



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 31 October 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

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

I note that the OPCW Technical Secretariat remains unable to resolve all the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and that it therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1. In that context, and to continue with the joint efforts to resolve all the outstanding issues, the twenty-second round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian Arab Republic was held from 14 to 23 October 2019 in the Syrian Arab Republic. The outcome of this work will be reported to the OPCW Executive Council accordingly.

Furthermore, I note that the Technical Secretariat is planning the sixth round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamraya facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre, which will be conducted before the end of 2019, in accordance with relevant decisions of the Executive Council. The Technical Secretariat continues to await clarification from the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the chemical listed in schedule 2 that was detected in one of the samples taken at the Barzah facility during the third round of inspections.

The fact-finding mission continues to analyse the information related to allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Kabanah on 19 May 2019, in Aleppo on 24 November 2018 and in the five reported incidents in 2017, as well as other incidents. Moreover, the mission is planning further deployments and will report to the Executive Council on the results of its work in due course.

Regarding the work of the Investigation and Identification Team established by decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, I note that the Team has started its investigations and has contacted States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention requesting their cooperation.

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

(Signed) António Guterres



**Annex**

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

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

*(Signed)* Fernando **Arias**

**Enclosure**

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

**Note by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons****Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme****Background**

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.
2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled “Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities” (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation “in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1”.
3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled “Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria” (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General’s intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council’s discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled “Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General’s intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.
4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled “OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall “regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1”.
5. This, the seventy-third monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 September to 23 October 2019.

**Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1**

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 17 October 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its seventy-first monthly report (EC-93/P/NAT.1, dated 17 October 2019) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

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

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

**Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5**

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

9. The Director-General submitted to the Council at its Ninety-Second Session a "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-92/HP/DG.2, dated 27 September 2019). The report updated the Council on the DAT's progress in analysing the information that was collected and received during the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of consultations and the related field activities, and on the work carried out by the DAT since then. The report concluded that, at present, the Secretariat remains unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, and that it therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

10. To continue the joint efforts being carried out by the DAT and the Syrian Arab Republic to resolve all outstanding issues, the DAT deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic from 14 to 23 October 2019 to conduct the twenty-second round of consultations. These consultations built upon the work carried out during and since the previous two rounds. The outcomes of this deployment, together with further information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and/or collected by the DAT, as well as the results of the analysis of information and samples obtained by the DAT during the twentieth and twenty-first round of consultations, will be reported to the Council accordingly.

11. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat continues to assess conditions for the conduct of inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat conducted the fifth round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in July 2019. The outcome of these inspections will be reported to the Council in due course. The Secretariat is currently planning for the sixth round of inspections, which will be conducted before the end of 2019.

12. During the third round of inspections, a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical was detected in one of the samples taken at the Barzah SSRC facilities. The Syrian Arab Republic declared to the Council at its Ninety-First Session that it had initiated an investigation into this issue and that it would inform the Secretariat of its outcome. The Secretariat continues to wait for clarification from the Syrian Arab Republic regarding this issue.

13. In accordance with subparagraph 12(a) of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Director-General submitted to the Council at its Ninety-Second Session a report entitled “Status of Implementation of Executive Council Decision EC-83/DEC.5 (Dated 11 November 2016)” (EC-92/DG.19, dated 17 September 2019), providing a further update regarding the status of implementation of EC-83/DEC.5.

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

14. On 3 October 2019, the Secretariat provided States Parties with a comprehensive briefing on the status of its work with regard to the SSRC inspections and the work of the DAT, the FFM, and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

15. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide support to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement concluded between the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

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

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

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

18. The FFM is currently looking into a number of incidents, including: two incidents in Kharbit Masasnah on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Qalib Al-Thawr, Al-Salamiyah on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus on 22 October 2017; one incident in Al-Balil, Souran on 8 November 2017; one incident in Aleppo on 24 November 2018; and one incident in Kabanah on 19 May 2019. The FFM is currently analysing information related to these and other incidents, is planning further deployments, and will report to the Council on the results of this work in due course.

19. The Secretariat provided an update on the work of the FFM in a Note entitled “Summary Update of the Activities Carried Out by the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria” ([S/1798/2019](#), dated 3 October 2019).

#### **Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic**

20. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018) adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Fourth Special Session addresses, inter alia, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

21. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat established the IIT to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or

has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism did not issue a report. The IIT has begun its investigations and reached out to States Parties requesting their cooperation.

22. In this regard, the Secretariat circulated a Note entitled “Work of the Investigation and Identification Team Established by Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (Dated 27 June 2018)” (EC-92/S/8, dated 3 October 2019).

23. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Director-General submitted to the Council at its Ninety-Second Session a report entitled “Progress in the Implementation of Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 on Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (EC-92/DG.26, dated 27 September 2019 and Corr.1, dated 4 October 2019).

### **Supplementary resources**

24. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which include the work of the DAT and IIT, and the biannual inspections of the SSRC. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 29.6 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

### **Conclusion**

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

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