



# Security Council

Eightieth year

**9930**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thursday, 5 June 2025, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett . . . . . (Guyana)

*Members:*

Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Bendjama
China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
Denmark . . . . .	Ms. Lassen
France . . . . .	Mr. Bonnafont
Greece . . . . .	Mr. Sekeris
Pakistan . . . . .	Mr. Ahmad
Panama . . . . .	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone . . . . .	Ms. Swallow
Slovenia . . . . .	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
Somalia . . . . .	Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Quinn
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Kelley

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 27 May 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2025/330)

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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 27 May 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2025/330)**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of 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/2025/330, which contains the text of a letter dated 27 May 2025 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 previous consideration of this matter by the Council (see S/PV.9874), and consistent with established practice, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with counterparts in the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on activities related to resolution 2118 (2013).

Since the Council's previous meeting on this matter, we have continued to observe a new political reality emerge in Syria. As I previously emphasized, and as part of that new reality, there is an important opportunity to obtain long-overdue clarifications on the full extent and scope of the Syrian chemical weapons programme; to rid the country of all chemical weapons; to normalize relations between Syria and the OPCW; and to ensure long-term compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

As reported, for over a decade, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has not been able to confirm that the declaration submitted by the previous Syrian authorities was accurate and complete, because of the insufficient and inaccurate information it contained. Over the past 11 years, the OPCW has reported a total of 26 outstanding issues related to Syria's declaration, of which 19 remain unresolved. The OPCW Technical Secretariat has reported that the substance of the 19 outstanding issues remains of serious concern as it involves large quantities of potentially undeclared or unverified chemical warfare agents and chemical munitions.

In that regard, I welcome the continued engagement by the interim Syrian authorities with the OPCW to address outstanding issues related to Syria's chemical weapons dossier.

As of the previous meeting of the Security Council on this matter, a team of technical experts from the OPCW Technical Secretariat was preparing to be deployed to Damascus to start the work on establishing the OPCW's permanent physical presence in Syria and start jointly planning deployments to chemical weapons sites. I am pleased to report that this deployment went forward from 12 to 21 March.

Furthermore, a second deployment was completed from 14 to 25 April, and the OPCW Technical Secretariat is currently preparing its next deployment to the Syrian Arab Republic.

The aim of the deployments completed to date has been to conduct the necessary activities required to establish the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, to conduct site visits and to interview personnel with knowledge of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

During the first deployment, the OPCW team was able to conduct initial visits to five locations in and around Damascus, including the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre. During the second deployment, seven locations were visited, in line with the OPCW Technical Secretariat's priority list, as well as the accessibility of the locations. The samples were also collected from one of the visited locations, which OPCW-designated laboratories are currently analysing.

During the most recent visit in April, the OPCW team also conducted meetings with the representatives of the Syrian interim authorities, including with the newly appointed Director-General of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre and with His Excellency Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani, caretaker Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic. The OPCW team also had a technical meeting with two Syrian experts and gathered new information that had not been previously revealed by the former Syrian authorities.

The OPCW has highlighted that, for both deployments, the interim Syrian authorities extended all necessary support for the OPCW team's activities. That included unfettered access, inter alia, to sites and people, the issuance of visas and security escorts for field activities. There were also discussions on requirements for the safe conduct of future OPCW activities in Syria and the planning of necessary steps to facilitate such activities.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat remains committed to delivering on its mandate to verify the full implementation by the Syrian Arab Republic of all declaration requirements under the Chemical Weapons Convention, decisions by OPCW policymaking organs and, of course, Security Council resolutions. The commitment of the new authorities in Syria to fully and transparently cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat is commendable.

However, the work ahead will not be easy and it will require support from the international community. The OPCW Technical Secretariat has consistently underscored the importance of additional support and resources from the States parties to the CWC and relevant international actors to accomplish the tasks needed to rid Syria of all chemical weapons and carry out other mandated activities, such as capacity-building assistance to prevent the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons, as well as training and equipment to enable the Syrian National Authority to respond to and investigate chemical weapons issues and incidents effectively.

I once again urge the members of the Council to unite and show leadership in providing the support that this unprecedented effort will require. The United Nations stands ready to support that effort and will continue to do its part to uphold the norm against the use of chemical weapons, anywhere, at any time.

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

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

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing.

We have closely studied the most recent monthly report issued by Mr. Fernando Arias, Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), particularly those sections concerning the two visits to Damascus by representatives of the mission to assess Syria's initial declaration under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We are pleased that the Technical Secretariat is gradually establishing a solid working relationship with the Syrian side. We also welcome Qatar's commitment to the role it has undertaken to serve as a politically neutral and objective channel of communication with Damascus, as well as Doha's willingness to represent Syria in the OPCW until a permanent representative from Syria is appointed to that role.

