



**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**

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Briefing
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Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

I thank Council members for this opportunity to brief you once again on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. It is so nice to be able to brief you back in this Chamber.

It is a pleasure to be joined here today, albeit virtually, by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), His Excellency, Mr. Fernando Arias, who will update the Council on the elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic chemical weapons programme.

Since the last Security Council meeting on resolution 2118, held on 6 May 2021, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with counterparts at the OPCW on activities related to this matter. Per established practice, I held a monthly call with the OPCW Director-General on 1 June 2021, to receive an update and ascertain his views. In light of the participation of Director-General Arias in this meeting today, my statement will be brief.

At the outset, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation to Director-General Arias and the staff of the OPCW Technical Secretariat for the professional and impartial efforts to uphold the norm against the use of chemical weapons and for our partnership in the pursuit of the elimination of these inhumane weapons.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat's ability to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic remained subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, despite continued restrictions, the Technical Secretariat has been able to pursue its mandated activities related to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic in this regard. I welcome the efforts to clarify all the outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW.

Engagement and dialogue by the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW Technical Secretariat is essential to closing these outstanding issues. As has been stressed on multiple occasions,

due to the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain unresolved, the OPCW Technical Secretariat continues to assess that, at this stage, the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. I have no doubt that Director-General Arias will provide the Security Council members with an update on the efforts to ensure the timely resolution of these outstanding issues.

I have been advised that the OPCW Technical Secretariat intended to deploy the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) to Syria last month and was rescheduling the next round of consultations with the Syrian National Authority in the absence of confirmation from the Syrian Arab Republic within sufficient time to finalise the necessary preparations. I look forward to Director-General Arias' update on this matter.

Mr. President,

I note that 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, quote, "variety of incidents". As previously reported, further FFM deployments will be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I also understand that following the issuance of its second report in April 2021, 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.

Mr. President,

As I previously informed the Council, on 21 April 2021 the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention at its twenty-fifth session, adopted the decision C-25/DEC.9 entitled "Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic", suspending the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention. A copy of this decision was shared with the Security Council and General

Assembly members as document A/75/871–S/2021/425, pursuant to paragraph 12 of the aforementioned decision of the Conference of the States parties. I look forward to Director-General Arias' update on the next steps for the implementation of this decision.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

There is an urgent need not only to identify but hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons in violation of international law. It is an obligation on all of us. Without such an action, we are allowing the use of chemical weapons to take place with impunity. Unity in the Security Council is required to re-establish the norm against chemical weapons. The Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to provide whatever support and assistance it can, in the hopes that these dreadful weapons can be truly relegated to the past.

I thank you very much for your attention.