

# Syria: Statement by the High Representative Josep Borrell on the second OPCW report about the use of chemical weapons

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The European Union welcomes the release of the second report of the Investigation and Identification Team to the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and to the Secretary General of the United Nations on 12 April 2021.

The European Union strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force in Saraqib, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 4 February 2018, as concluded by the report. We fully support the report's findings, which further confirm the failure of the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention more than seven years after the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone – be it a State or a non-State actor – anywhere, at any time, and under any circumstances, is a violation of international law and can amount to the most serious of international crimes – war crimes and crimes against humanity. Those identified responsible for these reprehensible acts must be held accountable.

It is now up to the International Community to duly consider the reports and take appropriate action. Consistent with its own commitment to the International Partnership against impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, the European Union is determined to ensure that this clear violation of the core principles of the Convention receives the strongest possible response from the Chemical Weapons Convention's States Parties.

The OPCW Investigation and Identification Team's findings are an important contribution to our efforts to end impunity for the use of chemical weapons. For its part, the European Union has previously imposed restrictive measures on high-level Syrian officials and scientists for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons, and is ready to consider introducing further measures as appropriate. The European Union and its Member States will continue to work at national and international levels addressing chemical weapons attacks and other atrocity crimes committed by the Syrian regime.

The European Union reiterates its full support to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and underlines the complementarity of its work with the United Nations. We have full confidence in the objectivity, impartiality and independence of the Organisation's Technical Secretariat and its Investigation and Identification Team.