



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

Provisional

8872

nd meeting

Monday, 4 October 2021, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Kimani (Kenya)

Members:

China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Estonia	Mr. Lipand
France	Mr. De Rivière
India	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland	Mr. Kelly
Mexico	Mr. Ochoa Martínez
Niger	Mr. Abarry
Norway	Ms. Heimerback
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Prince
Tunisia	Mr. Ben Lagha
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mr. Mills
Viet Nam	Mr. Pham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 30 September 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2021/842)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

21-27287 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 30 September 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2021/842)

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 Turkey 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/2021/842, which contains the text of a letter dated 30 September 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: I thank Security Council members for this opportunity to brief them again on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), on the elimination of the chemical-weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Since the previous Security Council meeting on resolution 2118 (2013), held on 2 September (see S/PV.8849), the Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with its counterparts at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) regarding its activities related to that matter. Per established practice, I held a monthly call with the OPCW Director-General on 1 October to receive an update and ascertain his views.

As I previously informed the Security Council, the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted the OPCW Technical Secretariat's ability to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic. Nevertheless, the Technical Secretariat maintains its readiness for deployments. Despite the continued travel restrictions, the OPCW Technical Secretariat continues to undertake

its mandated activities related to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic in that regard.

Efforts by the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) are still ongoing to clarify all the outstanding issues related to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW. In that context, the OPCW Technical Secretariat remains of the position that the Syrian Arab Republic must declare all chemical warfare agents produced and/or weaponized at the former chemical-weapons production facility that was declared by the Syrian Arab Republic as never having been used to produce and/or weaponize chemical weapons.

I have been advised that the OPCW Technical Secretariat has not yet received a response from the Syrian National Authority to the request for information and documentation regarding the damage caused to the declared former chemical-weapons production facility during the attack on 8 June, reported by the Syrian National Authority. I urge the Syrian Arab Republic to respond to the OPCW Technical Secretariat as soon as possible given that the damage caused to that facility is related to an outstanding issue recently opened by the Declaration Assessment Team.

As I previously informed the Security Council, the Syrian National Authority also reported the destruction, in the attack on the chemical-weapons production facility, of two chlorine cylinders that were related to the chemical weapons incident that took place in Douma on 7 April 2018. In addition, the OPCW Technical Secretariat requested the Syrian Arab Republic to provide information regarding the unauthorized movement of the two cylinders and any remains of their destruction. The Technical Secretariat is still awaiting a response from the Syrian Arab Republic on that matter.

I note that, on 16 August, the Syrian National Authority responded to the OPCW Technical Secretariat's request to schedule the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority. I understand that the Syrian National Authority has confirmed its readiness to hold the consultations from 11 to 27 October. The OPCW Secretariat informed the Syrian National Authority, on 25 August, that the DAT was prepared to deploy in October. It also expressed concern about how delays in the conduct of the consultations could impact Syria's

compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as the implementation of the Technical Secretariat's mandate.

Unfortunately, on 23 September, the Syrian Arab Republic reconfirmed to the OPCW Technical Secretariat its refusal to issue an entry visa to one member of the DAT for the upcoming deployment. In its response, the OPCW Technical Secretariat recalled that the DAT expert had deployed to Syria on multiple occasions over the past seven years and further referred to the applicable legal framework, which does not entitle the Syrian Arab Republic to select experts on behalf of the Technical Secretariat. Given the regrettable situation, the Technical Secretariat confirmed that it would not deploy the DAT to the Syrian Arab Republic at this time.

I have been informed that, with the aim of advancing the implementation of the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations and the OPCW Technical Secretariat's mandate, the Technical Secretariat has invited Syria to send a delegation for a meeting in the second half of this month with the DAT at the OPCW's headquarters in The Hague. The OPCW Technical Secretariat has underscored that such a meeting cannot replace full-fledged deployments to the Syrian Arab Republic.

As a result of 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 urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to facilitate arrangements for the deployment of the DAT as soon as possible. As has been stressed on numerous occasions, it is only through complete cooperation by the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW Technical Secretariat that all outstanding issues related to the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration can be closed. As noted at many prior Council meetings, the confidence of the international community in the complete elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme depends upon those issues being finalized.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat continues to plan to conduct two rounds of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in 2021. The inspections of those facilities remain subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. I have been advised that the

Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information or explanations that would enable the OPCW Technical Secretariat to close the issue related to the detection of a Schedule 2 chemical at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC in 2018.

With regard to the in-person meeting between the OPCW Director-General and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic, I note that the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic have appointed officials in charge of preparations. I hope that the proposed meeting will be an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between both parties.

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 to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic 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.

I understand that, following the issuance of its second report in April, the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) continues with its investigations into incidents in which the FFM has determined that chemical weapons were used or likely used in the Syrian Arab Republic. The IIT will issue further reports in due course, subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. I take this opportunity to once again state my full support for the integrity, professionalism, impartiality, objectivity and independence of the work of the OPCW.

On 21 April, at its twenty-fifth session, the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention adopted 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. According to paragraph 8 of the decision, the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic will be reinstated by the Conference of the States Parties once the OPCW Director-General has reported to the Executive Council that the Syrian Arab Republic has completed all of the measures contained in paragraph 5 of Executive Council decision EC-94/Dec.2. I have been advised that the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to complete all of those measures. I therefore reiterate once again my call on

the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with the OPCW Technical Secretariat in that regard.

It cannot be repeated often enough: there is no justification for the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere or under any circumstances. There are no excuses for an inexcusable act. We must remain united and determined in preventing their use or the threat of their use. Those who have used chemical weapons must be identified and held to account. It is an obligation for all of us. It is my sincere hope that members of the Council will unite on this issue.

