



Investigation and Identification Team (IIT)

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' (OPCW) Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) is responsible for identifying the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The IIT identifies and reports on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) has not identified the perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria.

Mandate

Under the decision of the Conference of the States Parties (/about/conference-states-parties) titled Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use (C-SS-4/DEC.3) (/documents/2018/06/c-ss-4dec3/decision-addressing-threat-chemical-weapons-use) dated 27 June 2018, the IIT is mandated to investigate cases where the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria has determined that the use or likely use of chemical weapons has occurred. The IIT is responsible for identifying individuals or entities directly or indirectly involved in such use, by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons.

The IIT will not investigate a case for which the OPCW-UN Joint Mechanism, whose mandate expired in 2017, has already identified the perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria.

Composition and Authority

The IIT works under a Coordinator appointed by the Director-General. The Coordinator is Mr Santiago Oñate-Laborde. The IIT includes experienced investigators and analysts with relevant qualifications and experience in complex investigations, analysis and forensics; an expert in information systems; and a legal adviser recruited as staff members of the Technical Secretariat.

Other Technical Secretariat staff and external experts provide further support. Overall, the IIT includes personnel from all geographical groups and the gender balance is 55% female and 45% male.

The IIT is part of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and functions under the authority of the OPCW Director-General.

Difference between JIM and IIT

The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2235 (2015) on 7 August 2015, condemning any use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic, and expressing determination to identify and hold accountable those responsible for such acts. The resolution established the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), as a sub-organ of the UN Security Council, to identify the perpetrators of the chemical weapon attacks confirmed by the Fact-Finding Mission. The JIM presented its reports to the Security Council, and informed the OPCW. The JIM's mandate expired in November 2017.

The JIM's mandate was to identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups or governments who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic where the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) determined that a specific incident in the Syrian Arab Republic involved or likely involved the use of chemicals as weapons.

On 27 June 2018, the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention adopted the decision entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3). This decision reaffirmed that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable and mandated the OPCW Technical Secretariat to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic where the FFM determined that use or likely use occurred, and for which the JIM had not issued a report. It also decided that the Secretariat would provide regular reports on its investigations to the OPCW Executive Council and to the United Nations Secretary-General, for their consideration.

The Technical Secretariat therefore established the Investigation and Identification Team with the purpose of identifying, in compliance with C-SS-4/DEC.3, perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The IIT is an integral part of the Secretariat and functions under the authority of the Director-General. The IIT's investigations began in June 2019.

The IIT is therefore tasked with identifying individuals or entities directly or indirectly involved in the use of chemical weapons in Syria, by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons. Paragraph 12 of C-SS-4/DEC.3 further requires the IIT to preserve and provide information to the investigation mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016) (IIIM), as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations.

Pursuant to paragraph 7 of Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, each State Party undertakes to cooperate with the Organisation in the exercise of all its functions and in particular to provide assistance to the Technical Secretariat.

Findings

The decision of the Conference of the States Parties titled Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use (C-SS-4/DEC.3) dated 27 June 2018, requires the Technical Secretariat to provide regular reports on its investigations to the Executive Council and to the United Nations Secretary-General for their consideration.

The IIT is further required to preserve and provide information to the investigation mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 71/248 (2016) (<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/462/01/pdf/N1646201.pdf?OpenElement>) [International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM)], as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations. The IIT, therefore, endeavours to compile its records and findings in a manner suitable also for future use by the IIIM or other relevant investigatory entities.

Key Information

- Full text of the Conference of States Parties decision titled Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use (C-SS-4/DEC.3), which led to the creation of the IIT.
- Further information on the IIT's approach and methodology can be found in the Technical Secretariat's notes to the Executive Council of 28 June 2019 (EC-91/S/3) and 3 October 2019 (EC-92/S/8).
- OPCW Activities in Syria
- OPCW Declarations Assessment Team
- OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM)
- OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism



Does the IIT only work on incidents of chemical weapons use in Syria?

The IIT was established to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in specific incidents in Syria.

However, with a view to strengthening implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Conference of the States Parties in its decision of 27 June 2018 also decided that the OPCW Director-General, if requested by a State Party investigating a possible chemical weapons use on its territory, can provide the OPCW's technical expertise to identify those who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons. To this end, experience and know-how of the IIT will be transferred to relevant parts of the Secretariat to enable it to provide adequate assistance to States Parties, upon request.



Fact-Finding Mission (FFM)

In response to persistent allegations of chemical weapon attacks in Syria, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (/fact-finding-mission) was set up in 2014 "to establish facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals, reportedly chlorine, for hostile purposes in the Syrian Arab Republic". The FFM's mandate is to investigate whether chemical weapons were used, but it does not include the identification of perpetrators of chemical weapons use.

IIT Reports

First Report of the IIT (/iit/first-report-iit)

Dated 8 April 2020

The first report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team focuses on the incidents in Ltamenah, Syrian Arab Republic on 24, 25, and 30 March 2017.

Report and Statements

Document Symbol	Title
	IIT Coordinator's Remarks on the First Report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020/04/IIT%20Coordinator%27s%20Remarks%
S/1867/2020	First Report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) Pursuant to Paragraph 10 of Decis Ltamenah (Syrian Arab Republic) 24, 25, and 30 March 2017 (https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/

Document Symbol	Title
	Director-General's Statement on the First Report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021/04/IIT%20Coordinator%27s%20Remarks%20on%20the%20First%20Report%20by%20IIT%208%20April%202020.pdf)

National Statements (/iit/first-report-iit)

Second Report of the IIT (/iit/second-report-iit)

Dated 12 April 2021

The second report of the IIT sets out the findings of the investigations conducted in the period between April 2020 and March 2021, focusing on the incident in Saraqib, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 4 February 2018.

Report and Statements

Document Symbol	Title
	IIT Coordinator's Remarks on the Second Report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021/04/IIT%20Coordinator%27s%20Remarks%20on%20the%20Second%20Report%20by%20the%20OPCW%20Investigation%20and%20Identification%20Team.pdf)
S/1943/2021	Note by the Technical Secretariat: Second Report by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team P Chemical Weapons Use" Saraqib (Syrian Arab Republic) – 4 February 2018 (https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021/04/IIT%20Coordinator%27s%20Remarks%20on%20the%20Second%20Report%20by%20the%20OPCW%20Investigation%20and%20Identification%20Team.pdf)

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