

Syria and Chemical Weapons: Fourth Quarter 2013

Draft as of 10.00 GMT, 4 December 2013

Subject to revision as new information becomes available.

Please read the note in the shaded box, bottom right.

20131001

1 October 2013 A joint Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations team arrives in Damascus to undertake preliminary activities in relation to the disclosures made to the OPCW by the Syrian authorities.[1] The team has travelled over land from Beirut[2] and is initially said to comprise 19 OPCW inspectors and 14 UN staff members[3], although later official reporting puts the number of UN staff members at 16.[4]

It is reported that some of the team members will double-check the disclosures made to the OPCW by the Syrian authorities of what weapons and chemical precursors it possesses and where they are located, while others will start planning the logistics for visits to each of the listed sites.[5] The purpose of this mission is described by the OPCW Director-General two days later in the following terms: 'The team has a three-pronged mission. Firstly: to enable a fuller and more precise disclosure to be made by the Syrian Arab Republic. Secondly: to conduct an assessment based on inspections at sites included in the disclosure in order to plan for destruction activities. And, thirdly: to assess and to carry out operations to render inoperable chemical weapons production facilities and those designed for mixing and filling'.[6]

The opposition Syrian National Coalition indicates that the Free Syrian Army would ensure that inspectors 'will be protected, and granted access to all locations' according to a quote attributed to spokesman Monzer Akbik.[7]

[1] [No author listed], Associated Press, as in: 'Syria's chemical weapons: inspectors arrive to begin dismantling', *Guardian* (London), 1 October 2013; Anne Barnard, 'Weapons Inspection Team Begins Work in Syria', *New York Times*, 2 October 2013.

[2] Martin Nesirky, *Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General*, 1 October 2013, as published by the United Nations Department of Public Information in a 'near-verbatim transcript'.

[3] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'OPCW-UN team arrives in Damascus and sets up operational base', press release, 1 October 2013 [this press release was issued jointly with the United Nations].

[4] United Nations Secretary-General, *Letter dated 7 October 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2013/591, 7 October 2013.

[5] Barbara Surk, Associated Press, as in: 'Weapons Experts Start Syria Mission Amid Clashes', *Time*, 2 October 2013.

[6] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, 'Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council at its Thirty-third Meeting on 3 October 2013', EC-M-33/DG.1, 3 October 2013.

[7] [No author listed], 'Syria conflict: Chemical arms experts cross border', BBC News, 1 October 2013.

20131002

2 October 2013 The first full day of activity in Syria for the joint Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations team formed pursuant to the Geneva Framework Agreement is carried out.

The day's activities are described in the following terms: 'Joint work with the Syrian authorities has begun on securing the sites where the team will operate, especially in outlying areas. The team has also been considering the health and environmental hazards which they may have to confront. In addition, planning continues for one of the team's immediate

tasks, disabling Syria's chemical weapons production facilities, which should begin soon. Meanwhile, discussions on the size of Syria's stockpiles are also under way, as well as long-term planning, so that deadlines unanimously imposed by the Executive Council of the OPCW and the UN Security Council are met'.

Specific emphasis is placed on the role of Syria itself: 'In their discussions with the authorities, the OPCW-UN team was keen to stress that the onus was on the Syrian Government to meet the verification and destruction deadlines. It was however reiterated that the joint mission will provide the necessary technical support to meet these obligations. Meeting the regular reporting requirements will be one indication of compliance'.[1]

The following day, the OPCW reports that the joint OPCW-UN team has made 'encouraging initial progress, following the first working day of meetings with the Syrian authorities'. During the first day of operations, Syrian authorities hand over further documents [see 20 September] which 'look promising, according to team members, but

Please note that this is a snapshot of an unfunded work in progress. It has been circulated in draft form in order to assist understanding of developments in Syria as they unfold. Entries are updated on a regular basis, therefore, ***please check with the author before quoting or citing as more information on any particular event may have become available.*** Comments are welcome. Copies of the chronology will be made available via <<http://www.cbw-events.org.uk/syria.html>>.

Richard Guthrie

richard@cbw-events.org.uk

Entry formatting

As this is a working draft there are a number of types of entry: finished entries, based on the information available at the time; those have been put in place as a holding entries; and those containing something that needs checking or adding to. The entries in the above categories appear thus:

00 XXXXXXX 0000 An entry considered ready for publication — i.e., with content and cross-referencing complete, although still subject to change if new information becomes available.

H 00 XXXXXXX 0000 [Holding entry, essentially rough information to help build the details of the chronology and needing further work — text is included in square brackets.]

Q 00 XXXXXXX 0000 An entry containing something needing checking factually (or further information to be obtained), or which contains suggested edits to be considered. May also include changes or corrections that should be entered into the *CBW Events* source files.

further analysis, particularly of technical diagrams, will be necessary and some more questions remain to be answered'. What are described as 'technical groups' are established by the joint OPCW-UN team with the participation of Syrian experts. These technical groups are working on three areas, described as: 'verification of the information handed over by the Syrian Government'; 'safety and security of the inspection teams'; and 'practical arrangements for implementing the plan, under which Syria's chemical weapons material and equipment are to be eliminated by mid-2014'. [2]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Chemical weapons team gets down to work in Syria', press release, 2 October 2013 [this press release was issued jointly with the United Nations]. See also: Martin Nesirky, *Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General*, 2 October 2013, as published by the United Nations Department of Public Information in a 'near-verbatim transcript'; and United Nations Department of Public Information, 'UN inspectors begin mission to disable Syria's chemical production facilities', press release, 2 October 2013.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Syria Chemical Weapons Team Reports Encouraging Progress, 3 October 2013 [this press release was issued jointly with the United Nations].

20131002

Q 2 October 2013 In Strasbourg, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe debates the situation in Syria. [1] The debate is introduced by Björn von Sydow of Sweden, rapporteur of a report for the meeting. [2]

The Assembly unanimously adopts a recommendation [3] which 'condemns in particular the large scale use of chemical weapons on 21 August 2013 in the Ghouta area of Damascus, which reportedly resulted in many hundreds of deaths, particularly among civilians and including several hundred children' and 'insists that there can be no impunity for those who commit crimes against humanity, whoever and wherever they are. All allegations of violations and crimes committed throughout the Syrian conflict, by virtue of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical and biological weapons, must be properly investigated and their perpetrators, whoever and wherever they may be, brought to justice, including, as appropriate, before the International Criminal Court'.

Welcoming the Geneva Framework Agreement, the associated decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, resolution 2118 of the UN Security Council and the acceptance of the Syrian authorities of these, 'highlighted by Syria's accession' to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the recommendation states the Assembly is: 'well aware of the huge technical difficulties and legal obstacles on the way towards elimination of Syria's chemical weapons and of the fact that the ongoing civil war in the country increases them immensely. Strong political will is needed to work out the details of implementation, and strict compliance by both the Syrian authorities and the opposition are indispensable for its success. Pending cessation of the hostilities, ceasefires should be implemented to allow for inspections of chemical weapons sites, as well as for the transportation and destruction of chemical weapons'.

