Federal Foreign Office on the publication of the OPCW IIT report on the use of chemical weapons in Marea, Syria, in September 2015

2024-02-23

A Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson issued the following statement today (23 February) on the publication of the fourth report by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' (

OPCW

) Investigation and Identification Team:

The German Government condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by the so-called Islamic State in the Syrian town of Marea in September 2015 which has been established following an independent investigation by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Germany will continue to work to ensure that those responsible for this appalling violation of international law are brought to justice. The report is an important contribution in the fight against impunity in connection with all chemical weapons attacks within and outside Syria.

The report also stresses the need to remain very vigilant about the use of chemical weapons by terrorists. That is why Germany actively championed the decision of 30 November 2023 by the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention which permanently strengthens the capabilities of the

OPCW

to investigate the use of chemical weapons by state and non-state players and which is aimed at halting transfers to Syria of chemicals potentially suitable for producing chemical weapons. This decision must now continue to be quickly implemented in light of the report.

The independent, non-partisan and expert work of

OPCW

staff is of the greatest importance.

Background information

On 22 February 2024, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (

OPCW

) published the fourth report on the use of chemical weapons in Syria by the Investigation and Identification Team – IIT.

The IIT was created in June 2018 at the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention aimed at identifying the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons against civilians and civilian targets in Syria under the

OPCW

. The first three IIT reports, presented in April 2020, April 2021 and January 2023, identified the Syrian air forces as being responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Ltamenah in March 2017, in Saraqib in February 2018 and in Duma in April 2018.

The report published by the

OPCW

Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in January 2022 concluded that toxic chemicals were weaponised in Marea on 1 September 2015. Today’s IIT report builds on that and concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that ammunition filled with sulfur mustard was deployed by Islamic State fighters on 1 September 2015 during hostilities in Marea.

On 30 November 2023 the

OPCW

Conference of States Parties adopted a further decision on Syria. The key elements are maintaining the

OPCW

’s investigative capabilities, transfer bans on chemicals and equipment to the regime and to terrorists in Syria, as well as greater cooperation in the fight against the use of chemical weapons by terrorists.

Link to the report:

https://www.opcw.org

Overview "Newsroom"

Source : https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/2645686-2645686