



## SRMUN Charlotte 2025

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Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Charlotte 2025 and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council (OPCW-EC). My name is Lilly Slipher, and I have the pleasure of serving as your Director for the OPCW-EC. This will be my fourth time as a SRMUN staff member, having previously served as the Assistant Director of the General Assembly Plenary, Peacebuilding Commission, and the Commission on Population and Development. I recently graduated with my bachelor's degree in International Studies and am attending graduate school to get my Master's in Gender, Politics, and International Relations. Our committee's Assistant Director will be Jia Li Emaus. This will be Jia's first time as a staff member. She previously held the position as Chair Rapporteur for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in SRMUN Charlotte 2024, and she is excited to serve on staff at SRMUN Charlotte 2025. Jia is currently obtaining a double degree in Political Science and International Affairs & Development, with a concentration in Global Politics, and minors in Spanish and Chinese.

The OPCW's mission is to globally promote the destruction and permanent prohibition of chemical weapons. It was founded in 1997 and follows the guidelines set by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The OPCW-EC governs as one of three main bodies of the OPCW. The OPCW-EC, specifically, consists of 41 Member States and is responsible to further adhere, promote, and implement the CWC. The OPCW-EC works toward achieving its goals by verifying the removal of chemical weapons through onsite inspections and further evaluations of Member States' declarations.

Focusing on the mission of the OPCW-EC, we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

- I. Addressing Concerns Regarding the Complete Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme
- II. Ensuring the Responsible Handling of Dual-Use Chemicals In Preventing the Proliferation of Chemical Weapons

This background guide will serve as the foundation for your research, yet it should not be the extent of the research. Preparation is given to each topic to help guide delegates in their initial research, and to serve as a starting place for more in-depth studies. It is expected that delegates go beyond this background guide in preparation for their position paper and to better prepare themselves for contribution within the committee in November. Further, each delegation is required to submit a position paper for consideration. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit [srmun.org](http://srmun.org). **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, February 28, 2025, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.**

Both Jia and I are excited for the opportunity to serve as your dais for the OPCW-EC. I wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to meeting and working with each of you. Should questions arise as you begin to prepare for this conference, contacting those on your dais is always encouraged via the email provided below.

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## History of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council

The official mission statement of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to achieve the vision of a world free of chemical weapons and the threat of their use, and in which chemistry is used for peace, progress, and prosperity.<sup>1</sup> Defined by the OPCW, a chemical weapon is a poisonous substance used to deliberately cause death or injury, as well as weapons, tools, and devices specifically created to deploy these toxic chemicals.<sup>2</sup> The first large-scale international declaration condemning and prohibiting the use of chemical weapons in warfare was written as part of an expansive treaty detailing laws and customs of war at the 1899 Hague Peace Conference in the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> The section pertaining to chemical weapons required all Member States to agree to abstain from the use of projectiles, the sole object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gasses.<sup>4</sup> This language laid the foundation for international consensus on opposing the use of chemical weapons in warfare.<sup>5</sup>

In 1914, the beginning of World War I reversed the progress made at the Hague Conference. Military forces during WWII deployed chemical weapons such as chlorosulfate and mustard gas.<sup>6</sup> The massive casualties from chemical weapons during this war prompted the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gasses, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, also referred to as the Geneva Protocol.<sup>7</sup> While this protocol regulated the use of chemical weapons in warfare, it did not address the restriction of development, production, and possession of chemical weapons, creating loopholes for Member States to amass stockpiles of these weapons.<sup>8</sup> This was addressed through the Conference of Disarmament in 1980, producing a more detailed chemical weapons prohibition treaty.<sup>9</sup> The result of this work led to the creation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), formally adopted in 1992, which ultimately banned the development, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons, both in times of peace and war.<sup>10</sup> The CWC also called for the creation of an implementing body, the OPCW, to ensure that the agreements of the CWC were upheld, and to aid in the elimination and conversion of chemical weapons and their production facilities.<sup>11</sup>

The Executive Council (EC) is one of three main bodies that operate the OPCW in addition to the Conference of the States Parties (CSP) and the Technical Secretariat.<sup>12</sup> The Conference of the States Parties is composed of representatives from each of the 193 Member States of the OPCW.<sup>13</sup> The CSP serves as an oversight body for the workings of the Executive Council and the Secretariat and is responsible for the election of the members to the

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), "Mission," *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, accessed June 10, 2024 <https://www.opcw.org/about-us/mission>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), "OPCW Basics," *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, accessed July 23, 2024 <https://www.opcw.org/about-us/mission>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), "Past Chemical Disarmament Efforts," *OPCW*, accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/about-us/history>.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), "History," *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/about-us/history>.

<sup>5</sup> UN OPCW, "History."

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Tucker, "'War of Nerves': A History of Chemical Weapons," *NPR*, Last Modified May 8, 2006, accessed Jun 10, 2024. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5390710>.

<sup>7</sup> "Geneva Gas Protocol," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Geneva-Gas-Protocol>.

<sup>8</sup> "Geneva Gas Protocol," *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<sup>9</sup> UN OPCW, "History."

<sup>10</sup> UN OPCW, "History."

<sup>11</sup> UN OPCW, "History."

<sup>12</sup> UN OPCW, "History."

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), "Conference of the State Parties: Setting the OPCW's strategic direction" *OPCW*, accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/about/conference-states-parties>.

Executive Council and the appointment of the Director General.<sup>14</sup> The Conference of the States Parties may also vote to bring issues of critical concern to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Security Council (SC).<sup>15</sup> The Technical Secretariat is largely responsible for the logistical aspects of implementing the goals of the CWC.<sup>16</sup> Composed of roughly 500 staff members from more than 80 Member States, the Technical Secretariat handles day-to-day tasks within the OPCW and coordinates between the OPCW and other United Nations (UN) bodies.<sup>17</sup> It is responsible for verifying Member State compliance with the CWC by conducting regular on-site inspections of chemical weapons storage facilities and industrial chemical facilities in OPCW Member State territories.<sup>18</sup> The Executive Council is composed of 41 Member States, distributed by geographic representation among the five main regional groups: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western European and Others.<sup>19</sup> The EC's principal functions include carrying out all functions and powers entrusted to the EC as outlined by the CWC and the recommendations set forth by the CSP.<sup>20</sup> Other important functions include addressing cases of non-compliance by a Member State, submitting drafts on the programme budget, submitting draft reports pertaining to status of CWC implementation, and making recommendations to the CSP on the appointment of the Director-General.<sup>21</sup>