Paragraph 8 of the recommendation reads: 'In this respect, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers urge the governments of Council of Europe member States to: 8.1. put pressure on all sides so as to ensure respect for the ceasefires necessary for the implementation of the agreed plan; 8.2. provide additional resources to the OPCW to carry out its challenging task'.

[1] *[*debate transcripts*]*

[2] Björn von Sydow (Sweden), 'The situation in Syria', Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, Document 13320, 1 October 2013

[3] *[*recommendation 2026 (2013)*]*

20131003

3 October 2013 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, and presidential envoy on the Middle East, Mikhail Bogdanov, expresses fears that opposition groups may stage 'provocations' as the activities to eliminate chemical weapons are being undertaken in Syria. He is quoted as saying: 'Objectively speaking this cannot be ruled out, and we have certain understanding with our western partners in this respect that there are real risks and different kind of provocations because terrorists and extremists who are not interested in a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis might put different obstacles, quite serious, in the process to eliminate chemical weapons'. He is also said to have expressed concerns that 'it will not be easy to get to the places where chemical weapons or some components are located', asserting: 'In principle, chemical arsenals are under control of the Syrian government, but I think not all of them', adding: 'But one can get to the depots that are controlled by the government only in crossing regions that are controlled by the opposition.'

[1] [No author listed], 'Russia fears radical Syrian opposition provocations in elimination of chemical weapons', Itar-Tass, 3 October 2013.

20131003

Q 3 October 2013 The thirty-third meeting of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons resumes and is legally a continuation of the one that adopted decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 [see 27 September] as the meeting was suspended rather than closed. Representatives of Syria are present. The decision to allow the presence of Syria while a non-State Party is described in the report of the meeting in the following terms: 'This decision neither has, nor is intended to create, a precedent and any possible future requests of a similar nature shall be considered on a case-by-case basis'. [1]

The Director-General describes the purposes of the initial mission to Damascus [see 1 October] and notes that the Syrian National Authority 'has identified a point of contact and detailed discussions have already been conducted regarding all three aspects of the current mission'. He indicates that discussions are also continuing on 'operational planning with the United Nations as a partner' and that a 'Special Coordinator' will be appointed to head the joint OPCW-UN mission. The Special Coordinator will have two deputies, one from the OPCW, the other from the United Nations. He states: 'Decision-making on matters of a nature specific to verification activities and related provisions of the Council decision and the UN Security Council resolution will be conducted under my direct supervision and authority'. He notes: 'United Nations support in areas such as security, security assessments, logistics, and contacts with Syrian opposition groups will be critical to the success of this mission'. [2]

The following Executive Council members make statements relating to the situation in Syria: Iran, Saudi Arabia, the USA, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), Canada, Peru, Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), the UK, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Pakistan, France, Senegal, Norway, Poland, Ecuador (and on behalf of Bolivia), Uruguay, China, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Japan, Argentina, Germany, India and Russia. Four observer states in the Executive Council also make statements: Cuba, Switzerland, Turkey, and the Netherlands. [3] [Note: as of 2 November, all but the statements of Saudi Arabia, the USA, Canada, Senegal, Uruguay, China, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Japan, Argentina, Germany, India and Turkey are available on the OPCW website.] *[*add details from speeches*]*

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Executive Council, 'Report of the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Executive Council', EC-M-33/2, 3 October 2013.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, 'Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council at its Thirty-third Meeting on 3 October 2013', EC-M-33/DG.1, 3 October 2013.

[3] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Executive Council, 'Report of the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Executive Council', EC-M-33/2, 3 October 2013.

20131004

4 October 2013 Syrian authorities submit additional information to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons updating their initial disclosure [see 20 September and 2 October]. This information is described as drawing 'in part on technical assistance provided by the OPCW team and will help the OPCW plan its future activities'.[1] [Note: It is not clear from what has been published whether the two sets of information from today and two days earlier are entirely separate or are related sets of information.] Today is seven days since the adoption of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 [see 27 September] and thus the deadline for submission of the information in paragraph 1(a) of that decision.

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'OPCW Deploys 2nd Team of Inspectors to Expand Verification and Destruction Activities in Syria', press release, 8 October 2013.

20131004

H 4 October 2013 [NATO-Russia Council meets in Brussels]

20131006

6 October 2013 Syrian officials start destroying certain Category 3 chemical weapons and destroying or disabling a range of items under the supervision of personnel from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, towards the goal of rendering unusable all production facilities and mixing and filling equipment by 1 November.[1]

These activities are described by the OPCW Director-General a few days later in the following terms: 'Under the verification of OPCW experts supported by the United Nations, Syria began to destroy its chemical weapons. Syrian personnel used cutting torches and angle grinders to destroy or disable a range of materials, including missile warheads, aerial bombs, and mixing and filling equipment'.[2]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'OPCW Deploys 2nd Team of Inspectors to Expand Verification and Destruction Activities in Syria', press release, 8 October 2013.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Opening Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council At its Seventy-Fourth Session', EC-74/DG.12, 8 October 2013.

20131006

6 October 2013 An element of the advance team of the joint Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations mission returns to The Hague from Syria.[1] At least part of the activities of the OPCW personnel while in Damascus is described as a 'Technical Assistance Visit' in a briefing to the Executive Council the following week.[2]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'OPCW Team Completes First Week of Work in Syria', press release, 6 October 2013.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Briefing by the Technical Secretariat on the Technical Assistance Visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, EC-74/S/4, 10 October 2013.

20131007

7 October 2013 The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, writes to the Security Council regarding the formal establishment of the joint Organization for the Prohibition of

Chemical Weapons-United Nations mission pursuant to the Geneva Framework Agreement [see 14 September] and subsequent legal decisions [see 27 September]. The total size of the Joint Mission is anticipated to be some 100 personnel. The letter confirms that the Joint Mission will be headed by a civilian Special Coordinator [see 3 October], to be appointed 'in close consultation with the Director-General of OPCW, at the level of Under-Secretary-General'.

The Secretary-General writes: 'Within the Joint Mission, the United Nations and OPCW will operate in areas of their particular competencies, taking into account the necessary and complementary roles that each organization has in supporting and conducting the Mission. ... Owing to the specialist nature of the Joint Mission and stringent timelines that have been put in place for the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, the role of the United Nations in facilitating strong support and assistance from Member States is also necessary. While OPCW will serve as the lead technical agency, the United Nations is willing to play a strategic coordination role and serve as an operational enabler for the Mission'. The UN and OPCW would each be responsible for 'its own personnel, responsibilities and tasks'.

