



Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East: Syria (Chemical Weapons), 8 August 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Darren Camilleri
Political Coordinator of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, and I also thank Deputy High Representative Ebo and Dr Katoub for their insightful briefings.

I reiterate Malta's full support for the independent, unbiased, and expert work of the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. The OPCW, including through its Investigation and Identification Team, the Fact-Finding Mission, and the Declaration Assessment Team, plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the global prohibition of chemical weapons and in ensuring the complete elimination of all chemical weapons in Syria.

Since our last meeting, the OPCW issued its latest report. Once again, regrettably, the Technical Secretariat's efforts to organise the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority have remained unsuccessful. This is due to, inter alia, the Syrian Arab Republic's refusal to issue a visa to the DAT's lead technical expert.

The report also shows that no progress has been made on the 20 outstanding issues because the Syrian Arab Republic did not present any of the documents requested by the Secretariat. The declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic, therefore, still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention as well as with Resolution 2118.



While we take note of the six-month extension of the Tripartite Agreement and the deployment of two reduced DAT missions in January and in April, we reaffirm that these are by no means sufficient substitutes of Syria's obligations.

The lack of progress is deplorable, and Syria bears complete responsibility for it. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat, in accordance with UNSCR 2118.

Malta is also deeply concerned about the repeated and baseless assertions intended to undermine the credibility of the OPCW or cast doubt on its findings. They must be decisively addressed and rebutted by the members of this Council.

We reaffirm our full support to the OPCW Secretariat and its technical teams, who carry out their mandate independently and impartially and in accordance with the highest international standards.

Independent OPCW and joint UN-OPCW investigations have concluded that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons against its own people on nine occasions. This is unconscionable and deeply troubling. There can never be a justification for their use.

In 2013, the Council unanimously adopted a resolution establishing that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. Their use cannot and must not go unpunished. Malta firmly believes in the



universalisation of the global norm on the prohibition of chemical weapons, as mandated by the Chemical Weapons Convention.

To conclude, President, we call on Syria to cease obstructing efforts of the OPCW and to adhere to its international obligations.

We reiterate our strong condemnation for the use of Chemical Weapons by any actor, under any circumstances.

I thank you.