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Security Council

Eighteenth year

Provisional

9994th meeting
Friday, 12 September 2025, 10.40 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Sangjin Kim	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark	Ms. Landi
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece	Mr. Stamatekos
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Pakistan	Mr. Jadoon
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Totangi
	Slovenia	Mrs. Košir
	Somalia	Mr. Ibrahim
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Quinn
	United States of America	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 27 August 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2025/536)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation co ncerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0928 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 27 August 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2025/536)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2025/536, which contains the text of a letter dated 27 August 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: I thank Council members for the opportunity to brief them once again on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Since the previous consideration of this matter by the Council, and consistent with established practice, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with counterparts in the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on activities related to resolution 2118 (2013). I also held a virtual meeting with His Excellency Ambassador Ibrahim Olabi a few days ago.

Since the Council's previous meeting on this matter (see S/PV.9930), the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic have continued to engage on how to address outstanding issues related to Syria's chemical weapons dossier. Given the significant challenges to overcome in these efforts, I welcome the remarkable progress that has been made since the Council's previous meeting.

As previously reported, since 2014, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has not been able to confirm that the declaration submitted by the previous Syrian authorities was accurate and complete, because of the insufficient and inaccurate information that it contained. A total of 26 outstanding issues were reported, of which 19 remain unresolved. The OPCW Technical Secretariat has reported that the substance of these issues is of serious concern, as it involves large quantities of potentially undeclared or unverified chemical warfare agents and chemical munitions.

In this month's report, the OPCW Technical Secretariat reported that in addition to the 26 declared chemical weapons-related sites, information made available to the OPCW suggests that there are more than 100 other sites that may have been involved in chemical weapons-related activities. As part of its work on this matter, the OPCW Technical Secretariat plans to visit all these locations, taking into account security and other relevant considerations.

Since March 2025, there have been four deployments of OPCW teams to the Syrian Arab Republic to consult with the relevant authorities and to visit declared and suspected chemical weapons sites — the first two, as previously reported, in March

and April and the most recent two in June and August. I am also encouraged to hear that further deployments are being prepared. However, I note that the most recent deployment, in August, was initially scheduled for 20 to 28 July. I am informed that the OPCW was forced to postpone this deployment as a result of air strikes carried out by Israel on 16 July targeting several sites in Damascus, including a building in which the OPCW teams had held several consultations with the relevant Syrian authorities and which was located in the direct vicinity of the hotel used by the OPCW teams during the OPCW missions in Syria.

I have been further informed that during the deployment that took place in April, the OPCW collected three samples at one of the visited locations. The OPCW has reported that the analysis of these samples conducted by OPCW-designated laboratories revealed indicators of nerve agents. This is a concerning finding, and the OPCW has shared the results with the Syrian authorities and intends to address the issue in subsequent deployments.

As has been previously reported, there are significant challenges ahead, and consistent support from the entire international community will be critical for the efforts to rid Syria of all chemical weapons. The OPCW Director-General has noted that the tasks ahead will likely be more complex than those carried out 11 years ago with the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons programme. I have been informed that the OPCW Technical Secretariat has been supporting and advising the Syrian Arab Republic and other States parties with regard to the plans for the destruction of any identified chemical weapons and related remnants. The OPCW Technical Secretariat issued a note on 24 July, which outlines the context for such destruction and also addresses the exceptional circumstances or conditions that may justify expedited in situ destruction and verification processes.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat remains committed to delivering on its mandate to verify the full implementation by the Syrian Arab Republic of all declaration requirements under the Chemical Weapons Convention, decisions by OPCW policymaking organs and of course Security Council resolutions. I would also reiterate that the commitment of the new authorities in Syria to fully and transparently cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat is commendable.

As I have previously emphasized, there is currently a critical opportunity to obtain long-overdue clarifications on the full extent and scope of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and to rid the country of all chemical weapons. I once again urge the members of the Council to unite and show leadership in providing the support that this unprecedented effort will require. The United Nations stands ready to support and will continue to do its part to uphold a norm against the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time.

The President: I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing. The United States welcomes the new Syrian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Ibrahim Olabi.

The United States also welcomes the progress that has been made by the Syrian Government and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) since December 2024. We urge the OPCW and Syria to redouble their efforts to locate and destroy remnants of the Al-Assad regime's chemical weapons programme. We also look forward to progress at the upcoming October OPCW Executive Council on the next steps towards the destruction of any chemical weapon remnants found in

Syria. And we can all agree that the OPCW and the Syrians supporting this important mission must be able to operate fully and safely on the ground.

We take note that sample results from the OPCW's April visit have revealed indicators of nerve agents. Although this does not come as a surprise, it is another urgent reminder that the OPCW mission in Syria is complex but critical. We must uncover the true scale and scope of the Al-Assad regime's chemical weapons programme to address any residual threats to regional and international security. As the Security Council, we must also ensure that all those responsible for the use of chemical weapons are held to account, in accordance with resolution 2118 (2013), adopted by the Council in 2013. Assessing, declaring and verifiably destroying any remnants of the Al-Assad regime's chemical weapons programme is an important task. The United States echoes the calls by the OPCW Director General and the Technical Secretariat for voluntary monetary and in-kind contributions to the Syrian mission.

