapons Convention recommending that States parties take “collective measures” to prevent the transfer to Syria of dual-use chemicals and equipment. That decision also aims to prevent the same dual-use chemicals and equipment from falling into the hands of non-State actors, including terrorist groups. The United States encourages all its fellow Security Council members to call for the full and robust implementation of that decision. The OPCW Investigation and Identification Team’s Marea report (see S/2024/200), which found evidence of the use of chemical weapons by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham in Syria, is a strong reminder that chemical materials in the wrong hands are a real threat to all.

We laud the professionalism, dedication and determination of the Syria special missions. The United States will continue working with partners across the world to bring an end to the regime’s chemical weapons programme and promote accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As several other delegations on the Security Council have done, Russia has repeatedly emphasized that it is more than sufficient to review the Syrian chemical file once a quarter. However, as today’s briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, has shown, even that is excessive, given the lack of related developments on the ground. In fact, in the three months since the previous meeting on the topic (see S/PV.9562), there have been no substantive changes.

Once again, the Council has been asked to discuss a carbon-copy monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Mr. Fernando Arias (see S/2024/414). It differs from the previous report (see S/2024/346) by precisely two factual proposals for the twenty-seventh round of consultations between the Syrian authorities and the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the results of which will be reported to the Council in due course. What is the point, then, of convening a separate meeting of the Security Council to discuss this? Is it so that some Western capitals can check a box and once again read out their remarks about condemning an unwanted Government? Such an approach devalues the discussion on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) and undermines the authority of the Security

Council, which could have discussed much more urgent issues instead of this idle talk.

We have no doubt that today’s meeting will be nothing more than another opportunity for Western countries to exercise their anti-Syrian rhetoric. At the same time, Syria is demonstrating openness to cooperating with the OPCW. We welcome the resumption of consultations between the Syrian National Authority and the DAT under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). That work was effectively frozen for two years because of the requirements set by the OPCW Technical Secretariat. Nevertheless, Syria, as a gesture of goodwill, met the conditions set by the organization, which made it possible to move the work forward. That once again demonstrated the openness of the Syrian authorities and their willingness to cooperate fully with the OPCW, which made it possible to hold the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh rounds of consultations between Damascus and the OPCW Technical Secretariat. The outcome of those consultations was the DAT being able to conclude three further outstanding issues on Syria’s initial declaration.

Thus, the work on the Syrian initial declaration is proceeding with the full and unconditional cooperation of Damascus. In that connection, we note that the Syrian Arab Republic remains the most verified State party to the CWC. We believe that our Syrian colleagues will speak more about that today. In contrast, the actions of the OPCW, which the United States and its Euro-Atlantic allies turned into a tool for serving their geopolitical interests, raise many questions.

Russia reaffirms its position on the illegitimacy of the attribution of responsibility for the chemical incidents, which does not comply with the mandate of the OPCW and imposes on the exclusive prerogatives of the Security Council. The Council has not delegated its authority to the OPCW, let alone its Secretariat. Thus, the work of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) not only is completely outside the legal framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention, but also violates the Charter of the United Nations. The Euro-Atlantic allies, led by the United States of America, are once again blatantly violating the CWC and the Charter of the United Nations by giving the OPCW authority reserved exclusively for the Security Council and allowing its Technical Secretariat to operate as if it were a Security Council sanctions committee. The reports published by the IIT are biased and completely untenable from an expert point of view. The sole purpose of the IIT

is to hold Syria responsible at all costs for episodes of chemical weapons use in the absence of any convincing evidence whatsoever.

We underscore that the implementation of any restrictive measures in international forums based on unfounded accusations is categorically unacceptable. Year after year, we hear the same type of statement about the use by certain countries of chemical weapons or the concealment of their stockpiles, which are not supported by serious, verifiable evidence. The results of the work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria are a clear example of that.