Overall, we note that progress in addressing the outstanding issues related to Syria's initial declaration can be achieved only if the OPCW leadership ensures that this process is free of political bias and is being conducted in a purely professional, objective and impartial manner. Unfortunately, we continue to have serious doubts in that regard, given the OPCW Technical Secretariat's sad track record, which is full of violations and falsifications. The multi-year trend towards the extreme politicization of the OPCW's activities undermines faith in its ability to perform its purely technical functions honestly and conscientiously, as stipulated by its mandate.

We must note that the constructive relations we are seeing emerge between the new Syrian authorities and the OPCW does not cancel out the attributive decisions at the time pushed through by Western countries in violation of the CWC, nor the establishment of such illegitimate entities as the Investigation and Identification Team, nor violations by the Technical Secretariat of the working methods prescribed by the Convention. The political environment has nothing to do with it. It is purely an issue of the poor quality of work being done across the entire Organization. Nor has the direct forgery in preparing the report on the Douma incident been cancelled out. I would like to recall that, as confirmed by various sources, including the very former OPCW inspectors who were directly involved in investigating this incident, the final version of the report was heavily edited, compared to the initial version. Attempts by those inspectors to ensure that the OPCW leadership investigate what happened came to naught. Instead, they were persecuted for seeking the truth. In such a context, how can we trust any claims made by the Technical Secretariat with regard to Syria? How can there be any trust in the work of OPCW entities at all?

What is particularly notable regarding this report is the Director General's dubious — to say the least — assessment that the current military situation in Syria is conducive to obtaining as much information as possible about the former military chemical programme in Syria. We consider such statements to be not only premature, but also beyond the technical mandate of the OPCW.

We cannot ignore the objective reality: over the years of conflict, a significant part of Syrian territory repeatedly fell under the control of various armed groups. Many military and vital industrial facilities have been either destroyed or seriously damaged as a result of massive air strikes carried out by both the Western coalition and Israel.

Under such circumstances, it is impossible to talk about properly collecting new samples and searching for documents at those facilities. We also have doubts about the quality of the "new" materials obtained in such an environment. It is clear that given these conditions, we cannot talk about preserving the chain of custody of the evidence or its accuracy, verifiability or usefulness for objective analysis. Nor can we talk about being able to paint a full picture during such inspections. Against that backdrop, attempts to initiate new inspections appear unjustified, to say the least, and can be seen as an attempt to shift blame to the former Syrian authorities rather than as a step towards establishing the objective truth. In other words, all the prerequisites are in place for further politicization of the OPCW's work to serve

the changed political situation in the country. That is not a trend that should be supported by the Security Council.

In that regard, we urge the OPCW Technical Secretariat to focus on a thorough analysis of the materials already available, collected over previous years. The only way to resolve outstanding issues within the framework of the initial declaration is through a professional and objective approach. Levelling new accusations without solid evidence not only fails to bring us closer to resolving the problem, but also fuels the mistrust and politicization surrounding the OPCW's work.

When discussing the Syrian chemical file, we urge all parties to take into account the full context and complexity of the current domestic political situation in Syria, including the need to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, to restore State institutions and to combat terrorist threats. And resolution 2118 (2013) should not become a policy lever or a tool for settling scores. Otherwise, the fragile stabilization process in the country could be in jeopardy.

**Ms. Lassen** (Denmark): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her informative briefing, and I welcome the Permanent Representative of Syria to today's meeting.

Almost six months have passed since the fall of the Al-Assad regime. Images of Syrians celebrating in the streets and the visible signs of hope remain fresh in our memory. While the security situation in Syria remains complex and precarious, some things remain straightforward — chemical weapons are illegal. They must be destroyed. Any usage must be investigated, and perpetrators held to account. Victims have the right to justice.

The brutality of the Al-Assad regime affected all aspects of Syrian life, but it is perhaps most visibly and most ruthlessly represented through the multiple chemical attacks against civilians conducted over the years. Now Syria is taking a first step in tackling this heavy legacy, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). This endeavour deserves our collective support.

To that end, let me make three brief points.

First, we welcome the cooperation between the OPCW and the Syrian transitional Government. Statements from the Syrian leadership on the commitment to implementing the provisions in the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013) are commendable. We are encouraged by the visits of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to Syria, most recently — as we heard — from 14 to 25 April. Those are concrete steps towards establishing a sustained OPCW presence in Syria.

We reiterate the importance of the OPCW continuing the dialogue with the Syrian transitional Government on both a technical and a political level. While we acknowledge the resource constraints, it is important that the current momentum is sustained and that dialogue translates into tangible results on the ground.

Secondly, priority must be given to ensuring that no chemical weapons or precursors fall into the hands of terrorists. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist organizations will not hesitate to use these weapons. We continue to support all efforts to combat ISIL in Syria.

Thirdly and finally, the victims and their relatives deserve justice. Resolution 2118 (2013) is clear: the evidence of the crimes of the Al-Assad regime must be secured, and accountability must be ensured. There can be no impunity for the perpetrators of these chemical-weapons attacks. We must all do our utmost to that end.