We also urge Council members to adjust the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida sanctions regime under resolution 1267 (1999) to ensure that the OPCW and Member States can provide all necessary support for chemical weapons destruction in Syria. We urge all Council members to continue working with us on this critical matter until that work is done.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, for her briefing. We welcome the new Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations, Mr. Olabi, and the representative of Türkiye.

We carefully examined the most recent report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Fernando Arias (see S/2025/536). We note that the Technical Secretariat has been establishing incrementally closer working relations with the Syrian side. We also welcome Qatar's commitment to acting as a communication channel with Damascus and Doha's willingness to represent Syria in the OPCW until the appointment of a new Permanent Representative of Syria to that Organization.

For many years now, we have been discussing the need to promptly resolve the outstanding issues related to Syria's initial declaration under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), which, in general, would help to close the Syrian chemical file. All of this could have been done far earlier had the OPCW Technical Secretariat acted in good faith, as stipulated by its mandate and the provisions of the Convention. Unfortunately, however, for more than a decade, the OPCW has only been acting on political instructions, dragging the process on and on and artificially keeping the Syrian chemical file afloat as a lever of pressure vis-à-vis the former Syrian leadership. To that end, they violated the methodology for collecting evidence established by the CWC, fabricated evidence, drew conclusions that flew in the face of basic scientific laws and used false testimony from phony eyewitnesses. The international community observed all of this when the Technical Secretariat investigated the incidents in Saraqib of August 2016, in Lataminah of March 2017, in Khan Shaykhun of April 2017 and in Aleppo of November 2018.

In the light of this grim Technical Secretariat track record, we still have very serious doubts whether, after all these years, in a matter of just a few months, this body has miraculously recovered from its chronic deficits and will now fulfil its mandate conscientiously and in good faith. This is especially true given that there have been neither staffing nor methodological changes in the Technical Secretariat's approaches to its work. The establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) was steamrolled by Western States in violation of the CWC, and the fact

that the IIT now has complete freedom of action on the ground does not in any way whitewash or legitimize this body in our eyes. Rather, it gives rise to reasonable concerns that we will see a recurrence of the scandals that have surrounded the OPCW Technical Secretariat's investigations in the past.

On a separate note, we would like to recall the egregious falsifications in the report of the Fact-Finding Mission regarding the incident of alleged use of chemical weapons in Duma, Syria. As confirmed by various sources, including former OPCW inspectors themselves, the final version of the report was radically edited compared to the initial draft. Attempts by these inspectors to have the OPCW leadership investigate what transpired led nowhere. Moreover, they were persecuted for their quest for the truth.

Regardless of the political landscape, what remains a key problem is the OPCW's inability to perform its work effectively along with the fundamental unwillingness of the Technical Secretariat's leadership to rectify the original sin in the working methodology of the body, including regarding the violation of the chain of custody procedure. Nothing will help in such circumstances — neither the explicit willingness of Syria's transitional Government to engage constructively with the OPCW nor the desire of the international community to turn this page of Syrian history as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, the most recent report of OPCW Director General Arias only bears out this conclusion. The report maintained that the transfer of power to new authorities in the Syrian Arab Republic presents an opportunity for the Organization to obtain clarifications on the full extent and scope of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, which is completely at odds with the real situation on the ground, not to mention the fact that this goes beyond the framework of the technical mandate of the OPCW. Council members are perfectly aware of the fact that the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic remains highly volatile. The country is convulsed by ethnic and sectarian clashes, and part of the Syrian territory is entirely outside of the control of the transitional authorities in Damascus. Furthermore, Israeli strikes are continuing to target the Syrian Arab Republic, as a result of which many military and industrially significant facilities have been destroyed. Under these circumstances, one can hardly talk about the appropriate collection of new samples, nor about the chain of custody. All these questions, which arise for any objective observer, remain unanswered.

Against this backdrop, the Technical Secretariat's statements about the result of samples received during the April visit of the Declaration Assessment Team, which allegedly revealed indicators of substances containing a "nerve agent", as well as the need for inspections in 100 additional locations, with reference to information from certain OPCW States Parties, appears to be unsubstantiated, and this also suggests that this is nothing more than an attempt to pin responsibility on the former Syrian authorities, not an attempt to establish the truth. We believe that members of the Council should not condone such an approach.

In this connection, once again, we urge the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to draw conclusions from past mistakes, to focus on a thorough analysis of already existing material, which was compiled over previous years, and not to trot out new accusations without credible evidence. This will only further exacerbate the atmosphere of mistrust around the Syrian chemical dossier. The only possible way to resolve outstanding issues is to have an approach rooted in professionalism and objectivity by the Technical Secretariat, which needs to take into account the entire scope and complexity of the current domestic political situation in Syria, including the need to uphold the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the rebuilding of government institutions and the fight against terrorist threats.

