

**NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****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 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.

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