On logistic arrangements, the intention is that the Joint Mission will establish a 'light footprint' in Syria, 'deploying to Syria only those personnel whose presence is necessary' primarily in tasks related 'logistics, security and liaison, with limited numbers for support to the Special Coordinator, medical support, communications, administrative support and possibly other areas, as may be required. The Damascus office will thus serve as an operations base for the Joint Mission'. The main support base would be in Cyprus.[1]

[1] United Nations Secretary-General, *Letter dated 7 October 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2013/591*, 7 October 2013. See also: United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Ban seeks 100-member joint mission to oversee destruction of Syrian chemical weapons', press release, 8 October 2013.

20131008

Q 8 October 2013 In The Hague, the seventy-fourth session of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is opened. The session continues until 11 October.

In his statement at the opening of the session, OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü describes some of the recent activities taking place in Syria [see 6 October] and notes that a second team of 12 OPCW inspectors 'has now departed for Cyprus' in order to 'deploy to Damascus via Beirut on 9 October'.[1]

Ambassador Darius Semaška of Lithuania, speaking on behalf of the European Union, notes: 'A number of European Union Member States have already committed additional financial resources to the OPCW, air transport for inspectors, technical personnel and equipment going to Syria and have expressed their willingness to support the OPCW with expertise and other necessary means in order to discharge the new mandate in the Syrian Arab Republic'.[2]

Ambassador Francesco Azzarello of Italy notes the provision by his country of a C-130 military transport aircraft for ten days with the hope that 'thanks to the necessary coordination of the Technical Secretariat, we will be able to have a planned rotation among States Parties ready to assist with vital air transport'.[3]

Ambassador Zelmys María Domínguez Cortina of Cuba suggests: 'For implementation of the Convention by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and the States Parties of this Organisation must make available to the Syrian National Authority all necessary resources, and must help it to comply with the provisions of the Convention,

as well as with those of the decision adopted by the Executive Council on this matter'.[4]

[*CHECK if any further relevant statements have been made public*]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Opening Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council At its Seventy-Fourth Session', EC-74/DG.12, 8 October 2013.

[2] Lithuania, 'Statement on Behalf of the European Union Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Darius Semaška Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the OPCW at the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council', EC-74/NAT.5, 8 October 2013.

[3] Italy, 'Statement by H.E. Ambassador Francesco Azzarello Permanent Representative of Italy to the OPCW at the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council', EC-74/NAT.6, 8 October 2013.

[4] Cuba, 'Statement by H.E. Ambassador Zelmays María Domínguez Cortina Permanent Representative of Cuba to the OPCW at the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council', EC-74/NAT.6, 8 October 2013.

20131009

Q 9 October 2013 OPCW major press conference. The Director-General provides an update on the OPCW's verification and destruction activities in Syria. This is followed by an on-the-record briefing by a panel of senior OPCW representatives comprising three Syria Advance Team members — Jun Wang, Director, OPCW External Relations and Team leader, Dominique Anelli, Head, OPCW Chemical Demilitarisation, Nihad Alihodjic, Head, OPCW Declarations unit — and Malik Ellahi, Political Adviser to the Director-General. **[*Expand*]** UN press release.[1] **[*OPCW source??*]**

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Chemical weapons watchdog urges cooperation in Syria to carry out UN-joint mission', press release, 9 October 2013.

20131010

10 October 2013 In the UK House of Commons, a junior Foreign Office minister states in response to a specific question: 'We have seen no evidence that Saudi Arabia has supplied rebel groups in Syria with chemicals that could be weaponised'.[1]

[1] Hugh Robertson, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Answer, 10 October 2013, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 568, c357-58, in response to Paul Flynn MP.

20131010

10 October 2013 In the UK House of Lords, further details are given regarding the licences granted for export of sodium fluoride and potassium fluoride to Syria [see 1 September]. A junior minister states: 'Two Standard Individual Export Licences (SIELs) were granted on 17 and 18 January 2012 authorising export of sodium fluoride and potassium fluoride. The licences were revoked on 30 July 2012 following the adoption of EU sanctions prohibiting the supply of these chemicals to Syria. No chemicals were exported under these licences before they were revoked'. [Note: the EU sanctions were introduced some six weeks before this date.]

The response also states: 'Ministers were not consulted by officials before these export licences were granted, as no specific concerns about end-use had been identified'.[1]

[1] Viscount Younger of Leckie, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Written Answer, 10 October 2013, *Hansard* (Lords), vol 748, c45, in response to Lord Alton of Liverpool.

20131010

Q 10 October 2013 After some days of rumours circulating, a blog post includes a reference to an approach to the government of Norway by representatives of the US government requesting assistance with destruction of Syrian chemical weapons.[1] **[*expand*]**

[1] Colum Lynch, 'New Syrian Weapons Disposal Plan: Send Them to Scandinavia', *Foreign Policy* [blog], 10 October 2013

20131011

Q 11 October 2013 OPCW awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the citation reading: 'for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons'.[1] Congratulations from UN.[2] Some commentaries in favour,[3] some against [4]. **[*Expand*]**

[1] Den Norsk Nobelkomite [The Norwegian Nobel Committee], 'The Nobel Peace Prize 2013', press release, 11 October 2013.

[2] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Ban lauds awarding of Nobel Peace Prize to international chemical watchdog', press release, 11 October 2013.

[3] Matthew Schofield, 'Why OPCW won this year's Nobel Peace Prize', McClatchy, 14 October 2013

[4] Henry Sokolski, 'This Year's Peace Prize: Not Up to Snuff', *National Review*, 12 October 2013.

20131011

Q 11 October 2013 The United Nations Security Council agrees to the terms for establishment of the Joint OPCW-UN Mission in Syria.[1] The agreement is circulated in the form of a letter rather than a formal decision of the Council or as a statement by the President of the Council. However, the letter is unpublished at this time. **[*Expand*]**

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Security Council approves joint OPCW-UN mission to oversee destruction of Syria's chemical weapons', press release, 11 October 2013.

20131014

14 October 2013 The Chemical Weapons Convention [see 29 April 1997] formally enters into force for Syria [see 14 September].

2013101

14 October 2013 In the UK House of Commons, a junior Foreign Office minister is asked whether the Government has 'independently evaluated' reports that opposition groups in Syria had used chemical weapons. The minister responds: 'We have seen no credible evidence to suggest that the Syrian opposition was behind the 19 March attack. Russia and Syria continue to claim that the opposition were also responsible for the 21 August Ghouta atrocities'. He adds: 'The Joint Intelligence Committee assessment [see 29 August] confirmed that it was not possible for the opposition to have carried out an attack on the scale of 21 August and this has been backed up by the UN inspectors' report which leaves no doubt that the Syrian regime is the only party that could have been responsible'.[1]

In answer to a further question, the minister responds: 'We have seen no credible evidence to suggest that chemical weapons imported by the Gaddafi regime are now in the possession of the Syrian opposition forces'.[2]

[1] Hugh Robertson, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Answer, 14 October 2013, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 568, c540, in response to Paul Flynn MP.