Equally important is for the work of the Technical Secretariat not to undermine the fraught process of national reconciliation in the Syrian Arab Republic and for Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) not to morph into a tool for the settling of accounts. Otherwise, the prospects for stabilization in this friendly country are liable to be imperilled, which we — and, we hope, other members of the Council — wish to avoid. It is important now not to rock the boat but, through concerted efforts, to strive to help the Syrian people as they seek to surmount the challenges of the transitional period. This is precisely what the Council's efforts should focus on, both in the context of the chemical dossier and vis-à-vis other aspects of the Syrian resolution.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council plus (A3+), namely, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Somalia and my own country, Algeria.

We thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing. We also welcome the participation in this meeting of the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye.

At the outset, the A3+ reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We, the A3+, also condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances. We note with satisfaction the continued progress in the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), and we recognize the significant enhanced cooperation between Syria and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The visit by the Director-General to Damascus in February, the reorganization of the conduct of the Secretariat's activities through the Office of Special Missions in June and the signing of the agreement on privileges and immunities for OPCW personnel on 16 June are all emblematic of the improved cooperation between Syria and the OPCW.

We welcome the successful OPCW deployment in March, April and June, which was marked by unprecedented access, cooperation and the successful collection of new documents and samples, which were previously unrevealed.

The A3+ commend Qatar's continued instrumental role in representing Syrian interests before the OPCW. We also acknowledge the Syrian authorities' submission of a concept plan in July for the destruction and verification of remaining chemical weapons. We urge continued support by the international community to the Syrian authorities as they advance implementation of the plan.

In a related positive step, we welcome the lifting of comprehensive sanctions by major international partners and the renewed eligibility of the Syrian Arab Republic for support from international financial institutions. This development will be crucial for the country's reconstruction efforts. The A3+ support the ongoing work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Syrian authorities, in addressing the 19 outstanding issues involving quantities of potentially undeclared chemical warfare agents and munitions. We urge all parties to approach these outstanding issues with the utmost seriousness, working collaboratively and transparently to address the gaps and ensure full compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Furthermore, the A3+ acknowledge that more than 100 additional locations may have been involved in chemical weapons activities. The OPCW's comprehensive approach through the Office of Special Missions, in close collaboration with the Syrian authorities, represents an appropriate way to address this.

This progress is complicated by a deteriorating security situation. The A3+ are deeply concerned about the Israeli aggressions, including the air strikes of 16 July

targeting Damascus, which forced the postponement of OPCW deployment and undermined the ongoing efforts. We condemn all Israeli aggressions in the strongest terms and insist on an immediate halt to all aggressions against Syria's territory. Syria's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity must be respected, and civilians should not be put at risk.

The continued threats posed by Da'esh remain a significant concern. We stress the importance of preventing chemical weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

Finally, we, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Algeria, underline that sustainable progress on the elimination of chemical weapons requires, first, the immediate cessation of all military aggression against Syria; secondly, full and sustained cooperation between Syrian authorities and the OPCW; thirdly, adequate international funding and technical support for Syria; and fourthly, the protection of civilians and strict adherence to international humanitarian law.

We encourage continued dialogue and cooperation between Syria and the OPCW, with appropriate international support, to permanently close this file.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): We thank Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

We welcome the participation of the new Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and that of the Permanent Representative of Türkiye in this meeting.

Pakistan has always opposed and condemned the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. We consider the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to be a pillar of global arms control and the disarmament regime. We support continued efforts to achieve universal adherence to the CWC and its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation. Pakistan remains committed to advancing the objectives of the Convention and upholding the effectiveness and impartiality of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the protection of its verification mechanisms.

Pakistan supports the shared objective of the stabilization of Syria through an inclusive, Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political process, facilitated by the United Nations. We extend our support for Syria's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We remain concerned about various aspects of the situation in Syria, in particular the military occupation by Israel of parts of Syrian territory and its continuing strikes against various locations in Syria. Regrettably, Israeli military attacks have also impeded the technical work of the OPCW in Syria, in the discharge of its mandate. These reprehensible attacks and violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity must stop.

Pakistan welcomes the commitment of the Syrian authorities to fully implement the CWC, secure suspected chemical weapons sites and address all outstanding issues. In this respect, we particularly appreciate the Syrian authorities' positive engagement and cooperation with the OPCW to fulfil its mandate, addressing long-standing questions and ensuring unimpeded access, in order to enable independent and full verification by the OPCW, allowing for the elimination of suspected chemical weapons in Syria and any risks of further proliferation, in compliance with the CWC.

We also commend the engagement of the OPCW Director General with the Syrian authorities to implement the mandate entrusted to the OPCW. We welcome the deployment of the OPCW team to Syria to continue the necessary activities required to establish an OPCW presence in Syria, on an adaptive and sustained basis, and to conduct declaration-related activities. We support continuation of these important efforts in a transparent and equitable manner.

All concerned should seize the present opportunity to address outstanding issues in Syria, including those related to chemical weapons. We urge continued dialogue, cooperation and full compliance with the CWC and Security Council resolutions as a way forward to close the Syrian chemical weapons file as soon as possible.

