

Proof of chemical weapons use in Syria should be met with 'meaningful response,' UN disarmament chief

5 February 2018 – Evidence of the use, or likely use, of banned chemical weapons in Syria should be met with a “meaningful response” within the Security Council, the United Nations disarmament affairs chief said on Monday.

UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu was [briefing](#) the Council on the work being undertaken by the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact Finding Mission (FFM) to look into all allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

“New reports by the FFM are pending. Should they conclude that there has been the use, or likely use, of chemical weapons in any of these alleged incidents, our obligation to enact a meaningful response will be further intensified.”

She said that the complete destruction of the Government’s 27 above-ground facilities should be completed within two months, and added that the FFM was due to submit a report “very soon.”

The majority of allegations involve the use of chlorine gas.

Meanwhile, allegations of chemical weapon use were continuing, she said, “including only this past weekend in the town of Saraqeb.”

According to news reports, nine people have been treated with breathing problems, after a bomb believed to be filled with the toxic gas was dropped on the opposition-held town, in Idlib Governorate.

High Representative Nakamitsu said that the situation made it “abundantly clear our continuing and collective responsibility to ensure that those responsible are held to account.” She said that another FFM team has been looking into allegations of the use of chemical weapons by other warring parties, brought to their attention by the Syrian government. She said its report was pending.

Ms. Nakamitsu said that should any of the reports conclude that there had been “the use, or likely use, of chemical weapons in any of these alleged incidents, our obligation to enact a meaningful response will be further intensified.”

“It is my hope, and the hope of the Secretary-General, that such a response will favour unity, not impunity,” she added.

In November last year, the Security Council failed to adopt a resolution to renew the mandate of an international panel investigating the use of chemical

weapons in Syria, due to the use of the veto by permanent member, Russia.

Ms. Nakamitsu, also the head of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), told the Security Council that work still remains to be done to fully implement Council resolution 2118 as well as for the international community to have "shared confidence" that the Syria's chemical weapons programme has been fully eliminated.