European External Action Service (EEAS)

Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare: Statement by High Representative/ Vice-President Josep Borrell

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On this day, the European Union commemorates those who have died and suffered as a result of the use of chemical weapons.

The prohibition of chemical weapons is the global norm today. Since the entry in force of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, almost 99% of chemical weapon stockpiles declared by possessor States have been verifiably destroyed.

However, chemical weapons remain a serious threat to international peace and security. No one should make use of chemical weapons, be it a State or a non-State actor, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances.

These heinous weapons have been used in Syria, causing hundreds of victims, including children. In August last year, a toxic nerve agent “Novichok” was used in the assassination attempt on the Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny in the territory of the Russian Federation. They have also been used in the United Kingdom, Malaysia and Iraq.

Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must and will be held accountable. We will not shy away for bringing them to justice.

We will continue supporting to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) professionally, independently and impartially.

Our fight will not cease until we bring an end to the use of chemical weapons.

Background

Under its regime of restrictive measures dedicated to fighting the proliferation and use of chemical weapons and their precursors, the European Union has imposed restrictive measures on persons and entities in Russia linked to the Salisbury attack in 2018 and the poisoning of Alexei Navalny in 2020. In Syria, the EU has imposed restrictive measures on an entity and persons responsible for development and use of chemical weapons, in particular for the attacks that took place in August 2013 in Ghouta, March 2017 in Ltamenah and 2018 in Douma.

The EU is a strong and consistent supporter of the OPCW, both politically and financially. It currently provides over €15 million in support of the organisation under its Common Foreign and Security Policy in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The European Union continues its active participation in the Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/day-remembrance-all-victims-chemical-warfare-statement-high-representative-vice-president-josep_en