For the Russian Federation and a whole host of like-minded States, the reports of both the IIT and the FFM are unacceptable, as are the politically motivated decisions by the OPCW governing bodies and any attempts to bring them to the Security Council. It is obvious that under that approach there is no point in counting on a meaningful discussion in the Council on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). Against the backdrop of the tasks the Security Council is faced with, we consider meetings like today's to be an irrational waste of time and resources.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

In its most recent statement to the Security Council on this issue in March (see S/PV.9562), Switzerland welcomed the holding of the twenty-sixth round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian Government. Since then, it has been possible to resolve 3 of the 20 points still outstanding in relation to Syria's initial declaration. We also take note that a twenty-seventh round of consultations was held in Damascus last month, and we look forward to hearing the results. Switzerland supports that recent resumption of cooperation between the OPCW and Syria after many months of interruption. That is a crucial step towards full clarification of the 17 points that remain unresolved, in line with Syria's commitments in that regard.

Switzerland recalls that verifiable, tangible and scientifically plausible answers to those points are one of the conditions for Syria to regain its rights and privileges as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. In order to achieve that objective, Switzerland has full confidence in the OPCW and

commends the meticulous work, professionalism and integrity of all its teams, including the fact-finding missions and the investigation and identification teams, which must be able to operate without hindrance in the field. Their work is fundamental, and their integrity and professionalism are unimpeachable.

Furthermore, Switzerland is concerned about the threat emanating from non-State actors using chemical weapons, as revealed in February by the fourth report of the OPCW's Identification and Investigation Team on a chemical weapons attack carried out by the Islamic State organization in Marea (see S/2024/200). Switzerland condemned that attack and demands that those responsible be brought to justice.

With resolution 2118 (2013), adopted unanimously in 2013, the Security Council made a clear commitment to oppose the use of chemical weapons in Syria. For more than 11 years, regular Council meetings have served as a reminder of the importance of preventing the development, production, stockpiling, use and transfer of such weapons and of ensuring their destruction. Resolution 2118 (2013) also reflects the firm conviction of the Security Council and the international community that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria must be held accountable.

The fight against impunity must help to ensure that the ban on chemical weapons is respected and that they are never used again in Syria or anywhere else in the world. In that regard, we welcome the formal cooperation between the OPCW and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. Switzerland will continue to take the strongest possible stand against the use and proliferation of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Our collective security and the credibility of the instruments of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture that guarantee it are at stake.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I have the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and my own country, Algeria, as well as Guyana (A3+).

We thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the

briefing. We welcome the participation of the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye.

The A3+ reiterates its firm belief that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances must be condemned. Impunity for such a crime under international law is not acceptable. We take note of the contents of the 128th monthly report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), covering the period from 24 April to 23 May. We also acknowledge the submission of the 126th monthly report, dated 15 May, on the progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic towards the destruction of its chemical weapons.

The A3+ encourages the Technical Secretariat to continue its efforts to clarify the Syrian Arab Republic's declarations by addressing the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain unresolved. To that end, we acknowledge the important role of the tripartite agreement concluded between the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Syrian Arab Republic in facilitating the Secretariat's activities regarding the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We therefore encourage the extension of the tripartite agreement upon its expiration on 30 June.

We also encourage the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its cooperation by submitting the relevant explanations, documents and amendments to the outstanding issues, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. In that regard, we note with appreciation the collaboration of the Syrian Arab Republic with the Technical Secretariat, particularly in allowing the conduct of the ongoing twenty-seventh round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority in Damascus. We look forward to the report on those consultations in due course.

Notwithstanding the recent encouraging developments, the A3+ remains concerned about the slow pace of progress in efforts to close the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons file.

In the light of the findings from the report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team regarding the Marea incident (see S/2024/200), the A3+ reiterates its grave concern about threats posed by acts of terrorism involving the use of chemical weapons. We urge for continued high-level engagement to address the

Syrian chemical weapons file based on those findings in order to build momentum for conclusively resolving outstanding issues.