Mrs. Košir (Slovenia): At the outset, I would like to thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her informative briefing today.

I welcome the representatives of Syria and Türkiye to the meeting.

Slovenia firmly condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances. We therefore reiterate the imperative of identifying and bringing to justice those responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria and elsewhere.

We take note of the information provided by the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the latest developments and we remain concerned about the numerous unresolved issues regarding the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

Syria needs international assistance to address its chemical weapons stockpiles. We are therefore encouraged by the ongoing collaboration between the Syrian Arab Republic interim authorities and the OPCW in the efforts to identify the remaining elements of its chemical weapons programme. This cooperation is already yielding visible results, as demonstrated by the recent identification of nerve agent indicators at one of the locations visited by the Declaration Assessment Team in April. Moreover, it now appears that the undeclared chemical weapons programme has been larger in scope than previously thought, with the OPCW now deciding to inspect more than 100 additional locations that may have been involved in chemical weapons-related activities, as we heard from the High Representative today.

It is therefore essential to establish a comprehensive picture of the chemical weapons programme developed in Syria, while at the same time ensuring the safety of OPCW personnel and their Syrian counterparts. With this in mind, Slovenia reaffirms its full support for Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, which is key for regional stability, and calls on Israel to respect the demilitarized zone and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces.

At the same time, we call on the Syrian interim authorities to maintain and consolidate cooperation with the OPCW in order to fulfil their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and to comply with the relevant OPCW decisions and Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm Slovenia's full support for the work of the OPCW. The Organization's work contributes towards achieving a future without the threat of chemical weapons. It is vital to strengthen the stability of Syria and the wider region. We stand ready to support all efforts that will enable the Syrian people to build the peaceful and secure future they both want and deserve.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our country thanks the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, for her briefing on the 143rd monthly report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on Syria (see S/2025/536).

We welcome the new representative of Syria, Ibrahim Olabi, and the representative of Türkiye, who distinguish us with their participation.

The situation of chemical weapons in Syria is inextricably linked to the ongoing political process. More than a decade after the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, its initial declaration remains incomplete. Significant gaps persist, and there is concrete evidence of possible undeclared sites

and activities. Therefore, we stress the urgency of moving towards an inclusive political transition, in line with resolution 2254 (2015). A robust political process that strengthens legitimate and effective governance is the only way to create the conditions necessary for moving forward in permanently eradicating the threat posed by chemical weapons.

In the report, we can see that the threat of the use of chemical weapons persists and that the international community must remain vigilant. The recent detection of neurotoxic agents in field samples should be a matter of alarm for everyone. The 19 fundamental unresolved issues, including the existence of potentially undeclared chemical substances and munitions pose an ongoing threat to regional security. This is why we call upon all national and international actors to refrain from jeopardizing the verification missions and allow the safe deployment of OPCW personnel to all sites, as required.

We recognize the commitment expressed by the interim Syrian authorities to cooperate with the OPCW through the signing of an agreement on the privileges and immunities of its personnel, as well as their willingness to receive missions and eradicate the remnants of the inherited chemical programme. However, it is essential that this commitment be translated into verifiable actions. The adoption by Syria of a conceptual plan for the destruction and verification of any remnants of the chemical programme is a positive step but is insufficient on its own.

We reiterate our support for the technical, rigorous and independent work carried out by OPCW personnel. Likewise, we appreciate the efforts of regional actors to that end, in particular those undertaken by the State of Qatar. We also support the relevant call by the OPCW Director-General for voluntary contributions, which are essential in order to maintain the momentum of operations, guarantee the safety of deployed personnel and ensure the continuity of on-site verification work and destruction.

The use of chemical weapons under any circumstances constitutes a violation of international law and a heinous crime that must never go unpunished. Panama urges the members of the Council to stand together in their condemnation and prevent these kinds of weapons from ever being used again in conflicts. We reaffirm our commitment to disarmament, justice for the victims and a Syria free of chemical weapons, which contributes to the preservation of international peace and security.

Ms. Quinn (United Kingdom): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her comprehensive briefing. I welcome the presence of Ambassador Olabi as the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and the presence of the representative of Türkiye.

After 10 years of obstruction and denial by the Al-Assad regime, we have a window of opportunity to end the threat of chemical weapons in Syria once and for all. We welcome the progress made by the new Syrian Government in delivering on its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013), as underlined by Minister for Foreign Affairs Al-Shaibani. We also welcome the recent deployments to Syria by the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The Director-General's report confirming the presence of a nerve agent found at a site undeclared by the Al-Assad regime affords us a deeper understanding of the serious nature and scope of the chemical weapons programme. Discoveries such as this underline the urgent need to maintain momentum. As High Representative Nakamitsu's briefing set out, the scale of the challenge means there is much more to do. We therefore call upon Syria and OPCW to accelerate efforts to identify, secure and verifiably destroy all remaining chemical weapons. We look forward to early

decisions by the OPCW Executive Council to establish a clear mandate for this work to proceed safely and expeditiously.

