

Secretary-General's remarks upon receiving final report of the UN Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria

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Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As you just saw, I have now received the final report of the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the use of Chemical Weapons in Syria from the Head of the Mission, Professor Åke Sellström.

He is accompanied by his team leaders from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the World Health Organization.

I have not read the report, but will do so immediately after this briefing.

The report will be posted shortly on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. My Spokesperson will ensure the link is sent and tweeted as soon as possible.

Tomorrow afternoon, I will brief the General Assembly, and on Monday I will brief the Security Council.

I know you will have many questions. I encourage you to first read the report. After I have briefed the Assembly, my High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Under-Secretary-General Angela Kane, along with Professor Sellstrom and the team leaders, Mr. Scott Cairns from the OPCW and Dr. Maurizio Barbeschi from the WHO, will brief the press.

I again commend the team of experts led by Professor Sellström for their important and courageous work. They have carried out their tasks with the highest degree of professionalism, and did so in the face of many dangers.

Much has happened since the first allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria in March of this year. The Syrian Government acknowledged that it possessed chemical weapons and subsequently joined the Chemical Weapons Convention. An OPCW-UN Joint Mission was established and continues to oversee the timely elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme in the safest and most secure manner possible.

The use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of international law and an affront to our shared humanity. We need to remain vigilant to ensure that these awful weapons are eliminated, not only in Syria, but everywhere.

I thank you.