In conclusion, the international community, including the Council, must continue to support the efforts of the OPCW and the Syrian authorities to immediately destroy

these horrific weapons once and for all. Denmark remains steadfast in our support for a peaceful Syria without chemical weapons.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

China's position on the issue of chemical weapons is consistent. We firmly oppose the use of chemical weapons by any country, organization or individual, under any circumstance or for any purpose. The use of chemical weapons cannot be tolerated at any time, anywhere. We express the hope for an early realization of a world free of chemical weapons.

China supports the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to discharge its duties and responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and encourages its Technical Secretariat to strengthen communication and cooperation with the Syrian interim authorities in a scientific, open and transparent spirit. We recognize the recent positive interactions between the two parties. As a State party to the Convention, Syria should fully implement its obligations under the Convention to destroy all chemical weapons and their production facilities. We hope that all parties will work together to secure an early and definitive solution to the issue of chemical weapons in Syria.

Syria is currently facing a fragile security landscape and grim counter-terrorism situation. Recently, the country has been rocked by several violent terrorist attacks, raising the spectre of terrorist organizations and extremist forces taking advantage of the current chaos to grow and stage a comeback. The international community should remain highly vigilant about a possible scenario where terrorist forces in Syria manufacture, acquire or use chemical weapons. We are concerned about the relevant reports that foreign terrorist fighters based in Syria have recently been integrated into the Syrian Government forces, and we urge the Syrian interim authorities to fulfil their counter-terrorism obligations. They must take all necessary measures to combat all terrorist organizations and individuals listed by the Security Council, including the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, and prevent dangerous chemicals and chemical weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

The political transition in Syria is at a critical juncture. China sincerely hopes that peace and stability will return to Syria at an early date. To that end, we call on all relevant parties in Syria to work under the guidance of the principles of resolution 2254 (2015) to fully engage and consult with each other, build maximum consensus and push forward a broad and inclusive political transition in an orderly manner. At the same time, it is important to work with the international community to alleviate the humanitarian situation and begin an economic recovery. China supports the United Nations playing an important role in that process.

**Mr. Bonnafont** (France) (*spoke in French*): France would like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing. We also thank her for reporting on the work carried out by the teams of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), who demonstrated their professionalism and whose impartiality cannot be called into question.

I also welcome the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and the representative of Türkiye.

As we discuss chemical weapons in Syria, we are compelled to remember the victims of these inhuman weapons. Let us not forget that, for years, Al-Assad's regime used these weapons against its own population, causing thousands of civilian casualties, notably in Ghouta in August 2013.



The regime's fall in December raised immense hopes for the Syrian people. France immediately mobilized to help the Syrian authorities lead a political transition that respects the principles of resolution 2254 (2015), paving the way for a free, sovereign and stable Syria that is fully reintegrated into the international community. An essential step in that reintegration is the elimination of the chemical-weapons programme inherited from the deposed regime. The elimination of that programme also serves as an example to reinforce the absolute ban on chemical weapons worldwide.

Let me make three points in that regard.

First, France welcomes the efforts made by the transitional Syrian authorities to ensure that Syria complies with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Syria joined the Convention in 2013, under pressure from the international community. For over 11 years, delaying tactics by the former Syrian authorities prevented the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) from verifying the elimination of Syria's chemical programme. Many questions relating to large stocks of chemical agents have yet to be clarified.

A real dynamic of cooperation has been established between the new Syrian authorities and the Technical Secretariat's teams. We are delighted with the various recent deployments and welcome the commitment made by the transitional authorities to continue facilitating the work of the OPCW teams. That cooperation must be stepped up to identify and eliminate chemical weapons in Syria quickly, definitively and under guaranteed security conditions. By implementing its obligations under the CWC, Syria will be able to regain its rights and prerogatives as a State party to the Convention, which were suspended in 2021.

Secondly, the Council must continue to ensure the elimination of Syria's chemical programme in order to prevent non-State actors, in particular terrorists, from gaining access to chemical weapons and to protect the population. Chemical terrorism remains a threat, both to the Syrian population and to the stability of the region. OPCW reports have attested to the reality of that threat, establishing the responsibility of Da'esh in the attack perpetrated at Marea in 2015. The Council must remain mobilized to prevent stockpiles of chemical weapons and their means of delivery from falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

Thirdly, those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must not go unpunished. Accountability is imperative, both to render justice to the victims and to guarantee the credibility of the norm banning chemical weapons. France will continue to be a driving force in that regard, having launched the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons in 2018. We will continue to support the OPCW's professional and impartial follow-up work towards the full elimination of chemical weapons and effective accountability.

The path Syria has embarked upon since the fall of Al-Assad must be that of a free, democratic country that respects each of its components, is at peace with its neighbours and is free from terrorism. The work under way to eliminate the chemical weapons programme contributes to that goal. Let us help and encourage Syria.

