



**Briefing to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council  
resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons  
programme of the Syrian Arab Republic**

**Statement by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

Check against delivery



Virtual Briefing  
3 February 2021

Madame President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

I thank you for the opportunity to brief the Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

As always, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has maintained regular contact with counterparts at the OPCW on its activities. In that context, per established practice, I held a monthly call with the OPCW Director-General, yesterday, 2 February, to receive an update and ascertain his views on the matter. In addition, on 6 and 14 January 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs received information from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning chemical issues for this period. This information was studied carefully and also forwarded to the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

Madame President,

As I have previously informed the Security Council, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the OPCW's ability to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic. The OPCW Technical Secretariat maintains its readiness for deployments, which are being conducted subject to the evolution of the pandemic. In spite of the travel restrictions, the Technical Secretariat has continued with its mandated activities related to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic in this regard.

Efforts by the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) are still ongoing to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration to the OPCW. As reported by the OPCW Director-General during his briefing to the Security Council on 11 December 2020, while three outstanding issues related to the Syrian Arab Republic initial declaration were closed during the twenty-third round of consultations with the Syrian National Authority, held in Damascus from 22 September to 3 October 2020, 19 issues remain outstanding. I note that one of the outstanding issues pertains to a chemical weapons production facility (CWPF) that was declared by the Syrian National Authority as never having been used for the production of chemical weapons. However, the review of all the information and other materials gathered by the DAT since 2014, indicates that production and/or weaponization of chemical warfare nerve agents did take place at this facility. Consequently, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has requested the Syrian Arab Republic to

declare the exact types and quantities of chemical agents produced and/or weaponized at this site. I understand from the OPCW Technical Secretariat that the Syrian National Authority has yet to respond to this request.

As a result, the OPCW Technical Secretariat continues to assess that, at this stage, due to the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain unresolved, the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. I urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with the OPCW Technical Secretariat in that regard. As I have noted on many occasions, the confidence of the international community in the full elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme depends upon the OPCW being able to close these outstanding issues.

I hope that during the next round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority, to be held later this month, further progress will be made to resolve these issues.

Madame President,

I have been advised that the samples collected during the seventh round of inspections conducted last November by the OPCW Technical Secretariat at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) were split at the OPCW Laboratory in the presence of a representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and sent to designated laboratories for analysis. The outcome of this round of inspections will be reported to the OPCW Executive Council in due course.

With regard to the finding of a Schedule 2 chemical detected at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC during the third round of inspections held in 2018, I understand that the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information or explanations that would enable the OPCW Technical Secretariat to close this issue.

The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) remains in the process of studying all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and continues its engagement with the Syrian Government and other States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention with regard to a "variety of incidents". As previously reported, further FFM deployments will be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) 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.

With regard to the inspections mandated by paragraph 8 of Executive Council decision EC-94/DEC.2 entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic”, I have been advised that the OPCW Technical Secretariat continues to monitor the security situation and will inform the Syrian Arab Republic when it is prepared to deploy for this purpose. These inspections will also be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Madame President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

I say this every month because it bears consistent repeating: There is an urgent need to not only identify but hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons in violation of international law. Without such an action, we are allowing the use of chemical weapons to take place with impunity. It is imperative that this Council shows leadership in demonstrating that impunity in the use of these weapons will not be tolerated. The Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to provide whatever support and assistance it can.

Before closing, I wish to echo the Secretary-General’s remarks to Member States on his Priorities for 2021 delivered on 28 January 2021: “Our seventh priority for the year must be to heal geopolitical rifts and find common ground. To address today’s roiling peace and security threats, we need to find a bridge back to common sense. We need a united Security Council.”

I thank you very much for your attention.