

Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs on the conclusion of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention

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Statement

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The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement:

“Canada is pleased that the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention adopted the draft decision entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.” This decision underscores the international community’s commitment to hold Syria to account for its possession and use of chemical weapons. The victims of the Syrian regime’s war crimes deserve to see those responsible held accountable for their heinous actions.

“Syria continues to violate the Chemical Weapons Convention [CWC] and terrorize its people by using toxic substances against them. The international community has demonstrated that this abhorrent behaviour has consequences. With the adoption of this decision, the Assad regime loses its voting rights at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons [OPCW] and can no longer hold offices at the OPCW, until it complies with the CWC.

“The decision’s importance is even more apparent following the conclusions of the OPCW’s Investigation and Identification Team [IIT] that there are reasonable grounds to believe the Syrian Arab Air Force perpetrated a chemical weapon attack with toxic chlorine gas on February 4, 2018, in Saraqib.

“The attack in Saraqib is the eighth case of chemical weapons use attributed to the Assad regime in five years. The use of chemical weapons is an abhorrent breach of international law, and the perpetrators of these crimes must face justice without delay.

“As a state party to the CWC, Syria has an obligation to fully and verifiably eliminate its chemical weapons program. Canada once again calls on the Assad regime to declare its entire supply of chemical weapons so that it may be verifiably destroyed, as required under the CWC.

“Canada commends the IIT for its work. We are a steadfast supporter of the OPCW and will continue to work with our partners to prevent the use of chemical weapons.”

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