Before concluding, I wish to echo the Secretary-General's remarks to the General Assembly in presenting *Our Common Agenda* on 10 September: "When we work together, there is no limit to what we can achieve".

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

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

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today Mrs. Nakamitsu presented the ninety-sixth monthly — the most recent — report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) (S/2021/842, annex). Those documents have long since been based on the same template and honed to achieve a single goal — giving the impression that Syria is allegedly attempting to hide something and mislead the international community with regard to its chemical dossier. The methodology of those documents has not changed. The Technical Secretariat, headed by the Director-General, is attempting to bury in the text, as deeply as possible, the obvious fact that Damascus, in spite of it all, continues in good faith to fulfil its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and does not refuse to cooperate with the OPCW.

Despite the machinations of the Technical Secretariat, Syria demonstrates the political will and readiness to continue dialogue with it. Frankly, we admire the restraint and composure of our Syrian colleagues. We can only imagine how challenging it was for them not to be driven by emotions or yield to provocation following the decision that the delegations of the Western States pushed for at the Conference of

the States Parties in April, in violation of CWC norms, to strip Syria of its rights in the OPCW.

I am sure that, even today, my Western colleagues, as is their tradition and despite the facts and common sense, will rush to praise the decision and commend its alleged broad support of OPCW member countries. Well, if fewer than half of votes in favour and only six of 15 votes in favour from among the members of the Security Council indicates broad support for them, then I will not argue. It is clear that we were taught to do arithmetic in different ways. Regrettably, it is not just arithmetic, but also physics.

In our textbooks, for example, we learned about the force of gravity. When objects fall from a height, they become deformed. That is to say that chlorine cylinders, allegedly dropped from the air in Douma in April 2018, would have exhibited similar damage, just as the bed on which one of them allegedly fell — not to mention the fact that, when smashing through the rafters, the cylinders' valves would have been damaged. Another example is the crater from the alleged bomb drop at Khan Shaykhun, which from all appearances looks like the result of the detonation of a shell on the ground. Other examples would be the fantastical conclusions of the Fact-Finding Mission, according to which munitions fall into ventilation shafts that are exactly the same diameter, or unguided bombs, instead of free-falling, fly horizontally for five kilometres until they hit their target. Neither you nor OPCW inspectors seems bothered by this. At this rate, the OPCW can claim another Nobel Prize — this time in alternative physics for the discovery of new laws.

Perhaps our understanding of the laws of chemistry is also different. For example, as we understand it, it is impossible for a cylinder to become half-corroded fewer than 12 hours after hitting the ground, although the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) states this happened in its report on Saraqib, to be half-rusted in fewer than 12 hours after hitting the ground. That again is a fantastical speed for a chemical reaction. Similarly, attempts to present as a chemical warfare agent the minuscule particles of chlorine found in Douma are not scientifically valid — the chlorine that was discovered in Douma could have had a multitude of applications, including household use. Not to mention the fact that we have long since given up attempting to find any logic in your assertions. If there were any logic to them, there would be no denial that the use of chemical weapons by Syrian forces would be unbeneficial for them even

if they possessed them, because at that time they had a clear military advantage.

Why look for any reason-based arguments at all if a shroud of fake information can simply be created around those events, designed to blame Syria and its leadership and promote cut-throats from among the Syrian opposition, whom you patronize as fighters for freedom and democracy? This fits well into your narrative, but has virtually nothing to do with reality.

The height of hypocrisy is the illegitimate IIT, whose armchair experts rubber-stamp, on the basis of pseudo-evidence and contrary to the laws of physics, chemistry, mathematics, new reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian leadership. We have repeatedly stated that we reject in advance the findings of any new IIT masterpieces, which are compiled using the same methodology that violates the principles and methodology of information-handling at the OPCW. Incidentally, much of the blame for the destruction of the good name and reputation of the OPCW lies with current Director-General Fernando Arias, who, instead of investigating the blatant case of machinations that occurred when the report on Douma was being compiled, attempts to silence OPCW experts and inspectors who dare to break the vicious circle and to sweep under the rug facts that are unflattering to the organization and to him personally.

Such hypocrisy is evident even in today's report. Delays in conducting the twenty-fifth round of inspections of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) are again being blamed on the Syrians. The Technical Secretariat is extremely concerned about that issue. Yet there is no mention of the fact that it was at the behest of the Director-General of the OPCW that inspections were not conducted during the summer months. As we all recall, Mr. Arias said that the summer months in Syria were allegedly too uncomfortable for the members of the DAT to be deployed in the field. It appears that for him considerations of "comfort" outweighed the importance of holding these consultations.

A similar attempt to shift blame can be found in the report on the 8 June air strike on a declared chemical facility on Syrian territory. Where is there even one word in condemnation of the aggression against the territory of a sovereign State? Apparently, this act of aggression seems irrelevant to the OPCW Director General.

Once again, concern is expressed about the relocation by the Syrians of the cylinders related to the Douma incident. However, does that justify the use of armed force against a sovereign State? It is obvious that, for the Director-General of the OPCW, active aggression of that kind is irrelevant.

How can we not recall the hasty air strikes by the Western coalition on the Shayrat airbase in 2017 and the fact that it blocked all attempts to launch a swift investigation by the OPCW into events in Ltamenah and Khan Shaykhun. Overall, the approach adopted by the leadership of the Technical Secretariat looks rather unflattering and has already affected several other situations involving the Director-General and his staff, which have nothing but politics behind them. It is regrettable that because it buries its head in the sand, the OPCW is becoming a politicized tool to punish regimes that have found disfavour with the collective West.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that because of the trends to which I have referred, the focus of the Syrian chemical file has long ceased being the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. Current developments should not be considered in the context of the dialogue between Syria and the Technical Secretariat which is under way, no matter how hard one might try to prove the opposite. They should rather be considered merely as an attempt to punish a State that has found disfavour with the tools of the CWC. It is extremely dangerous and can affect any State that stands in the way of the geopolitical aspirations of the West. All illusions in that regard have long since dissipated.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): We thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing. We appreciate her efforts and commend the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on this gravely important issue. Let me also say that the Director-General has the full confidence of the United States Government, and his professionalism and patience in dealing with this file are commendable.