The A3+ calls upon the Syrian Arab Republic to sustain its collaboration with the OPCW in line with resolution 2118 (2013) and the Chemical Weapons Convention and as a critical measure towards the resolution of protracted issues. We also call on the Syrian Arab Republic to declare all chemical weapons and their production facilities in its possession, to organize the next round of consultations with the Declaration Assessment Team and to resolve outstanding issues in order to definitively close this file.

The A3+ remains committed to the imperative against the use of chemical weapons and to all efforts aimed at prohibiting their development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use. We reaffirm our continuing support for resolution 2118 (2013) and underscore the need for the definitive closure of the issues pertaining to the Syrian chemical weapons file.

(spoke in French)

Algeria and, I believe, the A3+ have worked on the documents made available to us by the Secretariat. Those documents are insufficient. We cannot participate in the work of the Security Council concerning investigations or conclusive research because we are unable to access the documentation that we need to make our contribution to the Council.

I wish to take this opportunity to express the Algerian delegation's outrage at the obstacles placed in the way of our attempts to further that research and to work in the interest of international peace and security.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

I also wish to acknowledge the hard work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Slovenia commends its constant, professional and impartial action to ensure the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Let me begin by reiterating our resolute condemnation of any use of chemical weapons. We will never tire of condemning and fighting against the use of chemical weapons anywhere or by anyone, be it a

State or non-State actor. In that vein, we fully support the holding of Security Council meetings on the issue, including meetings on the use of chemical weapons in Syria, in accordance with resolution 2118 (2013).

While welcoming the successful work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Investigation and Identification Team, as well as the resumption of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian authorities, we once again voice our concern over the many unanswered questions regarding Syria's chemical weapons programme. The findings of the international investigation bodies confirm that Syria has, in fact, concealed a part of its chemical weapons programme in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and — worse — has used chemical weapons in at least nine confirmed cases in the past 10 years.

We express our deepest sympathy for the victims of chemical weapons use. We strongly believe that those abhorrent crimes cannot remain unpunished and that we owe it to the victims and survivors to take action. Accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria must be ensured. We call on all parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to continue fighting impunity by sending a clear signal from the international community that the use of such weapons will not be tolerated.

Once again, we call on Syria to comply with its obligations under the Convention, to declare all its chemical weapons production and research activities, to destroy any remaining secret caches and to fully cooperate with the OPCW. That should include providing unfettered access to the necessary sites, documents and people to resolve all outstanding issues and any other issue resulting from OPCW-mandated investigative activity.

We must spare no effort to prevent the re-emergence of those horrific weapons, which must be relegated to the history books as both a warning and a deterrence. To that aim, the attention of the Security Council is fundamental — even more so in the light of the lack of substantial progress in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention by one State party. Only a multilateral approach with respect for international law at its centre can pave the way towards a world free from the terror and destruction brought about by chemical weapons.

Slovenia will continue to support, in the Council and elsewhere, all efforts to resolve the outstanding issues on this file.

Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

We are meeting once again to note the lack of real progress towards the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme. It has been more than 10 years since the Syrian Arab Republic joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, yet the Syrian regime has since continued to use chemical weapons against its own population, in violation of its commitments. The Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has proven that, notably in the case of the attack on Douma, which claimed at least 43 victims in April 2018.

France condemns any use of chemical weapons at any time, anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances.

Transparency is still lacking regarding the status of Syria's chemical weapons programme and stockpiles. The most recent report by the Director General of the OPCW (see S/2024/414), published at the end of May, assesses — as did previous reports — that the declaration by the Syrian authorities cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention.

The report emphasizes that 17 substantial questions relating to the Syrian regime's declaration are still outstanding. It also notes the serious concerns of the Declaration Assessment Team regarding chemical samples it collected at several sites between 2020 and 2023.

We note that the twenty-seventh cycle of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian authorities took place at the end of May. We hope that the OPCW will soon be able to report back to the Security Council.

We reiterate once again the importance of Syria cooperating fully with the OPCW and finally complying with its international obligations. That is a prerequisite for Syria to regain its rights as a State party to the Convention, which were suspended in 2021.

