European External Action Service (EEAS)

Syria: Statement by the Spokesperson on the release of the fifth report of the OPCW investigation and identification team

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On 20 January 2026, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) issued a report that found Syrian Arab Air Force responsible for a chemical weapons attack in Kafr Zeita, Syrian Arab Republic on 1 October 2016. The report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a military helicopter released a cylinder which contained chlorine gas, injuring 35 named individuals and affecting dozens more.

The European Union strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone – be it a State or a non-State actor – anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances. It is a violation of international law and can amount to the most serious of international crimes - war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The EU recognises the positive role of the Syrian Transitional Authorities in facilitating the OPCW investigations. The OPCW Investigation and Identification Team’s professional reporting is an important contribution to efforts to end impunity for the use of chemical weapons. We stay committed to supporting the OPCW politically and financially with a view to ensuring full accountability for those responsible for these heinous crimes in Syria and beyond.

The European Union has imposed restrictive measures on Al Assad regime officials and scientists for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons. In light of the new report, the European Union is ready to consider introducing further measures as appropriate.

The European Union reiterates its full support to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and underlines the complementarity of its work with the United Nations. We have full confidence in the objectivity, impartiality and independence of the Organisation’s Technical Secretariat and its Investigation and Identification Team.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/syria-statement-spokesperson-release-fifth-report-opcw-investigation-and-identification-team_en