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Letter dated 27 June 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the 117th monthly report of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex).

The report provides information on the activities of OPCW in implementing Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the relevant provisions of the OPCW Executive Council decisions in relation to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. It covers the period from 24 May to 23 June 2023.

As I have stated previously, the use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone, and under any circumstances, is intolerable. Impunity for their use is equally unacceptable. It is imperative that those who have used chemical weapons be identified and held accountable. Unity in the Security Council is essential to achieve this urgent objective.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled “Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme”, prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 24 May to 23 June 2023 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report by the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015), noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. The Council, at its Ninety-Fourth Session, adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-94/DEC.2, dated 9 July 2020). In paragraph 12 of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly report to the Council on the implementation of this decision and decide[d] also that the Director-General shall provide a copy of this decision and its associated reports by the Secretariat to all States Parties and to the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly through the United Nations Secretary-General".

6. The Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference") at its Twenty-Fifth Session adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic" (C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021). In paragraph 8 of this decision, the Conference decided that the Director-

General shall regularly report to the Council and States Parties on whether the Syrian Arab Republic has completed all of the measures contained in paragraph 5 of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2.

7. This, the 117th monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council and Conference decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 May to 23 June 2023.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

8. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 15 June 2023, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its 115th monthly report (EC-103/P/NAT.4, dated 15 June 2023) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

9. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

10. The Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"), paragraph 1 of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4, paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, and paragraph 5 of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2.

11. As previously reported, the last round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority took place in Damascus in February 2021. Since April 2021, all of the Secretariat's efforts to organise the next round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority have remained unsuccessful, inter alia, because of the Syrian Arab Republic's refusal to issue a visa to the DAT's lead technical expert, which is not in line with its obligations under paragraph 7 of Article VII of the Convention, paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), and corresponding Council decisions.

12. In May 2022, the Secretariat proposed to address the declaration-related issues through exchange of correspondence, and in September 2022 provided the Syrian Arab Republic with the list of pending declarations and other documents requested by the DAT since 2019 that could assist in resolving the currently 20 outstanding issues. Although the Syrian Arab Republic agreed to this proposal, it did not submit any declarations or documents requested by the Secretariat.

13. Given that none of these documents had been provided and that consultations were prevented by the Syrian Arab Republic's refusal to issue a visa to the DAT's lead technical expert, the Secretariat proposed to deploy a reduced team comprised of several members of the DAT to the Syrian Arab Republic to conduct limited

in-country activities (LICA). The first such deployment took place in January 2023 and the outcomes were reported to States Parties in March 2023.

14. As previously reported, following another unsuccessful attempt by the Secretariat to organise the twenty-fifth round of consultations in April 2023, the Secretariat deployed a reduced team to the Syrian Arab Republic for another round of LICA from 12 to 19 April 2023. During this deployment, the team conducted three interviews, two site visits, and collected several samples, which arrived at the OPCW Laboratory in June 2023 and are currently in the process of being dispatched to OPCW designated laboratories for analysis.

15. Due to the continued limitations imposed by the Syrian Arab Republic, the reduced team did not engage in technical meetings with the Syrian National Authority during the April 2023 LICA. That notwithstanding, one coordination meeting and one wrap-up meeting took place between the reduced team and the Syrian National Authority during the April 2023 LICA. The outcomes of this deployment will be reported to the Council at its next session.

16. On 28 April 2023, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted a note verbale containing its explanations of the results of analysis of samples collected by the DAT in April 2019. The Secretariat assessed these explanations and will respond to the Syrian National Authority on the matter in due course.

17. In a note verbale dated 23 May 2023, the Syrian National Authority informed the Secretariat of the location selected for the construction of an incineration unit that reportedly will be used by the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). In this note verbale, the Syrian National Authority stated that despite the fact that all information had been provided, construction is still pending evaluation by the Secretariat. In its response dated 9 June 2023, the Secretariat recalled that during the last inspection that took place at the SSRC in September 2022, the Syrian Arab Republic informed the Secretariat that the time frame of the project could not be provided, as it depended on the outcome of the ongoing site selection for the incineration unit, and that the Secretariat would be notified in advance of the most favourable locations once this selection process had been completed. The Secretariat then requested the Syrian National Authority to inform it once the site selection procedure had been completed and to officially confirm the final location and tentative construction time frame, as this information would enable the Secretariat to share its assessment on the matter.

18. On 24 March 2023, following a previous attempt by the Secretariat in November 2022, the Syrian Arab Republic proposed holding a meeting in Damascus or Beirut at a level higher than the DAT. Through a note verbale dated 26 May 2023, the Secretariat confirmed its readiness to deploy a delegation in June 2023 with the aim of discussing all pertinent matters related to the Syrian chemical dossier. In its response dated 30 May 2023, the Syrian National Authority confirmed its readiness to hold such a meeting in Beirut on the dates proposed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will keep the Council informed as developments progress.

