

# Syria and Chemical Weapons: Second Quarter 2014

*Draft as of 13.00 GMT, 23 September 2014*

*Subject to revision as new information becomes available.*

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

*Note: this is still a relatively early draft owing to other commitments of the author*

20140401

**H 1 April 2014** [Further reporting of fighting in Latakia governorate.]

20140401

**H 1 April 2014** [NATO foreign ministers agree to suspend all practical civilian and military co-operation with Russia. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen is described as saying that Russia's annexation of the Crimea region was the gravest threat to European security for a generation and quoted as saying there could be no 'business as usual' — [No author listed], 'Ukraine crisis: Nato suspends Russia co-operation', BBC, 1 April 2014.]

20140402

**H 2 April 2014** [German offer of escort ship — [No author listed], 'Berlin to send frigate to help destroy Syrian chemical weapons', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 2 April 2014; [No author listed] (from Berlin), Associated Press, as in: 'Germany providing ship for Syrian chemical mission', Yahoo News, 2 April 2014. See 9 January.]

20140402

**H 2 April 2014** [Syria letter to UNSG [see 25 March] published, prompts press attention — Michelle Nichols (from UN New York), 'Syria accuses rebels of planning gas attack near Damascus', Reuters, 2 April 2014.]

20140403

**H 3 April 2014** [Opposition claim of chemical attack in Jobar neighbourhood of Damascus — Oliver Holmes (from Beirut), 'Syrian opposition accuses Assad of new poison attack', Reuters, 3 April 2014.]

20140403

**3 April 2014** In the UK, the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee publishes its report on *Government foreign policy towards the United States*.<sup>[1]</sup>

The committee is investigating, amongst other things, the implications of the parliamentary vote on Syria [see 29 August 2013] and concludes:

We are not aware of any evidence that the House of Commons vote at the end of August 2013 against opening the way to potential UK military action in Syria has damaged the UK's relationship with the US. We conclude that the episode surrounding potential Western military intervention in Syria in August 2013 illustrates important general features of the UK-US relationship, namely that developments in the UK can and do influence US policy, and that the two countries' positions can diverge in a particular case without harming the underlying tie. However, if Governments in both countries are routinely going to seek authorisation from their legislatures for discretionary military action, it will affect the way in which the UK and US work together as allies—in terms of both international politics and diplomacy, and the practical planning of military operations.

[1] UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *Government foreign policy towards the United States*, eighth report of session 2013-14, HC695, ordered to be printed 25 March 2014, published 3 April 2014.

20140403

**H 3 April 2014** [Sigrid Kaag briefs the UN Security Council by videoconference. She is reported to have indicated that the

holdups in shipments are due to the security situation [see 1 April] and that Syria could still meet the 27 April deadline to remove all declared materials from the country — Edith M Lederer (from UN New York), 'Diplomats: Syria can meet chemical weapons target', Associated Press, 3 April 2014; Michelle Nichols (from UN New York), 'About half Syria's chemicals packed for removal, violence halts convoys - UN', Reuters, 3 April 2014.]

20140403

**3 April 2014** [Collective Security Treaty Organization issues statement on Syria refugees. No mention of CW. Reproduced in S/2014/255.]

20140404

**4 April 2014** The twelfth consignment of chemicals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme is shipped out of the port of Latakia. This is reported to be the first shipment for some two weeks [see 20 March].<sup>[1]</sup>

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>>.

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## 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 XXXXXX 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 XXXXXX 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 XXXXXX 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.

No figures are provided as to the size or contents of this consignment at this point.[2] However, a few days later, the Russian Foreign Ministry is reported to say that the shipment was over 64 metric tons of materials, bringing the total of materials withdrawn from Syria or destroyed in the country to 59 per cent.[3] The material is said to be in 8 containers and loaded on board the Ark Futura.[4]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, '12th Consignment of Chemicals Removed from Syria', press release, 4 April 2014.

[2] Nick Cumming-Bruce (from Geneva), 'Syria Ships Out More Chemicals After a 2-Week Lapse', *New York Times*, 4 April 2014.

[3] [No author listed] (from Moscow), 'Russia contributes to Syria's chemical demilitarisation - Foreign Ministry', ITAR-TASS, 8 April 2014.

[4] [No author listed] (from Damascus), Agence France Presse, as in: 'Syria chemical arms removal back on track: task force', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 10 April 2014.

20140404

**H 4 April 2014** [Informal EU foreign ministers meet, known as a Gymnich, convenes in Athens for 2 days. Later reported: 'Ministers also discussed progress on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons' — David Lidington, Minister for Europe, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Statement, 10 April 2014, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 579, c30-31.]

20140406

**Q 6 April 2014** Journalist Seymour Hersh suggests that the change of policy of the Obama administration on possible military action against Syria in August 2013 derived from a report from the Porton Down defence laboratory in the UK. Hersh suggests that the report contained analysis of an alleged sample of sarin from the attack [see 21 August] which did not match any batches known to have been from Syria's chemical weapons arsenal.[1]

Hersh suggests the sample analysed from the attack was obtained by Russian intelligence and quotes 'a former senior US intelligence official, who has access to current intelligence' as saying: 'We use data exchanged as part of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The DIA's baseline consisted of knowing the composition of each batch of Soviet-manufactured chemical weapons. But we didn't know which batches the Assad government currently had in its arsenal. Within days of the Damascus incident we asked a source in the Syrian government to give us a list of the batches the government currently had. This is why we could confirm the difference so quickly.' The same official is further quoted as saying: 'We now know it was a covert action planned by Erdogan's people to push Obama over the red line' and: 'They had to escalate to a gas attack in or near Damascus when the UN inspectors were there. The deal was to do something spectacular. Our senior military officers have been told by the DIA and other intelligence assets that the sarin was supplied through Turkey – that it could only have gotten there with Turkish support. The Turks also provided the training in producing the sarin and handling it'.

The article becomes the focus of considerable reporting, much of it contesting Hersh's assertions.[2] *[\*ADD MORE\*]*

[1] Seymour Hersh, 'The Red Line and the Rat Line', *London Review of Books*, 6 April 2014.

[2] Marc Champion, 'Who Trusts Russian Spies on Syria?', Bloomberg, 7 April 2014. Also: Robert Fisk, *Independent*, 11 April 2014; Patrick Cockburn, *Independent on Sunday*, 13 April 2014

20140408

**8 April 2014** Sigrid Kaag, the Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations, visits Cairo. She meets with Minister of Foreign Affairs Nabil Fahmy.[1]

[1] OPCW-UN Joint Mission, 'OPCW-UN Joint Mission Special Coordinator visits Cairo', press release, 8 April 2014.