Despite the Al-Assad regime's frequent denials, it is clear that the regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons. The OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team has now attributed four separate chemical-weapon attacks in Syria to the Al-Assad regime. Those incidents are in addition to the four chemical-weapons

attack attributed to the Al-Assad regime by the former OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Although the evidence of the regime's culpability is clear and its Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) declaration remains incomplete, Syria has subsequently sought to avoid accountability by obstructing independent investigations and failing to cooperate with the OPCW, in a brazen attempt to undermine the organization's work as the implementing body of the CWC. As we heard, we are seeing that obstruction again this month, with the regime's failure to grant visas to all members of the OPCW's Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), which as we heard, was scheduled to deploy to Syria after several months of non-response from the Al-Assad regime.

The Al-Assad regime has even singled out an experienced member of the DAT and refused to issue that person a visa, despite the fact that that expert had deployed to Syria for that function multiple times over the past seven years. The delays to schedule that consultation and the refusal of that visa has hampered the ability of the DAT to do its job. It is clearly a deliberate attempt to delay and obstruct the work of that important team. We call on the Al-Assad regime to fully cooperate with the OPCW in accordance with its international obligations and to adhere to resolution 2118 (2013), including through the granting of visas to OPCW personnel.

A representative of the Al-Assad regime claimed, in a statement delivered to the General Assembly on 27 September, that the regime's accession to the CWC served as evidence that it had not used and would not use chemical weapons. However, it is incontrovertible, given the overwhelming evidence collected by the OPCW with the support of brave Syrian documentation groups, that the regime has utterly failed to comply with its obligations under the CWC.

It is evident that the regime continues to ignore calls from the international community to fully disclose and verifiably eliminate its chemical weapons programme. We concur with the OPCW's assessment that the disclosures submitted by the Al-Assad regime concerning its chemical weapons cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the CWC. We urge the regime to work closely with the OPCW on that pressing issue.

Repeated and continued failures by the Al-Assad regime to comply with its obligations under international

law must not be tolerated. We welcomed the decision made at the Conference of the States Parties on 21 April to condemn Syria's use of chemical weapons and to suspend Syria's rights and privileges under the CWC.

Let me be clear. That decision was a legitimate exercise of the authority of the Conference of the States Parties under the Convention. Although my mathematics may be different to my Russian colleague's, facts are not. That decision was adopted overwhelmingly by nearly 90 nations around the world and opposed by 15 — far exceeding the required two thirds majority of those present and voting under the OPCW's own rules.

The Al-Assad regime's allies, including Russia, have also actively sought to block all efforts to promote accountability. Russia continues to defend the Al-Assad regime failures to adhere to its obligations, including by spreading disinformation, attacking the integrity and the professional work of the OPCW and otherwise seeking to impede ongoing efforts by responsible nations to hold the Al-Assad regime accountable for its use of chemical weapons and for numerous other atrocities. That pattern of enablement is irresponsible and dangerous.

It is long past time for the Al-Assad regime to uphold its obligations under the CWC and resolution 2118 (2013). The Security Council should impose measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in response to Syria's non-compliance with resolution 2118 (2013).

At this point, there can be no doubt that the Syrian Government has repeatedly violated its international obligations, including through its failure to cooperate with the OPCW through the denial of visas. It is time for the Council to take resolute action and respond to Syria's non-compliance.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I would like to thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing on the progress towards the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

It is regrettable that the Security Council meets once again this month with no new positive developments on the Syrian dossier. This trend is unsustainable. The international norm against the use of chemical weapons must remain a top priority. The lack of accountability and the deterioration of trust reminds us of the urgency of the issue. The Council cannot be silent amid such prolonged stasis.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of all uses of chemical weapons at any time or by anyone. We call on Syria to fulfil its obligations in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013). Immediate attention must be given to full cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the resolution of the 20 outstanding issues. We urge Syria to provide sufficient technical information or explanations to reconcile the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies. Similarly, it is critical that Syria complete the necessary measures to lift the suspension of its rights and privileges as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) was last deployed to Syria in February. We are growing increasingly concerned by the delays in their regular deployment and consultations. Every month that those consultations are postponed undermines the priority of ensuring consistent cooperation, exchanges of information and technical assistance to Syria. Should a meeting take place in The Hague between the Technical Secretariat and Syrian authorities in October, we urge that the utmost attention be given to building trust and finding agreement on consistent modalities to prevent any further delays in DAT deployments to Syria.

Let me conclude by again underlining the need for urgent progress on the Syrian dossier. We owe it to the victims of those heinous attacks to ensure accountability and bring resolution to all outstanding issues.

Mr. Ben Lagha (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, for her briefing. I also welcome the participation of the representatives of Syria and Turkey at this meeting.

At the outset, Tunisia reiterates its steadfast condemnation of the use of chemical weapons, under any circumstance, wherever it may be and by whomever, regardless of the motives and justification. The use of chemical weapons is a threat to international peace and security. It is a gross violation of international law that calls for those responsible for such heinous crimes to be held responsible.

Tunisia supports the vital mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to independently and impartially fulfil its responsibilities for verification, including in the Syrian Arab Republic. The OPCW is also a forum

for consultation and cooperation among States on relevant issues.

