

96th session of the Executive Council of the OPCW

Ambassador Vásquez Gómez, Mr Chair, the United Kingdom would like to underline again our thanks to you and the Director-General, for enabling the Executive Council to convene in a safe way during the on-going pandemic.

Mr Chair,

Next week will mark the tenth anniversary of the start of the conflict in Syria. The United Kingdom deplores the use of chemical weapons which have been a devastating feature of the Syrian conflict. The recent UN Commission of Inquiry report documented 38 separate instances of the use of chemical weapons, of which 32 met its standard of proof for attribution to the Syrian regime. The UK calls on all States Parties to condemn the appalling chemical weapons attacks which have taken place in Syria.

The Syrian regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons against the Syrian people. Such acts can have no justification. Almost a year has passed since Syria was found to have used chemical weapons in three separate attacks in Ltamenah in 2017. In response, last July, the Executive Council clearly set out the steps required for Syria to come into compliance with the Convention. The Syrian regime has failed either to take the necessary steps, or to cooperate with the Council.

Syria's blatant disregard for its obligations under the terms of Convention is a matter of grave concern for all States Parties. The Conference of States Parties must now address Syria's breaches of international law. The United Kingdom commends the draft Decision text on next steps, tabled by France, and calls on all States Parties to support it.

Mr Chair,

It is appalling that we saw chemical weapons used again in 2020 when Alexey Navalny was poisoned with a nerve agent from the Novichok group in Russia. We thank the Director-General for publishing the correspondence between the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and the Technical Secretariat regarding the technical assistance visit requested by Russia in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 38(e) of the Convention. The United Kingdom benefited from such technical assistance visits in 2018, having swiftly and fully complied with the standard requirements to enable such visits to take place. It is deeply regrettable that the Russian Federation has apparently cancelled its request for technical assistance and has still to provide a coherent explanation of events.

Russia must account to this organisation for the use of a chemical weapon on its territory. There can be no impunity and those responsible must be held to account.

Mr Chair,

COVID-19 continues to bring real challenges to delivering the wider work of the OPCW, including capacity building activities and industry inspections. We recognise the adaptations that the Technical Secretariat has had to make and are pleased to see successful innovations in terms of delivering more training and other activities remotely. It is imperative that we take as many positives as we can from this experience and that the Technical Secretariat continues to adapt and evolve. The United Kingdom stands ready to support.

Mr Chair,

It is very encouraging to see that the budget for the Chem Tech Centre, to which the United Kingdom has contributed over £1 million, is now nearly fully funded. As current Chair of the Global Partnership we are very pleased that the membership has made such a significant contribution towards the costs of the project and we are keen to encourage further support for the OPCW from the Global Partnership.

With the transition to biennial budgeting now underway, the Chem Tech Centre project accelerating and planned destruction efforts close to fruition it is important that we look ahead. The United Kingdom is ready to work with all OPCW members and the Director-General to lay out a clear strategic vision for the future of the OPCW; and ensure a world truly free from the horrors of chemical weapons.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

[Analysis Function Events](#)

Published 10 March 2021

Last updated 28 April 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 28 April 2022

Full calendar of live events for Analysis in Government Month

2. 20 April 2022

New events from the Office for National Statistics.

3. 8 April 2022

GeoPlace conference

4. 4 March 2022

Events calendar updated for March and April.

5. 23 February 2022

New Leaders in analysis seminar.

6. 23 February 2022

New webinars added

7. 10 February 2022

New event added.

8. 3 February 2022

New events added for February 2022.

9. 7 January 2022

Data Science Accelerator programme seminar added.

10. 21 December 2021

New event added for January 2022.

11. 3 December 2021

New events added for December 2021 and for early 2022.

12. 18 October 2021

New seminar added.

13. 14 October 2021

New Leaders in Analysis event added.

14. 1 October 2021

AF Events updated for October.

15. 2 September 2021

New event added.

16. 26 August 2021

New events added.

17. 9 August 2021

New events added for August and September 2021

18. 27 July 2021

New training events in November added

19. 21 July 2021

New event added – Seminar 2 in the Actionable Insights series

20. 7 July 2021

New event added.

21. 6 July 2021

Updated events list for July 2021.

22. 10 March 2021

First published.

[New analysis of lateral flow tests shows specificity of at least 99.9%](#)

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[Readout – Senior EU delegation representative summoned to the FCDO](#)

News story

A senior representative of the EU's delegation to the UK was summoned to the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office this morning.



An FCDO Spokesperson said:

This morning a senior representative of the EU's delegation to the UK was summoned to a meeting with the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office to discuss the issue of incorrect assertions in recent EU communications.

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[New UK Government Covid testing centre opens in Glasgow Govan](#)

The UK Government has today, Wednesday 10 March, opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre as planned at Ibrox Football Centre in Glasgow Govan (G51 2XP).

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of eight drive through sites, 34 walk-through sites, 42 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all COVID testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

Tests must be booked in advance at: [NHS Inform](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book at test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste).

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

To respond to the coronavirus, we have built a major testing and tracing system from scratch. We are constantly working to expand and improve it with new technologies and innovations so everyone with symptoms can get a test.

New walk-in sites like this one makes it even easier to get a test no matter where you live. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted to protect others and stop the spread of the virus.

Baroness Dido Harding, Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, said:

Walk-through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand our testing network across the UK which now has the capacity to process more than 700,000 tests a day. We will continue to expand capacity to improve test turnaround times and push forward testing innovations to make sure anyone who needs a test can get one.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste, and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said

The UK Government is doing everything it can to support people in all parts of the UK through the pandemic.

Testing continues to play an important role how we manage the virus alongside the roll out of vaccines, helping to identify local outbreaks, slow down the rate of transmission and protect communities. I would like to thank the public for continuing to do the right thing and come forward to be tested when they display symptoms.

The UK Government continues to provide the bulk of testing in Scotland, with this new walk-through centre in Glasgow just the latest in our extensive network. We have also secured and paid for millions of doses of the Pfizer and Oxford vaccines for all parts of the UK.

Hope is on the horizon, but we can't let up on our efforts to contain the virus.

Dr Linda De Caestecker, Director for Public Health at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, said:

We'd like to thank all of the staff involved in setting up and operating testing sites across NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. We welcome the addition of another testing centre to support this existing network. Making testing centres local and easy to access is a very important part of helping us to control and minimise the spread of the virus across our communities.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Glasgow, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.