



Permanent Representation
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva

Statement
by the Permanent Representative of Germany
to the Conference on Disarmament,
Ambassador Peter Beerwerth,
on 26 January 2021

Mr. President,

I asked for the floor to set the record straight on the incorrect assertions of my Syrian colleague in last Thursday's session on the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Syria's status of compliance under the Geneva Protocol of 1925, international customary law, and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

To preclude any allegation that this amounts to an unjustified „politicisation“ of the CD I would like to recall the following:

- A) It is a matter of integrity for the CD that the proper facts are written into the record.
- B) As the single multilateral disarmament body of the United Nations, not only did the CD negotiate and agree on the Chemical Weapons Convention in the very chamber, in which we usually meet, but it concluded its negotiations under the auspices of my distinguished predecessor Ritter von Wagner. This is why Germany has a particular affiliation to this Convention.

Now, on the facts:

On July 9, 2020, the competent international body on these matters, the Executive Council of the OPCW decided – and I quote:

„ The Executive Council.....**Condemns** the use of chemical weapons as reported by the IIT, which concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Arab Republic used chemical weapons,

Expresses deep concern that the use of such chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, by direct implication, establishes that the Syrian Arab Republic failed to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities, and **demands** that the Syrian Arab Republic immediately cease all use of chemical weapons;

Expresses deep concern that the Syrian Arab Republic did not cooperate with, and provide access to, the IIT as required by United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), and **demands** that the Syrian Arab Republic cooperate fully with the Secretariat“

End of quote.

The Council, in this decision, repeated also the demands on Syria to declare all its chemical weapons, its relevant facilities and resolve all of the outstanding issues regarding its initial declaration.

To this date, Syria has not complied with this request. Let me also remind you that the use of chemical weapons in Ltamenah in 2017 to which this decision relates was not a singular incident. We have seen repeated use of Chemical Weapons in Syria, confirmed by the Sellström Mission in 2013, through various reports of the OPCW and the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Syria has been in material breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and other relevant international law that has cost thousands of lives.

Thank you, Mr. President.