My country believes that there is a dire need to restore positive engagement and confidence as well as mutual understanding, coordination and cooperation between the Syrian Government and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in order to make progress on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier.

We look forward to the upcoming meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Syria and the Director-General of the OPCW in order to re-establish a constructive, transparent and structured dialogue between the two parties. That will also lead to the resumption of the activities carried out regularly by the Technical Secretariat teams in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with its mandate and in a way that maintains the sovereignty and unity of Syria.

We call also for making progress on the pending issues so that Syria can fully honour its commitments. We stress the importance of all allegations of the use of chemical weapons by anybody in Syria being independently, transparently and comprehensively investigated.

In conclusion, Tunisia emphasizes once again that the efforts of the OPCW and the effectiveness of the chemical weapons regime in general will be strongly supported by the collective and coordinated work and by the constructive cooperation and consensual solutions of the Security Council and the international community at large. That will happen when they shoulder their responsibilities for implementing resolution 2118 (2013) and the Chemical Weapons Convention, thereby contributing to the closure of the Syrian chemical dossier and to ending the crisis.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Since the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), the United Nations has continued to make great efforts to establish responsibility for the multiple cases of chemical-weapons use in Syria. Regrettably, for whatever reason, those efforts have not yet made it possible to attribute, in a manner acceptable to all, responsibility for the commission of those unacceptable acts.

The Niger unreservedly condemns any use of chemical weapons, whether in the Syrian crisis or anywhere else. The use of such weapons is not justified under any pretext or circumstance. In that regard, my delegation commends the work of the Organization

for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to eliminate such weapons. The OPCW must retain its technical nature in order to preserve its integrity and ensure that its authority is respected by all.

I would like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing, and welcome the representatives of Syria and Turkey, who have joined us this afternoon.

Just as in recent meetings on this issue, we heard again today that gaps and inconsistencies remain in the Syrian Government's initial declaration. The Syrian representative will no doubt tell us later that his Government is cooperating in good faith with the OPCW team and has done its utmost to provide the team with all the information requested, thus reflecting the divergent interpretations of the two sides.

As has also often been the case, some will support the Syrian representative, while others will continue their condemnation. It is therefore crucial and urgent to put an end to this cycle of blame and denial. It is time for both sides to work hard to bring their positions closer together with the unanimous support of the Security Council, even if that unanimity does not yet seem possible today. Otherwise the status quo will persist.

I would therefore like to make several points.

First, my delegation reiterates that any course of action that does not lead the Council to ensure the full implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) must be avoided, as the text could serve as a basis for establishing responsibility and, consequently, could pave the way for the possible prosecution of those responsible before the competent courts.

Secondly, cooperation between Syria and the OPCW Technical Secretariat must continue in good faith to resolve outstanding issues, in accordance with resolution 2118 (2013). In that context, the upcoming meeting between the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the OPCW Director-General is a step in the right direction. It is also important that all incidents of chemical-weapons use in Syria receive the same attention and be treated with the same diligence in order to reach an overall conclusion.

To that end, my delegation notes the ongoing efforts of the Syrian Government to shed light on the use of these weapons on its territory through its communications through the OPCW and the Security

Council and its willingness to continue working with the Technical Secretariat.

We encourage it to continue in the same vein with the OPCW teams with regard to the request for additional information on the outstanding points of the initial declaration and in the granting of visas to the experts so as to close this controversial chapter of the finalization of the initial report.

Thirdly, my delegation reiterates its call to the United Nations and the OPCW Technical Secretariat to pay particular attention to the allegations of possession of chemical materials by non-State entities, which, if proven true, would be very dangerous — not only for the region but also for the world as a whole, as these weapons could be transferred to other non-State entities or even to terrorist groups operating in other regions.

In conclusion, while reiterating our full support for the OPCW, my delegation hopes to see progress on this aspect of the Syrian crisis, as it cannot be dissociated from the political and humanitarian aspects, in order to enable Syria to regain its full sovereignty and act in the interests of its people, with the support of the international community.

Mr. Lipand (Estonia): I also thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing. I very much appreciate her persistent calls for Security Council unity to uphold the norm against chemical weapons. Estonia reiterates that the identification of, and in particular accountability for, those responsible for the use of chemical weapons is imperative. Impunity is not an option. It must be ensured that those individuals who ordered, enabled or carried out chemical weapons attacks in Syria since 2013 will face a reckoning, and their victims will see justice done. Without accountability, there is no credible prospect for lasting peace in Syria.

Upon reading the OPCW Director-General's latest monthly report (S/2021/842, annex), we regret to see that Syrian cooperation with the OPCW continues to deteriorate. Paragraph 7 of resolution 2118 (2013) stipulates that, in order to fulfil its mandate, the Syrian Arab Republic shall cooperate fully with the OPCW, including by accepting personnel designated by the OPCW and providing the respective personnel access to and the right to inspect sites.

It is clear that the Syrian regime is not complying with that resolution and its international obligations

by refusing to issue the entry visa for a member of the Declaration Assessment Team. As a result, the twenty-fifth round of consultations are still on hold, and there has been no progress in clarifying the outstanding issues on the Syrian declaration. That lack of progress continues to pose a threat to the Syrian people and to international peace and security.

In addition to the consultations, we are also eager to see developments with regard to the planned meeting between Director-General Arias and Mr. Mekdad.

Estonia further notes with concern that several OPCW requests for information with regard to the former chemical-weapons facility, the moving of two chlorine cylinders and the detection of a Schedule 2 chemical at the Barzah facility remain persistently unanswered by the Syrian authorities. Again, resolution 2118 (2013) and Syrian responsibilities under the Chemical Weapons Convention are not being respected.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our full trust in the independent, impartial and professional work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its investigative bodies, as well as in the credibility of their reports. We call on the Syrian regime to cooperate fully with the OPCW and to comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions and international law.