The EC holds executive powers in matters that pertain to the implementation of the CWC.<sup>22</sup> Some of the executive powers include entering agreements on behalf of the OPCW to improve the protection against chemical weapons.<sup>23</sup> The EC plays a vital role in addressing ambiguities, concerns, and disputes between Member States regarding the compliance and implementation of the CWC and is the primary focal point for investigating alleged use of chemical weapons.<sup>24</sup> The EC is responsible for drafting the agenda for the annual CSP sessions and certifying Member State agreements made through the Conference.<sup>25</sup> Although the Executive Council believes in the principle of consensus, the OPCW-EC generally votes by a two-third majority vote for substantive matters, while procedural matters proceed through a simple majority vote.<sup>26</sup> In special instances of challenging an inspection from proceeding the EC requires a three-quarter majority vote.<sup>27</sup> While special meetings can be held as often as required, annually the EC hosts three regular sessions.<sup>28</sup>

In recent years, the Executive Council has worked on many initiatives including ongoing chemical weapons investigations in Syria through the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) as well as the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). In addition, the Executive Council has collaborated with the Secretariat to incorporate AI fields into the assessment and handling for inspections of chemical weapons within states.<sup>29</sup> The addition of AI has begun in hopes of deepening the EC's understanding of the risks and opportunities AI pose.<sup>30</sup> Exercising its executive powers, the

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), "The Structure of the OPCW," *UN Office for Disarmament Affairs*, accessed June 10, 2024.

[https://www.disarmamenteducation.org/dashboard/media/modules/124/required\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_3\\_-\\_OPCW\\_Structure.pdf](https://www.disarmamenteducation.org/dashboard/media/modules/124/required_Fact_Sheet_3_-_OPCW_Structure.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> UN OPCW, "The Structure of the OPCW."

<sup>16</sup> UN OPCW, "The Structure of the OPCW."

<sup>17</sup> UN OPCW, "The Structure of the OPCW."

<sup>18</sup> UN OPCW, "The Structure of the OPCW."

<sup>19</sup> UN OPCW, "The Structure of the OPCW."

<sup>20</sup> The United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, "Executive Council | OPCW," Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Accessed July 16, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/about-us/executive-council>.

<sup>21</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>22</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>23</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>24</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>25</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>26</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>27</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>28</sup> UN OPCW-EC, "Executive Council | OPCW."

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council (OPCW-EC), "Opening Statement By The Director-General To The 106<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council," *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, accessed July 23, 2024.

<https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024/07/ec106dg21%28e%29.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> OPCW-EC, "Opening Statement By The Director-General To The 106<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council."

OPCW-EC has consistently dedicated its duties to the implementation of the CWC in regard to chemical weapon investigations, oversights, and inspections, as well as international cooperation in the adoption of decisions and resolutions.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> UN OPCW-EC, “Executive Council | OPCW.”

# I. Addressing Concerns Regarding the Complete Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme

## Introduction

Over the past 11 years the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council (EC) has worked tirelessly to complete the total elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's (Syria) chemical weapons programme.<sup>32</sup> While Syria's chemical weapons programme is thought to have existed since the 1970s, it became a focus for the OPCW when Syria signed onto the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 2013.<sup>33</sup> The OPCW and other United Nations (UN) bodies, such as the Security Council, have made efforts to ensure Syria's compliance with the CWC, but there are still reports by the OPCW's Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) showing that chemical weapons are still in use in Syria.<sup>34</sup> This has led the OPCW to take measures to encourage compliance by revoking Syria's voting rights as it searches for alternative ways to resolve the stalemate between Syria and the United Nations (UN).<sup>35</sup>

## History

Syria's chemical weapons programme is thought to have been created in the early 1970s with the assistance of Egypt.<sup>36</sup> A main motivator for Syria to amass an arsenal of chemical weapons stems from Syria's combative relationship with Israel.<sup>37</sup> In the 1980s, Syria began developing its own chemical weapon manufacturing systems as Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979, cutting Syria off from Egyptian support.<sup>38</sup> Because of Syria's relationship with Israel, Syria opted to not join the CWC upon its creation in 1997 and stated that since Israel posed a significant threat to Syrian national security, Syria could not renounce its chemical weapons.<sup>39</sup>

In 2000 President Bashar al-Assad took his father's position as President of the state, but still refused to join the CWC.<sup>40</sup> Protests against al-Assad's leadership begun as a result of the Arab Spring in 2010 and harsh retaliation to the protests caused the country to spiral into a civil war.<sup>41</sup> In 2013, a chemical weapon was deployed onto a group of rebels in Syria which killed 26 people and injured over 100 others which promoted the OPCW to investigate.<sup>42</sup> In response, the OPCW-EC created the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to collect and analyze evidence that would lead to the identification of the perpetrators.<sup>43</sup> Investigations identified al-Assad's government as the perpetrator which prompted Syria to join the CWC and submit a declaration detailing its chemical weapon stockpiles and chemical weapon precursors to the OPCW.<sup>44</sup> Within the same year the Member States of Russia and the United States created a framework for the dismantlement of the Syrian chemical weapons programme which called for Syria to create and

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<sup>32</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Syria and the OPCW," *OPCW*, Accessed August 18, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/featured-topics/opcw-and-syria>.

<sup>33</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview," *NTI*, April 24, 2018, Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/syria-chemical/#recent>.

<sup>34</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "OPCW Releases Third Report By Investigation and Identification Team," *OPCW*, January 27, 2023, Accessed August 15, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, *Decision On Addressing The Possession And Use Of Chemical Weapons By The Syrian Arab Republic*, EC-94/DEC.2, (July 9, 2020), [/https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020/07/ec94dec02%28e%29%20%282%29.pdf](https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020/07/ec94dec02%28e%29%20%282%29.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Egypt Chemical Overview," *NTI*, January 28, 2015, Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/egypt-chemical/>.

<sup>37</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>38</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>39</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>40</sup> Laub, Zachary, "Syria's Civil War: The Descent Into Horror," *The Council on Foreign Relations*, February 14, 2023, Accessed December 15, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war>.

<sup>41</sup> Laub, Zachary, "Syria's Civil War: The Descent Into Horror."

