

## **The tenth anniversary of entry into force of the CWC for Syria and of its membership in the OPCW - joint statement**

This joint statement is issued on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Columbia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

14 October 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of Syria becoming a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Syria joined the CWC in the aftermath of the horrific sarin chemical weapons attack perpetrated by the Syrian authorities on 21 August 2013 in the Ghouta district of Damascus, which killed more than 1,400 people.

Our governments remember and honor the victims and survivors of Syria's chemical attacks. We condemn in the strongest terms Syria's repeated use of these horrific weapons and continue to demand that the Syrian Arab Republic complies fully with its international obligations. Syria's use of chemical weapons is a violation of international law and may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. We express our deepest sympathies for the victims of chemical weapons attacks, as well as their families. The international community cannot accept impunity in this matter. Combatting impunity underpins the foundation of the effectiveness and credibility of the Convention banning these weapons and we will continue to work resolutely with our partners in this direction.

Syria's accession to the OPCW and the related adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2118 was supposed to lead to the total destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles. However, Syria remains in non-compliance with its obligations under the CWC. Ten years later, Syria, in defiance of its international obligations, has still not provided full information on the status of its chemical weapons stockpiles. Syria must declare and fully destroy its chemical weapons

programme and authorise the unfettered deployment of OPCW personnel on its territory to verify that it has done so.

Independent investigations by the United Nations and the OPCW have established that Syria is responsible for at least nine chemical weapons attacks since its accession to the CWC in 2013. Most recently, in January 2023, the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) published its third report concluding that the Syrian Air Force dropped two barrels of chlorine on residential buildings in Douma on 7 April 2018, resulting in the deaths of 43 people. Syria's repeated use of chemical weapons demonstrates that its stockpiles have not been completely destroyed and remain a threat to regional and international security.

It is imperative that Syria immediately complies with its obligations, if it wishes to regain the rights and privileges under the CWC that were suspended by the States Parties in April 2021 as a result of Syria's repeated violations of the Convention and its failure to take the measures called for by the Executive Council.

We commend the ongoing resolve and tenacity of the OPCW Technical Secretariat's teams, and their exemplary efforts to carry out their work rooted in expertise, impartiality and professionalism./.