Ms. Prince (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I also thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her informative briefing, as usual.

Our goal to prevent the development, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons in order to better protect the future of humankind requires both the full implementation of resolution 2118 (2015) and a committed partnership with the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Sustained international cooperation is imperative, and parties have an obligation to engage efficiently and constructively on all issues in order to make much-needed progress on this dossier.

However, we recognize that cooperation becomes severely strained where trust deficits exist. As such, the OPCW must continuously strive to ensure that its internal structure and all activities are characterized by integrity, transparency and non-politicization. Furthermore, States parties to the Convention should endeavour to pursue consensus-based decisions to thwart polarization and divisiveness.

We continue to encourage and appeal for dialogue between the OPCW and the Syrian Government to facilitate the timely provision of pertinent technical information and documentation and for the approval of required visas. Those are not only necessary to enable the OPCW's deployments to Syria, but also to assist in finally resolving the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies contained in the initial declaration. In the interim, the proposed meeting between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian delegation at OPCW headquarters can serve as steppingstone to advance the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) and fulfil the obligations encapsulated in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

On the point of dialogue, we are pleased to note the preparations being made for the in-person meeting between the OPCW Director-General and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic to discuss relevant developments and the way forward. There are indeed many diverging views on that file, and it is our hope that the meeting will go a long way in finding common ground and making meaningful progress.

In conclusion, I reiterate Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' well-established principled position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstance constitutes a reprehensible violation of international law. Allegations of the use of chemical weapons ought to be given immediate attention, and investigations should always be comprehensive and in keeping with international best practices to ensure that the perpetrators of chemical weapons atrocities are not allowed to operate with impunity.

We therefore continue to support the mandate of the OPCW to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and ensure that chemistry is used only for peace, progress and prosperity. Furthermore, we support all efforts to strengthen the organization's capacity to ensure that the quality of its work remains of the highest standard.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Clearly, the Syrian regime does not want to cooperate. What I read in the Director-General's monthly report (S/2021/842, annex) is a deliberate attempt to obstruct the deployment of the teams of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Syria is not issuing the requested visas, and

when it does, they are late and piecemeal. The delay in issuing the visa for the liaison officer has had an impact on the preparation of the missions planned for this autumn. That is not acceptable. Syria continues to act in contradiction to its obligations to the OPCW Technical Secretariat, which are enshrined in both the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013).

Without the ability to deploy the Declaration Assessment Team to the field, the Director-General invited Syria to go to The Hague in October for the twenty-fifth round of consultations. Syria has not yet responded.

We call on Syria to provide access to all members of the Declaration Assessment Team as soon as possible. We also call on Syria to provide all the elements and documents requested by the Technical Secretariat, in accordance with its obligations. We once again commend the tenacity, professionalism and independence with which the Technical Secretariat is carrying out its mission.

The unauthorized movement and destruction of two chlorine cylinders related to the attacks on Douma is of great concern. No explanation on that matter has been provided by the Syrian regime. We again call on Syria to respond to the questions posed by the Technical Secretariat.

I would like to recall that the decision taken in April by the OPCW Conference of the States Parties is not irreversible. It is up to the Syrian regime to act if it wants to recover its rights and privileges. Without its cooperation, the measures taken will remain in force. In the first place, Syria must finally clarify the 20 outstanding issues related to its initial declaration.

Lastly, the use of these shocking weapons cannot go unpunished. Evidence continues to be collected — and it will be used. That is the message that we are pushing with our partners, including in the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

During the general debate of the General Assembly in September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Fayssal Mekdad, said that his country firmly opposed the use of

chemical weapons under any circumstance, by anyone, anywhere and anytime and that Syria was always ready to maintain cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to resolve outstanding issues. China appreciates Syria's reaffirmation of its commitment.

China's consistent position is that dialogue and cooperation is the right approach to the issue of Syrian chemical weapons and that excessive pressure can only be counterproductive. The Syrian Government and the Technical Secretariat have different interpretations for multiple outstanding issues. The two sides should respect scientific facts, adhere to objectivity and impartiality, continue discussions, move towards each other and together strive for an early resolution of outstanding issues. A successful renewal of the tripartite agreement among the Syrian Government, the Technical Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Project Services has created good conditions for resolving outstanding issues.

The Syrian Government remains engaged with the Technical Secretariat on the Declaration Assessment Team's twenty-fifth round of consultations, which has run into difficulties owing to a visa issue. We hope that the two sides will resolve their differences in a constructive manner.

I would like to underscore that the establishment of an Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) goes beyond the scope of the Chemical Weapons Convention and runs counter to the OPCW's tradition of consensus. Many countries, including China, have expressed concerns that the working methods and procedures of the IIT have also failed to meet the requirements of the Convention and its annex on verification, thereby giving rise to multiple questions. We hope and the Technical Secretariat will adhere to its technical nature, uphold the spirit of impartiality, objectivity and independence in performing its duty and facilitate a return to the provisions of the framework of the Convention.

In conclusion, I reiterate that China stands firm in opposing the use of chemical weapons by any country, organization or individual under any circumstance or for any purpose and hopes that our world will soon be free of all chemical weapons. We urge the countries in possession of chemical weapons to destroy all chemical weapons as soon as possible.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): I want to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her

detailed and informative briefing today. I would like to make three points.

First, the Security Council should be united and firm in upholding the international prohibition against chemical weapons, while making it clear that the use of those weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time is abhorrent and unacceptable. The Council should be equally clear and united in its support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and in rejecting efforts to undermine the OPCW's essential role.