<sup>42</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>43</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Fact-Finding Mission," *OPCW*, Accessed December 15, 2024, <https://www.opcw.org/fact-finding-mission>.

<sup>44</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Syria and the OPCW," *OPCW*, Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/featured-topics/opcw-and-syria>.

submit a comprehensive list of its chemical weapons so that inspectors could verify.<sup>45</sup> To complete and verify the inspections, the OPCW formed the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) in April of 2014.<sup>46</sup> The DAT is a multi-disciplinary team comprised of experts from the OPCW's Technical Secretariat and is mandated to verify whether the declarations submitted by Syria are accurate and adhere to the CWC.<sup>47</sup> During the inspection, the DAT found that Syria had large stockpiles of sulfur, mustard, sarin, and nerve gasses as well as other deadly chemical weapon precursors.<sup>48</sup> Syria also possessed unfilled delivery systems, such as rockets, that could be used to make chemical weapons.<sup>49</sup> At the completion of the DAT's initial investigation in 2014, the OPCW took possession of Syria's declared chemical weapons and precursors.<sup>50</sup>

Once the stockpiles and precursors were in the possession of the OPCW, the OPCW began destruction of the materials in the United States and the United Kingdom in July of 2014.<sup>51</sup> By January of 2016, all 1,328 metric tons of declared chemical weapons were destroyed and the mission was declared complete.<sup>52</sup> However, doubts regarding the completeness of the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons program arose in January of 2015, as the DAT inspectors reported finding traces of sarin gas in an undeclared military facility during an inspection in Syria.<sup>53</sup> This led the Security Council to create the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in August of 2015.<sup>54</sup> JIM worked to determine whether chemical weapons had been used in attacks and investigated four separate incidents in Syria.<sup>55</sup> However, JIM was short lived as vetoes by Russia led to its termination just two years after its creation.<sup>56</sup> Just before JIM ended operations, it reported the use of chemical weapons by Syria in 2017 during an attack in the Southern Idlib area of Syria which killed 90 civilians, 30 of whom were children.<sup>57</sup> This attack sparked outrage within the OPCW and affirmed previous suspicions.<sup>58</sup>

### ***Current Situation***

The 2017 attacks prompted the Executive Council of the OPCW to meet and analyze what the Fact Finding Mission had to report on the alleged uses.<sup>59</sup> The FFM found the accusations credible and started to interview victims and manage samples taken from the locations of the attacks.<sup>60</sup> The samples showed that a large number of people were exposed to the nerve agent sarin and discovered a crater where the weapon landed.<sup>61</sup> In response to the dismantlement of JIM by the Security Council and the startling findings by the FFM, the OPCW created the

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<sup>45</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>46</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Declaration Assessment Team," *OPCW*, Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/declaration-assessment-team>.

<sup>47</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Declaration Assessment Team."

<sup>48</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>49</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>50</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Declaration Assessment Team."

<sup>51</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>52</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>53</sup> The Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Syria Chemical Overview."

<sup>54</sup> Security Council Report, "In Hindsight: The Demise of the JIM," *Security Council Report*, December 28, 2017, Accessed August 15, 2024. [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/in\\_hindsight\\_the\\_demise\\_of\\_the\\_jim.php](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/in_hindsight_the_demise_of_the_jim.php).

<sup>55</sup> Security Council Report, "In Hindsight: The Demise of the JIM."

<sup>56</sup> Security Council Report, "In Hindsight: The Demise of the JIM."

<sup>57</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Technical Secretariat. *Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission In Syria Regarding an Alleged Incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic April 2017*. New York, NY: UN Headquarters, 2017. S/1510/2017. [https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/Fact\\_Finding\\_Mission/s-1510-2017\\_e\\_.pdf](https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/Fact_Finding_Mission/s-1510-2017_e_.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Updated Media Brief: Reported Use of Chemical Weapons, Southern Idlib, Syria, 4 April 2017," *OPCW*, April 7, 2017, Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/news/2017/04/updated-media-brief-reported-use-chemical-weapons-southern-idlib-syria-4/>.

<sup>59</sup> OPCW Technical Secretariat, *Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission In Syria Regarding an Alleged Incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic April 2017*.

<sup>60</sup> The OPCW Technical Secretariat. *Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission In Syria Regarding an Alleged Incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>61</sup> The OPCW Technical Secretariat. *Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission In Syria Regarding an Alleged Incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic*.

Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) which was formed to identify who within Syria was responsible for utilizing and deploying the chemical weapons.<sup>62</sup>

The IIT's first investigation was done between 2019 and 2020 and sought information on the chemical weapon attacks in Syria in 2017.<sup>63</sup> The IIT found that all three attacks were conducted by the al-Assad regime, with two bombs containing sarin and one containing chlorine gas.<sup>64</sup> The total number of victims was reported to be 106.<sup>65</sup> One year later, in 2018, the IIT reported two more attacks conducted by the Syrian military, both utilizing chlorine gas, with a total of 55 recorded victims.<sup>66</sup> The IIT has not investigated any allegations since 2018, but there is still significant discussion amongst the Executive Council regarding the programme's completeness since the weapons used in the 2017 and 2018 attacks were deployed after Syria's initial declaration in 2013.<sup>67</sup>

The Executive Council's initial response was to focus future efforts on the FFM and to encourage Syria to declare more chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities.<sup>68</sup> When those efforts yielded little result, the EC made a landmark decision in 2020 to formally condemn Syria, in EC-94/DEC.2, for its usage of chemical weapons and demanded that Syria cooperate with the Security Council and the IIT in ceasing its use of chemical weapons and cooperate with UN bodies in declaring stockpiles in its decision.<sup>69</sup> In the same decision, the Executive Council requested that within 90 days Syria declare the facilities in which the chemical weapons from the 2017 attacks were developed, produced, and stockpiled and declare all other chemical weapons and precursors it possessed.<sup>70</sup> At the end of the 90 days, Syria had not adhered to any of the decisions.<sup>71</sup> As outlined in EC-94/DEC.2, the Executive Council recommended that the OPCW's Conference of States Parties (CSP) take action to address Syria's non-compliance.<sup>72</sup> The CSP responded to Syria's non-compliance with the EC's demands by suspending some of Syria's rights and privileges, such as voting in the CSP.<sup>73</sup>

As of July 2024, reports by the DAT have found traces of chemical weapons from previously declared sites demonstrating that undeclared chemical weapon activity could still be occurring today.<sup>74</sup> In a report from September of 2024, the Director-General of the Executive Council explained that recent delays in the DAT assessment and interviews within Syria have been caused by concerns for the safety of the DAT members in Syria.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "Investigation and Identification Team (IIT)," *OPCW*, Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/iit>

<sup>63</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, "OPCW Releases First Report By Investigation and Identification Team," *OPCW*, April 8, 2020, Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/news/2020/04/opcw-releases-first-report-investigation-and-identification-team>

<sup>64</sup> The OPCW, "OPCW Releases First Report By Investigation and Identification Team."

