



## Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East: Syria (Chemical Weapons), 5 January 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier  
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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President

Since this is the first formal meeting of the Council for 2023, and our first as an elected member, I avail myself of this opportunity to thank all Council members for their warm welcome, and the wider membership for the confidence and trust they have placed in us. We look forward to engaging in an open and constructive manner over the next two years and contributing to the work of the Council in a meaningful manner.

I also congratulate Japan on assuming the Presidency of the Council for the month of January.

Last but definitely not least, I thank the Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Mr Adedeji Ebo for the briefing he has just provided.

President

The lack of progress on this particular file remains worrying and is of concern. Malta attaches great importance to the universalisation of the global norm on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which is underpinned by the Chemical Weapons Convention. There can never be a justification for the use of these abhorrent weapons.



We call on Syria to cooperate with the OPCW and resolve all the pending queries related to its initial Declaration. The Syrian Arab Republic must uphold its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and this includes the settlement of all issues related to its initial Declaration.

We recall Resolution 2118, which was unanimously adopted by the Council. We regret to note that the list of pending declarations and other documents requested by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) since 2019 have not yet been provided by the Syrian Arab Republic, and that the Declaration submitted is inaccurate and incomplete.

We urge Syria to agree on an agenda and engage with OPCW so that a meeting between the OPCW Director-General and the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs can take place.

President

Malta expresses its full support for the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. We would like to underline our support for the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and its task to determine the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We look forward for the publication of additional reports on this work including by the Investigation and Identification Team.



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President

We should all strive to uphold the international ban on the use of chemical weapons. The lack of progress as reported by the UN Secretariat and OPCW remains of grave concern. We call on Syria to engage with OPCW and to present the necessary assurances on its chemical weapons programme in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I thank you.