Secondly, we remain deeply concerned by Syria's lack of progress in addressing the serious and growing list of issues under its initial declaration. The OPCW reports make clear a disturbing pattern of visa delays and denials used to hold up its work on the ground. That contrasts with the approach of the Technical Secretariat, which has actively sought to assist Syria, with flexibility and professionalism, to resolve outstanding issues. We regret that the Syrian Government has not responded in a positive way to that constructive approach.

We deeply regret Syria's decision to refuse a visa to a member of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), leading to the further postponement of the DAT deployment, originally planned for May. As the report makes clear, Syria cannot select experts for missions on behalf of the Technical Secretariat. The Technical Secretariat's invitation to Syria to send a delegation for a meeting with the DAT later this month in The Hague is a practical interim step but it cannot replace the planned deployment on the ground.

That follows substantial visa delays for the command post officer in Damascus, with implications for DAT and Fact-Finding Mission deployments. Syria's actions regarding visas are contrary to its obligations under resolution 2118 (2013), paragraph 7, to accept "personnel designated by the OPCW or the United Nations" and to provide "immediate and unfettered access". We call upon Syria to urgently address that matter.

Thirdly, the list of areas where the Syrian authorities have yet to provide credible information requested by the OPCW continues to grow. Those include mis-declared chemical-weapon production facilities; Schedule 2 chemicals from Barzah; samples of a "neat chemical warfare agent" from large-volume storage containers; and chlorine canisters, forming part of the evidence from the 2018 Douma chemical-weapon attack, moved without informing the OPCW.

Syria must engage seriously with the OPCW. We hope that the arrangements for the bilateral meeting between Director-General Arias and Minister Mekdad can be finalized soon. We encourage Syria to engage with Director-General Arias in order to break the impasse.

It is only through Syria's real and meaningful cooperation with the OPCW that we can resolve the outstanding issues, gain assurance that its entire stocks of chemical weapons are declared and verifiably destroyed, in line with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013), and close this file. That is surely in the interest of Syria, as much as in that of the international community.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): Let me begin by joining other speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for her update. We also welcome the presence of the representatives of Syria and Turkey at today's meeting.

We have taken note of the contents of the most recent, ninety-sixth, monthly report (S/2021/842, annex) of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We also note the submission by the Syrian Arab Republic on 16 September of its ninety-fourth monthly report, detailing the activities undertaken to implement its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

It is important that the visit of the Declaration Assessment Team to Syria take place soon. We have taken note of the upcoming visit of a Syrian delegation to The Hague to engage with the Declaration Assessment Team. We hope that both the OPCW and Syria will resolve the relevant issues expeditiously.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a unique, non-discriminatory disarmament instrument for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We attach high importance to the CWC and stand for its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation. We support the collective efforts by all to ensure that the credibility and integrity of the Convention is maintained to the fullest.

India is against the use of chemical weapons by anybody, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstance. India has consistently maintained that any investigation into the use of chemical weapons must

be impartial, credible and objective, while scrupulously following the provisions and procedure embedded in the Convention and in conformity with the delicate balance of power and responsibility enshrined in it to establish the facts and reach evidence-based conclusions.

As a member of the Security Council, India has repeatedly cautioned against the possibility of terrorist entities and individuals gaining access to chemical weapons, including in the region. The most recent report of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (see S/2021/419) also referred to the repeated deployments of chemical weapons by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant against civilian populations between 2014 and 2016. That is a cause for serious concern and needs to be acted upon.

Lastly, we believe that technical issues such as Syria's chemical weapons file need to be dealt with in an objective manner. Progress on those matters could potentially help the political track positively.

Mr. Pham (Viet Nam): I thank Under-Secretary-General and High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing. I would also like to welcome the participation of the representatives of Syria and Turkey at today's meeting.

We take note of the ninety-sixth monthly report (S/2021/842, annex) of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Recognizing that there was little progress during the reporting period, we note the continued engagement between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and Syria, especially between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority, in addressing the remaining outstanding issues relating to the initial declaration.

In that regard, my delegation calls for close dialogue and cooperation in order to strengthen communication and address all outstanding issues in order to facilitate the OPCW's work and Syria's implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), including, inter alia, to agree on all substantial and logistical issues for the holding of the long-delayed twenty-fifth round of consultations and the newly proposed in-person meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Syria and the Director-General of the OPCW.

Constructive and non-politicized technical consultations between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Syrian authorities are the only way forward towards resolving all reported "identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies" and subsequently putting an end to that protracted issue.

Viet Nam shares the deep concern over the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria. My delegation would like to reiterate Viet Nam's unequivocal condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone and under any circumstance. Chemical weapons are indiscriminate and inhumane and can have long-term effects on human life and the environment.

We support the cooperation between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the States parties to the CWC in efforts to champion the full implementation of the Convention. To achieve the goal of ridding the world of chemical weapons, the work of the OPCW should be carried out in the most comprehensive, objective and impartial manner. Those high standards, particularly in terms of investigations of alleged CWC violations, would help to establish irrefutable facts and evidence with a view to ensuring justice and deterring violations.

We are also concerned about the long-standing divergence in the international community over the issue of chemical weapons in Syria. We are of the view that the full implementation of the CWC and resolution 2118 (2013) can be achieved only when it is supported by constructive and non-politicized international cooperation.

To conclude, Viet Nam would like to stress the need for a comprehensive political settlement of the crisis in Syria. That is the only path towards peace, stability and development for the Syrian people.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): May I also start by thanking High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

We are disappointed that, despite Security Council members making clear, month after month, the importance of resolving the outstanding issues in Syria's chemical weapons declaration, the most recent monthly report (S/2021/842, annex) from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) again sets out a lack of substantive progress by Syria.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat has been attempting to reach agreement on deploying the

Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) to Syria since April this year. It received no response to its requests to deploy from May to June and had to postpone the visit until after the summer. Syria eventually agreed to the deployment of the DAT this month, but now we are told that Syria has refused a visa for one of the DAT members, contrary to its obligations under resolution 2118 (2013) — yet again resulting in the DAT being unable to deploy. While we welcome the Technical Secretariat's efforts nevertheless to advance discussions on Syria's declaration by inviting Syria to The Hague, we regret that the twenty-fifth round of consultations has been unable to go ahead in full in Syria.

