



Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East: Syria (Chemical Weapons), 7 September 2023

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

Thank you, President. I would like to begin by congratulating Albania on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and by thanking the United States for steering the work of this Council during the month of August. I also thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her informative briefing.

The latest report from the OPCW shows, once again, that no progress has been made on this file. 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.

We also note that no advancement was recorded on the 20 outstanding issues. The declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic, therefore, still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as with Resolution 2118.

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, including granting full access to its personnel, and to submit all the requested documents and declarations, in accordance with Resolution 2118.



Malta remains extremely 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 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. 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.

President

Independent OPCW and joint UN-OPCW investigations have concluded that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons against its own people nine times. Malta strongly condemns these attacks. There can never be a justification for the use of chemical weapons. This Council and the international community must never look the other way when confronted with such reprehensible events.



Neither can we forget that in 2013, the Council unanimously adopted a resolution establishing that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. We stress that their use cannot, and must not, go unpunished.

In closing, President, we reiterate our full support to the OPCW and our condemnation for the use of chemical weapons by any actor, under any circumstances. We remain firm in our belief that the global norm on the prohibition of chemical weapons, as mandated by the Convention, must be universal.

I thank you.