

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
On “The situation in the Middle East – Syria / chemical”
Before the United Nations Security Council
New York, 5 November 2020

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful,

Madam President,

I would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

Iran attaches great importance to the full, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and underlines the need for upholding the authority, credibility and legitimacy of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its Technical Secretariat.

As a major victim of chemical weapons in contemporary history, Iran condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Every effort should be made to prevent any use of these horrific weapons.

These objectives, however, can be realized only if all available tools are applied genuinely, professionally and, above all, without politicization or discrimination of any kind.

Nevertheless, unfortunately, what we continue to observe here in the Council and in the OPCW in the past several years is that a group of Member States has chosen to systematically abuse the relevant process in order to advance their own politically motivated objectives at any price whatsoever. Citing a series of unsubstantiated allegations, they are abusing these bodies against the Syrian Government and ignoring the progress achieved so far by that country in the implementation of its obligations.

The fact is that, in her final report to the Council in 2014, the head of the Joint Mission to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria confirmed that Syria had fulfilled all its commitments and that its entire chemical stockpiles had been destroyed. This was confirmed later by the OPCW itself.

Up to now, Syria has provided the OPCW with 83 monthly reports and large amounts of information, and in a letter dated 4 November 2020 to the OPCW Director General, declared its commitment to continue to work with the Technical Secretariat to resolve outstanding issues as soon as possible — the latest example being the recent holding of the twenty-third round of consultations between the Syria and the Declaration Evaluation Team to resolve the pending issues in Syria’s initial declaration.

Despite such cooperation by Syria, some Western countries are pursuing an unproductive policy here in the Council and in the OPCW, resulting only in division in both and the erosion of their legitimacy and credibility. Furthermore, it has weakened professionalism and consensual decision-making process in the OPCW, adversely affecting the efforts for the full and effective realization of the very purpose of the CWC, namely, the elimination of chemical weapons, which is yet to be realized due to the blatant failure by the United States, as the sole major State party that possesses them, to destroy its chemical weapons.

The credibility of the OPCW is at stake. Every effort must be made to restore its authority and promote the full and non-discriminatory implementation of the CWC.

I thank you, Madam President.