Sadly, this lack of cooperation on the part of Syria is not an exception. For example, the OPCW continues to wait for answers with regard to the Schedule 2 chemical found at the Barzah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre in November 2018. It continues to wait for answers to questions regarding the unauthorized movement and destruction of cylinders relating to the high-profile 2018 Douma chlorine attack. And the OPCW Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention continue to wait for compliance with the measures in the Executive Council's decision of 9 July 2020, imposed following the findings of the Investigation and Identification Team that chemical weapons were used by Syria in Ltamenah in 2017.

It is often alleged by Syria that we and other countries are using the chemical weapons file to punish them, but let me assure you, Mr President, that the United Kingdom would like nothing more than to receive a monthly report from the Director-General confirming that all declaration issues have been resolved and that Syria's chemical weapons programme has been verifiably destroyed. We therefore call on Syria to take the process seriously and take expeditious steps towards meeting in full its obligations under resolution 2118 (2013) and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Ochoa Martínez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I am grateful for the briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, and I welcome the presence of the delegations of Syria and Turkey at this meeting.

We begin by reiterating our unequivocal condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, at any time and under any circumstance.

We are concerned by the lack of progress in the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). With regard to the twenty-fifth round of consultations with the Declaration Assessment Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), we call for the expeditious and unconditional granting of visas for all — I repeat, all — members of the Declaration Assessment Team. Any delay will affect both Syria's compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as on carrying out the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We hope that those discussions, when they take place, will be constructive, and we urge the Syrian delegation to engage in a constructive and committed manner to clarify any discrepancies.

While a visit by a Syrian delegation to OPCW headquarters in The Hague will be a step in the right direction, it must be underscored that such discussions cannot take the place of the on-site inspections that OPCW teams are required to conduct on Syrian territory. With regard to the pending visits to the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre, we urge the country's authorities to allow for the deployment and facilitate the tasks of the OPCW experts.

Concerning the attack that led to the destruction of the cylinders related to the Douma incident, my country condemns violations of Syrian airspace, but it also demands clarification vis-à-vis the unauthorized movement of the cylinders and their remnants, as well as the chain of custody of the evidence.

In conclusion, I reiterate that, while Mexico values these meetings, which continue to be an exercise in transparency, we also believe that it is important to explore new forms of direct interaction between the Security Council and OPCW experts, with a view to delving deeper into the data needed to assess the matter before us.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Kenya.

I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing. I welcome the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey to this meeting.

Kenya takes note of the ninety-sixth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (S/2021/842,

annex) and the submission by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic of its report.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Kenya has made its position clear. The use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone constitutes a grave violation of international law and cannot be justified under any circumstance. We repeat our support for the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as the technically competent international authority in its area of work. We continue to encourage cooperation and engagement in better faith between the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW Technical Secretariat regarding the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain unresolved.

Kenya remains convinced that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict. We support an inclusive Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process as the only avenue to a sustainable peace. I add my words to those of Ambassador Abarry in calling for stronger efforts to close the damaging divisions on this file. They do not serve the people of Syria and contribute to sustaining the crisis.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Sabbagh (Syria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month and to thank your predecessor for her efforts last month.

In speaking to the General Assembly on 27 September (see A/76/PV.16), our Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Mr. Fayssal Mekdad, said that the Syrian Arab Republic reiterated once again that it categorically condemned and rejected any use of chemical weapons under any circumstance, by whomever, whenever and wherever. It is for that reason that Syria voluntarily joined the Chemical Weapons Convention and met all its obligations in record time. Syria continues to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to close this dossier as soon as possible.

The statements made by the representatives of some States today clearly demonstrated that they continue to turn a deaf ear to the truth. They continue to politicize this dossier by insisting on levelling baseless

accusations and focusing on procedural details, which should not concern the Security Council. They also deliberately disregard the serious measures that Syria has taken and our genuine cooperation with the OPCW.

With regard to the briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, my delegation regrets the continued lack of balance and impartiality in her briefings while ignoring over the past years Syria's concerns and the information that it has provided.

On 16 September, Syria submitted its 95th monthly report on the activities related to the destruction of chemical weapons and their production facilities. We also welcomed the meeting to be held between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates and the OPCW Director-General in Damascus. The focal points on both sides are preparing for that meeting.

My country also welcomed the visit of the Declaration Assessment Team to Damascus to hold the twenty-fifth round of consultations pursuant to the date agreed upon by both parties. We granted the necessary visas to all the members of the Team, with the exception of one person, after we asked for his replacement. In that regard, we note that entry visas are granted based on national and sovereign procedures and instructions applicable by the Syrian State to all employees of the United Nations, its agencies and international organizations, including the OPCW. That measure was therefore not an exception. Not granting an entry visa to a member of the Declaration Assessment Team must not negatively affect the performance of the Team as a whole. Moreover, the OPCW has several experts and specialized personnel to replace someone who proved to be non-objective.

Just for clarification, the Declaration Assessment Team is not an investigative team. I noticed during the statements by some colleagues that there is some confusion. The Declaration Assessment Team is not an investigative team. It is a Team that should help the Syrian National Committee in presenting its declaration. Despite that fact, the Syrian National Committee accepted a proposal, later submitted by the Technical Secretariat, to hold the round of consultations at its headquarters in The Hague. It appears that the information of my colleague from France needs to be updated.

