



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Eighth Meeting
16 April 2018

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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTINE WEIL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO
THE OPCW AT THE FIFTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union presented by the head of the Bulgarian delegation, Ambassador Krassimir Kostov.

We are deeply shocked that chemical weapons have again been used in the Syrian Arab Republic, in Douma, in the attack that took place on 7 April 2018.

This horrific attack targeted mainly families, men, women and children, who were hiding in cellars and who died a cruel death. Many more were seriously injured. There is no circumstance, no aim, no cause that can justify the use of chemical weapons.

For us, the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, it should be of the utmost importance to defend that principle!

We have to defend that principle, not only as an act of public international law, but first and foremost as an act of humanity.

Instead, we have seen this absolute taboo broken time and again in the Syrian Arab Republic. Those who support the Syrian Government, in particular the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran, must guarantee that the Syrian Arab Republic does not use chemical weapons again. This is a question of credibility and responsibility, also for them. In this context, we remind the Russian Federation of its commitment made in 2013 when the Syrian Arab Republic joined the Convention.

Together with our partners, we have always condemned the confirmed use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Government. We support that our American, British and French allies as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council have taken responsibility in the way they did.

Their military action is a proportionate and necessary response to prevent the Syrian Government from further violating the Convention. The Syrian Arab Republic must now finally fully comply with the Convention. It is now high time that the Syrian Arab Republic declares all of its remaining chemical weapons stocks and facilities, and that all of it is destroyed under the auspices of the United Nations and the OPCW.



We would like to thank Director-General Üzümcü for the comprehensive briefing he gave to the Executive Council. We think that it is important that the Executive Council is informed that Director-General Üzümcü has sent two Fact-Finding Mission teams to Douma, to establish the facts with impartial experts from the OPCW. Germany welcomes this step and commends Director-General Üzümcü for having taken quick and responsible action. We acknowledge the professional work of the Technical Secretariat and its experts. We wish them every success and a safe return.

We need to hold to account those who are responsible for these brutal crimes against humanity. Germany deplores the fact that it was not possible to prolong the Joint Investigative Mechanism in the United Nations Security Council last November. It is obvious that we urgently need an independent attribution mechanism to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic. We note with deep regret that, despite thorough preparation, it was not possible to establish such a mechanism due to the Russian Federation's veto at the recent meeting of the United Nations Security Council.

The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic can only be ended through a political solution. Germany, together with its partners, supports the Geneva peace process and will make all efforts to support and further this political process.

We will need to come together again in the Executive Council to discuss the results of the Fact-Finding Mission to Douma. Meanwhile, we will not give up on the question of accountability. Germany supports the renewed efforts in the United Nations Security Council to come to an agreement on a new attribution mechanism. We also support the International Partnership against Impunity, initiated by President Macron, which will support our efforts to bring those responsible to justice.

Thank you.

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