

Minister Nicholson Honours Ypres Centenary, Condemns Syria's Use of Chemical Weapons

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The Honourable Rob Nicholson, P.C., Q.C., M.P. for Niagara Falls, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement on the centenary of the use of chemical weapons during the Second Battle of Ypres in Belgium on April 22, 1915:

“A century ago, a new horror was unleashed on humanity when chlorine gas was released against Allied troops on the battlefields of Flanders, marking the first-ever large-scale use of chemical weapons. We are reminded that the use of chemical weapons is not only a historical fact but also a present reality.

“As recently as April 16, 2015, the United Nations Security Council heard graphic first-hand accounts of chlorine attacks on civilians in Syria. Canada deplores the Assad regime’s continued assaults on its citizens and has repeatedly condemned President Bashar al-Assad’s brutal actions.

“Canada is committed to honouring the memory of those who died as a result of chemical agents in the First World War—and of the thousands more who have succumbed to such weapons in the intervening century—by pushing relentlessly toward a world free from this scourge. The horrors of Ypres will be avoided only when every country—including the Assad regime’s Syria—has truly committed itself to the total elimination of chemical weapons.”

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