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

Let me start by welcoming the strong commitment of the Syrian Government to turn the page of history. We applaud Syria's determination to ensure, once and for all, that the Al-Assad era chemical-weapons programme is destroyed.

The United Kingdom is greatly encouraged by Syria's operational and logistical support to the deployments carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), including access to sites and people, and by Syria's commitment to engage with the international community.

We also welcome the OPCW Technical Secretariat's deployments to Syria in March and April. The persistence and professionalism shown by OPCW staff in Syria has been exceptional, as has the consistently high quality of the Technical Secretariat's work on this important file in a very challenging technical environment. Important progress has been made towards setting up OPCW offices in Syria and the collection and analysis of samples. Those are vital steps towards Syria's full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013), which the Al-Assad regime so flagrantly violated.

There is, however, much more work to do in a difficult operational environment. Due to the secrecy and complexity of Al-Assad's illegal chemical-weapons programme, the precise extent of the challenge ahead is still unknown.

Allow me to make three brief points in that regard.

First, both the Syrian Government and the OPCW will need to be operationally agile to address any proliferation or health risks found while inspecting sites of concern. The OPCW's role is vital. As mandated by the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013), the OPCW must verify the Syrian-led declaration and destruction of any remaining elements of Al-Assad's chemical-weapons programme.

Secondly, to achieve this, the OPCW will need technical, financial and logistical assistance from the international community. The OPCW has provided States parties with its estimated costs for its work in Syria. The United Kingdom has already provided more than \$1 million to the OPCW Syria missions to support their immediate work and will look to provide further assistance. We join High Representative Nakamitsu in encouraging others to also provide the necessary resources. In particular, we welcome Qatar's role in representing Syria at the OPCW in The Hague.

Finally, military action by neighbouring States risks delaying OPCW deployments and threatens the preservation of evidence at chemical-weapons sites. We therefore urge Israel to de-escalate its actions in Syria.

We have a historic opportunity to rid Syria of Al-Assad's chemical weapons. Let us all do our part to support Syria and the OPCW so as to enable the new Syrian Government to finally close the file on the scourge of chemical weapons use and on this dark chapter in Syria's history.

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

We thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing, and we welcome the participation in this meeting of the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances.

We note with satisfaction recent reports detailing significant progress in the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). We recognize the enhanced and positive engagements between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and Syria, including the Director General's visit to Damascus and his meetings with the new President and Foreign Minister of Syria. We welcome the successful OPCW deployments in March, April and May, achieving the



unprecedented access, cooperation and collection of new documents and samples previously unrevealed by the former authorities.

We commend Qatar's instrumental role in representing Syrian interests before the OPCW and the Syrian Foreign Minister's participation in the 108th OPCW Executive Council session.

We are encouraged by the commitment of the Syrian authorities to securing OPCW offices in Damascus and to providing complete access, security escorts and full cooperation during technical meetings with Syrian experts. We stress the importance of ensuring that such cooperation remains consistent, thorough and verifiable, as it is vital for building trust and confidence within the international community.

We welcome recent international economic developments concerning Syria, including the lifting of sanctions by major international partners and Syria's re-eligibility for loans from international financial institutions following debt clearances by regional partners.

The A3+ remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation in some parts of Syria, notably the escalating Israeli strikes and the occupation of 460 square kilometres since December 2024. We are particularly troubled by the strikes near Syria's presidential palace on 2 May and the Latakia/Tartus attacks on 30 May. We condemn these actions in the strongest terms.

The A3+ insists on an immediate halt to all aggressions against Syrian territory, emphasizing that Syria's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are inviolable. We call for regional de-escalation measures and reaffirm the urgent need for dialogue and diplomacy to prevent further escalation and humanitarian suffering.

We welcome Syria's readiness for transparent OPCW relations. Our attention remains focused on the 19 outstanding issues involving quantities of potentially undeclared chemical warfare agents and munitions. In that regard, we support the work of the OPCW's Technical Secretariat in addressing these outstanding issues.

We urge all parties to approach these outstanding issues with the utmost seriousness, working collaboratively and transparently to address the gaps and ensure full compliance. We commend the positive progress achieved in the collection of new documents and samples and in the productive technical meetings held, which provided insight into Syria's chemical-weapons programme.

We also acknowledge the OPCW's detailed cost estimates and its note on the way forward in relation to Syria's chemical-weapons programme, and encourage continued international support, noting enhanced cooperation and access. The continued threats of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da'esh, underscored by 10 attacks in northeast Syria last month remain a significant concern. The A3+ welcomes Syria's first anti-ISIL operation in Aleppo.

We also welcome the formation, on 18 May, of the National Commission for Transitional Justice and the National Commission for Missing Persons Commissions as an important step towards accountability and reconciliation.

Finally, we underline that the protection of civilians and adherence to international humanitarian law must remain at the core of all our counter-terrorism efforts.

We encourage continued OPCW-Syria dialogue and cooperation towards permanently closing this file.