20140410

**H 10 April 2014** [Press report of a shipment of chemicals from Latakia — [No author listed] (from Damascus), Agence France Presse, as in: 'Syria chemical arms removal back on track: task force', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 10 April 2014. Does not appear to be any official statement about this.]

20140410

**H 10 April 2014** [A Beirut newspaper reports that Turkey and the US are following up on recent allegations of use of chemical weapons within Syria — Olivia Alabaster (from Beirut), 'Fresh round of chemical attack investigations', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 10 April 2014. Also, Daniel Nisman [OpEd, described as 'a geopolitical analyst specializing in Eastern Mediterranean affairs'], 'Chemical Assad – New claims of poison-gas attacks by the Damascus regime are falling on deaf ears', *Wall Street Journal*, 10 April 2014]

20140410

**10 April 2014** In the UK House of Commons, the Foreign Office is asked 'what the Government's most recent assessment is of the likelihood of President Assad complying with the agreed Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons timetable for the removal and destruction of Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons'. The Secretary of State replies:[1]

Good early progress was made toward putting both Syria's chemical weapons manufacturing facilities and the weapons themselves beyond use. However, the programme has fallen behind schedule and the regime has missed a number of interim deadlines, including the 31 December target for the removal of priority I chemicals, and the 5 February deadline for the removal of priority II material. It is the regime's responsibility to comply with the timetable set out by the UN-Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The UN Secretary-General, the OPCW Director-General and the co-ordinator of the OPCW-UN joint mission have assessed that Syria has all the equipment it needs to ensure the expeditious removal of the chemicals concerned. To date, approximately 54% of the declared chemical stockpile has been removed from Syria. The regime must significantly accelerate the movement of the chemicals to port to enable their removal if the 30 June deadline for the elimination of the chemicals is to be achieved.

[1] William Hague, Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Answer, 10 April 2014, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 579, c377, in response to Douglas Alexander MP. The questioner is opposition spokesman on foreign affairs.

20140410

**10 April 2014** The United States and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons co-host a visit by international media and NGOs aboard the MV Cape Ray, the ship on which the hydrolysis of some of the materials from Syria is intended to be carried out. The ship is at anchor in the Spanish port of Rota. The purpose of the visit is later officially described as: 'to demonstrate the extensive safety and security measures that have been put into place to guard against any risk to the operating personnel and to the environment during the destruction operations'.[1]

Numerous press and television reports are dispatched from the ship and the port.[2]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-40/DG.4, 25 April 2014.

[2] For example: [No author listed] (from Rota), Associated Press, as in: 'Syria chemical destruction deadline still possible', Yahoo News, 10 April 2014; Naftali Bendavid (from Rota), 'U.S. Ship Retrofitted for Destroying Syria's Chemical Arsenal at Sea', *Wall Street Journal*, 10 April 2014; Frank Gardner (from Rota), 'Syria chemical weapons: Time running out for destruction', BBC, 10 April 2014; and Fiona Ortiz (from Rota), 'Ship ready to destroy Syria's chemical arms at sea', Reuters, 10 April 2014.

20140411

**11 April 2014** In northern Syria, reports start to emerge of allegations of use of chlorine as a chemical weapon. Reports focus on activities in the evening in the town of Kfar Zita (sometimes transliterated as Kfar Zeita or Kafr Zaita) in Hama province in northwest Syria. Unverified videos posted online appear to show individuals affected by a toxic substance.

Syrian state television is reported to have said the Nusra Front group, often referred to as jihadist or Al-Qaeda linked, launched the attack killing two people and injuring dozens of others[1] and that the Nusra Front was planning similar attacks on the Wadi al-Daif area in Idlib province in northwest Syria and the town of Mork in Hama.[2]

Rami Abdel Rahman, described as from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition group, is quoted as saying: 'Regime planes bombed Kafr Zita with explosive barrels that produced thick smoke and odours and led to cases of suffocation and poisoning'.[3]

Other reporting cites opposition sources alleging that at least six people were killed and 100 others affected by the government use of poisonous gas in Kafr Zaita and the Harasta suburb, on the eastern side of Damascus.[4]

Dr. Nazih al-Ghazi, described as working in Kfar Zita's field hospital, is quoted as saying: 'The smell was like chlorine or toilet bowl cleaner, but the symptoms faded directly within two hours'.[5]

[1] Conal Urquhart, 'Syrian poison gas attack "kills two and wounds up to 100"', *Guardian* (London), 12 April 2014.

[2] [No author listed] (from Damascus), 'Syria accuses rebels of using toxic gas in Hama province', *Xinhua*, 12 April 2014.

[3] [No author listed], 'Claims of new poison gas attack in Syria', *BBC*, 12 April 2014.

[4] [No author listed] (from Damascus), 'Syria accuses rebels of using toxic gas in Hama province', *Xinhua*, 12 April 2014.

[5] Anne Barnard and Ben Hubbard (from Beirut), 'Damascus and Rebels Trade Blame in Gas Attack', *New York Times*, 13 April 2014, page A12.

20140411

**Q 11 April 2014** In The Hague, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons continues its fortieth meeting [see 28 March] The meeting is held in private, but a number of national statements are made public.[1] **[\*ADD MORE\*]**

[1] As of 30 April, statements from Greece (on behalf of the European Union), Russia, Turkey, UK and USA are posted on the OPCW website.

20140411

**11 April 2014** In New York, Turkey forwards a letter to the UN Security Council on behalf of the Syrian Coalition on the subject of chemical weapons. The letter is signed by Najib Ghadbian, Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the United Nations.

The letter repeats allegations of recent use of chemical weapons in Harasta [see 27 March] and says that this 'demonstrates the urgent need for the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission to maintain vigilance in ensuring that all of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities are destroyed. Yet that will only be possible once all sites and stockpiles have been fully declared. It remains unclear whether that is the case.'

The letter suggests 'the Joint Mission should send without delay a monitoring and inspection team to the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre's facility in Jamraya, which has played an instrumental role in Syria's chemical weapons production, storage and deployment. Such a mission will allow OPCW-United Nations monitors to gain a more thorough accounting of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles and any illicit weapons that may not have been declared by regime authorities'.

On the subject of movements of chemical weapons materials within Syria for removal and/or destruction, the letter notes 'it is impossible for Free Syrian Army brigades to distinguish between regime disposal convoys versus regime military convoys' and asks that the Joint Mission provides 'precise information on the schedule and routes of all convoys deployed through opposition held territories. Such information will enable our partners on the ground to better support the safe passage of chemical weapons convoys.'

Some days later, the text of this letter is published as an official UN document.[1]

[1] Turkey, *Letter dated 11 April 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2014/274, 16 April 2014.