<sup>65</sup> The OPCW, "OPCW Releases First Report By Investigation and Identification Team."

<sup>66</sup> The OPCW, "OPCW Releases Third Report By Investigation and Identification Team."

<sup>67</sup> The OPCW, "Investigation and Identification Team (IIT)."

<sup>68</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, *Note By the Director-General on the Progress In The Elimination Of The Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*, EC-88/DG.16, (June 22, 2018), [https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/EC/88/en/ec88dg16\\_e\\_.pdf](https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/EC/88/en/ec88dg16_e_.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> The OPCW-EC, *Decision On Addressing The Possession And Use Of Chemical Weapons By The Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>70</sup> The OPCW-EC, *Decision On Addressing The Possession And Use Of Chemical Weapons By The Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>71</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, *Report By The Director-General Regarding Progress In The Elimination Of The Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*, EC-107/DG.5, (July 24, 2024), [/https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024/07/ec107dg05%28e%29.pdf](https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024/07/ec107dg05%28e%29.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> The OPCW-EC, *Decision On Addressing The Possession And Use Of Chemical Weapons By The Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>73</sup> The OPCW, "Syria and the OPCW."

<sup>74</sup> The OPCW-EC, *Report By The Director-General Regarding Progress In The Elimination Of The Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*.

<sup>75</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, *Report By The Director-General Regarding Progress In The Elimination Of The Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*, EC-107/DG.20, (September, 24, 2024), <https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024/09/ec107dg20%28e%29.pdf>.

The Executive Council seemed to be at a stalemate with the Syrian regime until December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, when President al-Assad fled the country after rebel groups took the city of Damascus, subsequently ending his rule of the regime.<sup>76</sup> Three days after this revelation the Director-General of the Executive Council called an emergency meeting begin discussion on the situation in Syria.<sup>77</sup> The Director-General reported that there is a high chance that the new regime would turn over chemical weapons left behind by the previous government.<sup>78</sup> The Director-General expressed concerns about reports of airstrikes targeting military facilities that may be currently housing chemical weapons and reported that these strikes could cause an accidental chemical attack.<sup>79</sup> The Executive Council expressed its eagerness to make contact with the new Syrian government as soon as possible, and the Secretariat passage along its sentiments to Syria's representative in the UN.<sup>80</sup> Syria's representative acknowledged the message but explained that they were unable to respond at the time due to the instability in Syria.<sup>81</sup> The Director-General finished his statement by assuring the Executive Council that the DAT, FFM, and the IIT would begin operations in Syria as soon as possible.<sup>82</sup>

### ***Actions Taken by the UN***

The Security Council began efforts to hold Syria accountable for its stockpiles of chemical weapons in 2013.<sup>83</sup> S/RES/2118 endorsed the Executive Council's 2013 decision, which contained instructions for the immediate destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and for full cooperation by Syria in verifying the completeness of the programme.<sup>84</sup> The Security Council also mandated that Syria have no part in proliferating chemical weapons with other state or non-state actors.<sup>85</sup>

While information gathered by the FFM and IIT have been used to deduce who is responsible for deploying the chemical weapons in Syria, the FFM and IIT aren't bodies that can prosecute Syria for its actions.<sup>86</sup> The General Assembly attempted to hold Syria accountable in 2016 when it passed A/RES/71/248 or the "International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes Under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011".<sup>87</sup> A/RES/71/248 emphasized the need for accountability for the crimes committed in Syria and other international law violations.<sup>88</sup> As seen by the chemical weapons attacks in 2017 this resolution had little influence over Syria's actions as there were five recorded attacks utilizing chemical weapons after this resolution's passing.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*, OPCW-EC, (December, 12 2024), <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/speeches-statements/2024/12/statement-director-general-sixty-sixth-meeting-executive>.

<sup>77</sup> OPCW-EC, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*.

<sup>78</sup> OPCW-EC, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*.

<sup>79</sup> OPCW-EC, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*.

<sup>80</sup> OPCW-EC, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*.

<sup>81</sup> OPCW-EC, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*.

<sup>82</sup> OPCW-EC, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*.

<sup>83</sup> The United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 2118 (2013)*, S/RES/2118 (2013), (September 13, 2013), [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2118.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2118.pdf).

<sup>84</sup> The UN SC, *Resolution 2118 (2013)*.

<sup>85</sup> The UN SC, *Resolution 2118 (2013)*.

<sup>86</sup> The OPCW, "OPCW Releases First Report By Investigation and Identification Team."

<sup>87</sup> The United Nations General Assembly, *International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011*, A/RES/71/248, (January 11, 2017), <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n16/462/01/pdf/n1646201.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup> The UNGA, *International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011*.

<sup>89</sup> The OPCW, "OPCW Releases Third Report By Investigation and Identification Team."



The CSP of the OPCW also tried to address Syria's noncompliance through decision C-25/DEC.2 in 2021.<sup>90</sup> In C-25/DEC.2, the CSP decided to suspend Syria's right to vote in the CSP and the Executive Council, as well as restricting Syria's ability to stand for election for the Executive Council or hold any offices within the OPCW.<sup>91</sup> The CSP also decided that the Director-General is to regularly report to the Executive Council and the CSP on the status of Syria's chemical weapons programme and efforts made towards the Executive Council's demands.<sup>92</sup> C-25/DEC.9 outlines that the decisions made are to remain in effect until Syria complies with the Executive Council's demands.<sup>93</sup> While the decision made by the CSP has more binding effects, such as removing Syria's voting rights, it still has not been enough to encourage Syria to declare more chemical weapons facilities.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

