

Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare

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Press Statement
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On this remembrance day, we recall the agony of hundreds of innocent civilians who suffocated to death as Assad's militias unleashed lethal chemicals across Syria. We reflect on the constant fear hundreds of thousands of civilians live with in Syria; fear that Assad's militias might use these horrific weapons once again, and that these civilians could face the same agonizing death they watched their neighbours, friends, or family experience.

Although the Assad regime was forced to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013, and its declared chemical arsenal has been since shipped out of the country and most of it destroyed, its forces continue to deploy chlorine as a weapons of war.

The OPCW Fact Finding Mission maintains that chlorine attacks have taken place in Syria on multiple occasions since 2013. The FFM, however, needs to be able to identify the perpetrators of those attacks because without attribution and consequent accountability, these heinous crimes will not only continue but also escalate.

It is also vital that the international community take immediate steps to protect civilians from further chemical, as well as indiscriminate conventional attacks and ensure unfettered humanitarian access to hundreds of thousands in dire need inside Syria. The establishment of a no-fly zone can achieve this, as it can save lives by preventing indiscriminate attacks including chemical ones; alleviate the suffering of the population by allowing free access to much needed aid; and create a space for refugees to return to their homes.