



Security Council

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Letter dated 30 January 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the fortieth monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#). The present report covers the period from 22 December 2016 to 22 January 2017.

The situation with regard to the destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic is unchanged. OPCW has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 facilities. The Director General has been informed by the Syrian Arab Republic that the security situation on the ground still prevents safe access to the three remaining facilities by representatives of either the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic or the OPCW Secretariat.

With respect to the initial declaration and subsequent submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic, I recall the Director General's overview of the correspondence between OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic in that regard and, in particular, that OPCW has urged the Syrian Arab Republic to take the steps necessary to complete its declaration. I welcome the commitment of the OPCW Secretariat to assisting the Syrian Arab Republic with the full implementation of its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. I therefore reiterate the need for the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW Secretariat to work together to resolve those issues.

I deplore the use of chemical weapons by any party in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. The progress that has been made towards a world free of chemical weapons and the threat of their use must be maintained. I would like to reiterate my previous calls to strengthen the norm against chemical weapons. Those responsible for their use must be held accountable. This norm has already been flouted and, without accountability, may be irreversibly undermined.

The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic is continuing its efforts to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons, including by studying all available information relating to such allegations. In that connection, I recall that the summary update of the activities carried out by the Fact-Finding Mission in 2016 and its report were transmitted to me by the Director General and subsequently circulated as a document of the Security Council (see [S/2017/45](#)).



On 17 November 2016, by its resolution [2319 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council decided to renew the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism for a further period of one year. Activities since that time have been focused on securing the professional capacity and resources required to implement that mandate. I wish to express my full support for the work of the Mechanism.

(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 OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 22 December 2016 to 22 January 2017 and fulfils 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

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons program

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 fortieth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 22 December 2016 to 22 January 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 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat was informed by the Syrian Arab Republic that the security situation still continues to preclude safe access both for the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready to accept the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

(b) On 13 January 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its thirty-eighth monthly report (EC-84/P/NAT.5, dated 13 January 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 reported previously, 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 decision EC-81/DEC.4

8. In decision EC-81/DEC.4, the Council requested the Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), to continue its efforts, on an expedited basis, to verify the accuracy and completeness of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration and related disclosures, and to address the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies it identified in the "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/HP/DG.1, dated 22 February 2016). The Council also requested the Director-General, in parallel with the efforts of the DAT, to report to the Council, at all future sessions, any unresolved issues regarding the Syrian declaration and related submissions.

9. As reported previously, through a letter dated 13 October 2016 the Syrian Arab Republic declared certain parts of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) under paragraph 1(d) of Article III of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"). The Secretariat's assessment that this declaration was incomplete, in that it did not reflect the full scope and nature of the activities declarable under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III of the Convention, which had been carried out at the SSRC since 1 January 1946, was shared with the Syrian Arab Republic through a letter dated 1 November 2016, and was reiterated in a letter dated 6 December 2016, sent in reply to the letter from the Syrian Arab Republic dated 10 November 2016. The Secretariat also urged the Syrian Arab Republic to take the necessary steps to complete its declaration.

10. Further to these efforts, by letter dated 17 January 2017, the Secretariat forwarded to the Syrian Arab Republic, as a possible basis for future work, a matrix

which sets out, in a summarised form, the status of each of the outstanding issues related to the Syrian declaration. At the same time, the letter identified a number of documents which, taken with other documents listed in previous correspondence, would help to address certain gaps and inconsistencies.

11. The Secretariat remains fully committed to assisting the Syrian Arab Republic with the full implementation of its obligations under the Convention, Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and United Nations Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) relating to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, in particular to address the unresolved issues, including the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies identified by the Secretariat in its report (EC-81/HP/DG.1).

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

12. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

13. 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

14. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 7.8 million 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

15. 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. A summary update of the activities carried out by the FFM in 2016 was also issued by the Secretariat in December 2016 ([S/1445/2016](#), dated 27 December 2016).

16. The Secretariat also submitted the “Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of 2 August 2016 as Reported in the Note Verbale of the Syrian Arab Republic Number 69 Dated 16 August 2016” ([S/1444/2016](#), dated 21 December 2016). In paragraph 1.5 of that report, the FFM concluded that it was unable to “confidently determine whether or not a specific chemical was used as a weapon in the investigated incident”.

17. As reported previously, letters dated 16 and 29 November 2016 were sent to the Secretariat by the Syrian Arab Republic in relation to incidents reported to have occurred on 16 September, 31 October, 3 November, and 13 November 2016 in the area of Aleppo. The FFM is currently translating and analysing the records of the 16 interviews conducted during its deployment in December 2016, along with the

associated documentation. With regard to the samples provided by the Russian Federation to the Syrian Arab Republic, a team of OPCW experts recovered the samples from the SSRC at the beginning of January 2017 and the samples were transported to the OPCW Laboratory.

18. In January 2017, an FFM team conducted three interviews and collected supporting evidence related to two other allegations of the use of chemical weapons. The FFM team will continue to gather additional evidence with regard to these two allegations.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5

19. As reported previously, the Syrian Arab Republic has been informed of the commencement of the preparatory work in view of the implementation of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, and in particular paragraphs 10 and 11 thereof.

Conclusion

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