



Security Council

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Letter dated 28 February 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the seventy-seventh 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 \(2013\)](#) (see annex). The report covers the period from 24 January to 23 February 2020.

The Declaration Assessment Team continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues related to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic to OPCW. In this regard, the twenty-third round of consultations between the Team and the Syrian Arab Republic, which was to have begun on 11 February 2020, has been postponed and the OPCW Technical Secretariat is endeavouring to find an alternative date.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat has analysed the explanation provided by the Syrian Arab Republic concerning the discovery, during the inspections carried out in November 2018, of a chemical listed in schedule 2 at the Barzah facility of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre and will discuss the matter with the Syrian authorities in due course.

I note that, in accordance with decision EC-M-43/DEC.1 concerning the destruction and verification of 12 declared chemical weapons production facilities, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has ensured the inspection and maintenance of the remote monitoring systems installed at four sealed underground structures in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. The mandate for these activities will expire at the end of March 2020.

The OPCW fact-finding mission continues to study all available information relating to allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and is currently analysing the information collected during its recent visits. Moreover, the mission is planning further deployments and will report to the OPCW Executive Council on the results of its work in due course.

Regarding the activities of the Investigation and Identification Team established by decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, I note that the Team is conducting its investigations, has contacted the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to request their cooperation and is about to complete its work on the first incidents that are under investigation. The next progress report on the implementation of the aforementioned decision will be submitted to the OPCW Executive Council at its ninety-third session, to be held from 10 to 13 March 2020.

As I have already stated, the use of chemical weapons by anyone and anywhere is intolerable. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons is equally unacceptable. It is imperative to identify and hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons. Unity in the Security Council is essential to achieve this urgent obligation.

(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 enclosures I and II). My report covers the period from 24 January 2020 to 23 February 2020 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(Signed) **Fernando Arias**

Enclosure I

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report 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 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 seventy-seventh monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 January to 23 February 2020.

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) 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 17 February 2020, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its seventy-fourth monthly report (EC-93/P/NAT.5, dated 17 February 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

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 been destroyed.

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

8. 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 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

9. The twenty-second round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian Arab Republic took place from 14 to 23 October 2019. These consultations built upon the work carried out during the previous two rounds that had taken place, respectively, in March and in April 2019. The outcomes of this deployment, together with further information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and/or collected by the DAT, as well as the results of the analysis of information and samples obtained by the DAT during the previous rounds of consultations, will be reported to the Council accordingly.

10. The twenty-third round of consultations, initially planned to begin on 11 February 2020, is being rescheduled. The Secretariat is currently considering alternative dates for this deployment.

11. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat continues 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. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat conducted the sixth round of inspections from 6 to 11 November 2019. The outcome of these inspections will be reported to the Council in due course.

12. With regard to the explanation provided in a note verbale by the Syrian Arab Republic for the finding of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical that was detected during the third round of inspections at the Barzah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC), the Secretariat has conducted its analysis and will engage with the Syrian authorities in due course. The Council will be informed accordingly.

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

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.

14. 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 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. The Secretariat's mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic include the deployments and work of the FFM, DAT, and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), and the conduct of inspections pursuant to Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

15. In a meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss the next extension of the Tripartite Agreement, which took place from 5 to 6 February 2020 in Damascus, the three parties agreed to a six-month extension of the Agreement until, and including, 30 September 2020.

16. Pursuant to EC-M-43/DEC.1 (dated 24 July 2014), regarding the destruction and verification of 12 declared chemical weapons production facilities, the Secretariat has been monitoring and maintaining the remote monitoring systems installed at four sealed underground structures on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. In line with the Council's decision, the mandate related to those activities will expire at the end of March 2020.

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

17. 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. The FFM is currently analysing information collected from recent deployments, is planning further deployments, and 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

18. 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.

19. 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. The IIT is conducting its investigations, has reached out to States Parties requesting their cooperation, and is in the process of concluding its work on the first incidents under investigation.

20. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the next progress report on implementation of that decision will be submitted to the Council at its Ninety-Third Session, which will take place from 10 to 13 March 2020.

Supplementary resources

21. 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, and the biannual inspections of the SSRC. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 31.2 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, 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

22. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities 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; and the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.

Enclosure II

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme****Corrigendum****Page 2, subparagraph 6(b)****For:**

“On 17 February 2020, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its seventy-fourth monthly report (EC-93/P/NAT.5, dated 17 February 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.”

Read:

“On 17 February 2020, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its seventy-fifth monthly report (EC-93/P/NAT.5, dated 17 February 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.”