It is clear that the OPCW requires technical, financial and logistical assistance from the international community to accomplish this vital work. The United Kingdom continues to strongly support the work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. In July, we pledged $2.7 million in support of OPCW missions in Syria, in addition to the $1.1 million we had provided following the fall of the Al-Assad regime. We urge all Member States to step up support for Syria to eliminate these weapons.

Finally, the United Kingdom notes with concern that Israeli military actions have delayed OPCW deployments and risk undermining the security and stability of Syria and the wider region. Preserving evidence at chemical-weapons-related sites is essential to ensure accountability for both those who use these weapons and their supporters. We therefore urge Israel to de-escalate and avoid any further disruption to this critical work.

This latest report is another stark reminder of the importance of the Council continuing to support Syria and the OPCW, so that the new Syrian Government can meet its international obligations and move towards a safer and more secure future for all Syrians.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing. I welcome the new Permanent Representative of Syria and the representative of Türkiye at today's meeting.

As always, China firmly opposes the use of chemical weapons by any country, organization or individual under any circumstances, for any purpose. The use of chemical weapons is not to be tolerated at any time, anywhere. We hope for an early realization of a world free of chemical weapons.

I wish to make three points in that regard.

First, in addressing the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, dialogue and cooperation are essential. China has noted that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has continued to interact with the interim Syrian authorities and has recently made positive progress. We hope that both sides will maintain the momentum of cooperation and resolve the outstanding issues in a comprehensive and thorough manner. OPCW should remain committed to its technical nature, perform its duties strictly in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, provide State parties with detailed information on the facilities to be inspected in Syria, in a timely fashion, and ensure that the next steps are carried out in an impartial, transparent and secure manner. As a State party to the Convention, Syria has a responsibility to fulfil its obligations under the Convention in full.

Secondly, in addressing the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, we should take the counter-terrorism dimension into account. The spate of large-scale violent incidents in Syria highlights the serious threat posed by the terrorist forces entrenched in that country, which warrants heightened vigilance. We urge the interim Syrian authorities to take all measures to combat all terrorist organizations and individuals listed by the Security Council, including the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement. The destruction of chemical weapons should be carried out in a verifiable manner so as to prevent dangerous chemicals and chemical weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

Thirdly, to address the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, a safe and stable environment is necessary. Israel's attacks on Syria seriously violate international law, infringe upon Syria's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity and complicate the resolution of the chemical weapons issue in Syria. We call upon Israel to cease its military actions against Syria and withdraw immediately from the Syrian territory.

In closing, I wish to emphasize that the issue of chemical weapons in Syria is closely related to the political resolution of the Syria dossier. China expects the interim authorities of Syria to engage in extensive dialogue and consultations with all parties to bridge internal differences, advance an inclusive political transition and ensure that the rights of all Syrians are protected. We stand ready to work with all parties to promote a swift political transition in Syria and restore peace and stability.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, for her briefing to the Security Council. I also wish to extend a welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Syria, Mr. Ibrahim Olabi, and commend him for his presence among us today.

In December 2024, Syria embarked on a historic political transition. France has determined to support the new Syrian authorities in effecting a transition that is consonant with the principles of resolution 2254 (2015). Syria is confronting a multitude of challenges, such as intercommunal tensions, a fragile security situation entailing the ongoing threat posed by Da'esh and foreign interventions and the demanding task of building new institutions that are inclusive and robust.

This political transition also marks a historic opportunity to achieve the chemical disarmament of Syria, almost 12 years after it became a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). Bashar Al-Assad's regime pursued an offensive chemical programme, including after Syria had acceded to the CWC. In a number of instances, as confirmed by independent investigations, Bashar Al-Assad's regime used chemical weapons against its own population. Bashar Al-Assad's regime concealed entire swathes of its programme from teams from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The OPCW is still not in a position, at this point in time, to consider the Syrian Administration's declaration about its chemical programme as accurate and complete vis-à-vis the CWC's requirements.

We commend the new Syrian authorities for their stated desire to cooperate fully with the OPCW so as to settle outstanding issues surrounding the Syrian chemical programme and fully eliminate it. That formed part of the objectives set in the Paris statement on Syria of 13 February. That renewed desire for cooperation has been reflected this year by several deployments of OPCW teams to Syria, as pointed out by the High Representative. We welcome the fact that the teams tasked with investigating and identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons were hosted in Damascus for the first time.

The fight against impunity is crucial to delivering justice to the victims and to buttressing the norm prohibiting chemical weapons. France will continue to be a driving force in that regard, building on the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, which it launched in 2018.

A Herculean task remains. The OPCW estimates that it needs to inspect more than 100 undeclared sites that could have been involved in the chemical programme of Bashar Al-Assad's regime. Measures must be taken, as a matter of urgency, to secure, reliably assess and subsequently destroy the country's entire chemical weapons stockpiles and production capabilities. To that end, we encourage the Syrian authorities to continue their active cooperation with the teams of the OPCW's Office of Special Missions and to submit, as soon as possible, a plan for verified destruction. We are cognizant of the fact that the OPCW must carry out its work in a delicate security situation. In that connection, France is concerned about the risk of destabilization ensuing from the Israeli strikes that targeted one of the buildings of Syria's Ministry of Defence in July. Those strikes may hamper the smooth conduct of the OPCW's missions in the country.