20140413

**13 April 2014** The US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, appears on the ABC programme *This Week*. She is asked about the recent allegations of attacks with chemical weapons in Syria [See 11 April]. Her words are reported thus: 'We are trying to run this down' and: 'So far it's unsubstantiated, but we've shown, I think, in the past that we will do everything in our power to establish what has happened and then consider possible steps in response'.[1]

[1] [No author listed] (from Beirut), *Associated Press*, as in: 'Reports of poison gas attack in Syria so far "unsubstantiated", Powers says', *Guardian* (London), 13 April 2014.

20140413

**13 April 2014** Deadline for removal of most chemicals from Syria [see 23 February].

This deadline falls on a Sunday. On Monday, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric expresses the Joint Mission's concerns about this missed deadline and tells reporters that 'it expects immediate action to initiate the high pace and scale of operations for the removal of all chemical weapons materials as safely as possible by 27 April'.[1]

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Syria: UN-OPCW mission expects "intensified efforts" as chemical weapons deadline slips', press release, 14 April 2014.

20140413

**H 13 April 2014** [Public health capacities press release]

20140414

**Q 14 April 2014** The OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, visits Moscow where he meets with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Sergey Lavrov, and separately with Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov. Issues related to the situation in Syria are raised within these meetings.[1]

The following day, while still in Moscow, the Director-General reportedly tells a Russian television channel that recent media reports of allegations of use of chemical weapons within Syria should be investigated before drawing conclusions.[2]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Director-General Visits Russia, Meets with Foreign Minister Lavrov', press release, 14 April 2014.

[2] [No author listed], 'OPCW urges probe into reports of chemical weapons use in Syria', *Xinhua*, 15 April 2014. **[\*GET better source??\*]**

20140414

**14 April 2014** In The Hague, the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons reports that two further consignments of chemicals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme have been shipped out of the port of Latakia. The 13th consignment reached the port on 10 April and the 14th on 13 April. In both cases, the consignments were immediately boarded onto cargo ships. These consignments are said to bring the total removed to 65.1 per cent of the declared materials. This total includes 57.4 per cent of so-called 'priority 1' chemicals.[1]

[*Note*: There is initially some confusion on this day in the reporting of the latest movements of chemicals, with some sources combining the two most recent shipments as one consignment. A clarification confirming that there were two consignments is made in the afternoon.]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, '13th and 14th Consignments of Chemicals Delivered to Latakia Raising Overall Total of Removals to 65%', press release, 14 April 2014.

20140414

**Q 14 April 2014** In New York, the Ambassador of Syria to the United Nations writes identical letters on the subject of chemical weapons to the UN Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council.

The letter repeats the allegation that the attack in East Ghouta [see 21 August 2013] was carried out by opposition forces and claims the recent Seymour Hersh article [see 6 April] supports this.

The letter notes: 'A few days ago, the Syrian Government sent the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) a new document containing irrefutable evidence that armed terrorist groups are in possession of toxic chlorine gas and that they intend to use it in Aleppo governorate and other parts of Syria'. [*\*CHECK if this document is public\**] [*\*ADD Nusrah Front alleges??\**] Referring to recent allegations of use [see 11 April], the letter states: 'The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic holds the American administration, the Turkish Government and Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and terrorist organizations fully responsible for the crimes that were committed in Syria with chemical weapons, including the recent attack in Kafr Zayta, or any crimes that might be thus committed against the Syrian people.'

Two days later, the text of these letters is published as an official UN document.[1]

[1] Syria, *Identical letters dated 14 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council*, A/68/846-S/2014/271, 16 April 2014.

20140415

**15 April 2014** Syria submits its fifth monthly report to the OPCW Executive Council regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities. Such reports are required under paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1 [see 15 November]. Two days later the report is circulated within the Council as document EC-M-40/P/NAT.3.[1] This report is not made public.

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-40/DG.4, 25 April 2014.

20140416

**H 16 April 2014** [Allegation of use of poison gas in Harasta, a neighbourhood of Damascus — Oliver Holmes (from Beirut), 'Syrian opposition accuses Assad's forces of new poison gas attack', Reuters, 16 April 2014.]

20140416

**16 April 2014** Fifteenth consignment of chemicals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme leaves Syria, bringing the total removed or destroyed in country to 72.3 per cent, according to the OPCW-UN Joint Mission.[1]

[1] OPCW-UN Joint Mission, '72.3% of Syria's chemical materials are removed from or destroyed in country', press release, 16 April 2014.

20140416

**16 April 2014** The government of Syria submits to the OPCW an amendment to its initial declaration of chemicals

held for its chemical weapons programme [see 24 October 2013]. This amendment is described as 'clarifying a previous amendment submitted on 7 March 2014 [see entry that date] and providing exact numbers of quantities of declared chemicals'.[1]

Although no further details appear to be officially published, there is some press reporting. One news agency, citing unnamed officials as the source of the information, describes the original declaration as having been based on estimates, not exact amounts of toxic agents found in storage and production facilities across the country. The article quotes an unnamed diplomat as saying that inspectors in Syria had identified 'discrepancies between what they found, and what was on the original declaration'.[2]

The following week, on 22 April, a team of experts from the OPCW Technical Secretariat travels to Damascus to meet with Syrian authorities 'as part of continuing efforts to streamline and complete the data regarding the initial declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic in October 2013, and subsequent amendments, as well as the verification work'.[3]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-40/DG.4, 25 April 2014.

[2] Dominic Evans (from Beirut) and Anthony Deutsch (from The Hague), 'Exclusive - Syria submits more "detailed" list of chemical weapons', Reuters, 17 April 2014.

[3] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-40/DG.4, 25 April 2014.

20140416

**Q 16 April 2014** In New York, the United Arab Emirates forwards a letter to the UN Security Council on behalf of the Syrian Coalition on the subject of the recent allegation of use of chemical weapons in Kafr Zita [see 11 April]. The letter is signed by Najib Ghadbian, Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the United Nations.

The letter ... [*\*ADD details\**]

The following day, the text of this letter is published as an official UN document.[1]

[1] United Arab Emirates, *Letter dated 16 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2014/285, 17 April 2014.

20140417

**17 April 2014** The United Kingdom forwards a letter to the UN Security Council on behalf of the Syrian Coalition on the subject of the situation in Syria. The letter is signed by Najib Ghadbian, Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the United Nations [see also 16 April]. The letter describes allegations of brutality by government forces and urges the Security Council to: 'Refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court'. The letter makes no specific reference to chemical weapons.

The text of this letter is published as an official UN document.[1]

[1] United Kingdom, *Letter dated 17 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2014/287, 17 April 2014.