[2] Hugh Robertson, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Answer, 14 October 2013, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 568, c547-48, in response to Paul Flynn MP.

20131016

Q 16 October 2013 The Syrian National Coalition states 'there are no chemical weapons sites in the areas under Free Syrian Army control'.[1] The Coalition further states: 'There are regime-controlled chemical weapons sites that are in areas besieged by the FSA, however there are no chemical weapons sites that are controlled by rebel brigades'.

The statement also includes: 'The Syrian Coalition, and the General Staff of the Free Syrian Army, reiterate their commitment to fully cooperate with members of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as they carry out their duties in dismantling and destroying the Assad regime's chemical weapons'. However, referring the recent comments about whether sites to be inspected by the OPCW are under opposition control **[*clarify*]** he is quoted as saying: 'The Syrian Coalition wishes that the

Director-General of OPCW, Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü, will, in the future, choose his remarks with more precision’.

[*Add about humanitarian corridors??*]

[1] Syrian National Coalition Of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, ‘Syrian Coalition: No Chemical Weapons in Areas Under Free Syrian Army Control’, press release, 16 October 2013.

20131016

Q 16 October 2013 The ‘OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria’ is formally established following the outline elaborated by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Director-General [see 3 October], suggestions by the United Nations Secretary-General [see 7 October] and the agreement within the UN Security Council [see 11 October]. Sigrid Kaag is appointed as the Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission.[1] The mission is known by the abbreviation JMIS, as in OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria.[2] **[*Expand*]**

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, ‘Ban appoints Sigrid Kaag to head up joint OPCW-UN mission in Syria’, press release, 16 October 2013.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, ‘Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme’, EC-M-34/DG.1, 25 October 2013.

20131016

H 16 October 2013 [OPCW TS call for voluntary contributions for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, S/1132/2013, 16 October 2013.]

20131017

H 17 October 2013 [Published today — Frederik Pleitgen and Nick Thompson, ‘Syria’s chemical weapons inspectors prepare for unprecedented mission’, CNN, 17 October 2013.]

20131017

17 October 2013 In the UK House of Lords, further details are given regarding the licences granted for export of sodium fluoride and potassium fluoride to Syria [see 1 September and 10 October]. A junior minister states: ‘A minimum of 4050kg and a maximum of 4150kg of sodium fluoride was exported under licence between 2004 and 2012. It is not possible to give precise figures because HMRC [Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs] is only required to keep export records for a maximum of 3 calendar years from the year in which the export was submitted to them and some exports were made before this period. No potassium fluoride was shipped because the licence concerned was revoked and no shipments had been made’.

A further piece of new information provided in this answer is that other than the already disclosed six licences granted for export of sodium fluoride and one for potassium fluoride: ‘No other licences have been granted for export to Syria of chemicals capable of use in the manufacture of chemical weapons’.[1]

[1] Viscount Younger of Leckie, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Written Answer, 17 October 2013, *Hansard* (Lords), vol 748, c96, in response to Lord Roberts of Llandudno.

20131018

18 October 2013 The number of sites inspected by the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations has now risen to 14, according to information released by the OPCW. The OPCW is not providing an exact number of sites that are subject to inspection, saying that this is ‘more than 20 sites’.[1]

[1] [No author listed], Agence France Presse, 18 October 2013, as in: ‘Chemical watchdog says 14 sites inspected in Syrian’, *Dawn* (Bangladesh), 19 October 2013.

20131018

H 18 October 2013 [Saudi Arabia announces it is declining its seat on the Security Council, citing what it describes as failures within the Council in dealing with Syria.]

20131019

19 October 2013 Sigrid Kaag, the Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations, visits The Hague to meet with the OPCW Director-General and other Secretariat officials.[1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, ‘Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme’, EC-M-34/DG.1, 25 October 2013.

20131022

22 October 2013 The Syrian Government has been fully cooperating with the destruction of its chemical weapons programme, so says Sigrid Kaag, the Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations, speaking in Damascus. She is quoted as saying: ‘To date, the Government of Syria has fully cooperated in supporting the work of the advance team and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission’. The tally of sites at which inspections have been conducted at has now reached 17, at 14 of which the inspectors carried out what is described as ‘activities related to the destruction of critical equipment’.[1]

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, ‘Syria has “fully cooperated” with OPCW-UN efforts to destroy chemical arsenal, team head says’, press release, 22 October 2013.

20131023

Q 23 October 2013 For the first time, an official source publicly states that the number of sites disclosed by Syria in relation to its chemical weapons programme is 23. The information comes from a press conference in The Hague hosted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

OPCW spokesman Michael Luhan tells the press conference that inspectors had now been to 18 of the 23 sites and that the team is proceeding with ‘functional destruction’ to ensure the sites are inoperable. He is quoted as saying the inspector teams are concentrating on destroying ‘what we call the critical equipment that is at the heart of the production facility, or that runs the mixing and filling units. That critical equipment will be destroyed, rendering the production facilities and equipment inoperable, unusable’. Describing the ‘low tech, quick and cheap’ methods used to render equipment unusable, such as filling with concrete or crushing he is quoted as saying: ‘It means that [Syria] will no longer have the capability to produce any more chemical weapons, and it will no longer have any working equipment to mix and to fill chemical weapons agent into munitions’.[1]

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, ‘Syria: joint OPCW-UN chemical weapons team reports visits to nearly all declared sites’, press release, 23 October 2013. **[*OPCW source??*]**

20131023

23 October 2013 Following suggestions that Norway could be used as a location for destruction of syrian chemical weapons materials [see 10 October], Norwegian Foreign Minister Boerge Brende is quoted as saying Oslo will respond ‘as soon as possible’, adding that Norway does not have the equipment needed for the destruction process.[1]

[1] [No author listed], Agence France Presse, as in: ‘Sweden to assist in Syrian arsenal destruction’, *Global Post*, 24 October 2013

20131024

24 October 2013 Sweden announces provision of assistance to the OPCW-UN mission to oversee destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons. The assistance takes the form of a

C-130 Hercules and its associated support unit. Defence Minister Karin Engström is quoted as saying ‘The Swedish military aviation unit will be stationed in Cyprus in order to support the [OPCW] in personnel and equipment transport’.[1]

[1] [No author listed], Agence France Presse, as in: ‘Sweden to assist in Syrian arsenal destruction’, Global Post, 24 October 2013

20131024

24 October 2013 Syria delivers to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons its first formal declaration and its general plan for destruction of chemical weapons as required under the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention [see 29 April 1997], taking into account the modified timelines in the decision adopted by the OPCW Executive Council on 27 September. The receipt of this declaration is not made public for a few days[1] and no specific details of its contents are revealed at this stage.

