United Nations S/2022/181

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 March 2022

Original: English

Letter dated 4 March 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the 101st monthly report of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex).

The report, in which the activities of OPCW in implementing resolution 2118 (2013) and the relevant provisions of the OPCW Executive Council decisions in relation to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme are set out, covers the period from 24 January to 23 February 2022.

The Investigation and Identification Team continues its investigations into incidents in which the fact-finding mission determined that chemical weapons were used or likely used in the Syrian Arab Republic and will issue further reports in due course.

As I have stated previously, the use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is intolerable. Impunity for their use is equally unacceptable. It is imperative that those who have used chemical weapons be identified and held accountable. Unity in the Security Council is essential to achieve this urgent objective.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Please recycle

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled “Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme”, prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 24 January to 23 February 2022 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015), noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. The Council, at its Ninety-Fourth Session, adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-94/DEC.2, dated 9 July 2020). In paragraph 12 of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly report to the Council on the implementation of this decision and decide[d] also that the Director-General shall provide a copy of this decision and its associated reports by the Secretariat to all States Parties and to the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly through the United Nations Secretary-General".

6. The Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference") at its Twenty-Fifth Session adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic" (C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021). In paragraph 8 of this decision, the Conference decided that the Director-General shall

regularly report to the Council and States Parties on whether the Syrian Arab Republic has completed all of the measures contained in paragraph 5 of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2.

7. This, the one-hundred-and-first monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council and Conference decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 January to 23 February 2022.

Impact of COVID-19

8. As previously reported, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the Secretariat's ability to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat is maintaining its readiness for deployments, which are being conducted subject to the evolution of the pandemic. The travel restrictions notwithstanding, the Secretariat is continuing its mandated activities related to the Syrian chemical weapons programme and its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic in this regard.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

9. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 15 February 2022, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its ninety-ninth monthly report (EC-99/P/NAT.5, dated 15 February 2022) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

10. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

11. The Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"), paragraph 1 of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4, paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, and paragraph 5 of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2.

12. As reported previously, the Secretariat is still waiting to receive the declaration from the Syrian Arab Republic, requested on 21 October 2020, of all undeclared types and quantities of nerve agents produced and/or weaponised at one former CWPF that was declared as never having been used to produce and/or weaponise chemical warfare agents. The Secretariat is also expecting to receive further information and documentation from the Syrian Arab Republic, requested on 15 July 2021, regarding

the damage caused to a military facility that housed a declared former CWPF reportedly attacked on 8 June 2021. As at the date of this report, the Secretariat had not received any reply from the Syrian Arab Republic to these requests.

13. Since 30 April 2021, the Secretariat has been reaching out to the Syrian Arab Republic to schedule the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority in Damascus. This deployment has so far been delayed for nine months despite the extensive efforts of the Secretariat. This delay was initially caused by the absence of a response from the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequently due to the repeated refusals by the Syrian Arab Republic to issue an entry visa for one DAT expert, which is not in line with the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under paragraph 7 of Article VII of the Convention, paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), and corresponding Council decisions.

14. While the exchange of correspondence between the Syrian National Authority and the Secretariat on this matter continues, the Syrian Arab Republic has still not confirmed that all visas requested by the Secretariat will be issued. The Secretariat will continue to seek the opportunity to deploy the DAT to the Syrian Arab Republic subject to the issuing of visas to all DAT members as well as the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

15. Considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain unresolved, the Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention, Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-94/DEC.2, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The Secretariat will continue to engage with the Syrian National Authority regarding the remaining outstanding issues in its initial declaration and subsequent submissions and will continue to keep the Council updated regarding progress made in these activities.

16. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is continuing to assess conditions for the conduct of inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports. In doing so, the Secretariat is taking into account the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is planning for the conduct of the next rounds of inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in the course of 2022.

18. With regard to the detection of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical during the third round of inspections at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC in November 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information or explanations that would enable the Secretariat to close this issue.

Other activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

19. As previously reported, following an invitation extended on 24 June 2021 by the Director-General to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr Faisal Mekdad, to an in-person meeting, both parties have appointed officials in charge of the preparations. The Secretariat will keep the Council informed of further developments on this matter.

20. On 23 February 2022, the Secretariat conducted a briefing for States Parties regarding the status of the Secretariat's mandated activities pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

21. In its aforementioned note verbale to the Secretariat dated 9 July 2021, the Syrian National Authority also reported the destruction in the attack on the CWPF of, inter alia, two chlorine cylinders related to the chemical weapons incident that took place in Douma, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018. In its aforementioned reply dated 15 July 2021, the Secretariat additionally requested the Syrian Arab Republic to, inter alia, provide all relevant information regarding the unauthorised movement of the two cylinders and any remains of their destruction. As at the date of this report, the Secretariat had not received a response to this request. The Secretariat will keep the Council informed of further developments in this matter.

22. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide support to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement concluded between the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic. This agreement facilitates the Secretariat's mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic pertaining to the full elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and to any subsequent decision or resolution of the relevant organs of the OPCW or the United Nations, as well as any bilateral agreements concluded between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic. The current extension of the Tripartite Agreement remains in force up to and including 30 June 2022.

23. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

24. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 4 February 2015 and 23 November 2015, respectively), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

25. Following the FFM's investigation into the alleged incidents in Marea, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 1 and 3 September 2015, the Secretariat issued a report on these incidents, entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incidents of the Alleged Use of Chemicals as a Weapon in Marea, Syrian Arab Republic, on 1 and 3 September 2015" (S/2017/2022*, dated 24 January 2022).

26. Regarding the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon on 1 September 2015 in Marea, the Syrian Arab Republic, all information obtained and analysed by the FFM provides reasonable grounds to believe that a vesicant chemical substance from Schedule 1.A.04 (sulfur mustards) under the Convention was used as a weapon. The other incident occurred during the night of 3 September 2015 and the affected individuals displayed signs and symptoms similar to the casualties of the incident on 1 September 2015. As the casualties of the incident on 3 September 2015 were not available to be interviewed, the results of analysis of all available data obtained up until the issuance of this report did not allow the FFM to establish whether the chemicals were used as a weapon in the incident that took place in Marea, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 3 September 2015.

27. Following the FFM's investigation into the alleged incident in Kafr Zeita, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 1 October 2016, the Secretariat issued its report on this incident, entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the

Incident of the Alleged Use of Chemicals as a Weapon in Kafr Zeita, Syrian Arab Republic, 1 October 2016" (S/2020/2022, dated 31 January 2022).

28. Regarding the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon on 1 October 2016 in Kafr Zeita, the Syrian Arab Republic, all information obtained and analysed by the FFM provides reasonable grounds to believe that a chlorine cylinder was used as a weapon. The cylinder ruptured as a result of mechanical force and released a toxic irritant substance that affects the respiratory system and mucous membranes.

29. The Secretariat planned to deploy the FFM to the Syrian Arab Republic from 22 January to 4 February 2022 to collect information and conduct interviews regarding incidents in the Aleppo Governorate in 2016. Due to confirmed positive COVID-19 cases identified within the support team in Damascus, the deployment had to be postponed.

30. The FFM is continuing its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic and other States Parties with regard to a number of incidents.

31. The FFM is continuing to prepare upcoming deployments. The conduct of these deployments is subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. The FFM will report to the Council on the results of its work in due course.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic

32. Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018), adopted by the Conference at its Fourth Special Session, addresses, inter alia, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

33. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat established the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism did not issue a report.

34. The IIT is continuing its investigations in accordance with the Note entitled "Work of the Investigation and Identification Team Established by Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (Dated 27 June 2018)" (EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019) and will issue further reports in due course, subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-94/DEC.2

35. In paragraph 5 of decision EC-94/DEC.2, the Council decided:

> to request, pursuant to paragraph 36 of Article VIII of the Convention, that the Syrian Arab Republic complete all of the following measures within 90 days of this decision in order to redress the situation:
>
> (a) declare to the Secretariat the facilities where the chemical weapons, including precursors, munitions, and devices, used in the 24, 25, and 30 March 2017 attacks were developed, produced, stockpiled, and operationally stored for delivery;

(b) declare to the Secretariat all of the chemical weapons it currently possesses, including sarin, sarin precursors, and chlorine that is not intended for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as well as chemical weapons production facilities and other related facilities; and

(c) resolve all of the outstanding issues regarding its initial declaration of its chemical weapons stockpile and programme.

36. At the end of the 90 days, the Syrian Arab Republic had not completed any of these measures.

37. With regard to the inspections mandated by paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2, the Secretariat is monitoring the current security situation and will inform the Syrian Arab Republic when it is prepared to deploy for this purpose. The conduct of these inspections will also be subject to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat with respect to Conference decision C-25/DEC.9

38. In paragraph 7 of decision C-25/DEC.9, the Conference decided, after careful review, and without prejudice to the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under the Convention, pursuant to subparagraph 21(k) of Article VIII and paragraph 2 of Article XII of the Convention, to suspend several rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention.

39. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference decided, inter alia, that the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic suspended in accordance with paragraph 7 of decision C-25/DEC.9 are reinstated by the Conference once the Director-General has reported to the Council that the Syrian Arab Republic has completed all of the measures stipulated in paragraph 5 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the date of this report, the Syrian Arab Republic had not completed any of these measures.

40. The Secretariat will continue to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic with regard to their completion and will continue to report to the Council as mandated.

Supplementary resources

41. The Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which presently include the work of the DAT and the IIT, as well as the biannual inspections of the SSRC and the two sites identified in paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions and pledges to this fund stood at EUR 35.9 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Australia, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Conclusion

42. The future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will focus on the work of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah sites of the SSRC; the implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3; the implementation of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2; and the implementation of Conference decision C-25/DEC.9.