The Council and the international community as a whole must now support efforts for the chemical disarmament of Syria. That disarmament will mark a watershed in Syria's reintegration into the international community. France is playing its full part in supporting the political transition in Syria and would like to see its multilateral efforts coordinated for optimal effect. The chemical disarmament of Syria will contribute to the goal of a world free from chemical weapons and, with it, to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Stamatekos (Greece): I would like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, for her briefing. I also welcome the participation of the new Permanent Representative of Syria in this meeting.

Greece remains concerned about the volatile security situation and the fragile political transition in Syria — a country with which we share long-standing historical and cultural ties. We fully support Syria's efforts to achieve progress and prosperity, to preserve its rich ethnic and religious diversity and to close all outstanding issues related to its protracted civil war, including the chemical weapons file.

I wish to reiterate Greece's full adherence to the principles and objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons by any State or non-State actor anywhere and under any circumstances, and we stress the need to hold all those who use such weapons accountable. I wish to highlight three points.

First, we welcome the most recent monthly reports of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The reports indicate that despite 26 declared chemical-weapons-related sites, information made available to the secretariat of the OPCW suggests that there are more than 100 additional locations that may have been involved in chemical-weapons-related activities. Greece fully supports the secretariat's efforts to verify the accuracy of this information, including through visits to all these locations. Moreover, the reports confirm a persistent lack of progress on 19 of the 26 outstanding issues that have been reported by the secretariat since 2014. These issues constitute a source of great concern, as they relate to large quantities of potentially undeclared or unverified chemical warfare agents and chemical munitions and must be addressed.

Secondly, Greece values the fact that the OPCW is carrying out its mandate impartially, professionally and in adherence to the highest international standards. Furthermore, we acknowledge the first steps made by the interim Syrian authorities to improve their cooperation with the OPCW's newly established Office of Special Missions, and we encourage the two parties to continue their close cooperation.

Thirdly, we call upon the interim Syrian authorities to take any possible measure in order to prevent any non-State actors from gaining access to chemical weapons. This development would have an impact on regional and global peace and security.

In conclusion, Greece reiterates its full support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, which must be fully respected by all. We also reaffirm the importance of upholding all relevant international agreements and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2118 (2013), and of preserving the international norm against any use of chemical weapons.

Ms. Landi (Denmark): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing, and I welcome the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to our meeting. I know that Ambassador Olabi has worked closely with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and we look forward to hearing from him. I would also like to welcome the representative of Türkiye to this meeting.

All of us around this table remember the Al-Assad regime's deplorable use of chemical weapons over the past decades. Al-Assad was responsible for the development of a secret chemical weapons programme and for the use of it, openly, to quell any opposition and attack innocent civilians. With this tragic history in mind, we acknowledge the enormity of the task at hand for the Syrian transitional Government. We therefore urge all actors to extend all technical and financial assistance to Syria and the OPCW in sharing this burden. As Denmark has stated before, it is not only in Syria's interest to eliminate all chemical weapons and uphold the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction — it is a common interest for all nations.

Turning to progress on this file, we are encouraged by the recent positive steps taken by the OPCW and the Syrian transitional Government. The constructive and close cooperation between the Syrian transitional Government and the OPCW is very welcome. The recent visits by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to Syria is also cause for optimism. We hope that the recently concluded agreement between Syria and the OPCW concerning immunities and freedom of movement in Syria can pave the way for more frequent and extensive visits. We are confident that the proposed destruction plan presented by Qatar to the OPCW this week will help to increase the momentum on this file.

In conclusion, and with these developments in mind, we reiterate our hope to make further progress towards concluding the chemical weapons file as rapidly as possible. At the same time, uncovering the full scope of the Syrian weapons programme and assuring accountability for perpetrators must take priority. We encourage the OPCW and the Syrian transitional Government to continue to work diligently towards these ends.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Let me begin by thanking High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her valuable briefing. I would also like to warmly welcome the new Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and the presence of the representative of Türkiye.

Let me share the following three points.

First, we urge all actors concerned to prioritize Damascus' full implementation of its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). We welcome the progress made between Syria and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) towards resolving the long-standing issues related to Syria's chemical weapons programme and look forward to their continued cooperation. We also take note of the findings that revealed indicators of nerve agents in the samples collected earlier this year. In this regard, we are gravely concerned that Israeli air strikes in July, as reported by the OPCW, targeted several sites in the direct vicinity of the location used by the Secretariat during its mission in Syria. Such air strikes, as the OPCW Director General raised his concern about last year, might not only create a risk of contamination but could also lead to the destruction of valuable evidence for investigations related to the past use of chemical weapons. In this connection, we urge Israel to refrain from actions that could impede Syria's full implementation of its CWC obligations, such as Monday's air strikes, which targeted Homs, Ladhiqiyah and Tadmur.

