

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, 11 December 2020

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

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by congratulating you for assuming the Presidency of the Council for this month.

In contemporary history, Iran has been the main victim of the large-scale, most systematic and frequent use of chemical weapons during the eight-year war imposed on us by Saddam when some Western States, not only assisted Saddam in developing chemical weapons but also refrained from taking any action when he extensively used such weapons against our citizens and later against Iraqi citizens.

Such bitter experiences have thought us that no one should possess such inhumane weapons and the legal regime to prohibit their development and use, must not allow any sort of politicization.

Now, we understand and feel, more than any other country, both the horrible nature of these inhumane weapons and the poisonous nature of politicizing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the OPCW.

It is in this context that we condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anytime, anywhere and under any circumstances, and also call for promoting the full, effective, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention as well as upholding the integrity, authority and legitimacy of the OPCW.

Nevertheless, it is a source of grave concern that, in the past several years, a group of Member States, systematically abusing the processes of this Council and the OPCW, have politicized the consideration of the implementation of the Convention by Syria.

They disregard the fact that, in her final report to this Council in 2014, the head of the Joint Mission to Eliminate Chemical Weapons in Syria confirmed that Syria has fulfilled all its commitments and that its entire chemical stockpiles have been destroyed. This was confirmed later by the OPCW too.

They refer to a technically defective report of the IIT -- prepared without on-site investigation or due regard to the chain of custody -- and intentionally disregard the progress achieved so far by Syria in implementing its obligations.

They also overlook Syria's commitment – reiterated also very recently -- to continue to work with the Technical Secretariat to resolve all outstanding issues as soon as possible.

Even the relevant decision of the 94th session of the OPCW's Executive Council disregarded Syria's unprecedented cooperation with the OPCW, carried out despite serious security threats posed by the deadliest terrorist groups as well as the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unfortunately, such unproductive policies of some Western countries, pursued adamantly during the past several years, have resulted only in division within this Council and the OPCW and eroded their legitimacy and credibility.

More importantly, such politically motivated approach continues to endanger the consensual decision-making tradition in the OPCW -- the latest example of which is the decision of the recently held 25th Session of the Conference of the States Parties on program and budget of the OPCW for 2021 that was adopted by voting.

Such unconstructive approach will continue to adversely affect 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 blatant failure by the U.S. as the sole major Possessor State Party.

A recent draft decision, proposed by a group of countries, to deprive a State from continuing to be a party to the Convention, despite destroying all its chemical weapons as verified by the OPCW and also its continued cooperation with the Organization, will set a dangerous precedent and will have a far-reaching serious consequence for the regime of chemical weapons disarmament.

Continuation of such policies is not acceptable and must not be allowed anymore. Therefore, every effort must be made to restore the OPCW's authority and promote the full and non-discriminatory implementation of the CWC.

I thank you, Mr. President.