

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****PROGRESS IN THE ELIMINATION
OF THE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAMME**

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 in Syria (FFM), 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 eighty-fifth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 September to 23 October 2020.

Impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

6. As previously reported, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the Secretariat's ability to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat is maintaining its readiness for deployments, which are being conducted subject to the evolution of the pandemic. The travel restrictions notwithstanding, the Secretariat is continuing its mandated activities related to the Syrian chemical weapons programme and its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic in this regard.

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

7. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:
 - (a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.
 - (b) On 15 October 2020, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its eighty-third monthly report (EC-96/P/NAT.1, dated 15 October 2020) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and 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

8. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

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

9. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4, paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, and paragraph 5 of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2 entitled "Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic" (dated 9 July 2020).
10. The Director-General updated the Council of the recent activities of the DAT in a report entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-95/HP/DG.2, dated 1 October 2020).
11. The twenty-third round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority took place from 22 September to 3 October 2020 in Damascus. In the course of this deployment, the DAT collected samples to replace those taken during its previous deployment and discussed the current status of all outstanding issues. The outcome of these activities will be reported to the Council in due course through an addendum to EC-95/HP/DG.2.

12. At this stage, considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain unresolved, the Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).
13. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is continuing to assess conditions for the conduct of inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports. The Secretariat will do so while also taking into account the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.
14. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is planning to conduct two rounds of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in 2020. The conduct of further inspections of these facilities will be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.
15. With regard to the finding of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical that was detected during the third round of inspections at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC, the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information or explanations that would enable the Secretariat to close this issue.

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

16. On 2 October 2020, the Secretariat provided States Parties with a presentation to inform them of the status of the Secretariat's mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. These activities are comprised of the work of the DAT, the FFM, and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT); the conduct of inspections pursuant to Council decision EC-83/DEC.5; the implementation of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2; and the removal of the remote monitoring system that was established in accordance with EC-M-43/DEC.1 (dated 24 July 2014).
17. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide support to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement concluded between the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic. This agreement facilitates the Secretariat's mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and to any subsequent decision or resolution of the relevant organs of the OPCW or the United Nations, as well as any bilateral agreements concluded between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic. On 27 September 2020, the three parties finalised a six-month extension of the agreement to cover the period from 1 October 2020 up to and including 31 March 2021.
18. As at the cut-off date of this report, two OPCW staff members were deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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

19. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 4 February 2015 and 23 November 2015, respectively), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.
20. With regard to an incident that took place in Saraqib, in the Idlib Governorate, on 1 August 2016, the Secretariat issued a Note entitled “Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Chemicals as a Weapon in Saraqib, Syrian Arab Republic, on 1 August 2016” (S/1901/2020, dated 1 October 2020). In this Note, the FFM reported that the results of the analysis of all available data obtained up until the issuance of this report did not allow it to establish whether or not chemicals were used as a weapon in the incident.
21. With regard to an incident that took place in Aleppo on 24 November 2018, the Secretariat issued a Note entitled “Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident in Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, on 24 November 2018” (S/1902/2020, dated 1 October 2020). In this Note, the FFM reported that all the information obtained and analysed, the composite summary of the interviews, and the results of the laboratory analyses did not allow it to establish whether or not chemicals were used as a weapon in the incident.
22. The FFM is continuing its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic and other States Parties with regard to a variety of incidents, as reported by the Secretariat in a presentation provided to States Parties on 2 October 2020. Additionally, the FFM is continuing to analyse information collected from its most recent deployments. The conduct of further FFM deployments will be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. The FFM will report to the Council on the results of its work in due course.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic

23. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018), adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Fourth Special Session, addresses, inter alia, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.
24. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat established the IIT to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism did not issue a report.

25. Following its first report issued on 8 April 2020,¹ the IIT is continuing its investigations, subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, and will issue further reports in due course.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-94/DEC.2

26. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of EC-94/DEC.2, the Director-General submitted to the Council a report entitled “Implementation of EC-94/DEC.2 on Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-96/DG.1, dated 14 October 2020). The report states that the Syrian Arab Republic did not complete the measures contained in paragraph 5 of the decision within the 90-day period specified therein. In accordance with paragraph 12 of EC-94/DEC.2, on 16 October 2020 the Secretariat transmitted this report to the United Nations Security Council and United Nations General Assembly through the United Nations Secretary-General.
27. With regard to the inspections mandated by paragraph 8 of the decision, the Secretariat is monitoring the current situation and will inform the Syrian Arab Republic when it is prepared to deploy for this purpose. The conduct of these inspections will be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supplementary resources

28. The Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which presently include the work of the DAT and IIT, as well as the biannual inspections of the SSRC and the two sites identified in paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 33.8 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Conclusion

29. The future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will focus on the work of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah sites of the SSRC; the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3; and the implementation of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2.

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¹ “First Report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team Pursuant to Paragraph 10 of Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, ‘Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use’, Ltamenah (Syrian Arab Republic) 24, 25, and 30 March 2017” (S/1867/2020, dated 8 April 2020).