As multiple UN bodies continue to make efforts to complete the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, many Member States continue to verbalize their grievances with Syria's non-compliance with the CWC and the OPCW.<sup>95</sup> Syria's consistent non-compliance has damaged international cooperation and poses a serious threat to the security of other Member States.<sup>96</sup> To encourage Syria to declare all of its chemical weapons, facilities, and precursors, the OPCW-CSP has revoked Syria's rights to vote or hold office.<sup>97</sup> The current situation is uncertain as the regime transition can pose hope but also uncertainty for the future of non-proliferation of chemical weapons in Syria.<sup>98</sup>

### ***Committee Directives***

The lack of information on Syria's chemical weapons programme poses a large threat to international security, especially those who are adversaries to Syria, while also creating a humanitarian crisis as chemical weapons have been used on civilians. While many efforts have been made to either encourage or force Syria to comply with the OPCW-EC, Syria has consistently disregarded the demands of the OPCW-EC. Delegates should consider ways to encourage Syria to comply with the OPCW and explore new options that still avoid violating Syria's sovereignty. Delegates should also analyze their Member States' relationship with Syria so they better understand what position they should be taking in committee and within their resolutions. Delegates should ask: What can be done now that would work? Why have previous efforts not worked? How can the OPCW Executive Council create effective solutions while also staying within the OPCW Executive Council's mandates and capabilities? Overall, delegates should consider the consequences of any action, including Syria's continued non-compliance. Most importantly, delegates should bear in mind that this background guide only provides information up to the time of its publishing and that real world events continue to shape the narrative around the topic past the background guide.

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<sup>90</sup> The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Conference of State Parties, *Addressing the Possession And Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic*, C-25/DEC.9, (April 21, 2021), [/https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021/04/c25dec09%28e%29.pdf](https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021/04/c25dec09%28e%29.pdf).

<sup>91</sup> The OPCW CSP, *Addressing the Possession And Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>92</sup> The OPCW CSP, *Addressing the Possession And Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>93</sup> The OPCW CSP, *Addressing the Possession And Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>94</sup> The OPCW CSP, *Addressing the Possession And Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic*.

<sup>95</sup> The OPCW-EC, *Statement of Japan At the 106<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW*.

<sup>96</sup> The UN SC, *Resolution 2118 (2013)*.

<sup>97</sup> The OPCW, "Syria and the OPCW."

<sup>98</sup> OPCW-EC, *Statement by the Director-General to the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council*.

## II. Ensuring the Responsible Handling of Dual-Use Chemicals In Preventing the Proliferation of Chemical Weapons

### *Introduction*

According to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, a dual-use chemical is classified as any chemical that can be used for both legitimate peaceful uses and/or to make chemical weapons.<sup>99</sup> Peaceful uses of dual-use chemicals can be found in the industrial, agricultural, medical, and pharmaceutical industries.<sup>100</sup> Many chemicals that are used for chemical weapons are also used for peaceful practices such as furnishings, transportation equipment, and the electrical industry.<sup>101</sup> One common example of a dual-use chemical is thiodiglycol, which is a chemical ingredient used in pen ink, but is also used in mustard agents, a gas used in wartime causing blistering eye burn.<sup>102</sup> Ensuring the responsible handling of dual-use chemicals includes implementation of strict controls to prevent misuse, including thorough tracking, secure storage, export controls, and awareness training for all personnel involved in the handling.<sup>103</sup>

According to Article II of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a chemical weapon is defined as a toxic chemical and its precursors that are used or designed specifically to cause death or harm, originally only designated for chemical weapons.<sup>104</sup> Although the convention mentions the prevention of re-emergence, it also contains provisions for promoting chemistry in peaceful ways and handling to support the development of Member States.<sup>105</sup>

### *History*

In the Greek epics of the Iliad and the Odyssey, both sides used poisoned arrows in battle during the Trojan War, using chemicals in warfare as far back as 12th century BCE.<sup>106</sup> Around 1000 BCE, the Chinese also combined chemicals with weapons with the creation of arsenical smoke.<sup>107</sup> Later, it is said that the Athenians and Spartans in 600 BCE used tactics such as burning sulfur in combat.<sup>108</sup> In more recent history, 15<sup>th</sup> century Leonardo de Vinci designed a machine that would fire shells filled with sulfur, arsenic, and copper acetate, another war tactic that incorporated chemicals.<sup>109</sup>

The first recorded use of modern chemical weapons was in 1914 during World War I, using bromoacetate or tear gas.<sup>110</sup> Following the widespread use of chemical weapons during World War I, the Geneva Protocol was introduced by the League of Nations and ratified in 1925 by the majority of countries, declaring a prohibition solely on the use

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<sup>99</sup> United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) “Preventing the Re-Emergence of Chemical Weapons,” *Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, accessed August 5, 2024, <https://www.opcw.org/our-work/preventing-re-emergence-chemical-weapons>.

<sup>100</sup> United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), “Promoting Chemistry for Peace,” *Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, accessed August 5, 2024, <https://www.opcw.org/our-work/promoting-chemistry-peace>.

<sup>101</sup> Douglas B. Walters, Pauline Ho, and Jasper Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals,” *Journal of Chemical Health and Safety* 22, no. 5., December 18, 2014, accessed August 5, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jchas.2014.12.001>.

<sup>102</sup> UN OPCW, “Preventing the Re-Emergence of Chemical Weapons.”

<sup>103</sup> European Commission, “Exporting Dual-Use Items.” *European Commission*, accessed November 13, 2024, [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/help-exporters-and-importers/exporting-dual-use-items\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/help-exporters-and-importers/exporting-dual-use-items_en),

<sup>104</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction,” 29 April 1997, *United Nations Treaty Collection*, XXVI, Treaty 3, [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1997/04/19970429%2007-52%20PM/Ch\\_XXVI\\_03p.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1997/04/19970429%2007-52%20PM/Ch_XXVI_03p.pdf).

<sup>105</sup> UN OPCW, “Promoting Chemistry for Peace.”

