

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN****VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES OF THE OPCW****INTRODUCTION**

Since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), a confidence-based approach between the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) and the States Parties, as well as abiding by provisions of the Convention, led the Organisation to achieve a remarkable and unprecedented record in the history of multilateral disarmament instruments. Maintenance of the achievements of the Organisation and prevention of any efforts to undermine the existing interactions and cooperation between the States Parties and the Secretariat is the greatest responsibility of all, to reach a world free of chemical weapons. However, in recent years verification-related issues, particularly non-routine missions, have become a very important debate within the OPCW.

MANDATE OF THE ORGANISATION

The OPCW is an organisation of a technical nature with a well-defined mandate to implement the provisions of the Convention to achieve the common goal of a world free of chemical weapons, in which chemistry is only used for peace, progress, and prosperity of all humankind, as properly stipulated in the Convention. Indeed, this body should not be used as a forum for matters beyond the scope of the Convention or the competency of the Organisation. In this vein, defining any new mandate to the Organisation which does not directly fall in the scope of the Convention or the mandate of the Organisation would only undermine the integrity and credibility of this key multilateral disarmament instrument and this august body.

In this regard, the decision to task the Secretariat with the so-called “attribution” mandate is in no way within the scope of the Convention or the competency of the Organisation. Thus, some States Parties have never recognised the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) in the Organisation and are not in a position to accept the allocation of budget to the activities of this team in any form.

This trend will escalate the tension and gaps among the States Parties, and divert the Organisation from its right path. In this context, we recommend that the States Parties consult and consider possible ways to preserve the technical nature of the Organisation and to bring back the sense of ownership to all the States Parties, through deepening the common understanding on substantive issues as well as avoiding hasty decisions under the pretext of short-sighted political interests.



OPEN-SOURCE INFORMATION

The mechanism set out for verification of compliance with the Convention is only based on declarations submitted by States Parties, in accordance with relevant provisions of the Convention. Hence, any use of open-source information undermines the technical and professional function of the Secretariat in regard to fulfilling its mandate and is inconsistent with the provisions of the Convention.

Unfortunately, in recent years, we have witnessed that use of open-source information not only affects the full and effective implementation of the Convention but also creates a mistrusting atmosphere among the States Parties and the Secretariat. Undoubtedly, the objective and non-discriminatory procedures according to which inspections are conducted and information given in declarations is verified support and build trust among Member States.

We recommend that the Secretariat do its verification mandate work in a professional, impartial, and transparent manner, in order to preserve and strengthen the Organisation as an exemplary multilateral disarmament body.

DESTRUCTION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The OPCW, together with its Member States, are committed to the total elimination of all types of chemical weapons under the watchful eye of the OPCW's verification regime. However, the destruction of the declared chemical weapons stockpile of the sole possessor State Party, despite several extensions and after 26 years since entry into force of the Convention, has yet to be completed.

We firmly believe that, since chemical weapons have proven to be a scourge on humanity, the sole possessor State Party shall comply with its obligations under the Convention and relevant decisions of the policy-making organs and accelerate its efforts by making use of all relevant technologies and methods to complete the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpile in the shortest possible time.

Destruction of all declared chemical weapons of the only possessor State Party shall remain the top priority for the OPCW. Indeed, without achieving the total elimination of chemical weapons, any discussion on the post-destruction programmes is premature.

In light of the possibility of the new accession to the Convention, the Organisation shall preserve and promote its knowledge, experience, and expertise on chemical weapons disarmament. This will contribute to the Organisation remaining fit for purpose to tackle new and emerging challenges.

CONCLUSION

The Convention and its Verification Annex provide a comprehensive system for verification of relevant chemical activities of States Parties, thus the verification process should be implemented by the Secretariat in full conformity with the provisions of the Convention.

The Organisation should bolster confidence building through the review, compilation, and evaluation of declared data and through the inspection of the chemical industries of States Parties in the framework of the Convention.

The use of open-source information in the verification of States Parties' compliance with the Convention, is not only a violation of the Convention itself, but it would also damage the credibility and integrity of this august body.

The best mechanism to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention is to return to the well-established practice of consensus in the decision-making process within the OPCW policy-making organs. The Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is a good opportunity to encourage States Parties to revive the tradition of consensus.

The only source for the verification of compliance with the Convention is the submitted declarations of the States Parties, and other sources shall not be used in this regard.

The current situation of decision making has triggered a rapid, scattered decision collection through voting, which would undermine collective efforts towards strengthening the Convention regime.

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