Secondly, the Security Council and the OPCW must spare no effort in holding perpetrators accountable for using chemical weapons against innocent civilians, regardless of their affiliations. Beyond the complete destruction of chemical weapons, broader accountability measures must be pursued as part of Syria's

political transition. In this connection, we reaffirm our support for the OPCW Syria team, including the Declaration Assessment Team, the Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team. The essential ongoing work of the OPCW Syria team should therefore continue until all chemical weapons in Syria are destroyed and the perpetrators that used them are identified. We oppose any attempts to undermine its value and legitimacy, and we also call on Syria to recommit to bringing all perpetrators to book.

Thirdly, we call on all Member States to consider providing voluntary contributions to the OPCW Syria team beyond 2026. As a Member State that has contributed financially to the OPCW Syria team this year, we are provided with some respite to finally see that the funding target has been met for this crucial file. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the OPCW, which painstakingly reprioritized its limited resources to meet the target. Yet, the watchdog's estimate for the following years gives us an enduring challenge to mobilize more financial resources to realize our common aspirations to eliminate all chemical weapons from Syria. We therefore call on all Member States to consider pledging additional voluntary contributions for the 2026–2027 cycle to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons in this war-torn country.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Olabi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, and your friendly country, the Republic of Korea, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September, and I wish you every success. I thank His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Panama for his efforts in conducting the work of the Council last month. I also thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her efforts, briefing and cooperation with the Syrian Arab Republic. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Türkiye today.

This is the first time that I have spoken in the Security Council on behalf of Syria. I am proud to represent the Syrian Arab Republic, which is working tirelessly to be a source of peace and prosperity in the region. After years of struggling by chemical weapons survivors — men and women — and those who are defending their rights — I was honoured to have been one of them — in order to make their voices heard in the Council, their struggle has enabled me to be the voice of a Government that is proud to represent them. It is a responsibility that I cherish. My colleagues working on this file in Damascus are witnesses and survivors of these weapons. They are determined to carry on their efforts to counter these weapons for the last time, with a view to eliminating them completely. They might need technical expertise and the necessary equipment, but they have the patience and courage to counter these weapons, until the day when Syria becomes free of their impact — the new Syria.

This year, 21 August marked the twelfth anniversary of the largest chemical weapons massacre in the past 30 years. It took place a few kilometres from the capital, Damascus. For the first time in 12 years, this year, the families of the victims and survivors, accompanied by representatives of the diaspora and civil society organizations who have worked with them, led by Syrian Government ministers, were able to commemorate the massacre from Damascus and show their grief for their loved ones after years of oppression, displacement, misinformation, intimidation and deprivation of their most basic rights to mourn and grieve for their loved ones. This year, during the commemoration of this sad anniversary, the survivors and the families of the victims were received in the presidential palace by His Excellency the

President of the Republic, who listened carefully to their demands and their misgivings and reassured them that the new Syria will no longer allow chemical weapons to be used against anyone, that Syria will spare no effort in ensuring that such crimes are not repeated and that the perpetrators will be brought to justice. The Syrian Arab Republic's ongoing efforts to safeguard the global non-proliferation regime and the prevention of the use of chemical weapons is matter of a national priority, based on a profound faith in the victims' right to remedy, justice, non-occurrence and truth.

In this context, the Syrian Arab Republic has continued its efforts this month in preparation for the fifth deployment in 2025 of the technical teams of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), in order to facilitate their access to sites to gather the required information. The fourth deployment of the technical teams of the OPCW, between 18 August and 1 September 2025, included visits to five sites suspected of hosting chemical weapons in the vicinity of Damascus and investigations into the chemical weapons programme under the Al-Assad regime are being conducted. This included meetings with the Syrian team to promote cooperation and coordination in order to look into possible scenarios for destroying these weapons by identifying the best way of proceeding. In addition, we are working to build the Syrian team's capabilities and increase the number of its members.

The Syrian Government concluded a landmark agreement on the privileges and immunities for the staff of the OPCW, taking into account the concerns of the Syrian Government, to ensure that the legal framework and mechanisms are in place to allow the OPCW to advance in its mission.

The Syrian Arab Republic is aware of the enormous challenges involved in assessing and destroying the chemical weapons programme of the Al-Assad era and we are actively addressing these challenges. The Al-Assad regime carried out this programme in the greatest secrecy and had set up a complex security structure aimed at getting around inspections and flouting the Chemical Weapons Convention. Therefore, great efforts and a lot of cooperation are now required among all parties concerned in order to obtain information.

The legacy of the Al-Assad regime era is not just limited to the chemical weapons programme and challenges related to economic recovery, such as the weakness of infrastructure and an economy exhausted by years of war. Syria also faces significant challenges, that must be addressed, posed by mines and remnants of war which are preventing access to military sites and making operations extremely complex, requiring a lot of preparation and precaution. These challenges demonstrate that we urgently need to launch the process for capacity-building and provide the necessary equipment for a weapons destruction programme, which requires international technical, technological and logistical support to ensure the safe assessment, transportation and destruction of those weapons within the necessary technical conditions.