19. The Secretariat remains fully committed to implementing its mandate aimed at verifying the fulfilment of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration obligations under the Convention, decisions of the policy-making organs, and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Secretariat also reiterates its earlier calls to the Syrian Arab Republic to submit pending declarations and documents, and to fulfil its obligations by providing immediate and unfettered access to all locations and sites for all personnel designated by the Secretariat.

20. Considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain unresolved, the Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab

Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention, Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-81/DEC.4, EC-83/DEC.5, and EC-94/DEC.2, as well as Conference decisions C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018) and C-25/DEC.9, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

21. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is continuing to assess conditions for the conduct of inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports.

22. With regard to the inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC as mandated by paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is continuing to plan the next round of inspections in 2023.

23. Concerning the detection of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical during the third round of inspections at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC in November 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information or explanations that would enable the Secretariat to close this issue.

Other activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

24. Following an invitation extended on 24 June 2021 by the Director-General to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic to an in-person meeting, the Secretariat stands ready to engage further on an agreed agenda for the meeting through the agreed channel.

25. In a note verbale to the Secretariat dated 9 July 2021, the Syrian National Authority also reported the destruction in an attack on a former CWPF of, inter alia, two chlorine cylinders used in the chemical weapons incident that took place in Douma, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018. In its reply dated 15 July 2021, the Secretariat requested the Syrian Arab Republic to, inter alia, provide all relevant information regarding the unauthorised movement of the two cylinders from the site where they had been stored and inspected in November 2020, 60 kilometres away from the site where the cylinders had allegedly been destroyed. As at the date of this report, the Secretariat had not received a response to this request. The Secretariat will keep the Council informed of further developments on this matter.

26. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide support to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement concluded between the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic. This Agreement facilitates the Secretariat's mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and to any subsequent decision or resolution of the relevant organs of the OPCW or the United Nations, as well as any bilateral agreements concluded between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic. The current extension of the Tripartite Agreement remains in force up to and including 30 June 2023. As at the date of this report, the finalisation of the new extension of the Agreement is in progress.

27. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

28. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 4 February 2015 and 23 November 2015, respectively), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available

information relating to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

29. The FFM continues to fulfil its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic and other States Parties with regard to a number of incidents.

30. The FFM is preparing upcoming deployments and will report to the Council on the results of its work in due course.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic

31. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat established the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism did not issue a report.

32. The IIT is continuing its investigations in accordance with the Note entitled "Work of the Investigation and Identification Team Established by Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (Dated 27 June 2018)" (EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019) and will issue further reports in due course.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-94/DEC.2

33. In paragraph 5 of decision EC-94/DEC.2, the Council decided:

> to request, pursuant to paragraph 36 of Article VIII of the Convention, that the Syrian Arab Republic complete all of the following measures within 90 days of this decision in order to redress the situation:
>
> (a) declare to the Secretariat the facilities where the chemical weapons, including precursors, munitions, and devices, used in the 24, 25, and 30 March 2017 attacks were developed, produced, stockpiled, and operationally stored for delivery;
>
> (b) declare to the Secretariat all of the chemical weapons it currently possesses, including sarin, sarin precursors, and chlorine that is not intended for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as well as chemical weapons production facilities and other related facilities; and
>
> (c) resolve all of the outstanding issues regarding its initial declaration of its chemical weapons stockpile and programme.

34. At the end of the 90 days, the Syrian Arab Republic had not completed any of these measures.

35. With regard to the inspections mandated by paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2, the Secretariat is monitoring the current security situation and will inform the Syrian Arab Republic when it is prepared to deploy for this purpose.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Conference of the States Parties decision C-25/DEC.9

36. In paragraph 7 of decision C-25/DEC.9, the Conference decided, after careful review, and without prejudice to the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under the Convention, pursuant to subparagraph 21(k) of Article VIII and paragraph 2 of

Article XII of the Convention, to suspend several rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention.

37. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference decided, inter alia, that the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic suspended in accordance with paragraph 7 of decision C-25/DEC.9 are reinstated by the Conference once the Director-General has reported to the Council that the Syrian Arab Republic has completed all of the measures stipulated in paragraph 5 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the date of this report, the Syrian Arab Republic had not completed any of these measures.

38. The Secretariat will continue to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic with regard to their completion and will continue to report to the Council as mandated.

Supplementary resources

39. The Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which presently include the work of the DAT and the IIT, as well as the biannual inspections of the SSRC and the two sites identified in paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions and pledges to this fund stood at EUR 39 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Conclusion

40. The future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will focus on the work of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-81/DEC.4, and EC-83/DEC.5, including declaration-related issues; inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah sites of the SSRC; the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3; the implementation of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2; and the implementation of Conference decision C-25/DEC.9.