**Mrs. Blokar Drobič** (Slovenia): Let me first thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her informative briefing.

As we have emphasized on multiple occasions, Slovenia unequivocally condemns the use of chemical weapons — anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances.

After more than a decade of war in which chemical weapons were used, Syria now has a historic opportunity to close that dark chapter of its past. While many open issues pertaining to the Syrian chemical weapons programme remain, we have been witnessing increased cooperation between the Syrian interim authorities and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), including the recent deployments of an OPCW team in Syria.

Slovenia is encouraged by the commitment of the Syrian interim authorities to dismantle the remains of the chemical weapons programme. We urge the interim authorities to remain committed to that promising path and to take all necessary measures to fully meet their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as well as to comply with relevant decisions of the OPCW and Security Council resolutions. In particular, we underscore the urgent need to accurately map, secure and destroy any undeclared sites related to the development, production or stockpiling of chemical weapons.

With regard to the past use of chemical weapons, we deem it imperative to identify and hold accountable those responsible for the immense suffering caused by the use of chemical weapons throughout Syria. We call on the interim authorities to do their utmost to ensure justice for the victims and survivors and to prevent the recurrence of chemical weapons use in the country.

Slovenia reaffirms its unwavering support for the work of the OPCW and commends its Director General and his team for their work and steadfast engagement with the Syrian authorities. We firmly believe that only a multilateral approach — with the CWC and the OPCW at its centre — can lead towards a future free from the threat of chemical weapons.

In Syria, achieving a future without the threat of chemical weapons is an important part of strengthening the stability of the country and the wider region. Slovenia remains committed to that goal.

**Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan): We thank Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing. We welcome the presence of the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye in this meeting.

Pakistan is opposed to and condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. We consider the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) a pillar of global arms control and disarmament. Pakistan remains committed to advancing the objectives of the Convention and upholding the effectiveness and impartiality of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the protection of its verification mechanisms. We support continued efforts for universal adherence to the CWC, and for its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation.

Pakistan supports the shared objective of the stabilization of Syria through an inclusive, Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political process, facilitated by the United Nations. We extend our support for Syria's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, I would like to make following points.

First, we welcome the commitment of the Syrian authorities to fully implement the CWC, secure suspected chemical weapons sites and address outstanding issues. In that regard, we particularly appreciate the Syrian authorities' positive engagement and cooperation with the OPCW to fulfil its mandate, addressing long-standing questions and ensuring unimpeded access to enable independent and full verification by the OPCW of the elimination of suspected chemical weapons in Syria and risks of proliferation in compliance with the CWC.

Secondly, we commend the engagement of the OPCW Director General with the Syrian authorities to implement the mandate entrusted to the OPCW. We welcome the deployment of the OPCW team to Syria to continue the necessary activities required to establish an OPCW presence in Syria on an adaptive and sustained basis, and to conduct declaration-related activities. We support the continuation of those important efforts in a transparent and equitable manner.

Thirdly, everyone should seize the present opportunity to address outstanding issues in Syria, including those related to chemical weapons. We urge continued dialogue, cooperation and full compliance with the CWC and Security Council resolutions as a way forward to close the Syrian chemical weapons file as soon as possible.

Finally, we remain concerned about various aspects of the situation in Syria, in particular the military occupation by Israel of parts of Syrian territory and its continuing strikes against Syrian sites and facilities. Those reprehensible attacks and violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity must stop. We urge consensus and unity within the Council for the restoration of normalcy and to address all outstanding issues for the preservation and consolidation of peace and security in the region.

**Mr. Sekeris** (Greece): I would like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, for her, as always, interesting briefing.

To begin with, my country, Greece, fully adheres to the principles and goals of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons, by any State or non-State actors, anywhere, in any circumstances, and we stress the need to hold all those who would use such weapons accountable.

Historically tied with the Syrian people, Greece supports Syria's efforts to achieve progress and prosperity and to be a factor of stability in the wider region. As our Minister for Foreign Affairs stated just a few days ago, on 21 May, while presiding over the previous meeting of the Council on the situation in Syria (see S/PV.9920), Greece stands ready to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria and to ensure the preservation of its rich ethnic and religious diversity. In that spirit, our Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Damascus in February, and has taken part in international conferences on Syria in Paris and in Brussels.

The political transition in Syria has opened a rare window of opportunity to settle the long-overdue issue of chemical weapons in Syria. I wish to highlight three areas of priorities for Greece.

Firstly, my country supports the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) towards establishing the facts surrounding any use of chemical weapons, including toxic chemicals, for hostile purposes by the Al-Assad regime. We commend the fact that the OPCW is carrying out its mandate impartially, professionally and in adherence to the highest international standards.

