



**REMARKS BY MR. THOMAS MARKRAM, DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY
TO THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS,
TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE AGENDA ITEM “THE
SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST (SYRIA)”**

(Delivered on behalf of Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for
Disarmament Affairs Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu)



New York
9 April 2018

Mr. President, distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, is away on official travel.

Mr. President,

2. It has been less than one week since I last briefed the Council on the issue of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In the intervening period, new and deeply disturbing allegations of the use of chemical weapons have come to light. Over this past weekend, reports have come in regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma, in the Syrian Arab Republic. According to reports that came in yesterday, it is alleged that at least 49 people were killed and hundreds more were injured in a chemical weapons attack. Others – more than 500 individual cases – reportedly presented with symptoms consistent with such an attack.

3. The Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in touch with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on this matter. The OPCW, which implements the Chemical Weapons Convention to which Syria is a State Party, is gathering information about this incident from all available sources, through its Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). Following the completion of its investigation, the FFM will report its findings on this alleged attack to the States Parties to the Convention.

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

4. There is, sadly, little to be said today that has not already been said. The use of chemical weapons is unjustifiable. Those responsible must be held to account. That these views have been stated before, on many occasions, does not lessen the seriousness with which such allegations are regarded by the Secretary-General.

5. Nor does it lessen the truth behind them, which is that what we are seeing in Syria cannot go unchallenged by anyone who values the decades of effort towards bringing about the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As the body charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council must unite in the face of this continuing threat. The Council must fulfil its responsibilities. To do otherwise – or simply to do nothing – is to accept, tacitly or otherwise, that such a challenge is

insurmountable. The use of chemical weapons cannot become the status quo, nor can we continue to fail the victims of such weapons.

6. Just over one year ago, in responding to the attack on Khan Shaykhun, the Secretary-General called for those responsible to be held accountable, stating that there “can be no impunity for such horrific acts.” Just over one week ago, speaking on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, I noted that unity in the Security Council on a dedicated mechanism for accountability provided the best foundation for success in this regard. I reiterate that belief here, as well as the readiness of the Secretary-General and of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to assist.

7. I thank you for your attention.