The report of the Director-General addressed the visit of the Declaration Assessment Team. It held Syria responsible for the Technical Secretariat's inability

to plan for the missions of its various teams. That is inaccurate, non-objective and we categorically reject it. All members recall when the Director-General spoke in this Chamber in June (see S/PV.8785) about postponing the Team's visit until after summer, at a time when Syria had a genuine interest in accelerating discussions with the Team and closing the dossier.

Some States continue to raise the issue of the two cylinders related to the alleged incident in Douma. My delegation previously clarified to the Security Council the importance of those two cylinders for Syria as legal and material evidence to reject the claims related to that incident and as a proof that terrorist groups possessed toxic chemicals. My delegation rejects the attempts by some States to distract attention from condemning the Israeli aggression against Syria's sovereignty, which led to the destruction of the two cylinders. Instead, they focus only on technical and procedural matters.

Syria and other countries have called for a review of the report on the alleged incident in Douma. It is fabricated and full of lies. In that regard, I would like to refer to the article featured in *The Daily Mail* on 5 September in which the British Broadcasting Corporation admitted that a Radio 4 documentary on the alleged incident in Douma contained errors and false allegations. That proves once again that open-source information can be manipulated easily; it lacks credibility.

The flawed methods of work adopted by the Fact-Finding Mission when investigating the alleged incident in Douma were also adopted in its investigation into other incidents. The Fact-Finding Mission lacked commitment to the rules outlined in the Chemical Weapons Convention, including collection of evidence and samples while preserving the chain of custody. It relied on open sources and information provided by terrorist groups and their affiliates, such as the White Helmets.

My delegation expresses grave concerns about the delay by the Fact-Finding Mission in announcing the outcome of its investigation into incidents reported by the Syrian Government since 2017 on the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups. We also express concern about the fabrication of evidence years after other alleged incidents took place. Moreover, the Fact-Finding Mission continues to disregard the information we provide on terrorist groups that possess chemical

weapons and on preparing to use them and fabricate incidents and accusations against the Syrian Arab Army.

Some members of the Security Council insist on politicizing this dossier by doubting Syria's cooperation. That has become clear. They attempt to conceal the practices of terrorist groups that used chemical weapons against Syrian citizens and the Syrian Arab Army. That has also become very clear. They are misinterpreting the text of the Convention's to establish illegitimate mechanisms and adopt a resolution against Syria. That sets a dangerous precedent in the work of the organization.

In that regard, I would like to remind the representative of the United States, who demonstrated his excellent mathematical skills, that 167 States participated in the Conference of the Parties in April. Therefore, the 87 countries that supported the resolution represent almost half the number of countries that took part in the Conference. The United States colleague disregarded the fact that 34 countries abstained in the voting and that 31 countries were not present, while 15 countries voted against the resolution. Hence the other half of the countries that took part in the Conference did not vote in favour of the resolution. That is just an example of how the United States distorts information.

I would like to underscore that the Syrian Arab Republic is not trying to jeopardize the work of the OPCW. Rather, we are defending its professionalism and objectivity. We reject the attempts by some States to use the organization as a tool to achieve their objectives against Syria. If those States do not change their destructive behaviour and disruptive agendas against my country, we will be unable to have objective discussions on this dossier and bring it to an objective and professional conclusion.

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

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Kenya's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for October. I also thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The non-compliance of the Syrian regime vis-à-vis its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention has continued unabated. We reviewed with great concern the ninety-sixth monthly report (S/2021/842, annex) of the Director-General of the Organization

for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian regime's chemical weapons declaration persist. Therefore, the OPCW still cannot confirm that the declaration is accurate and complete. The regime consistently fails to respond to the information requests made by the OPCW Technical Secretariat regarding a number of outstanding issues in relation to its declaration. The recent discovery of an undeclared chemical-weapons production facility continues to be a matter of grave concern. Yet again, the regime fails to declare the chemical warfare agents produced and/or weaponized at that site, in violation of its obligations.

The previous monthly report (S/2021/764, annex) of the OPCW revealed that the Al-Assad regime had moved two chlorine cylinders related to the Douma chemical attack without prior notification or approval by the Technical Secretariat. Moreover, the regime refuses to grant visas to OPCW officials, deliberately hindering the discharge of their mandated activities.

In accordance with resolution 2118 (2013), the Syrian regime has the obligation to provide immediate and unfettered access to personnel designated by the OPCW. Let me be clear: that is not a simple procedural issue, but rather part of a broader pattern of non-compliance by the regime. It is high time that the members of the Security Council put their differences aside and enforced the Council's own resolution 2118 (2013).

Turkey supports the efforts within the OPCW to bring the regime to compliance. We co-sponsored the Executive Council decision of July 2020 and the

decision adopted during the second part of the twenty-fifth Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in April. It is important that those decisions, which are supported by the overwhelming majority of States parties, are worth more than the paper they are printed on.

The Council, as the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, must uphold the authority of the Chemical Weapons Convention. That is not a choice; it is a responsibility.

Turkey strongly condemns the repeated use of chemical weapons by the Al-Assad regime against its own people. To date, the regime's responsibility in at least eight heinous chemical-weapon attacks has been established in the reports of the investigative bodies mandated by the United Nations and the OPCW. The regime must be compelled to cooperate with the Declaration Assessment Team, the Investigation and Identification Team and the Fact-Finding Mission. In that context, we reiterate our support for the objective, impartial and professional work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its investigative bodies.

There is an urgent need to ensure full accountability for the Al-Assad regime's war crimes and crimes against humanity. The onus is upon all of us to take immediate and decisive steps to end impunity in Syria. That legal, historical and ethical responsibility belongs to us all, but especially to those emboldening the regime on its current course.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.