Secondly, we welcome the latest monthly report of the Director General of the OPCW on progress in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme (see S/2025/330). Despite the worrisomely slow progress, as attested in the report, some activities have been carried out by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. Notably, we welcome the deployment of a team of the Technical Secretariat to the Syrian Arab Republic from 14 to 25 April 2025. During that deployment, the team conducted meetings with the representatives of the Syrian de facto authorities, gathering new information that had not previously been disclosed to the Technical Secretariat and, most importantly, visited seven locations, including two that had

been declared by the Al-Assad regime in its initial declaration in 2013. We are looking forward to the publication of the outcomes of the analysis of the evidence collected during the aforementioned activities.

Thirdly, as stated in the most recent monthly report of the Director General of the OPCW, the Syrian authorities have yet to fulfil any measures stipulated in decision EC-94/DEC.2 of the Executive Council of the OPCW, particularly concerning declaring all of the chemical weapons they currently possess, including sarin, sarin precursors and chlorine that is not intended for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as well as chemical weapons production facilities and other related facilities.

We call, therefore, on the de facto authorities of Syria to engage constructively and in good faith with the OPCW's Technical Secretariat, in order to close the 19 outstanding issues and thus to confirm that it has abandoned the use of chemical weapons and has concluded the total destruction of its stockpiles.

In the same spirit, we remind Damascus of its responsibility to prevent any non-State actors from gaining access to chemical weapons, which would have devastating effects for regional stability and security.

In conclusion, Greece reiterates its previous call for the unity of the Council in upholding resolution 2118 (2013) and international norms against any use of chemical weapons. At the same time, Greece reiterates its full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, which must be fully respected by all, upholding relevant international agreements, and Security Council resolutions.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The past three months have witnessed a number of positive developments related to Syria. From the armed factions' gradual reintegration into the national defence framework to the lifting of sanctions, and to Damascus' successful return to the international community, there is new global hope that the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria is now finally within reach.

Yet the lack of resources needed to achieve that aspiration, as well as the resurgence of Da'esh and ongoing security challenges, including the recent artillery exchange in southern Syria, remind us that complacency is not an option. Let me make the following points in that regard.

First, we welcome the recent progress made between Syria and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The OPCW team's visit to Syria in March and April has resulted in access to key locations related to chemical weapons, some of which had not even been declared by the Al-Assad regime, as well as the collection of important evidence from the ground. We commend Syria's efforts in providing all necessary support to the OPCW team within its limited resources and hope that cooperation continues. Taking this opportunity, we would also like to stress the imperative of eliminating all chemical weapons in the world. The universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) underscores humankind's desire to build a world free of chemical weapons. Any political considerations should be set aside, and the four remaining States not party to the Convention, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, should accede to the CWC without delay or preconditions in order to achieve our shared vision.

Secondly, the Council and the OPCW must spare no effort in holding perpetrators accountable for using chemical weapons against innocent civilians. The Al-Assad regime may have fallen last December, but our responsibility to ensure accountability for the loss of more than 1,000 lives continues to rest with us. In that connection, we reaffirm our support for the OPCW Syria team, including the

Investigation and Identification Team. Its major achievements, including identifying Da'esh as responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Marea in 2015, show how important and relevant its ongoing work is, particularly in the context of Da'esh's recent resurgence. The work of the OPCW Syria team should continue until all chemical weapons in Syria are destroyed and the perpetrators of related crimes are identified. We oppose any attempts to undermine its value and legitimacy.

Thirdly, we call upon all Member States to consider providing financial and in-kind support to the OPCW Syria team as requested. While the political landscape is now more conducive to resolving this file than ever, the lack of resources hinders the watchdog's ability to translate such momentum into reality, as clearly illustrated in today's briefing. In that context, the Republic of Korea is pleased to announce its decision to make a voluntary contribution of €100,000 to the OPCW Syria team.

We hope that Damascus, in cooperation with the OPCW, will safely destroy all chemical weapons accordingly and eventually uncover the truth behind the heinous crimes committed during those dark times.

**Mr. Kelley** (United States of America): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu.

In Riyadh, President Trump opened a new chapter in United States-Syrian relations. We are now in a moment of great opportunity in which Syria, with international support, can come into compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013).

The United States welcomes the initial positive steps taken by the OPCW and the Syrian Government. We commend them both on successfully initiating inspections on the ground in spite of extremely challenging conditions.

We welcome the Syrian Government's commitment to providing all necessary support and cooperation to the Technical Secretariat. It is essential that efforts to address any remnants of the Al-Assad regime's chemical weapons programme be conducted safely and securely. We look forward to turning the page on the Al-Assad regime's chemical weapons programme and, in doing so, making Syria and the wider region more secure.

The change in Syria-OPCW cooperation finally presents an opportunity to determine the actual scope and size of this programme and eliminate it once and for all. That cooperation also presents a historic opportunity for the Syrian Government to demonstrate a good-faith effort to the international community and that it shares in our vision of a world free of chemical weapons.