<sup>106</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>107</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>108</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>109</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>110</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

of chemical weapons during war.<sup>111</sup> Many Member States, including the United Kingdom, France, and the USSR, ratified the Protocol, but declared it not binding because there was not mutual understanding among allies and enemies of the prohibitions.<sup>112</sup> There have been instances of use of chemical weapons even after the ratification, including Italy using poison gas in the Ethiopian war in 1935.<sup>113</sup> The Protocol was observed throughout World War II, but many Member States, such as the United States, did not ratify the protocol because the provisions regarding the use of dual-use chemicals were ill defined, and this led to the usage of chemicals such as tear gas and chemical herbicides.<sup>114</sup>

After World War II, Fritz Haber, known as the “Father of Chemical Warfare” and his brother Carl Bosch developed the Haber-Bosch process, which converts atmospheric nitrogen and hydrogen into ammonia.<sup>115</sup> Ammonia is a dual-use chemical that can be used in the manufacturing of explosives, feedstuffs, and fertilizer.<sup>116</sup> Ammonia is still used today in the majority of the fertilizer used in food production.<sup>117</sup>

The principles that later defined the usages of dual-use chemicals were introduced in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on 1 July 1968 through the UN by the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, and China.<sup>118</sup> The treaty laid out the principles of dual-use technology and rights of Member States to pursue peaceful applications of nuclear technologies.<sup>119</sup>

Between 1972 and 1992, the United Nations Conference of Disarmament, a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, began several negotiations discussing the elimination of the creation and stockpiling of chemical weapons, as well as the advanced development of chemical weapons.<sup>120</sup> In 1997, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) went into effect, which prevented the proliferation of weapons while allowing Member States to continue the peaceful use of chemicals and technologies.<sup>121</sup> The CWC further allows the use of dual-use chemicals for industrial, agricultural, medical and other peaceful purposes on the permits that are strictly verified by the OPCW and undergo prevention for misuse, and ensuring advancement of chemistry that can benefit society.<sup>122</sup>

### ***Current Situation***

In October 2002, 202 fatalities occurred at a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia after two bombs were set off by extremist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and affiliates of ISIS.<sup>123</sup> These bombs, also known as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), consisted of potassium chloride, sulfur, aluminum powder and TNT, which were dual-use chemicals obtained from fertilizer and industrial chemicals.<sup>124</sup> These chemicals being used in these bombs were in violation of chemical control regulations in place during the time in Indonesia.<sup>125</sup> In addition, there have been several more bombs set off around Indonesia that have caused over 100 casualties and hundreds of injuries.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Geneva Conventions, “Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare,” 17 June 1925, *Geneva Conventions: Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflicts*, 973, [https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/WMD/Bio/pdf/Status\\_Protocol.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/WMD/Bio/pdf/Status_Protocol.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>113</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>114</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>115</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>116</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>117</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>118</sup> Secretariat of the United Nations, *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*.

<sup>119</sup> Secretariat of the United Nations, *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*.

<sup>120</sup> United Nations Office For Disarmament Affairs, “Chemical Weapons – UNODA.” *United Nations Office For Disarmament Affairs*, accessed 16 Sep 2024, <https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/chemical/>.

<sup>121</sup> Secretariat of the United Nations, “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.”

<sup>122</sup> Secretariat of the United Nations, “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.”

<sup>123</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>124</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>125</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>126</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

Recent examples of irresponsible handling of dual-use chemicals include the discrepancies in the international trade of chemicals, particularly in 2019, where there were reported clerical mistakes, regulatory inconsistencies, and lack of harmonization of reporting standards among states under the CWC.<sup>127</sup> Notably, despite joining the CWC in 2023, Syria has committed repeated violations of the CWC, including retaining undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons and the continuous use of chemical weapons attributed to the Syrian government, involving chemicals such as sarin and chlorine.<sup>128</sup> With the Russia-Ukraine war, chemical weapons such as Chlorobenzylidene Malononitrile (CS) gas, also known as tear gas, and K-51 Grenades, have been reported to be used in battlefield situations.<sup>129</sup> Chemicals used in these like CS, K-51, and chlorine are often used in peaceful purposes such as solvents and cleaning agents, dyes, pigments, water purification and disinfection of facilities.<sup>130</sup> These chemicals are intended for crowd control and peaceful purposes, are prohibited by the CWC, and are currently being investigated by the OPCW.<sup>131</sup> Consequences of this mis-handling include international condemnation, sanctions, and ongoing investigation in the OPCW, but these have not resulted in a resolution in the gaps and inconsistencies in Syria's chemical weapons declarations, emphasizing the importance of further mechanisms of responsible handling and of dual-use chemical weapons.<sup>132</sup>

Despite continuous measures to implement ethical and transparent guidelines and communication with the Hague Ethical Guidelines, the NPT, and the CWC, the potential misuse of chemicals remains a challenge.<sup>133</sup> In addition, many Member States and non-state actors have yet to join the CWC, creating further potential for misuse.<sup>134</sup> Recent discussions by the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board and the British Medical Association raise concerns about the use of dual-use chemicals, emphasizing that even when these chemicals have the intention to incapacitate rather than kill, the usage can cause significant harm and may lead to death, making the legitimacy questionable.<sup>135</sup> Examples include tear gas and pepper spray, which are commonly used for crowd control or protection, however irresponsibility can cause severe injury or fatalities, which raises legal and ethical issues that are questioned to be addressed.<sup>136</sup>

According to the CWC, Member States must ensure that all toxic chemicals and their precursors are used for purposes that are not prohibited by the CWC. This creates a broad obligation which can increase loopholes and involve misunderstanding in implementation.<sup>137</sup> In more recent years, there have been several ongoing implementation issues, including the 2003 CWC Review Conference, revealing that many Member States have not implemented the necessary legislation or directed National Authority, an organizational point of contact for the CWC, for implementation including lack of national implementation, capacity in legislative drafting and enforcement, and resources.<sup>138</sup> Despite the attempt to implement National Authorities, over 60 of the 182 Member

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<sup>127</sup> United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). "Multiple Uses of Chemistry." *United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*. 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/multiple-uses-chemistry>.

<sup>128</sup> United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. "'Gaps, Inconsistencies and Discrepancies' Persist in Syria's Dossier on Dual-Use Chemical Agents, Security Council Told in Briefing | UN Press." *United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*. December 22, 2023. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15545.doc.htm>.

<sup>129</sup> U.S. Department of State. 2024. "Imposing New Measures on Russia for Its Full-Scale War and Use of Chemical Weapons against Ukraine." United States Department of State. May 1, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/imposing-new-measures-on-russia-for-its-full-scale-war-and-use-of-chemical-weapons-against-ukraine-2/>.

<sup>130</sup> United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). "Statement on Ukraine from the OPCW Spokesperson." *Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*. May 1, 2024. <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/news/2024/05/statement-ukraine-opcw-spokesperson>.

