European External Action Service (EEAS)

Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare: Statement by High Representative/ Vice-President Josep Borrell

2024-11-27 · Brussels, Belgium · EEAS Press Team

No one should use chemical weapons, anywhere, at any time or under any circumstances. The use of chemical weapons is a violation of international law and can amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On the Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare, the European Union pays tribute to those who have died and suffered as a result of the use of chemical weapons.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has eradicated an entire category of weapons of mass destruction through verified destruction of declared stocks, making it the world's most successful disarmament treaty. Yet, despite the progress made, the re-emergence of chemical weapons continues to threaten international peace and security. We still witness the horrific consequences of these heinous weapons.

The use of riot control agents as a method of warfare is prohibited by the Convention. Yet, there is a growing number of reported use of these agents by the Russian Federation against Ukrainian soldiers. Russia continues deliberately attacking civilian industrial facilities risking the exposure of Ukrainian citizens to toxic chemicals.

The European Union supports national and international efforts to hold accountable those responsible for the use of these prohibited weapons in Syria and beyond, regardless of their position.

The global norm against chemical weapons must be enhanced and enforced. Those responsible will be held accountable.

Background

Despite progress made, we are still witness to horrific consequences of these heinous weapons. In Syria they have caused hundreds of victims, including children. Chemical weapons have also been used in Russia, the United Kingdom, Malaysia and Iraq.

The European Union is a strong supporter of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its implementing body, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

politically and financially. Since 2004, the EU has supported provided €48.5 million in voluntary contributions to support OPCW activities and operations.

Under its regime of restrictive measures dedicated to fighting the proliferation and use of chemical weapons and their precursors, the European Union has imposed restrictive measures on persons and entities in Russia linked to the Salisbury attack in 2018 and the poisoning of Mr Navalny in 2020. As regards Syria, the EU has imposed restrictive measures on an entity and persons responsible for development and use of chemical weapons, in particular for the attacks that took place in August 2013 in Ghouta, March 2017 in Ltamenah and 2018 in Douma. Moreover, the European Union continues its active participation in the Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/day-remembrance-all-victims-chemical-warfare-statement-high-representative-vice-president-josep-1_en