20140419

**19 April 2014** The OPCW-UN Joint Mission reports that the proportion of materials from the Syrian chemical weapons programme that has been removed or destroyed in-country is now approximately 80 per cent.[1]

[*Note*: This would presumably be the 16th shipment, see 15 April].

[1] OPCW-UN Joint Mission, 'Statement by Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission', press release, 19 April

2014; United Nations Department of Public Information, 'OPCW-UN mission reports further progress in eliminating Syria's chemical weapons', press release, 19 April 2014.

20140421

**H 21 April 2014** [Allegation of use of chemical weapons in the town of Telminnes — Damien McElroy, 'Boy dies as Syrian regime carries out "gas attack" on rebels', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 22 April 2014.]

20140422

**22 April 2014** The seventeenth consignment of chemicals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme leaves Syria, bringing the total removed to 86.5 per cent, according to the OPCW. This total includes 88.7 per cent of so-called 'priority 1' chemicals. OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü says: 'We hope that the remaining two or three consignments are delivered quickly to permit destruction operations to get underway in time to meet the mid-year deadline for destroying Syria's chemical weapons'. [1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Removal of Syrian Chemicals Passes 86% of Total', press release, 22 April 2014.

20140422

**H 22 April 2014** [Expert mission, continues to 28 April, to clarify Syria declaration.]

20140424

**24 April 2014** The OPCW-UN mission reports that the proportion of materials from the Syrian chemical weapons programme that has been removed or destroyed in-country is now 92.5 per cent, following a further shipment of materials. [1] [Note: This would presumably be the 18th shipment, see 22 April].

[1] OPCW-UN Joint Mission, '92.5% of Syria's chemical weapons material removed or destroyed in-country', press release, 24 April 2014.

20140425

**25 April 2014** In The Hague, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons provides the seventh 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 March to 24 April.

With movements of chemicals to Latakia progressing, 11 of the 12 declared chemical weapons storage facilities have been closed under international verification, the report states. On chemical weapons production facilities, the report notes that destruction activities continue and that activities relating to the destruction of aircraft hangars and underground structures at 12 of the facilities are awaiting a decision by the OPCW Executive Council on the combined plans for destruction and verification.

The report notes that recent allegations of use of toxic chemicals within Syria [see 11 April] 'are a source of serious concern. The OPCW has been in touch with the Syrian authorities with a view to exploring possibilities of establishing the facts surrounding these allegations'.

The report provides the usual update to the financial situation with the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons currently standing at 47.5 million Euro.

Other matters referred to include the MV Cape Ray open day [see 10 April], Syria's monthly activities report [see 15 April] and the amendment to the declaration by Syria [see 16 April].

As with earlier reports, this report is also circulated as a UN Security Council document with an additional foreword by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. [2]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-40/DG.4, 25 April 2014.

[2] UN Secretary-General, 'Letter dated 25 April 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2014/300, 25 April 2014.

20140427

**H 27 April 2014** [Kaag statement. Date of revised deadline to ship out all chemical materials from Syria [see 23 February and 13 April].]

20140428

**H 28 April 2014** [Expert mission, started 22 April, to clarify Syria declaration completes its work. Decision to hold further mission.]

20140429

**29 April 2014** In The Hague, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons resumes its fortieth meeting [see 11 April]. This date is the annual Remembrance Day for the victims of chemical warfare, which was observed with a ceremony in the Ieper Room in the OPCW Building. [1]

During the meeting, the OPCW Director-General announces the establishment of a fact-finding mission to investigate allegations of use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in Syria [see 25 April]. [2]

The meeting adopts a decision on verification arrangements for application to the destruction activities that are intended to take place in Germany [see 9 January]. [3]

The meeting is held in private, but a number of national statements are made public. [4]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'OPCW Observes Annual Remembrance Day for Victims of Chemical Warfare', press release, 29 April 2014.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'OPCW to Undertake Fact-Finding Mission in Syria on Alleged Chlorine Gas Attacks', press release, 29 April 2014.

[3] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council, 'Arrangement Between the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany Governing On-Site Inspections at the Gesellschaft zur Entsorgung von chemischen Kampfstoffen und Rüstungsaltslasten mbH (GEKA mbH), Munster, and at the Port of Disembarkation, Federal Republic of Germany', EC-M-40/DEC.1, 29 April 2014.

[4] As of 20 June, statements from Iran, Ireland, Mexico, Turkey and the UK are posted on the OPCW website. The statement by the USA is posted on the US Department of State website.

20140429

**Q 29 April 2014** In the United Kingdom, a newspaper reveals the results of tests it has carried out on samples said to have been taken in areas where recent chemical attacks are alleged to have taken place. The results form the core of a range of articles being published the following day. The tests are carried out by a UK company, SecureBio, and are reported to detect the presence of chlorine and ammonia in samples that have been smuggled out of Syria and which are said to relate to alleged attacks in Kafr Zita [see 11 April] and Telminnes [see 21 April]. [\*ADD MORE\*]

[1] Ruth Sherlock (from Gaziantep), 'Syria chemical weapons: the proof that Assad regime launching chlorine attacks on children', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 30 April 2014 [with a version posted to the newspaper's website the evening before].

20140430

**H 30 April 2014** [From 30 April to 2 May, a visit took place in the United States at the Veolia ES Technical Solutions, L.L.C., in Port Arthur, Texas, selected for the disposal of Priority 2 inorganic chemicals through the solicitation process conducted by the OPCW, and at the actual port of Port Arthur. During the visit, OPCW personnel reviewed all practical aspects related to the receipt, transportation, temporary storage, and destruction/disposal of the Syrian chemicals at the facility, and discussed practical arrangements to ensure the adequate verification of these activities in accordance with the

draft facility agreement (EC-M-40/DEC/CRP.2, dated 31 March 2014) and the draft arrangements that will govern the verification activities to be conducted by the OPCW inspection teams at the port of Port Arthur. A visit is also planned to the relevant facility in Germany.’ — Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, ‘Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme’, EC-M-42/DG.1, 23 May 2014.]

20140501

**H 1 May 2014** [UK gifting of non-lethal equipment to Syria]

20140502

**2 May 2014** An offensive by opposition forces described as having the intention of easing a government siege east of Damascus has resulted in fighting closer to the last stockpile of declared chemical materials, so Reuters reports today, citing diplomats and activists.[1]

The news agency quotes an unnamed diplomat as saying ‘It’s a very contested area’ and cites opposition activists as indicating that the fighters are from the ‘Islamic Front’, describing this as ‘one of the largest and most powerful Islamist rebel coalitions’, the ‘Rahman Corps’ and the ‘Ahmad Abdo Brigades’. The diplomat is said to have indicated that the abandoned and emptied chemical base at Khan Abu Shammal is now in opposition hands and that fighting is close to Sayqal air base which the article describes as ‘where the chemicals are believed to be held’.

