

# Statement by Foreign Affairs Minister on 20th anniversary of Chemical Weapons Convention

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**From: Global Affairs Canada**

## Statements

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The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement:

“When the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force, 20 years ago today, the international community was united in denouncing the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstance.

“Over the past two decades, 192 countries have joined the convention. In doing so, each agreed to never develop, produce, acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, and committed to destroying all of them.

“Unfortunately, the ongoing use of chemical weapons in Syria reminds us that additional work remains if the international community is to eliminate these weapons. Following the Syrian regime’s recent attack against its own people, Canada imposed sanctions on five entities and 17 high-ranking individuals in the Assad regime linked to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. As the prime minister said earlier this month, this attack is a war crime.

“Canada is among the largest voluntary contributors to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons [OPCW], charged with implementing the convention. Through its Weapons of Mass Destruction Threat Reduction Program, Canada has provided over \$23 million to the OPCW since 2012 to help destroy chemical weapons in Libya, Iraq and Syria and to investigate allegations of chemical weapons use in the Syrian conflict.

“As Canada joins the international community to mark this important anniversary, we firmly restate our support for the OPCW’s tireless work to rid the world of chemical weapons. We commend the OPCW’s courageous and highly skilled inspectors for their invaluable work. We also call on the four remaining states outside the convention to join without delay.

“Most importantly, today we honour the memory of all the innocent children, women and men killed in chemical attacks. Today, and every day, we pledge to do everything we can to eradicate this weapon from our earth.”

## Quick facts

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- The OPCW is the only multilateral institution charged with eradicating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. The organization inspects selected industrial sites and research facilities around the world to ensure they are not used for clandestine production of chemical weapons.
- To date, the OPCW has verified the elimination of 95 percent of the world's declared chemical weapons. The organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 for its achievements.
- Canada's Weapons of Mass Destruction Threat Reduction Program is housed within Global Affairs Canada. It was established in 2002 as Canada's contribution to the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which aims to reduce the threat posed by the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons, materials and expertise.

## Associated links

[Canada adds Syrian officials to sanctions list](#)

[Canada announces new sanctions against Syrian leadership with links to chemical weapons](#)

[The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#)

## Contacts

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