<sup>131</sup> "U.S. Department of State. 2024. "Imposing New Measures on Russia"

<sup>132</sup> Hann, Notte. "Russia and Ongoing Challenges to the Chemical Weapons Convention." *James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies*. November 30, 2020. <https://nonproliferation.org/russia-and-ongoing-challenges-to-the-chemical-weapons-convention/>.

<sup>133</sup> Ralf Trapp, "The Duality of Chemistry: Chemistry for Peaceful Purposes versus Chemical Weapons," *Pure and Applied Chemistry* 80 (8): 1763–1772, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1351/pac200880081763>.

<sup>134</sup> Trapp. "The Duality of Chemistry."

<sup>135</sup> Trapp. "The Duality of Chemistry."

<sup>136</sup> Trapp. "The Duality of Chemistry."

<sup>137</sup> UN OPCW, "Preventing the Re-Emergence of Chemical Weapons."

<sup>138</sup> Trapp. "The Duality of Chemistry."

States still lack capacity in other areas, including implementation of legislation, awareness, legislative capacity, resources, or are in current conflict.<sup>139</sup>

### ***Actions Taken by United Nations***

In terms of development of chemistry for peaceful purposes among Member States, in Article XI of the CWC Member States are encouraged to cooperate in the field of chemistry internationally and exchange scientific and technical information as it is for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.<sup>140</sup> This includes Member States working together to share scientific knowledge relating to chemistry, support and promote equal access for all states including developing nations to chemical research and technology and collaborate in chemical safety, medical research, and industrial development.<sup>141</sup>

In 2004, UN Security Council Resolution 1540 was passed to require Member States to establish border control law enforcement measures to prevent trafficking of materials related to chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.<sup>142</sup> The resolution also stated that Member States should refrain from providing support to non-state actors in areas such as developing, acquiring, transferring, possessing, or transporting chemicals that are used for terrorist or harmful purposes.<sup>143</sup> At a recent press conference of the United Nations, Hernán Pérez Loose (Ecuador) in March of 2023, Chair of the Security Council mentioned that while the resolution remains a vital component to global non-proliferation, it is still a “long term task” to handle with the steady progress of recorded implementation.<sup>144</sup> It was brought to the attention of key issues that have not been addressed still, including non-State actors misuse of artificial intelligence to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, as well as the stress of disarmament efforts with dual-use chemicals but keeping the pace with scientific and technological evolution.<sup>145</sup> Some specific examples include the usage of AI tools to develop and synthesize chemical weapon models as well as assisting in obscuring illicit activities.<sup>146</sup>

In the 2005 Hague Ethical Guidelines convened to converse about the appropriate conduct of chemical science among scientists.<sup>147</sup> These guidelines later influenced the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals in chemistry for peace, creating formal educational providers surrounding dual use chemicals, and ensuring chemical safety supervisors within labs.<sup>148</sup> Some of these include programs set by the OPCW in universities, research institutions and industries that establish and execute Chemistry Education and Outreach, and research fellowships.<sup>149</sup> In addition, chemistry education projects for resources and guidelines and the Green Chemistry Initiative: for developing educational materials on teaching principles of green chemistry have been established by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC).<sup>150</sup> These programs create a framework of responsible handling of dual-use chemicals and a framework for responsible conduct in policies for the use of dual-use

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<sup>139</sup> Trapp, “The Duality of Chemistry.”

<sup>140</sup> UN OPCW, “Article XI – Economic and Technological Development,” OPCW (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)), accessed August 5, 2024, <https://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/articles/article-xi-economic-and-technological-development>.

<sup>141</sup> UN OPCW, “Article XI – Economic and Technological Development,”

<sup>142</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, *Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, S/RES/1540, (April 28, 2004), <https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/sc1540/>.

<sup>143</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, *Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, S/RES/1540.

<sup>144</sup> United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, “Resolution 1540 (2004) Vital Component in Non-Proliferation Architecture” *United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, 21 March 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15241.doc.htm>.

<sup>145</sup> United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, “Resolution 1540 (2004) Vital Component in Non-Proliferation Architecture.”

<sup>146</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). “Summary of NATO’s Revised Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy.” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*. July 10, 2024. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_227237.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227237.htm).

<sup>147</sup> D. B. Walters, P. Ho, and J. Hardesty, “Safety, Security and Dual-Use Chemicals.”

<sup>148</sup> United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) “The Hague Ethical Guidelines,” *Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, accessed 9 Sep 2024, <https://www.opcw.org/hague-ethical-guidelines>.

<sup>149</sup> UN OPCW, “Promoting Chemistry for Peace.”

<sup>150</sup> Brett, Christopher. 2021. “The International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and Its Role on the World Stage.” *National Science Review* 8 (5). <https://doi.org/10.1093/nsr/nwab036>.

chemicals in science, promoting efficient communication standards between scientists, policy makers, and the public.<sup>151</sup>

In a recent OPCW Conference of State Parties meeting, it was recommended that Member States take measures, such as verification methods, prevention of development, and implementation of consequences, to prevent the transfer of dual-use chemicals and equipment to Syria, following ongoing investigations of alleged chemical weapon usage.<sup>152</sup> In result of continued non-compliance, the conference adopted the decision of invoking Article XII, paragraph 3, which recommends Member States to take “collective measures,” including collective security and monitoring to prevent these transfers and aims to prevent dual-use chemicals and equipment from falling in the hands of non-state actors.<sup>153</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The OPCW recommends that Member States should work together to build a mutual and shared understanding and knowledge of chemicals used for peace and development.<sup>154</sup> To achieve this, the OPCW has taken numerous measures such as training and workshops to support capacity building and knowledge and undertakes projects to raise awareness of the CWC.<sup>155</sup> While there have been multiple measures, such as the CWC, in place to work towards a common goal, it is common for states to misunderstand, misconception or opt out of guidelines.<sup>156</sup> It is a prominent issue to be resolved on how Member States are following the guidelines and policies and how responsible handlings is being placed, which are important matters to not just the national security of each Member State, but also international security, as where inappropriate usage of dual-use chemicals could lead to the proliferation of chemical weapons.