The OPCW inspectors and the Syrian Government face the difficult task now of establishing a full inventory of any remaining chemical weapons and related sites — including any production facilities, equipment, munitions, precursors and other components — ahead of their verified destruction, while establishing a permanent in-country presence.

The success of that mission depends on the OPCW Technical Secretariat receiving the additional funding, expertise and resources needed to conduct a massive and complex effort.

The United States welcomes the professional and transparent work of the OPCW, and we commend partners and allies who are doing the same. But much more action is needed. We therefore echo the OPCW Director General and the Technical Secretariat's calls for vital financial contributions to ensure timely and effective solutions to that challenge.

We all have a stake in the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is our shared responsibility to future generations to rid the world of chemical weapons.



We look forward to the Syrian Government's efforts to eliminate its chemical weapons programmes and welcome its efforts towards the victims and families of past attacks who have long deserved justice.

We must remain seized of this critical matter until the work is done.

**Mr. Alfaro de Alba** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our country thanks Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the presentation of the 140th monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see S/2025/330), in accordance with resolution 2118 (2013) and relevant decisions of the OPCW Executive Council.

We note the sustained effort of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, which continues to carry out its work to verify and assist in the complete elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme with professionalism, technical independence and commitment to the facts.

Panama firmly and categorically condemns the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances, by any actor and for any reason. Such use constitutes a serious violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the international non-proliferation regime. We reiterate that those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable, without exception or delay.

In that context, we welcome the initial cooperation provided by the Syrian provisional authorities, which has allowed the resumption of certain verification activities inside the country. We see this new political context as a true opportunity to correct more than four decades of inconsistencies and serious omissions in terms of international responsibilities. The OPCW Director General's visit to Damascus in February this year, as well as the recent deployment mission from 14 to 25 April 2025, and others, are steps forward that need to be consolidated with timely objectives. We note as a positive step the readiness expressed by the interim Foreign Minister, Mr. Asaad Al-Shaibani, to fully support the OPCW.

However, Panama expresses its concern over the 19 unresolved questions concerning the Syrian chemical programme, many of which involve chemical agents and weapons that were never properly declared. Those omissions continue to pose a serious threat to regional and international security.

We encourage translating that willingness into full disclosure, unrestricted access and full compliance with all obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. We, therefore, consider it essential that the OPCW's Identification and Investigation Team be able to continue its work without restrictions, in close coordination with the accountability mechanisms established by the United Nations.

Panama reaffirms its commitment to disarmament, peace and justice. We will continue to support all efforts to ensure that chemical weapons are never used again, in Syria or anywhere else in the world.

We call on States parties to provide the necessary financial, technical and human resources to enable the OPCW to establish an effective and sustained presence in Syria.

Finally, we underline the importance of the Council acting with unity and determination to prevent impunity and to strengthen the international regime for the prohibition of chemical weapons, which establishes the inexorable conditions that prevent the collective failure that attacks with chemical weapons represent.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.



**Mr. Aldahhak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, and your friendly country, Guyana, on presiding over the Council for this month and wish you every success. I thank my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Greece, and his team for their effort in conducting the work of the Council last month. I would also like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing and for the cooperation among her office and our delegation and the Syrian Government.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its firm commitment to cooperating with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Through its full cooperation with the Organization over the past months, Syria has demonstrated its clear political will and significant determination to put behind it the past and the negative aspects that had overshadowed relations between the two sides.

That transition has had a strong foundation, established through the welcome by the President of the Republic for the Director General in early February 2025, when he headed a large delegation that included representatives of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team and the Fact-Finding Mission, and the Identification and Investigation Team, which visited Syria for the first time.

Syria's determination to achieve a quantum leap in its relations with the Organization was evidenced by the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates to the 108th session of the OPCW Executive Council on 5 March that Syria is committed to destroying any potential remnants of the chemical weapons programme conducted under the previous regime and to ensuring justice for victims.

The Syrian side's openness and positive interaction with the OPCW have opened a new phase and chapter of cooperation characterized by active interaction between the two sides. We received a team of the Technical Secretariat experts from 12 to 21 March 2025 and the Syrian side has engaged in intensive discussions with the team on the establishment of a sustainable presence and an office of the OPCW mission in Syria, including establishing administrative, logistical and security arrangements.

Syria has provided the team with its full support and cooperation, including the issuance of entry visas to all team members, and has provided full and unrestricted access to sites and facilitated interviews with relevant staff. We have also ensured full cooperation in connection with the team's field activities in its visits to five sites in the suburbs of Damascus, including the facilities of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre. The team has also studied various documents and has collected a number of samples to which the Syrian side has facilitated access, ensuring safe transport to the premises of the Organization in The Hague.

In addition, the Syrian side, at the request of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, has agreed to a visit by another team of OPCW experts to Syria and we welcomed that team on 14 April 2025. The team was provided with all the necessary assistance to continue to establish an OPCW mission and headquarters in Syria. In regard to the conduct of field visits, we facilitated the team's access to the seven sites that it asked to visit. We have also facilitated interviews with the relevant staff.

