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Information document submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic to the third session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

The Syrian Arab Republic wishes to comment on two points contained in the background document prepared by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) dated 10 September 2021 ([A/CONF.236/2021/BD.1](#)), which was submitted for the consideration of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction at its second session.

OPCW–United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (paras. 44 and 45)

This defunct mechanism employed unprofessional working methods, including remote investigations, and relied on open sources and information provided by terrorist organizations and their affiliates, such as the White Helmets. In addition, it violated the rules set out in the Convention concerning the collection of samples and maintaining the chain of custody for samples. As a result, the Mechanism reached dubious conclusions that were not accepted by the Security Council. Accordingly, its mandate was not renewed, and its work was formally terminated in November 2017. The Syrian Arab Republic therefore rejects and does not recognize the outputs of the Mechanism.

Investigation and Identification Team (paras. 46 and 47)

The Syrian Arab Republic notes that, after the failure of the Joint Implementation Mechanism, several States known for their hostility to the Syrian Arab Republic sought to establish a mechanism within the framework of OPCW entrusted with the task of identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons, despite the absence of any provision in the Convention allowing OPCW to do so. As a result of the manipulation and distorted interpretation of the provisions of the Convention, on 27 June 2018, the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use



of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction voted, under pressure from several States, to adopt decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, which is devoid of legitimacy because of the severe division among the States members of OPCW and the fact that it was adopted with the support of less than half of the membership. This illegitimate decision gave the Director-General a mandate, for the first time in the history of OPCW, to establish a team within the Technical Secretariat to investigate and identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons, thereby establishing a dangerous precedent.

OPCW, a technical agency the work of which is limited strictly to verifying the presence or use of chemicals, has taken the place of the Security Council by granting a mandate to determine which is the party that used toxic chemicals. That action constitutes a clear assault on the mandate of the Security Council.

To date, the Team has issued two reports on basis of the unprofessional reports of the Fact-Finding Mission, using the same erroneous methods and methodologies. These reports are based entirely on open sources that spread misinformation pushed by intelligence services that are hostile to Syria or on misinformation provided by such terrorist organizations as the White Helmets.

From the day on which the Team was established, Syria and several other States Parties to the Convention on Chemical Weapons declared that they do not recognize the legitimacy of the Team, would not have any contact with it and would not accept the results of its investigations. The States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention established OPCW in order to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention and ensure implementation of its provisions. Therefore, OPCW must not be a source of unsubstantiated reports, or a tool used that is used for the dissemination of fabricated or falsified information, nor should it be transformed from a technical agency into a political tool that is used by certain Western States to target other States.