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, ‘Syria Submits its Initial Declaration and a General Plan of Destruction of its Chemical Weapons Programme’, press release, 27 October 2013.

20131024

24 October 2013 In the UK, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Vince Cable, ‘has been accused of hampering a parliamentary investigation into the sale of potential nerve gas ingredients to Syria by refusing to disclose the names of British companies granted export licences for the chemicals’, so writes the *Independent* newspaper [see 17 October]. The paper says that Sir John Stanley, chairman of the House of Commons Committee on Arms Export Controls, is calling for this refusal to be reconsidered and quotes him as warning it is a ‘serious matter’.[1]

[1] Cahal Milmo, ‘Vince Cable refuses to name firms that tried to export chemicals to Syria’, *Independent* (London), 24 October 2013.

20131025

25 October 2013 In The Hague, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons provides a report on *Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme* to States Parties via the Executive Council.[1] It is described as the ‘first monthly report’ and covers the period from 27 September to 22 October 2013. The report makes public more details on the disclosure by Syria on its chemical weapons-related stocks and on its facilities than had been previously provided in official sources.

The report states that Syria submitted information on its chemical weapons-related stocks indicating it held ‘approximately 1,000 metric tonnes (MTs) of Category 1 chemical weapons (largely binary chemical weapon precursors), approximately 290 MTs of Category 2 chemical weapons, and approximately 1,230 unfilled chemical munitions’.

On facilities, the report states that Syria submitted information on 41 facilities at 23 sites, comprising 18 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs), including filling facilities, 12 chemical weapons storage facilities (CWSFs), 8 mobile filling units, and 3 other chemical weapons-related facilities. A footnote clarifies some details: ‘Following the receipt on 23 October 2013 of the initial declaration required by Article III, the number of declared facilities has been amended to a total of 41. One of the disclosed CWPFs was unintentionally counted twice in the disclosure made on 19 September, while one of the disclosed CWSFs was found to be completely empty and thus not declarable as a CWSF’. [Note: the reference to Article III is to that article in the Chemical Weapons Convention.] ‘In addition, the Syrian authorities have reported finding two

cylinders not belonging to them, which are believed to contain chemical weapons’, although no further details, such as location of these cylinders, is provided.

The report describes the establishment of an ‘Operational Planning Group’ which ‘consists of OPCW and United Nations personnel and national experts provided by States Parties in a position to do so’. The OPG ‘will provide advice on operational and logistical aspects relating to the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. The OPG will provide advice with regard to the identification of requirements for possible in-kind contributions from States Parties’.

Support from States Parties has been provided. The trust fund [see 16 October] has received EUR 4 million as at the cut-off date of this report, with contributions from Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the USA. A four further States Parties are said to have made pledges to contribute an additional amount of EUR 2.7 million. Appreciation is expressed for other provisions of support: ‘Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands for air transportation for the deployed teams; the European External Action Service, some European Union Member States, and the United States of America for providing armoured vehicles; and Canada for providing air transportation for the vehicles supplied by the United States of America’.

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, ‘Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme’, EC-M-34/DG.1, 25 October 2013.

20131025

25 October 2013 The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement on the discussions regarding suggestions that the country should host destruction of chemical weapons transported from Syria [see 10 and 23 October]. The opening summary paragraph of the statement reads: ‘Norway and the United States of America have over the course of the last few weeks held extensive discussions and exchanged relevant information on issues related to the possible destruction of Syrian chemical warfare agents in Norway. The considerations have taken place in a constructive and positive atmosphere. The two countries have come to the joint understanding that Norway is not the most suitable location for this destruction.’ The statement also includes: ‘After a comprehensive assessment, the two countries have come to the joint understanding that due to time constraints and external factors, such as capacities, regulatory requirements, Norway is not the most suitable location for the destruction of Syrian chemical warfare agents.’[1]

[1] Norway, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Syrian Chemical Warfare Agents’, 25 October 2013.

20131027

27 October 2013 Today is 30 days since the adoption of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 [see 27 September] and thus the deadline for submission of the information specified in paragraph 1(a) of that decision. This information is provided by Syria a few days ahead of this deadline [see 24 October].

20131029

29 October 2013 An artillery shell containing chemical weapons is alleged to be used in the north-east of Syria. An Iranian news agency describes the alleged use in the following terms: ‘The toxic shell exploded near a Kurdish defense forces’ checkpoint close to the border with Turkey in the city of Ras al-Ayn in the Northern province of al-Hasakah’, citing Al-Alam as the source of its information. The news agency says that Lebanese TV channel Al-Mayadeen quotes Kurdish defense forces indicating they saw toxic yellow smoke that followed the shell explosion,

while some of them had symptoms of severe chemical intoxication.[1]

The following day, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs states: 'Moscow is deeply embarrassed by another message about the use of chemical weapons in the territory of Syria by extremists. This information certainly requires thorough verification and investigation. At the same time, we reiterate yet again that the unanimously adopted UNSC resolution 2118 imposes special responsibility on Syria's neighbours requiring them to prevent chemical weapons getting into hands of non-governmental subjects'.[2]

[1] [No author listed], 'Report: Terrorists in Syria Use Chemical Weapons near Turkish Border', Fars, 30 October 2013.

[2] Russia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Comment by the Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the development of the situation in the north-east of Syria, 30 October 2013. See also: [No author listed], 'Russia alarmed by fresh reports Syrian militants using chemical weapons – FM', Voice of Russia, 30 October 2013.

20131031

31 October 2013 The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announces that the 'functional destruction' of the first set of defined items in Syria under OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 [see 27 September] has been completed. The announcement states that the Joint OPCW-UN Mission has inspected 39 of the 41 declared facilities located at 21 of the 23 declared sites. The OPCW explains: 'The two remaining sites were not visited due to safety and security concerns. But Syria declared those sites as abandoned and that the chemical weapons programme items they contained were moved to other declared sites, which were inspected'. The OPCW concludes: 'The Joint Mission is now satisfied that it has verified — and seen destroyed — all of Syria's declared critical production and mixing/filling equipment. Given the progress made in the Joint OPCW-UN Mission in meeting the requirements of the first phase of activities, no further inspection activities are currently planned'.[1]

There is no official statement on the locations of the uninspected sites, although there are indications provided in news reporting. One of these sites is said to be at Safira, a town south east of Aleppo which has been the location of considerable fighting between government and opposition forces.[2] The second site is said to be near Damascus.[3]

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office is quoted as saying in response to the OPCW announcement: 'While the challenging work of the OPCW has reached an important first milestone, it brings no relief to the Syrian people. The Assad regime continues to use artillery, air power and siege tactics against civilians, with thousands killed every month. As winter approaches, the humanitarian situation grows more acute with millions left vulnerable'.[4]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Syria Completes Destruction Activities to Render Inoperable Chemical Weapons Production Facilities and Mixing/Filling Plants', press release, 31 October 2013. See also, United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Syria meets deadline, renders chemical weapons facilities "inoperable" – OPCW-UN mission', press release, 31 October 2013.