The effective and positive cooperation of the Syrian side was highlighted in the monthly report of the Director General on OPCW activities in Syria from 24 March to 23 April 2025 (see S/2025/258), reflecting a new beginning in the relationship between the Syrian authorities and Organization, one based on confidence and transparency. In that regard, I would like to thank the State of Qatar and its leadership for its valuable support.

Currently, a third deployment of a team from the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, including visits to a number of locations, is under way, and the Syrian side will also provide unrestricted access. That shows our commitment to cooperating with the Technical Secretariat and enabling it to carry out its mandate in accordance with the Convention.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons at any time, anywhere, by anyone, in any circumstance. The Syrian leadership has repeatedly affirmed the new Syria's full commitment to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We seek eagerly to use the current phase to build relations of positive cooperation with the Organization in order to resolve relevant outstanding issues in our initial declaration, bearing in mind that we are dealing with a complex situation that the new Administration has inherited from the former regime and that the work of the Organization to address that situation is beyond the scope of its ordinary tasks. It faces significant challenges with security and operational dimensions, including the difficulty of securing sites — some of which are located in areas that have not yet been fully stabilized — the threat posed by mines and unexploded ordnance and repeated Israeli attacks, the latest of which was two days ago, on 3 June. Addressing those challenges requires constructive approaches and the mobilization of the international community to provide the necessary support and resources to support the joint efforts of the Syrian Government and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Syria looks forward to the support of the international community and the Organization in fulfilling all its obligations under the Convention. It reaffirms its determination to continue working seriously and constructively to close this file once and for all, based on Syria's keenness to strengthen regional and international peace and security and consolidate the global non-proliferation regime and its deep belief that chemical weapons have no place in today's world.

In conclusion, Syria has become a reliable partner that shares the common goal of disposing of any potential chemical weapons residues in Syria with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the international community. We are deeply relieved that the time of disagreement and mistrust is over and has been replaced by transparent cooperation in the framework of a genuine partnership — a constructive partnership that will enable us to overcome difficulties, regardless of their size or complexity.

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

**Mrs. Güven (Türkiye):** At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to High Representative Nakamitsu for her comprehensive briefing.

Türkiye's principled and unwavering stance against the use of chemical weapons is well known and has been reiterated on numerous occasions. The fall of the former regime presents a historic opportunity to address long-standing issues in Syria and ensure sustained compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The immediate priorities remain the full and accurate declaration of Syria's chemical weapons inventory, the provision of safe, timely and uninterrupted access to all relevant sites and the verifiable elimination of any remaining stocks.

In that regard, we welcome the stated willingness of the Syrian Administration to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as underscored once again today. The OPCW's visit to Damascus in February, aimed at initiating a dialogue on the declaration, verification and destruction of Syria's remaining chemical weapons stocks, constitutes a positive step forward. We commend the address delivered by Syria's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Al-Shaibani, to the Executive Council, in which he reaffirmed Syria's commitment to eliminating its remaining chemical weapons stocks. The recent technical visits of the OPCW to

Syria in March and April are concrete demonstrations of that commitment. In his latest report on the elimination of the Syrian chemical-weapons programme in May (see S/2025/330), the Director General of the OPCW noted that Syrian authorities granted unrestricted access to all relevant sites and extended their full cooperation to the OPCW Technical Secretariat team. During those visits, the technical team collected samples and documentation that could play a role in eliminating remaining chemical weapons and identifying perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria with a view to ensuring accountability. Notably, the technical team also obtained new information that was not previously disclosed by the former regime.

The international community expects the Syrian Administration to fulfil its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is therefore essential to support the Syrian Administration and the OPCW in that critical endeavour. Capacity-building and the provision of adequate resources are key. Additional financial, technical and logistical resources are required to enable the successful deployment of OPCW missions on the ground. We have a shared responsibility to provide the necessary support for that complex undertaking. My country is ready to contribute to capacity-building initiatives aimed at training Syrian experts. We will continue to facilitate OPCW missions and support the Organization's fieldwork. Türkiye has always underscored its strong support for Syria's territorial integrity. However, Israel's continued air strikes targeting Syria's infrastructure, including possible sites related to chemical weapons, are deeply concerning. Those attacks introduce new risks and could damage potential evidence related to past chemical weapons use. They also compromise the security of those sites and increase the risk of sensitive materials falling into the wrong hands. Those attacks must cease, as accountability and justice for the victims of chemical weapons require the preservation of all relevant evidence.

The recent decisions on the lifting of sanctions represent a major step for Syria's recovery and development. Türkiye has been consistently advocating the lifting of sanctions and encouraging all international partners to take similar steps. Now is the time to focus our collective efforts on rebuilding Syria.

In conclusion, Türkiye remains committed to supporting all genuine and verifiable steps towards the complete elimination of chemical weapons in Syria.

*The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.*