A Canadian newspaper publishes details of an interview carried out with Alexander Corbiel, described as a ‘Middle East analyst with the NATO Council of Canada’ and that he had ‘said he has seen internal OPCW documents on the remaining chemicals’.[2] Corbiel is said to indicate that ‘Site 2’ contains ‘at least 16 drums with about 100 tonnes of chemicals, including an estimated 27 tonnes of precursors to the deadly nerve gas sarin’. He is also said to indicate that some materials were moved from ‘Site 3’ into ‘Site 2’ in order ‘to keep them away from rebel forces that were closing in’.

[1] Dominic Evans (from Beirut), ‘Syrian rebel offensive encroaches on last chemical stockpile’, Reuters, 2 May 2014.

[2] Patrick Martin, ‘Remaining Syrian chemicals are in Damascus’, *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 2 May 2014.

20140502

**2 May 2014** An OPCW Technical Secretariat advance team for the Fact-Finding Mission [see 29 April] to investigate allegations of use of toxic chemicals travels to Damascus. The work of the FFM at this time is later described thus: ‘The alleged use of chlorine in the Syrian Arab Republic is of grave concern to the OPCW and the international community. It is now crucial that all efforts are made—by all parties to the conflict—to ensure safe access for the team, enabling it to conduct its important work.’[1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, ‘Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme’, EC-M-42/DG.1, 23 May 2014.

20140503

**H 3 May 2014** [Kerry telephone conversation with Lavrov.]

20140505

**H 5 May 2014** [US-Saudi differences]

20140505

**5 May 2014** The destruction of materials from the Syrian chemical weapons programme could begin before all materials have been moved out of the country, the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry’s department for security and disarmament, Mikhail Ulyanov, tells a Russian news agency. He is quoted as saying ‘This idea is being voiced’ without indicating the origin of the idea.[1]

Ulyanov is head of the Russian delegation to the third session of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee being held in the UN building in New York from 28 April 28 to 9 May. He is reported as indicating that Russia and the United States had discussed the situation in Syria the previous week and is quoted as saying ‘The differences on Ukraine have virtually not affected the sphere of nonproliferation and armament control’.[2]

[1] [No author listed] (from UN New York), ‘Syria chemical weapons destruction may start before all are moved out’, ITAR-TASS, 6 May 2014.

[2] [No author listed] (from UN New York), ‘Differences over Ukraine have not affected Russia-US disarmament cooperation’, ITAR-TASS, 6 May 2014.

20140506

**H 6 May 2014** [Allegations of supply of chlorine from China via Iran. Denied.]

20140506

**6 May 2014** Syrian opposition leaders based in Istanbul accuse Syrian President Bashir al-Assad and forces loyal to his regime of carrying out more than 60 chemical attacks in 15 different locations inside Syria.[1]

[1] [No author listed] (from Istanbul), ‘Syria opposition blames Assad regime for 60 chemical attacks’, Xinhua, 7 May 2014.

20140507

**H 7 May 2014** [UNSC statement on 1540, S/PRST/2014/7. No specific mention of Syria.]

20140508

**Q 8 May 2014** In The Hague, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons resumes its fortieth meeting [see 11 and 29 April].

The meeting is held in private, but a number of national statements are made public.[1] **[\*ADD MORE\*]**

[1] As of 20 May, statements by Greece (on behalf of the EU), the UK and the USA are posted on the OPCW website.

20140508

**H 8 May 2014** [Kaag briefs UNSC. After, she briefs reporters about difficulties of access to the last 16 containers of materials at ‘Site 2’.]

20140513

**H 13 May 2014** [Denmark FM in eastern Mediterranean, on board the Ark Futura — Michele Kambas (from the eastern Mediterranean), ‘Denmark, taking delivery of chemical arms, urges Syria to speed process’, Reuters, 13 May 2014.]

20140513

**13 May 2014** French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius suggests that Syrian authorities have used chemical weapons, including chlorine, 14 times since late 2013.[1] He is speaking at a press conference during a visit to the United States.

One news source reports him saying, via interpretation: ‘We have at least 14 indications that show us that, in the past recent weeks again, chemical weapons in a smaller scale have been used, in particular chlorine’. He also is reported to say: ‘Right now we are examining the samples that were taken’.[2]

During the press conference Fabius also notes the efforts by France to refer the conflict in Syria to the International Criminal Court. [See 11 September 2013, see also 17 April.]

[1] [No author listed], Agence France Presse, as in: ‘Syria used chemical arms 14 times since October: Fabius’, Yahoo News, 13 May 2014.

[2] Lesley Wroughton (from Washington), ‘France says Syria used chlorine in 14 recent attacks’, Reuters, 13 May 2014.

20140513

**H 13 May 2014** [Lakhdar Brahimi, the Joint United Nations-League of Arab States Special Representative on the Syria crisis, resigns.]

20140515

**Q 15 May 2014** At a press conference in Tel Aviv, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon, answering questions from reporters about recent allegations of chlorine gas attacks in Syria, responds that he believes Syrian armed forces have continued to use poison gases against civilians.[1] *[\*ADD Chuck Hagel press conference comments\*]*

[1] [Robert Burns] (from Tel Aviv), Associated Press, as in: 'Israeli official: Gas attacks continue in Syria', Yahoo News, 15 May 2014.

20140515

**15 May 2014** Syria submits its sixth monthly report [see 15 April] to the OPCW Executive Council regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities. Such reports are required under paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1 [see 15 November]. The report is circulated within the Council as document EC-M-41/P/NAT.1.[1] This report is not made public.

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-42/DG.1, 23 May 2014.

20140515

**Q 15 May 2014** John Kerry, speaking in London, follows on from earlier press conference in Israel with Chuck Hagel *[\*ADD context or combine with Yaalon entry\*]*:

'One the third issue – the issue of evidence, I suspect – I haven't talked with Secretary Hagel about what was in his mind or what he was referring to with respect to that. Chlorine is not listed on the list of prohibited items by itself freestanding under the Chemical Weapons Convention. But chlorine, when used and mixed in a way that is used as a chemical weapon in the conduct of war, is against the chemical weapons treaty. And I have seen evidence, I don't know how verified it is - it's not verified yet - it's hasn't been confirmed, but I've seen the raw data that suggests there may have been, as France has suggested, a number of instances in which chlorine has been used in the conduct of war. And if it has, and if it could be proven, then that would be against the agreements of the chemical weapons treaty and against the weapons convention that Syria has signed up to.'

