

# Until Syria gives proper assurances to the international community, we must assume it continues to hold chemical weapons

Thank you President, and thank you to the High Representative for the very helpful briefing.

President, Syria has had nine years to come into compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. But since its accession, it has repeatedly and categorically failed to provide the OPCW with a complete account of its chemical weapons programme. And as we know, the Syrian regime has been independently found responsible for at least 8 chemical weapons attacks by UN and OPCW independent investigations – attacks on its own people.

Syria has failed to assure the OPCW, or this Council, that it is today abiding by its commitments under resolution 2118 and as a state party to the Chemical Weapons Convention

There is understandable frustration in the Council about the lack of progress, but we must see this for what it is. The problem here is not how many meetings this Council has. The problem is the behaviour of the Syrian regime in breach of core international laws, including resolutions of this Council. And the problem is systematic disinformation from Syria and Russia in an effort to obscure this behaviour and to avoid accountability. Including deeply irresponsible attempts to attack the OPCW.

We heard from the High Representative today the risks of the erosion of the taboo against using chemical weapons. The OPCW is responsible for preventing the spread of chemical weapons. It is an expert and highly professional organisation, and it is in all of our interests to prevent it from being degraded by disinformation.

President, until Syria gives proper assurances to the international community, we must assume that Syria continues to hold chemical weapons. And given its track record, we must assume that the regime remains willing to use them.

So, it is up to members of this Council to maintain the pressure to resolve this ongoing threat to international peace and security.

Thank you.