### ***Committee Directive***

One consistent issue throughout the history of dual-use chemicals is the strict enforcement of guidelines governing their use for peaceful purposes. While these chemicals have legitimate applications in industries such as medicine, agriculture, and research, the potential for misuse remains a significant concern. Delegates should come to the committee with knowledge of the current standing guidelines for the use of chemical weapons and chemicals used for peace, including guidelines understood in the and *the Chemical Weapons Convention*. It is the committee’s directive to work towards recommendations to ensure safety and precautions regarding dual-use chemicals used for peace. What innovative measures should be in place to ensure responsible handling of these chemicals to prevent proliferation? Delegates should explore further goals that are outlined in the CWC and the, and how further recommendations can be made to ensure safe practices and handling with dual-use chemical weapons.

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<sup>151</sup> Chemistry International, "The Hague Ethical Guidelines" *Chemistry International* 38, no. 1 (2016): 19-20. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ci-2016-0112>.

<sup>152</sup> United States Mission to the United Nations, “Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on Syria Chemical Weapons,” *United States Mission to the United Nations*, June 11, 2024, accessed August 5, 2024, <https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-a-un-security-council-briefing-on-syria-chemical-weapons/>.

<sup>153</sup> United States Mission to the United Nations, “Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on Syria Chemical Weapons.”

<sup>154</sup> UN OPCW, “Promoting Chemistry for Peace.”

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### **I. Addressing Concerns Regarding the Complete Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme**

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, “Executive Council Documents,” *OPCW-EC*, 2024, <https://www.opcw.org/resources/documents/executive-council/executive-council-documents>

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council’s website features a section where all documents written by the Executive Council can be accessed. This library has documents dating back from 2012 and features every report, decisions, and national statement made by Member States. The most significant sections have updates on the Syrian Chemical Weapons programme which, put together, shows a timeline of events through the eyes of the Executive Council. Delegates should use this source to gain a more in-depth understanding of the series of events which have led to the current situation with Syria. It also serves as an excellent source to stay up to date on this evolving topic prior to and during the conference. Delegates may also utilize this source to analyze and monitor the national statements made by their Member State to better understand their Member State and to make their position papers more realistic.

Nuclear Threat Initiative, “Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC),” *NTI*, 2024, <https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/convention-prohibition-development-production-stockpiling-and-use-chemical-weapons-and-their-destruction-cwc/>

The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) is a non-profit organization that focuses specifically on ways to reduce nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons usage. Their website has extensive databases including country profiles that detail each Member States’ usage and chemical weapons history. The NTI’s article on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) where it explains the CWC, gives a brief history, and highlights main mandates of the CWC, which the OPCW is the implementing body of. It also features an interactive map that shows what Member States have signed onto the CWC and which ones have not. Delegates should use this source to learn about the CWC and what aspects of it Syria is not complying with. Delegates can also use this source to learn about the chemical weapons capabilities of their own Member State.

Lutkefend, Theresa & Schneider, Tobias, “Nowhere to Hide: The Logic of Chemical Weapons Use in Syria,” *Global Public Policy Institute*, 2019, [https://gppi.net/media/GPPi\\_Schneider\\_Luetkefend\\_2019\\_Nowhere\\_to\\_Hide\\_Web.pdf](https://gppi.net/media/GPPi_Schneider_Luetkefend_2019_Nowhere_to_Hide_Web.pdf)

The study done by Lutkefend and Shneider explains in detail Syria’s chemical weapons usage and gives extensive background on the topic. The study goes in depth on the various aspects of Syria’s chemical weapons programme, even listing every confirmed or suspected chemical weapon usage within Syria from 2012 to 2018. It also includes a timeline of diplomatic efforts around the Syrian Chemical Weapons Crisis as well as detailed statistics that delegates could find useful. It also includes useful figures detailing the confirmed perpetrators and identified chemical agents which help to form the bigger picture when understanding the Syrian chemical weapons program. Delegates should use this source as a tool to deep dive into what the Syrian Chemical Weapons programme entails. Delegates could also use this source to gain a better understanding of the complete historical background of Syria’s chemical weapons programme.

## II. Ensuring the Responsible Handling of Dual-Use Chemicals In Preventing the Proliferation of Chemical Weapons

Patton, James, “Gas in the Great War,” University of Kansas Medical Center, 2024, <https://www.kumc.edu/school-of-medicine/academics/departments/history-and-philosophy-of-medicine/archives/wwi/essays/medicine/gas-in-the-great-war.html#:~:text=Thus%2C%20chemical%20warfare%20with%20gases%20was%20subsequently>

The University of Kansas Medical Center is a lab for the University of Kansas schools of medicine, nursing, and health professions, designed to house research and exposition of the exhibits from the students. The article, “Gas in the Great War” investigates the history of usage of dual use chemicals. It details how gas and other chemical agents were used during warfare for many tactics. A portion of the article explains the transition in usage of these chemicals for war to peaceful purposes. Delegates may use this source to gain extensive background knowledge of which chemicals were first used to develop weaponry during warfare and how this led to many protocols like the Geneva Protocol. Delegates can also use this source to gain a better historical background on the usage of chemical weapons in warfare.

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). “Responsible Care® Workshops,” *Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, 2023, <https://www.opcw.org/resources/capacity-building/international-cooperation-programmes/responsible-care-workshops>

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is an intergovernmental organization implemented to embody the duties entail in the Chemical Weapons Conventions. The article, “Responsible Care ® Programmed” is a synopsis of a current initiative being developed to improve the overall responsibility and efficiency handling of dual-use chemicals. Delegates may use this source to explore current initiatives surrounding environmental health, safety, and security knowledge surrounding dual-use chemical weapons. Delegates can also explore current organizations and cooperations that this source provides that have developed and implemented measures and regulations for safety standards and practices. This source is a useful tool for delegates to use in frameworks for progressive initiatives surrounding the responsibility of dual-use chemical handling.

Mahfoud, Tara, Christin Aicardi, Saheli Datta, and Nikolas Rose. “The Limits of Dual Use.” *Issues in Science and Technology* 34, no. 4 (2018): 73–78. 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26597992>

The *Issues in Science and Technology* is a policy journal for the purposes of discussion of public policy related to science, technology, engineering and medicine published by U.S. Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The article, “The Limits of Dual Use” distinguishes the difference between military use and civilian use of chemical weaponry and the application into research and politics. The journal describes the limits of dual use that can be described in various areas of study including politics, security, intelligence and military applications. The article explores ways of how dual use can be used for peaceful purposes in all these aspects. Delegates may use this source to explore multiple varieties of applications of dual-use chemicals to further their knowledge on how to provide recommendations for responsible care.