[2] Erika Solomon (from Beirut), 'Syrian army captures strategic town as approaches to Aleppo', Reuters, 1 November 2013.

[3] [No author listed], 'Syria Destroys Chemical Equipment Despite Security Issues', *Global Security Newswire*, 31 October 2013, citing: Anne Barnard, 'Syria Destroys Chemical Sites, Inspectors Say', *New York Times*, 31 October 2013. However, the version of this *New York Times* article available on the web on 2 November does not mention this detail.

[4] Ian Black and James Meikle, 'Syria meets chemical weapons deadline amid fears of polio outbreak', *Guardian* (London), 31 October 2013.

20131031

H 31 October 2013 [Lebanon rejects any possibility of using its territory for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons —

[No author listed], 'Berri rejects dumping Syrian chemical arms in Lebanon', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 1 November 2013.]

20131031

31 October 2013 In the US Congress, hearings are held regarding the situation in Syria. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation Thomas Countryman. Committee Chairman Robert Menendez highlights that US sources originally suggested that there were 45 sites associated with the Syrian chemical weapons programme [see 14 September] while the Syrian declaration refers to 41 facilities at 23 sites. Countryman is quoted as saying: 'It's not just a semantics issue, whether we are talking about sites and facilities, whether we are double-counting. It is a serious question that needs to be addressed', adding: 'We do have the tools ... to resolve any discrepancies between what we believe and what the Syrians have declared'.[1]

Elsewhere, US sources raise doubts about whether the information provided by the Syrian authorities on chemical weapons activities is likely to be comprehensive. One unnamed official is quoted as saying: 'There's a real concern that the Syrians might be trying to preserve some of their chemical weapons capabilities'.[2] The official is said to have declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the situation.

US Secretary of State John Kerry announces that, to date, 'the United States has provided approximately \$6 million in financial and in-kind assistance to support the efforts of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission'.[3]

[1] [No author listed], 'Fidelity of Syrian Chemical Disclosure Questioned', *Global Security Newswire*, 1 November 2013

[2] Laura Smith-Spark, 'Syria has met first chemical weapons destruction deadline, OPCW says', CNN, 31 October 2013.

[3] John Kerry, US Secretary of State, 'Progress Eliminating Syria's Chemical Weapons Program', press statement, United States Department of State, 31 October 2013

20131101

1 November 2013 Sigrid Kaag, the Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations, travels to Moscow to meet with Russian officials on the progress of Syria's chemical weapons destruction.[1]

After the meeting, Russian first deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov is quoted as saying 'There are many arguments in favo[u]r of taking the vast majority of the poisonous substances outside of the country's borders'.[2]

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'As part of peace efforts, UN-Arab League envoy meets Syrian President in Damascus', press release, 30 October 2013.

[2] [No author listed], 'Syrian Chemical Arsenal Likely to Be Taken Abroad for Disposal', *RIA Novosti*, 1 November 2013. See also: Steve Gutterman, 'Russia says better to remove most chemical weapons from Syria', Reuters, 1 November 2013.

20131105

5 November 2013 In New York, the UN Security Council is briefed on activities undertaken by the OPCW-UN Joint Mission. Speaking to the press after the Council meeting, Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission, is quoted as saying: 'We had a very good discussion with Council members; questions were raised concerning staff safety and security and the possible anticipated role of the Joint Mission, obviously continued verification monitoring but also possibly support for implementation of the final phases of the overall plan'. Asked about funding, she is reported to say that the UN voluntary fund set up to support the Joint Mission had received some \$2 million, while the OPCW mechanism had roughly \$10 million, which would carry the Joint Mission through the end of the year.[1]

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Syria: top envoys brief on latest UN efforts to tackle worsening Syria crisis', press release, 5 November 2013.

20131106-09

6-9 November 2013 At the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague, the 'Operational Planning Group' convenes with a delegation from the Syrian Arab Republic in attendance. The OPG 'consists of OPCW and United Nations personnel and national experts provided by States Parties in a position to do so' [see 25 October] and numbers 30 experts from various backgrounds. The OPG develops what is described as 'an outline' of an 'Outline Plan for the Removal of Chemical Weapons in Syria for Destruction Outside its Territory'. This Outline Plan was circulated to OPCW member states annexed to document EC-M-34/DG.15, dated 14 November 2013, but which had not been made public as of 3 December.

The second monthly report of the OPCW describes the work of the group at this meeting in the following terms: 'The OPG presented a scenario for the rapid, sequenced packaging and transport of chemical agents from the Syrian Arab Republic for destruction. The OPG concluded that conditions of safety and security will be absolute prerequisites for the success of such a plan and that due regard must be paid to the protection of people and the environment at every stage of the process of transportation and destruction. Furthermore, the OPG recommended that international norms and standards applicable to the transportation of hazardous material will have to be fully upheld'.[1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-35/DG.1, 25 November 2013.

20131107

7 November 2013 It is announced that one of the remaining declared chemical weapons related sites to be verified has now been checked by remote means. A UN spokesperson is quoted as telling reporters: 'The additional site inspected is in the region of Aleppo and was one of the two sites that could not be visited earlier due to safety and security reasons'.[1]

A later report describes the verification activities in the following terms: 'Verification was conducted with the support of sealed GPS cameras used by Syrian personnel, in accordance with the guidance of the inspection team. The exact geographical location and the time the footage/images were captured were then fully authenticated. As stated in the initial declaration, the site was confirmed as long abandoned and the building showed extensive battle damage. Thus, the Secretariat has now verified 22 of the 23 sites declared by the Syrian Arab Republic'.[2]

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Syria: joint OPCW-UN chemical weapons team verifies site in Aleppo', press release, 7 November 2013.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-35/DG.1, 25 November 2013.

20131107

H 7 November 2013 [Launch of the joint mission website]

20131108

8 November 2013 Denmark offers assistance to move Syrian chemical weapons and associated items through the provision of a naval vessel. It also offers to provide protection through an unspecified number of what are described as specially trained troops. It is expected that the ship would be needed until February while the troops may be needed for longer.[1] In later reporting, the troops are described as being 'a personal protection team for international inspectors'.[2] Defence Minister Nikolai Wammen is reported to have said that the United Nations had unofficially asked whether

Denmark could contribute ships to transport the weapons from Syria.[3]

[1] [No author listed], 'Military to assist in chemical weapon mission in Syria', *Copenhagen Post*, 8 November 2013, citing reporting in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*.