The use of chemical weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and the Security

Council must remain actively seized of the issue, in accordance with resolution 2118 (2013).

We also reiterate our support for the OPCW teams and their work to ensure compliance with the Convention, to document the use of chemical weapons, to identify the perpetrators and to ensure accountability. Any use of chemical weapons, whether by State or non-State actors, is unacceptable. Together with its partners, France remains mobilized to ensure compliance with the prohibition of such inhumane weapons and to combat impunity for those responsible for chemical attacks.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her informative briefing.

At the outset, we thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for convening this important meeting. Malta continues to support regular discussions on this important file, as mandated by resolution 2118 (2013).

According to the most recent report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW),

“serious concerns remain regarding the presence of unexpected chemicals in the samples collected by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT)” (S/2024/414, annex, para. 12).

They were collected during multiple missions between 2020 and 2023 at several declared sites. It is deeply troubling that more than 10 years after its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to declare and destroy all its stockpiles. That is unacceptable. The Syrian Arab Republic must fully comply with its obligations under the Convention and resolution 2118 (2013). Any attempt to produce, acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons constitutes a clear violation and must be condemned.

Furthermore, there are still 17 outstanding issues in the declaration presented by Syria. In the light of the persisting gaps and inconsistencies assessed by the Technical Secretariat, the declaration still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention and with resolution 2118 (2013). That is deeply regrettable. Once again, we urge the Syrian Arab Republic to resolve all outstanding issues in its declaration and to make progress towards the full elimination of its chemical weapons programme. In doing so, it must cooperate in a full and transparent

manner with the OPCW Technical Secretariat, as mandated by resolution 2118 (2013).

We take note of the fact that the twenty-seventh round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority was taking place during the reporting period. We look forward to the report on the substance of those consultations.

We welcome the planning by the Technical Secretariat of the next round of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre later this year. The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission is also preparing upcoming deployments, and we call on the Syrian Arab Republic to grant full access to OPCW personnel in line with resolution 2118 (2013).

The use of chemical weapons is unconscionable and completely contrary to the legal standards of the international community. Malta strongly condemns their use by any actor, under any circumstances. We must collectively ensure that the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks are held accountable. Effective accountability means justice for the victims, as well as the prevention of future attacks.

In closing, we reiterate our full support for the OPCW and its technical teams. They carry out their mandate independently and impartially, in accordance with international standards. All Council members should recognize that and refrain from dangerous rhetoric aimed at casting doubt on their integrity and delegitimizing their work.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing.

The use of chemical weapons should never be tolerated anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances. It is our shared responsibility to hold those who have used chemical weapons accountable and bring justice to the victims.

Japan commends the impartial, independent and professional work conducted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Japan strongly supports the ongoing work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). The IIT's reports, including the most recent one on the use of chemical weapons in Marea in 2015 (see S/2024/200), play a crucial role in establishing the truth regarding the alleged instances of chemical

weapons use in Syria and identifying the perpetrators. We strongly oppose any attempts to undermine their invaluable work.

The use of chemical weapons by Syria remains a clear threat to international peace and security. It is truly regrettable that we have not seen concrete progress on this file since our most recent meeting in March.

The most recent monthly report by the Director General of the OPCW (see S/2024/414) showed that continuing discrepancies, gaps and inconsistencies in Syria's declarations remain unresolved. We are seriously concerned about the presence of unexpected chemicals collected by the Declaration Assessment Team between 2020 and 2023 in Syria, which may indicate potentially undeclared research and development or production of chemical weapons.

Syria has not provided the accurate and complete declarations or documents requested by the OPCW Technical Secretariat to resolve the outstanding issues. In that regard, Syria must comply fully and faithfully with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013).

Japan, once again, calls upon all Security Council members to urge the Syrian Government to declare and eliminate its entire chemical weapons programme to prevent the recurrence of the use of chemical weapons. Japan believes the Council should remain seized regularly of this matter.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation appreciates the, as always, valuable briefing of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and Under-Secretary-General, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu.

