



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

685 3rd Ave., Suite 1108, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 599-0950 • Fax: (212) 599-1020 •

svgmission@gmail.com | <http://svg-un.org>

Statement

By

**Ms. Diani Jimesha Prince
Counsellor**

Syria (Chemical Weapons)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President and I also thank High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

I reaffirm Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' well-established, principled position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances constitutes a reprehensible violation of international law. Impunity for chemical weapons atrocities should not be encouraged through inaction. Accordingly, allegations of the use of chemical weapons must never be dismissed and investigations should always be comprehensive and capable of withstanding scrutiny. In this regard, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) plays a critical role and bears the tremendous responsibility of ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. All activities of the Organization and its subsidiary bodies must therefore be characterized by transparency, impartiality, and non-politicization for it to remain fit for purpose and an effective multilateral body. We remain supportive of its mandate and all efforts aimed at strengthening its capacity to make certain that the quality of its work remains of the highest standard.

We continue to encourage dialogue between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Syrian National Authority to resolve the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the initial declaration. We recognize the efforts by both parties thus far, notwithstanding the impediments created by the global pandemic, and we urge them to maintain the constructive engagement. On this point we take note of the deployment of the Declaration Assessment Team to conduct the twenty-fourth round of consultations. We look forward to receiving the results of this deployment as well as all other pending reports.

Despite the many diverging views, cooperation must be fostered and sustained to make tangible progress in every aspect of this file and to ensure the full implementation of Resolution 2118. In this context, we restate the importance of OPCW Member States pursuing consensus-based decisions to thwart further polarization.

The Security Council and the OPCW Technical Secretariat ought not to overlook the many notifications by the Syrian government regarding the preparations by armed groups to fabricate

incidents of the use of chemical weapons. This is indeed concerning and we have an obligation to give this matter due attention to make an objective assessment.

In our deliberations on this file, we should always keep the collective goal of achieving a world free of chemical weapons at the forefront and remain steadfast in preserving the norm against chemical warfare.

I thank you.