With regards to the discovery of sarin gas sites and remnants, I am proud to have been part of the OPCW mission in the above-mentioned deployment. We would like to clarify that the site where the gas was found is an empty and abandoned site. We are very proud to have been able to discover that site because it had not been previously reported. The relevant samples were taken from the surrounding soil and sites, which means there was no stockpile in those areas. The behaviour of the Israeli entity, which has carried out targeted military strikes on the Syrian Arab territories that have destroyed a number of military positions and attacks on the headquarters of the Ministry of Defence and the headquarters of the General Staff in the centre of Damascus, and other buildings that were suspected of being used by the Al-Assad regime to store chemical weapons, and support by Israel for illegal armed groups — which are not only serious violations of the sovereignty, unity and

territorial integrity of Syria but also a flagrant violation of international law and United Nations resolutions — make it even more difficult to access these suspect sites, as is explained in OPCW reports.

Members of the Council are now seeing a new Syria, a Syria which many times and at the highest level and in many venues has demonstrated its political willingness, through genuine efforts on the ground and by providing the OPCW with all necessary resources and facilitation. In this regard, through the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the OPCW, we presented a conceptual plan for the destruction and verification of any remaining chemical weapons and other remnants of the Al-Assad era chemical weapons programme. We would like express our thanks to the brotherly State of Qatar for its efforts representing Syria, in the person of Ambassador Mutlaq bin Majid Al Qahtani, and we would also like to thank the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW for its remarkable work. Qatar and Syria have submitted, in an able manner, a draft resolution to the OPCW Executive Council, which can serve as a framework for the process for the destruction of the Al-Assad era chemical arsenal.

Despite the heavy legacy inherited by Syria from the Al-Assad regime and despite decades of repression, tyranny and war, and the unspeakable suffering brought about by issues such as the missing persons and the fight against drugs and terrorism, we will continue to resolutely proceed with rebuilding, in order to overcome this legacy, and we will spare no effort to tackle these issues, and moreover, to destroy the chemical weapons that were used against our defenceless people. This a matter that enjoys the utmost interest from the highest levels of decision-making centres in the State, which will turn it into a glimmer of hope in the history of Syria and an example to follow internationally.

The President: I now give the floor to the Representative of Türkiye.

Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye): I would also like to thank and appreciate High Representative Mrs. Nakamitsu for her comprehensive and informative briefing.

I also welcome the new Permanent Representative of the new Syria, Ambassador Olabi. His intervention touched me. He reminded us of the terrible years prior to the Syrian revolution, during which the former regime used chemical weapons against its own people, even in the agreed de-escalation zones, including eastern Ghutah, which is a suburb of Damascus. Those events always should be remembered, to avoid their repetition.

After years of obstruction by the former regime in Syria, the political situation since 8 December 2024 has opened a window of opportunity for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to establish a more effective working relationship in Syria. This new dynamic provides a basis to address long-standing issues related to Syria’s chemical weapons programme and advance sustained compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this context, we welcome the ongoing cooperation and engagement between the Syrian authorities and the OPCW. The agreement concluded in June between Syria and the OPCW on privileges and immunities of the Organization and its personnel constitutes an important step in facilitating the conduct of operations. By granting access to relevant sites and extending cooperation, the Syrian authorities have demonstrated a willingness to move forward on this file. Consequently, several deployments of the Declaration Assessment Team, the Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team have taken place since December 2024. We also take note of the concept plan prepared by the Syrian authorities for the destruction and verification of any remaining chemical weapons. This plan, which aims to enable the declaration and verified destruction of remaining stocks and former production facilities from the Al-Assad era, provides a constructive framework.

The key priorities remain the identification of all chemical weapons-related locations, the full and accurate declaration of Syria's chemical weapons inventory and the verifiable elimination of residual stocks. We are conscious that despite the determined efforts of the OPCW, the secretive nature of the former regime's programme and gaps in available documentation continue to pose significant challenges to this process. In parallel, additional difficulties come from Syria's lack of technical expertise, economic constraints, insufficient equipment, ongoing security threats from terrorist groups and Israeli air strikes. For these reasons, supporting Syria in terms of capacity-building, technical resources and security remains essential. The Syrian authorities, together with the Secretariat, will require significant financial, human and logistical support to ensure that the necessary conditions are in place. Türkiye stands ready to contribute to the training and capacity-building of Syrian experts and will continue to facilitate the work of OPCW missions in the field.

We must recall that Israel's continued attacks in Syria not only undermine the country's territorial integrity and unity but also impair Syria's ability to fulfil its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The unlawful attacks jeopardize the implementation of the OPCW mandate and disrupt the deployment of its experts on the ground, as was witnessed in July following Israeli strikes on the Syrian Ministry of Defence. Such attacks must cease.

We firmly believe that lifting the remaining sanctions on Syria is essential to facilitating the efforts of both the OPCW and the Syrian Government in identifying and eliminating any remaining chemical weapons. Türkiye supports all initiatives in this direction. Türkiye remains firmly committed to supporting genuine and verifiable steps towards the complete elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. We call on the international community to extend its support to the Syrian authorities and the OPCW in this critical endeavour. The opportunity to make Syria safer, in the region and beyond, is within our reach.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.