Ecuador acknowledges the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team, to clarify all outstanding issues relating to the initial declaration and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic.

Transparent dialogue and good-faith cooperation between the Syrian authorities and the OPCW technical teams is the best way to achieve results and accountability. In that vein, we look forward to the results of the twenty-seventh round of consultations. I join others in calling on the Syrian authorities to remain committed to the full implementation of their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention

and the respective Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2118 (2013).

Ecuador reaffirms its support for the work of the OPCW, and it firmly believes in the integrity, impartiality, objectivity and independence of its technical teams. Any incident involving the use of chemical weapons must be addressed with full transparency and must be subject to thorough investigations. No use of chemical weapons can or should go unpunished.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention, including the condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

Mr. Niu Xiaoqiang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

China's position on the question of chemical weapons has been consistent. We are firmly opposed to the use of chemical weapons by anyone, under any circumstances or for any purpose. We hope that the world will soon become free of chemical weapons.

China has consistently called for dialogue and consultations to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the initial declaration of chemical weapons in Syria. We welcome the twenty-seventh round of the technical consultations between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian Government. We encourage the Technical Secretariat to work with the Syrian Government on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation and on an equal footing, to strengthen communication and to meet each other halfway with a view to jointly resolving the outstanding issues as early as possible.

In its investigation and accountability work on the alleged use of chemical weapons, the OPCW should strictly observe the provisions contained in the Chemical Weapons Convention and the relevant verification annexes to ensure compliance with the established procedure, the reliability of evidence and the credibility of its conclusions. We hope that the Director General and the Technical Secretariat will make concrete efforts to uphold the technical nature of the OPCW.

Ms. Dix (United Kingdom): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her comprehensive briefing.

The United Kingdom would like nothing more than for the Security Council not to need to hold further meetings on chemical weapons, as that would mean that chemical weapons were no longer being produced, stored or used anywhere in the world and that the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks had been held to account. Sadly, that is not the case. Chemical weapons are not a historical problem in Syria, they are a present reality. The Al-Assad regime continues to possess chemical weapons today. Thousands of munitions and hundreds of tons of chemical agent remain unaccounted for. Analysis of samples collected at two sites in April 2023 indicates further undeclared processing and production activity in Syria. We are gravely concerned about those developments, and we join the High Representative's call for Syria's increased cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat.

The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team found that the Al-Assad regime used chemical weapons, including sarin and chlorine, against its own people nine times after acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013. Syria has failed to make a complete and accurate declaration of its stockpiles, despite the best and repeated efforts of the OPCW Secretariat, nor has it met its obligations under resolution 2118 (2013). Independent international investigations have also now attributed a total of four uses of chemical weapons to Da'esh.

Failure to hold Syria to account would undermine the international non-proliferation architecture. The United Kingdom will continue to pursue accountability for the use of chemical weapons by State and non-State actors. We fully support the work of the OPCW's Syria missions and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, which assists in the investigation and prosecution of international crimes committed in Syria. We applaud the OPCW's impartial and patient work. Until Syria fully declares and destroys its chemical weapons, the Council should remain focused on this ongoing threat to international peace and security.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

I would first like to join others in thanking High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing and also the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) team for its impartial, independent and professional work.

Resolution 2118 (2013) reflects the firm conviction of the Security Council and the international community that chemical weapons must never be used again by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances. It also reaffirms that those responsible for the ghastly use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. The Republic of Korea shares those beliefs and stands together with the Council to ensure the resolution's full implementation.

The slow progress on the issue of chemical weapons in Syria is therefore a matter of deep concern. Syria's initial and subsequent declarations regarding the reported use of chemical weapons have left many unanswered questions. The OPCW has confirmed that three issues were cleared in March, but there are still 17 other outstanding issues, even after the twenty-seventh round of consultations with the Syrian Government. Meanwhile, the Council has also been bogged down by discussions regarding the legitimacy of the attribution mechanism of the OPCW.