Later: 'With respect to the CW and what the consequences are, it has been made clear by President Obama and others that use would result in consequences. We're not going to pin ourselves down to a precise time, date, manner of action, but there will be consequences if it were to be proven, including, I might say, things that are way beyond our control and have nothing to do with us. But the International Criminal Court and others are free to hold him accountable. And as you know, we have a resolution that will be in front of the United Nations with respect to culpability for crimes against humanity, atrocities in the course of this conflict. So one way or the other, there will be accountability.' [1]

Comments are picked up in the press ... [2]

[1] *[\*ADD REF\*]*

[2] Diane Barnes, 'Kerry Says "Raw Data" Points to New Syria Chemical Strikes', *Global Security Newswire*, 15 May 2014

20140516

**H 16 May 2014** [*Washington Post* editorial]

20140519

**19 May 2014** In Beirut, a meeting takes place between representatives of the Syrian authorities, the OPCW Technical Secretariat and a British 'contracted personnel' from a British company Global Offshore Projects Ltd. The meeting lasts two days and is described as discussing issues related to the destruction of seven chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs). These are facilities described in OPCW Executive Council documents as 'aircraft hangars'. It is agreed that

During this technical meeting, it was agreed that a representative from the Secretariat and an expert from Global Offshore Projects would travel to the Syria between 22 and 27 May 2014 to undertake technical visits to two CWPFs (one single hangar and one double hangar). 'The information gathered during such visits will support and facilitate the technical and financial evaluations needed for the destruction of the seven aircraft hangars'. [1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-42/DG.1, 23 May 2014.

20140520

**H 20 May 2014** [OPCW confirms destruction of all declared isopropanol stocks from the Syrian chemical weapons programme.]

20140520

**H 20 May 2014** [David Owen OpEd in DTel; Lord Owen was UK Foreign Secretary 1977-79 and EU envoy to the former Yugoslavia 1992-95; David Owen, 'How we can save Syria's chlorine victims', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 20 May 2014, p *[\*GET PAPER COPY\*]*]

20140521

**H 21 May 2014** ['A team of technical experts from the Secretariat deployed to Damascus for a second mission from 21 to 28 May 2014 [see 28 April] in order to engage in consultations with the Syrian National Authority on any outstanding issues and to seek clarifications with regard to its Article III declaration. A briefing on the visit was provided to the Council at its Forty-Second Meeting. The Syrian National Authority agreed to submit a national paper providing a historical overview of its chemical weapons programme. Consultations on this issue will continue.' — Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-76/DG.14, 25 June 2014.]

20140522

**H 22 May 2014** [Further allegations of use of chlorine in Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah]

20140522

**Q 22 May 2014** In The Hague, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons convenes for its forty-first meeting [see 8 May]. [1]

The meeting is held in private, but a number of national statements are made public. [1] *[\*ADD MORE\*]*

[1] As of 17 June, statements from Denmark, France, Germany, Greece (on behalf of the European Union), Iran, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Turkey, UK, and USA are posted on the OPCW website.

20140522

**Q 22 May 2014** In New York, the UN Security Council convenes to discuss a draft resolution referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court [see ...]. [1] The resolution is vetoed by China and Russia while having support from the 13 other members of the Council. [2] The resolution was formally put to the Council by France [see 13 May].

Remarks by Eliasson ... *[\*ADD\*]* [3]

[1] The draft resolution was published in document S/2014/348 and was co-sponsored by: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

[2] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'Russia, China block Security Council referral of Syria to International Criminal Court', press release, 22 May 2014. The 13 members of the Security Council in favour of this resolution were: Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

[3] S/PV.7180

20140523

**Q 23 May 2014** In The Hague, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons provides the eighth 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 25 April to 22 May 2014. *[\*ADD MORE\*]*

As with earlier reports, this report is also circulated as a UN Security Council document with an additional foreword by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.[2] *[\*ADD DETAILS\*]*

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-42/DG.1, 23 May 2014.

[2] UN Secretary-General, 'Letter dated 23 May 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2014/368, 23 May 2014.

20140523

**Q 23 May 2014** In New York, France forwards a letter to the UN Security Council on behalf of the Syrian Coalition on the subject of the recent allegation of use chemical weapons in Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah [see 22 May]. The text of the letter is said to be a copy of a letter sent to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Ahmet Üzümcü. The letter is signed by Najib Ghabbian, Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the United Nations.

The letter ... *[\*ADD details\*]*

... three new chemical weapons attacks which took place yesterday in the towns of Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah ...

On the morning and evening of Thursday, 22 May, Syrian regime aerial forces bombarded the towns of Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah with explosive barrels loaded with toxic chemical gases. Video footage of the incidents provides clear and conclusive evidence that these explosions produced thick yellow-coloured smoke, consistent with the deployment of chlorine gas. Victims at both scenes reported symptoms which included choking. ...

You recently reported to the OPCW Executive Council that the OPCW fact-finding mission on allegations of use of chlorine gas in Syria has begun to prepare for on-site activities in Syria. Given yesterday's revelations, it is vital that the mission verify the chlorine attacks of 22 May and act without delay to dispatch monitors to Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah. Immediate verification is needed to determine with certainty the veracity of these attacks.

It is also critical that the mission be empowered to determine the party responsible for ordering these illegal chemical assaults. OPCW must make clear that those responsible for chemical weapons attacks will be identified and ultimately be brought to justice for their atrocities. Anything less than a clear designation of responsibility by OPCW will allow such crimes to continue and risks setting a precedent for further chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

The Syrian Coalition and its partner, the Free Syrian Army, remain committed to cooperating fully with the OPCW mission. As always, we stand ready to assist OPCW monitors in gaining full and immediate access to Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah.

Some days later, the text of this letter is published as an official UN document.[1]

[1] France, *Letter dated 23 May 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2014/370, 27 May 2014.

20140525

**25 May 2014** The government of Syria, in a letter dated today, informs the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission that an armed group had tested a 'locally made rocket with a gas cylinder warhead' on 19 May. The letter is said to claim that this

resulted in a toxic release. The FFM later reported other contents of the letter in the following terms: 'The letter also claimed that the Syrian Government had come across information on the existence of barrels containing chlorine gas in a certain house owned by an individual in the town of Kafr Zeyta, together with other unidentified canisters stored at another location. The Team was requested to inspect these locations when it arrived in Kafr Zeyta.'[1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Summary Report of the Work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Covering the Period from 3 to 31 May 2014', S/1191/2014, 16 June 2014.]

