

# Germany's contribution to the OPCW-UN mission in Syria

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09.01.2014 - Press release 

In response to a request from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the German Government has decided that Germany will make a substantial contribution towards the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons.

The German Government is willing and able to destroy the residuals generated by the irreversible neutralisation of chemical warfare agents from Syria, which are similar to industrial waste, in Germany.

Foreign Minister Steinmeier issued the following statement today (9 January):

“The destruction of chemical weapons could mark the first decisive step towards defusing the conflict in Syria. As, contrary to what many had expected, Syrian chemical weapons could be quickly identified, secured and removed, the international community has an obligation to ensure they are destroyed.

No-one who takes their international responsibility seriously can refuse to live up to this obligation. That also applies to our country, as we have fully developed technical facilities for destroying chemical substances. It is especially important that agreements are honoured for we are facing the next stage in difficult negotiations and it is essential that the reliability of the international community's pledges is beyond doubt.”

Defence Minister von der Leyen issued the following statement today (9 January):

“Advancing the peace process in Syria is an extraordinary international effort towards which many countries have already pledged their commitment. Germany has safe technology and many years of experience with the destruction of the residuals of chemical warfare agents. It makes sense for us to place our expertise at the disposal of the international community and thus make a valuable contribution towards the peace process.”

The practical implementation will be carried out in Munster, Lower Saxony, by GEKA, the state-owned company responsible for disposing of chemical warfare agents. GEKA works on behalf of the Federal Government. The Federal Ministry of Defence is the sole stakeholder. The substances, hydrolysates, are incinerated in a tried and tested process in line with all environmental standards.

Germany is thus continuing its active support for the work done by OPCW: Germany has to date made available 5 million euros for the OPCW Special Trust Fund for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons, provided further training for OPCW inspectors and flown them to Syria for inspections.

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