However, I would like to reiterate why we should retain our common commitment to the full and effective implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). The Syria chemical weapons dossier not only is related to revealing the use of chemical weapons in the past but also has vital relevance at present and even more so in the future. If we stop here and leave the issues unresolved now, we will end up opening the window of impunity for international crimes of chemical weapons use. Therefore, we can close this file only when all questions are answered, all chemical weapons programmes are destroyed and stringent verification of their destruction is in place.

In addition, achieving the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is an important task. Currently, there are four States that remain outside the Convention, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We call on those States to join the CWC and stress that the international community should work together towards achieving full universality, building on the grand milestone of the complete destruction of all declared chemical weapons. We should therefore send a strong warning to the countries

that violate the CWC and those that have not yet joined it. In particular, the issue of chemical weapons in Syria holds great significance for the Republic of Korea because of the non-State party located right next to us. In the light of that, the Republic of Korea will remain steadfast in ensuring accountability and preventing any future use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances.

Preventing the recurrence of the use of chemical weapons in Syria or beyond must continue to be a priority for the Security Council. The silent cries of those killed en masse in eastern Ghouta 11 years ago with such weapons implore us to do so.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country, Syria, has repeatedly condemned the use of chemical weapons at any time, anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances. My country has continued to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and has fulfilled all of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In the context of its ongoing cooperation, Syria fully facilitated the holding the twenty-seventh round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the Syrian National Authority from 21 to 30 May. The two sides engaged in technical discussions with the aim of achieving tangible progress on resolving a number of outstanding issues, as in the twenty-sixth round, which resulted in the closure of three issues.

During the twenty-seventh round, it was agreed to conduct field visits to several sites, collect samples and interview witnesses. The Syrian National Authority requested that DAT come up with an action plan that adopts a new course of action leading to a qualitative shift and appropriate formulas for resolving outstanding issues. Eager to continue cooperating with the Technical Secretariat, the Syrian National Authority welcomed the Technical Secretariat's announcement about planning for DAT's future mission. Furthermore, the Syrian National Authority submitted its monthly reports, the most recent of which is the 126th report, covering the relevant activities carried out on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic during the past three months.

We look forward to the convening of the high-level meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, the Chair of the Syrian National Authority, and the Director-General of the OPCW at the earliest opportunity. We call on the focal point of the Technical Secretariat to prepare for that meeting in good faith.

Syria once again calls upon the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and the Western countries that have been politicizing this file and using it to achieve their hostile agendas not to pre-empt the ongoing consultations between the Syrian National Authority and DAT — I repeat not to pre-empt the ongoing consultations between the Syrian National Authority and DAT — to stop making false accusations and to stop disrupting the existing cooperation between Syria and the organization.

My country regrets the repeated baseless accusations made in the organization's 127th report (see S/2024/346), which suggest that Syria has not fulfilled its obligations while disregarding Syria's cooperation and the information and facilities it provided to DAT. The aforementioned report of the organization pre-empts the results of sample analysis by providing negative and unscientific assessments prior to the conclusion of the relevant discussions, and even prior to the conclusion of the twenty-seventh round of consultations between DAT and the Syrian National Authority.

Some have spoken of a threat to peace and security in the Middle East. The main threat to peace and security in the Middle East region has been and continues to be the Israeli occupying entity's arsenal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, along with the military, technical and financial support extended to the occupying entity by the United States of America and its NATO allies, which provide the Israeli occupation authorities with various types of weapons and equipment — the devastating effects of which we see daily in Gaza and in the repeated Israeli acts of aggression against Syria and Lebanon.