20140527

**Q 27 May 2014** In Syria, a group of inspectors from the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission [see 29 April and 25 May] head north to investigate the allegations of use of chlorine gas as a weapon. While in an area not under the control of government forces, the convoy of vehicles they are travelling in comes under attack. The Syrian Foreign Ministry indicates that the inspectors are being held by an opposition group.[1] This is picked up by a number of media outlets.[2]

The OPCW issues a statement: 'A convoy of OPCW inspectors and United Nations staff that was travelling to a site of an alleged chlorine gas attack in Syria came under attack this morning. All team members are safe and well and are travelling back to the operating base.'[3] These details are rapidly picked up by the media.[4]

Further details are provided by the OPCW the following day:[5]

The team was en route to Kafr Zita as part of its mission to establish the facts surrounding allegations of use of chlorine in Syria. The visit was subject to a rigorous security assessment and a local ceasefire had been carefully negotiated for the day with the Government of Syria as well as with armed opposition groups in the area.

Shortly after leaving government-controlled territory, the lead vehicle in the convoy was struck by an improvised explosive device (IED) sustaining severe damage. The team members were rescued and shifted to two other vehicles in the convoy which turned back to move to a safer location. While entering a built-up area the convoy was ambushed; the first vehicle was shot at from close range with automatic weapons hitting the body, windows and tires.

The occupants of the two remaining vehicles, who were briefly detained by some gunmen, were later released upon the intervention of the main opposition group with whom the ceasefire and security arrangements had been negotiated. The reunited team then returned to Damascus via Homs under Syrian Government escort.

In subsequent days, a number of media reports suggest that rather than heading straight for their operating base after the attacks, two of the vehicles in the convoy had made it to Kafr Zita. One report suggested that 'A team from the world's chemical weapons watchdog investigating an alleged chlorine attack against rebel-held Kafr Zeita managed to visit the town Tuesday, hours after coming under attack, a Syrian rebel commander said'.[6]

A week later, one of the participants in the events is quoted in a US newspaper ... *[\*ADD details\*]* [7]

Details of today's events are reported later to CWC States Parties in the following terms:[8]

The composition of the FFM convoy for the cross-line mission was six (6) armoured vehicles; four (4) of these were to cross into the designated mission area and the other two (2) were to remain at the last Syrian Government checkpoint with a Syrian Government ambulance. The mission arrived in Homs from Damascus on 26 May. On 27 May, it departed from the hotel in Homs at 7:10 and arrived at the last Syrian Government checkpoint at 9:20.

From this point, an escort arranged by the Syrian Government led the OPCW FFM convoy towards the perimeter of the town of

Tayyibat-Al-Imam, where he stopped, signalling the way to Kafr Zeyta, and then left, taking another road. While travelling through the town, the team did not observe any unusual or suspicious circumstances. The convoy continued on the planned route towards the agreed point of meeting with the opposition escort, which was located between the Tayyibat-Al-Imam and Al-Lataminah villages. Approximately 1,000 meters of the agreed road lay ahead. With a slight incline in the road, it appeared possible that the opposition contacts might not be visible. In order to overcome the visual disadvantage due to the terrain gradient and in order to establish a direct line of sight, the first vehicle in the convoy proceeded ahead, with the second vehicle waiting some distance behind and the rest of the convoy still further back. At 9:35, the leading vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device, causing severe damage to the vehicle but no injuries to the occupants except for minor soft-tissue injuries to the left arm of the driver.

After the occupants were evacuated into the other vehicles, the convoy made an effort to return to safety. On re-entering the town, the first vehicle in this convoy was attacked with automatic gun fire. While this vehicle managed to get away, some distance ahead from the point of the shooting, the remaining two vehicles were intercepted by armed gunmen and members of the team detained for some time. Upon the intervention of the opposition group with which the arrangements for the visit had been made, all team members were released unharmed.

Given the circumstances and the loss of time, together with the approaching deadline for the end of the cease fire, the field mission was aborted and the team returned to Damascus via Homs.

[1] *[\*ADD FULL REF\*]*

[2] See, for example, [no author listed], 'Syria UN chemical weapons inspectors "kidnapped"', BBC News, 27 May 2014, 09.51 UTC.

[3] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Security Incident Affects Syria Fact-Finding Mission', press release, 27 May 2014.

[4] See, for example, [no author listed], 'Syria UN chemical weapons inspectors "attacked"', BBC News, 27 May 2014, 10.17 UTC.

[5] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'OPCW Team Arrives Safely Back in Damascus', press release, 28 May 2014.

[6] [No author listed], 'Chemical arms team visits Syria chlorine site', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 28 May 2014.

[7] Rick Gladstone (from New York) and Nick Cumming-Bruce (from Geneva), 'U.N. Official Urges Syria to Finish Chemical Arms Disposal', *New York Times*, 4 June 2014.

[8] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Summary Report of the Work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Covering the Period from 3 to 31 May 2014', S/1191/2014, 16 June 2014.

20140530

**Q 30 May 2014** A group of independent United Nations human rights experts 'emphasize' that the non-referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) by the UN Security Council [see 22 May] 'leaves the door wide open for new atrocities in the ongoing conflict'. [1]

[1] *[\*ADD FULL REF\*]*

20140603

**H 3 June 2014** [Syrian Presidential election]

20140604

**4 June 2014** The Norwegian cargo ship Taiko returns to the Syrian port of Latakia. Two containers with materials from the Syrian chemical weapons programme that are on board have their contents repackaged while in the port. The UN Secretary-General describes this activity in the following terms: 'The operation was necessitated by the extended time during which the containers had been on board the vessel. It was conducted by Syrian technical experts and supported by the Joint Mission. The Joint Mission also verified the reloading of all materials concerned on the vessel at the end of the operation the same day'. [1]

[1] UN Secretary-General, 'Letter dated 26 June 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2014/444, 26 June 2014.

20140604

**Q 4 June 2014** In the UK, the government publishes its response to the report of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on *Government foreign policy towards the United States* [see 3 April]. [1]

The government responds to the committee's comments on the implications of the parliamentary vote on Syria [see 29 August 2013]:

We welcome the Committee's agreement with our assessment that the parliamentary vote on Syria did not impact negatively on the UK's relationship with the US. We continue to work extremely closely with the US on all aspects of the Syrian conflict, including the political process, counter-terrorism, the humanitarian crisis and ensuring access for humanitarian relief.

The Committee's observation that the vote in the UK and President Obama's decision may influence the context for future discretionary military action by both countries is valid. But fundamentally, the UK and US will continue to be able and willing to work together in tackling international crises, whether diplomatically, through intelligence sharing or, should it be appropriate, military options.

