

Holding the Assad regime accountable for its repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria – UK Statement at the UN Security Council

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Speech

Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the UN Security Council meeting on Syria Chemical Weapons

From:

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I'd like to start by thanking the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention was an important milestone in international security, and we commend the OPCW's success in overseeing the Convention and verifying the destruction of 99% of declared stockpiles.

While almost all States Parties have met their obligations under the Convention, a few continue to develop, acquire, and deploy chemical weapons.

The Syrian regime continues to flout the terms of UNSCR 2118. It has ignored its obligations to cooperate fully with the OPCW to make progress on the outstanding issues on its chemical weapons declaration.

This month marks the anniversaries of chemical weapons attacks at Khan Shaykhun in 2017 and Douma in 2018. We are unwavering in our commitment to hold the Assad regime to account for its repeated uses of chemical weapons against its own people.

In Syria, the use of chemical weapons was both preceded and followed by disinformation. We are therefore concerned to see a similar pattern in Russian disinformation about chemical weapons in Ukraine. The use of chemical weapons in Ukraine would be a callous escalation, and we will hold any state which uses WMD to account.

There must be no impunity for any state that develops, acquires, or deploys chemical weapons anywhere under any circumstances.

With the entry into force of the Convention, the international community pledged to eliminate a class of weapons that inflicted appalling suffering in the last century. With this in mind, I welcome the Council's agreement on a press statement that reaffirms the objectives of the CWC. On its 25th Anniversary, we must collectively recommit to the Convention – it has saved countless lives.

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