Turning a blind eye to those grave threats and gross violations of international law and politicizing the so-called Syrian chemical file demonstrates how disarmament mechanisms are manipulated and diverted from their mandate, and their credibility is undermined, as evidenced by the push of some Western States to establish the illegal so-called Investigation and Identification Team, which goes beyond the provisions of the Convention. Furthermore, the reports of the

Fact-Finding Mission are politicized and devoid of the professionalism, objectivity and scientific integrity required by its mandate.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that it is eager to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat and its teams. It hopes that the politicization of this file will end, that it will no longer be used as a tool for pressure and blackmail and that the Technical Secretariat's future reports will reflect Syria's positive and constructive cooperation, thereby contributing to closing this file once and for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Ahmadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, for presiding over the Security Council this month. We acknowledge Mozambique for successfully presiding over the Council in May. We welcome the presence of Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, at today's briefing.

Iran strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. We reiterate our full support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the promotion of its authority. We call for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention. As an active member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Iran underscores the essential importance of ensuring the independent, impartial and professional work of the organization. That is of utmost importance, especially with respect to issues related to the implementation of obligations by States parties, including the Syrian Arab Republic.

As a committed party to the Convention, the Syrian Arab Republic continues to uphold its commitments and cooperate closely with the OPCW. We acknowledge the vital importance of the Syrian Government's efforts to implement its obligations under the Convention. The destruction of its chemical weapons programme in the shortest possible time frame and under difficult conditions proves the importance of such efforts by the Syrian Government.

We welcome the recent submission by Syria of its 126th report, which covers the relevant activities on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic during the past three months. We positively noted Syria's continued cooperation and its provision of all facilities to hold

the twenty-seventh round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority during the period from 21 to 30 May. The two sides engaged in technical discussions to achieve tangible progress that would allow the closing of a number of outstanding issues, along the lines of the twenty-sixth round, which resulted in the closure of three outstanding issues. The Syrian National Authority, as it is keen to continue cooperating with the Technical Secretariat, also welcomed the announcement of the Technical Secretariat that it would plan the next Declaration Assessment Team mission.

However, it is extremely disappointing that a certain group of countries continue to politicize the Syrian chemical file. That trend, which has undermined the Convention's authority and the OPCW's credibility, must stop, in the interest of the Convention, the OPCW, the rule of law and the maintenance of international peace and security. The OPCW must be able to perform its duties in an impartial, professional and objective manner to establish facts and develop evidence-based conclusions. We support the continued constructive dialogue between Syria and the OPCW to address any remaining issues and bring the file to a final and conclusive resolution. That approach is pivotal for ensuring transparency, accountability and the satisfactory resolution of all outstanding issues.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mrs. Özgür (Türkiye): We thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting after an interval of two months. We believe that the Security Council should continue its active engagement and periodic review of this critical file. We also thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The use of chemical weapons is unacceptable under any circumstances. Yet, in Syria, that grave violation of international law has been committed repeatedly, causing some of the worst destruction and suffering of the 13-year conflict.

The use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security. There is also a real danger of chemical weapons falling into the hands of non-State actors or terrorist organizations developing the capacity to produce chemical agents. Therefore, it is the collective responsibility of the international community and the Council to take effective measures to prevent chemical weapons use

and ensure accountability when it occurs. Unity in the Council is essential in that regard.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, Türkiye has supported the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to identify and hold to account the perpetrators of chemical weapons use. We will continue to provide necessary and appropriate contributions towards that end.

As we have heard from High Representative Nakamitsu, the OPCW Director-General's recent monthly reports communicate that, in addition to the 17 outstanding issues previously reported by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), serious concerns remain regarding the presence of unexpected chemicals in the samples collected by the DAT between 2020 and 2023 at several declared sites in Syria. Owing to the

remaining gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies, the declaration submitted by the Syrian regime still cannot be considered accurate and complete by the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

We thank the OPCW Technical Secretariat for its committed efforts to clarify all outstanding issues. We call on the Syrian regime to comply with its obligations and to fully cooperate with the OPCW in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013).

In the context of chemical weapons use, fighting impunity is not only a responsibility towards the victims, but also a requirement to deter and prevent the repetition of such heinous acts. Therefore, it is imperative that all perpetrators of chemical weapons use are identified and held accountable.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.