[1] *[\*ADD FULL REF\*]*

20140604

**Q 4 June 2014** Kaag tells reporters 'the deadline will not be met', referring to the Syria chemical weapons destruction deadline of 30 June. [1] *[\*ADD MORE\*]* [2]

[1] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'As Syria deadline nears, OPCW-UN mission focuses on swift removal of remaining chemicals', press release, 4 June 2014.

[2] Louis Charbonneau (from UN New York), 'Inspectors press Syria on chemical arms "discrepancies" - envoys', Reuters, 4 June 2014.

20140605

**Q 5 June 2014** French foreign ministry spokesman Romain Nadal tells reporters: 'Given that ... chlorine which is widely used for civilian purposes is very volatile, the results of the analysis may not necessarily prove to be conclusive, (and) will need to be complemented with other information'. [1] *[\*CHECK if primary source available\*]*

[1] John Irish (from Paris), 'France says Syria chlorine gas samples may be inconclusive', Reuters, 5 June 2014.

20140606

**6 June 2014** The Norwegian ship Taiko, carrying a cargo of materials from the Syrian chemical weapons programme, heads for Finland and the United States to deliver its cargo of chemicals for destruction in those countries. [1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Norwegian Cargo Ship Departs with Chemicals', press release, 6 June 2014.

20140614

**14 June 2014** Experts from the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons conclude some days of inspection of two objects declared by the Syrian government as 'abandoned chemical weapons'. [Note: These are presumably the two cylinders previously reported on as being found by the Syrian authorities, see 25 October 2013.]

The Secretariat later reports to the Executive Council: 'Samples were taken from the items and their subsequent analysis identified the agent contained in them as Sarin. The Secretariat is now assisting the Syrian authorities in preparing a destruction plan for the two items; the plan will be submitted to the Council once it is finalised.'

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-76/DG.14, 25 June 2014.

20140616

**Q 16 June 2014** In The Hague, the OPCW Technical Secretariat provides a report on its activities in May of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) [see 29 April] to investigate

allegations of the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in Syria. The report is submitted by Malik Ellahi, Head of the FFM.[1] *[\*ADD MORE\*]*

The report contains details of the the attack on the OPCW investigation team [see 27 May].

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Summary Report of the Work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Covering the Period from 3 to 31 May 2014', S/1191/2014, 16 June 2014.

20140616

**16 June 2014** In the UK House of Commons, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides a number of written answers to questions relating to the allegations of use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in Syria. A Minister of State replies:[1]

We are aware of at least nine attacks in April in which the use of chemical weapons has been alleged. We consider it likely that chemical weapons have been used on at least some of these occasions. There are a number of pieces of information that suggest that only the regime could have been responsible for these attacks, including the use of helicopters to deliver bombs to their targets and the fact that the attacks took place in opposition controlled areas. We have shared the information we hold with the OPCW.

We condemn the attack on the convoy carrying inspectors to Kafr Zita and urge all parties to the conflict to ensure that inspectors are given secure and unrestricted access to all relevant sites to enable the full facts to be established.

[1] Hugh Robertson, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Answer, 16 June 2014, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 582, c382, in response to Mark Hendrick MP.

20140617

**Q 17 June 2014** In The Hague, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons convenes for its forty-second meeting [see 22 May].

The meeting is held in private, but a number of national statements are made public.[1] *[\*ADD MORE\*]*

[1] As of 20 June, statements from Brazil, Croatia, France, Greece (on behalf of the EU), New Zealand, Turkey the UK and the USA are posted on the OPCW website.

20140619

**19 June 2014** The Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons facilitates a conference call via telephone on the subject of environmental issues relating to the transporting and processing of materials from the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

The conference call is later described as being: 'between experts from the Secretariat and representatives of civil society, in particular from the Mediterranean region. The conference call allowed for an exchange of views on the environmental aspects of the removal and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and also enabled the participants to receive more information about the operations and to pose questions to the experts from the Secretariat.' [1]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-76/DG.14, 25 June 2014.

20140620

**H 20 June 2014** ['On 20 June, following the Executive Council meeting, the Director General and I wrote a joint letter to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to urge it to remove the remaining chemical weapons materials as soon as possible.' — UN Secretary-General, 'Letter dated 26 June 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2014/444, 26 June 2014.]

20140620

**H 21 June 2014** ['The Taiko arrived at the port of Hamina Kotka in Finland on 21 June 2014 and offloaded the chemicals destined for destruction at the Ekokem Riihimäki waste

treatment and disposal facility. A team of OPCW inspectors was present during the offloading at the port to verify the receipt and arrangements for transportation of chemicals and related materials to the facility, and to provide assurance against diversion' — OPCW, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-76/DG.14, 25 June 2014.]

20140623

**23 June 2014** The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announces that the last consignment of declared materials from the Syrian chemical weapons programme has left the country.[1]

This consignment is later described by the by the OPCW Technical Secretariat to the Executive Council in the following terms: 'The Danish cargo ship Ark Futura took on board the remaining 8% of chemicals on 22 and 23 June 2014 for transportation to their destination. The Ark Futura will then sail to Gioia Tauro in Italy to offload certain Priority 1 chemicals to the United States vessel MV Cape Ray for neutralisation at sea, after which it will take the remaining Priority 1 chemicals to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for disposal.' [2]

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat, 'Announcement to media on last consignment of chemicals leaving Syria', press release, 23 June 2014.

[2] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-76/DG.14, 25 June 2014.

20140625

**Q 25 June 2014** In The Hague, the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons provides the ninth 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 May to 23 June 2014. *[\*ADD MORE\*]*

As with earlier reports, this report is also circulated as a UN Security Council document with an additional foreword by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.[2] *[\*ADD MORE\*]*

[1] Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-76/DG.14, 25 June 2014.

[2] UN Secretary-General, 'Letter dated 26 June 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2014/444, 26 June 2014.

20140626

**H 26 June 2014** [A technical meeting between representatives of [Russia, Syria & USA], as well as representatives of the Secretariat, took place in Moscow from 26 to 28 June 2014. — Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-44/DG.1, 25 July 2014.]

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**H 30 June 2014** ['The Secretariat briefed the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session on its ongoing consultations with the Syrian Arab Republic regarding its declaration and related disclosures. A team of experts from the Secretariat visited the Syrian Arab Republic from 30 June to 5 July 2014' — Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Director-General, 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme', EC-M-44/DG.1, 25 July 2014; *[\*but compare with:\**] 'OPCW technical experts were deployed to Damascus from 28 June to 5 July, to seek clarifications on outstanding issues' — UN Secretary-General, 'Letter dated 26 June 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/2014/533, 25 July 2014.]