[2] Charles Onians (from The Hague), Agence France Presse, as in: 'Chemical watchdog to seal Syria arsenal destruction plan', Google News, 15 November 2013.

[3] [No author listed] (from Copenhagen), Associated Press, as in: 'Danes could transport Syria's chemical weapons', *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 November 2013.

20131112

12 November 2013 In Tirana, there are protests against the possibility that Albania might act as host country for activities to destroy chemical weapons removed from Syria.[1] Rumours about possible imports of chemical weapons for destruction had circulated just weeks after the incoming government of Prime Minister Edi Rama had banned waste imports into Albania in its first cabinet meeting.[2]

With internal tensions rising, and with an imminent decision due by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the plan for destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, Rama announces later in the week that it is 'impossible for Albania to take part in this operation'.[3] The rejection of the destruction plan is described in the press as 'an unprecedented break from its traditionally staunch allegiance to NATO ally Washington'.[4]

[1] Benet Koleka (from Tirana), 'Albanians angry with U.S. over Syrian chemical weapons', Reuters, 12 November 2013.

[2] Besar Likmeta (from Tirana), 'Albania's New Govt Bans Waste Imports', *Balkan Insight*, 17 September 2013.

[3] [No author listed] (from Tirana), Associated Press, as in: 'Albania rejects US request to host disposal of Syria's chemical weapons', *Guardian* (London), 15 November 2013.

[4] Anthony Deutsch (from The Hague) and Benet Koleka (from Tirana), 'Albanian "No" deals blow to Syria chemical weapons plan', Reuters, 15 November 2013.

20131115

15 November 2013 In The Hague, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons meets on the scheduled date for a decision on intermediate deadlines for destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and related items in accordance with paragraph 1(c) of the OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 [see 27 September].[1]

The Council is briefed by the OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü and the Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria (JMIS) Sigrid Kaag. The Director-General tells the Council that Syria has reported the destruction of 774 Category 3 weapons, of which 462 have already been verified and that this work will continue in the coming weeks and provides a briefing on the most recent work of the Operational Planning Group [see 6-9 November]. Expressing appreciation for voluntary contributions either provided or pledged to assist the operations in relation to Syria, he informs the Council that total contributions to the trust fund as at 14 November 2013 were EUR 10.4 million with a number of further commitments made.[2]

Negotiations on the timelines focus on removal of relevant materials and technologies from Syria. Speculation is focused on the possibility that the intended location was to be Albania which announces this day it is not willing to host the destruction activities [see 12 November].[3] It is reported that Belgium and France have been considered as potential destruction locations.[4] The decision, as adopted, contains no reference to which location destruction activities would be carried out.

The adopted decision envisages removal from Syria of all declared chemical substances and precursors, except for isopropanol, no later than 5 February 2014 with the highest

priority chemicals to be transported out of Syria by 31 December 2013. Declared chemical weapons production facilities are to be destroyed during the period starting from 15 December 2013 to 15 March 2014. Destruction of the highest priority chemicals, described as ‘mustard agent and the key binary chemical weapon components’ and given the names ‘DF’, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘BB’ and ‘BB salt’, is to be completed by 31 March 2014 and for all other declared chemicals by 30 June 2014.[5]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Technical Secretariat, ‘OPCW Executive Council adopts plan for the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons programme in the first half of 2014’, press release, 15 November 2013.

[2] Director-General, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, ‘Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting on 15 November 2013’, EC-M-34/DG.16, 15 November 2013.

[3] Anthony Deutsch (from The Hague) and Benet Koleka (from Tirana), ‘Albanian “No” deals blow to Syria chemical weapons plan’, Reuters, 15 November 2013.

[4] [No author listed], ‘Albania shuns Syria chemical weapons destruction’, BBC News, 15 November 2013.

[5] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, ‘Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities’, Decision, EC-M-34/DEC.1, 15 November 2013.

20131118

18 November 2013 In Brussels, Belgian Defence Minister Pieter De Crem rules out Belgium as a location for destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and related materials.[1]

Also on this day in Brussels is a meeting of European Union foreign and defence ministers. Frans Timmermans, Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, is quoted as saying: ‘There is no [EU] member state that has come forward in saying “OK, give us the stuff” and saying further: ‘Instead of taking the chemical weapons out of Syria to the installations where they would be destroyed, one could perhaps take the installations to the chemical weapons instead’.[2]

The following day, France denies it has been approached for consideration as a location for destruction activities.[3]

[1] David Blair, and David Hopkins, ‘Belgium becomes fourth country to refuse to destroy Syria’s chemical arsenal’, *Daily Telegraph* (London), 18 November 2013.

[2] [No author listed] (from Brussels), Associated Press, as in: ‘No EU country comes forward as candidate to destroy Syria’s chemical stockpiles’, *Washington Post*, 18 November 2013.

[3] Charles Onians (from The Hague), Agence France Presse, as in: ‘Syria chemical weapons could be destroyed at sea: watchdog’, Yahoo News, 20 November 2013.

20131119

19 November 2013 ‘Unable to find a country willing to dispose of Syria’s chemical weapons, the United States is considering plans to place the chemical components of the weapons on a barge where they would be dissolved or incinerated, according to senior American officials’, so the *New York Times* writes today.[1]

The newspaper writes that two options are under consideration. One options would involve using five incinerators operating at high temperatures on board a barge. The second would be centred on what the paper describes as ‘a highly sophisticated mobile system’ developed by the Department of Defense, known as the Field Deployable Hydrolysis System. The first of these options would be carried out by a commercial entity, the second would be carried out by government personnel.

The following day, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirms that the proposed options for destruction at sea are plausible. OPCW spokesman Christian Chartier is quoted as saying: ‘It’s still being looked at and is one of several solutions envisaged by member states and as

long as a decision has not been taken, it remains a possibility’.[2]

Subsequent press comment sometimes confuses the concepts of destruction of chemical weapon materials within a facility installed on a ship which might operate at sea and the potential for dumping such materials at sea[3] — an activity specifically prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention [see 29 April 1997]. Paragraph 13 of Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex of the Convention reads:

Each State Party shall determine how it shall destroy chemical weapons, except that the following processes may not be used: dumping in any body of water, land burial or open-pit burning. It shall destroy chemical weapons only at specifically designated and appropriately designed and equipped facilities.

[1] Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt (from Washington), ‘Options Narrowed, U.S. Is Said to Weigh Destroying Syrian Chemicals at Sea’, *New York Times*, 19 November 2013.

