



Security Council

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Letter dated 27 December 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the fifty-first 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 \(2013\)](#). The present letter covers the period from 23 November to 22 December 2017.

Twenty-five of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic have been verified by the OPCW Technical Secretariat as having been destroyed. The two remaining facilities have been subject to an initial inspection by the OPCW Technical Secretariat. In this regard, I welcome the indication by the Director-General that, as a result of voluntary contributions to the relevant trust fund, OPCW is now in a position to provide financial assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic for the destruction of these two facilities.

With regard to the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, I take note that the documents it has provided to OPCW in November 2017 are still undergoing translation and analysis and that the member States of OPCW will be informed of the outcomes of this work. I further note that the results of the second inspection by OPCW at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre will be reported in due course.

It remains crucial that the outstanding issues related to the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic be resolved. The resolution of these issues will enable the international community to have full confidence in the complete elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. I therefore continue to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to extend its full cooperation to OPCW.

The OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to study all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the country. In response to a request from the Syrian Government, a team from the OPCW fact-finding mission was dispatched to Damascus to investigate certain incidents brought to its attention by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

With the end of the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, there is now a gap in our collective efforts to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. Nevertheless, the need to hold those responsible accountable for these horrific acts has not itself ended. No justification exists for using chemical weapons, and therefore no impunity for their use is permissible. I reiterate my call upon the Security Council to give all due attention to the ongoing reports of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic in order to preclude any impression that chemical weapons may be used without consequence.

(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 Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and United Nations Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council. My report covers the period from 23 November 2017 to 22 December 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(Signed) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

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 (FFM) in Syria, 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 fifty-first monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 November 2017 to 22 December 2017.

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) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. As

previously reported, in November 2017 the Secretariat conducted an initial inspection of the last two stationary above-ground facilities in accordance with paragraph 44 of Part V of the Verification Annex to the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”). Thanks to the voluntary contributions provided by States Parties to the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons, including contributions provided in response to the Secretariat’s Note S/1541/2017 (dated 9 October 2017), the Secretariat is now in a position to provide financial assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic for the destruction of the facilities located at these two sites.

(b) On 19 December 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-ninth monthly report (EC-87/P/NAT.3, dated 19 December 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its 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 now been destroyed.

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

8. As previously reported, the Syrian Arab Republic provided 19 documents, totalling approximately 450 pages, on 10 November 2017. These documents provided details of some research and development activities declarable under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III of the Convention that reportedly took place in the declared laboratories of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) between 1995 and 2010. During the period under review, the Secretariat has continued to translate and analyse the information received. States Parties will be informed of the outcomes of this analysis.

9. As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Twenty-Second Session (C-22/DG.20, dated 27 November 2017), the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC in accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5 was concluded on 22 November 2017. The samples taken during the mission were packed and prepared for shipment to the OPCW Laboratory on 19 December 2017. They will be subsequently sent to two OPCW designated laboratories for analysis. A report on the second round of inspections will be submitted in due course.

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

10. An agreement between the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic has been concluded to extend until the end of September 2018 the support provided by the UNOPS to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. Representatives of the OPCW and UNOPS met in Beirut, Lebanon, on 18 and 19 December 2017, to discuss the future operational needs of the OPCW.

11. 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.

Supplementary resources

12. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the Declaration Assessment Team. As at the cut-off date of this report, the total contribution stood at EUR 15.6 million, with forthcoming additional donations that are in the process of being finalised. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

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

13. 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 continued to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Conference at its Twenty-Second Session, a summary update of the activities carried out by the FFM in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2017 was submitted to the States Parties on 14 November 2017 (S/1556/2017, dated 14 November 2017).

14. Through Notes Verbales 109 (dated 17 November 2016), 88 (dated 20 September 2017), 103 (dated 26 October 2017), 106 (dated 1 November 2017), 116 (dated 11 November 2017), 119 (dated 13 November 2017), and 127 (dated 24 November 2017), the Syrian Arab Republic transmitted to the Secretariat a detailed information package relating to several incidents, and requested that the Director-General dispatch OPCW experts to investigate these incidents. In response, an FFM team was dispatched from 6 to 16 December 2017 to Damascus, where it was able to conduct 10 interviews and receive additional documents. The FFM team also took custody of biomedical and environmental samples.

Conclusion

15. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the verification of the destruction of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.