[2] Charles Onians (from The Hague), Agence France Presse, as in: ‘Syria chemical weapons could be destroyed at sea: watchdog’, Yahoo News, 20 November 2013.

[3] See, for example: [No author listed], ‘OPCW: Syria’s Chemical Weapons Can Be Dumped at Sea’, *Arutz Sheva*, 21 November 2013.

20131120

Q20 November 2013 The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons issues a request for expressions of interest from commercial entities involved in waste disposal to deal with some of the materials declared by the Syrian authorities and waste products resulting from the initial stages of destruction of the most toxic materials. The deadline for expressions of interest is given as 29 November.[1] [**Double check typesetting of chemical names**]

The hazardous materials to be disposed of fall within four categories. The first category includes various organic chemicals for which companies should be able to receive them in February 2014 with operations completed by 30 June 2014. The chemicals are listed with their CAS registry numbers and approximate quantities in metric tons (mt):

- triethylamine 121-44-8 (30mt);
- trimethyl phosphite 121-45-9 (60mt);
- dimethyl phosphite 868-85-9 (5mt);
- monoisopropylamine 75-31-0 (40mt);
- di-isopropyl aminoethanol 69-80-0 (5mt);
- 2-chloroethanol 107-07-3 (5mt);
- butan-1-ol 71-36-3 (5mt);
- methanol 67-56-1 (3mt);
- propan-2-ol 67-63-0 (120mt);
- hexamine 100-97-0 (80mt);
- sodium-o-ethyl methyl phosphonothionate 22307-81-9 (130mt);
- n (2-chloroethyl)-n-isopropyl propan 2 amine (Salt) 96-79-7 (40mt);
- n (2-chloroethyl)-n-isopropyl propan 2 amine (solution 23-64%) 96-79-7 (90mt); and
- n (2-chloroethyl)-n-ethyl propan 2 amine (solution 23-64%) 13105-93-6 (25mt).

The second category includes various inorganic chemicals for which companies should be able to receive them in February 2014 with operations completed by 30 June 2014. The chemicals are listed as:

- hydrogen fluoride 7664-39-3 (60mt);
- phosphorus pentasulfide 1314-80-3 (10mt);
- phosphorus trichloride 7719-12-2 (30mt);
- phosphorus oxychloride 10025-87-3 (15mt); and
- hydrogen chloride 7647-01-0 (45mt).

The third category is effluent resulting from neutralisation operations that will need to be destroyed. Companies interested in conducting the disposal operations for these effluents should be able to receive the effluent in February 2014 and shall complete operations by 31 December 2014.

The fourth category for disposal is described as: 'packaging materials/empty containers/drums for the above-mentioned chemicals (around 4,000 containers, different capacities) as well as, amongst others, solid waste including personnel protective equipment, spill pillows, carbon filters, HEPA filters, rags and clean-up materials, and lab equipment'. No time limit is stipulated for this.

The EOI notes that the processes for treatment of these hazardous materials will have to be monitored by the OPCW. 'The receipt of subject chemicals and effluent to the facility and its consumption will be fully reported to the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, and inspection teams of the OPCW will verify reported information on such receipt and consumption. In this regard, necessary verification measures meant to ensure the accountability of chemicals received and disposed of will have to be agreed. These may include but are not limited to: access of OPCW inspectors, subject to safety requirements, to agreed upon areas; the ability to confirm the receipt of chemicals and their destruction through physical access and/or by reviewing video recording; access to, as applicable, relevant operational records, process data, weighing data, and or video recordings of specific activities in relation to the disposal of the subject chemicals only'.

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Technical Secretariat, 'Treatment and disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous organic and inorganic chemicals and related packaging materials/containers', Request for Expression of Interest (EOI), OPCW/CDB/EOI/01/2013, 20 November 2013.

20131121

H 21 November 2013 [In The Hague, the Assembly of States Parties of International Criminal Court convenes for its 12th session.]

20131125

Q 25 November 2013 In The Hague, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons provides the second monthly report on *Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme* to States Parties via the Executive Council.[1] It covers the period from 23 October to 22 November 2013.

Matters reported on include the meeting of the Operational Planning Group [see 6-9 November] and the verification of the penultimate unvisited site [see 7 November]. *[*Add more*]*

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-35/DG.1, 25 November 2013.

20131128

28 November 2013 After some days of rumours circulating [see 19 November], it is confirmed that a plan is being prepared to enable destruction of declared Syrian chemical weapons and related materials on board a US Navy auxiliary vessel MV Cape Ray.[1] The option of a ship-board destruction operation has come to greater prominence following the difficulties of finding a land-based location to carry out such destruction activities.

The proposed plan would involve fitting a 'Field Deployable Hydrolysis System' on board the ship. The system is described as using 'a titanium reactor and heated water and other chemicals' to neutralize the chemicals from the Syrian programme. It is reported that the Defense Threat Reduction Agency developed the system but that it has never been used operationally.[2]

The proposed plan is outlined to the OPCW Executive Council the following day.

[1] Mark Urban, 'Syrian chemical weapons set to be destroyed at sea', BBC News, 28 November 2013.

[2] Lolita C Baldor and Pauline Jelinek, Associated Press, as in: 'AP sources: Plan calls for ship to destroy weapons', *Denver Post*, 28 November 2013.

20131129

H 29 November 2013 [OPCW Executive Council meets, receives progress report from DG, including US announcement on offer of ship-based destruction option. The plan would be for the use of a hydrolysis method. OPCW announces that 35 companies have responded to the request for expressions of interest on disposal of hazardous materials [see 20 November].]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Technical Secretariat, 'United States offers to destroy Syria's Priority Chemicals', press release, 30 November 2013.

20131202

H 2 December 2013 [The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Conference of States Parties convenes in The Hague. Numerous public statements make direct reference to events in Syria and subsequent activities to complete the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons capabilities.]

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Forthcoming milestones

20131215

H 15 December 2013 [Start date under OPCW Executive Council decision for destruction of declared chemical weapons facilities, to be completed by 15 March 2014.]

20131231

H 31 December 2013 [Deadline under OPCW Executive Council decision for removal from Syria of the highest priority chemicals.]

20140205

H 5 February 2014 [Deadline under OPCW Executive Council decision for removal from Syria of all remaining declared chemical substances and precursors, except for isopropanol.]

20140315

H 15 March 2014 [Deadline under OPCW Executive Council decision for destruction of declared chemical weapons facilities.]

20140331

H 31 March 2014 [Deadline under OPCW Executive Council decision for destruction of the highest priority chemical weapons materials.]

20140630

H 30 June 2014 [Overall Syria CW destruction deadline]

20141231

H 31 December 2014 [Deadline, as identified in the expression of interest document [see 20 November 2013] for the safe disposal of effluents produced in the hydrolysis of the priority chemicals.]