

**Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the  
States Parties (CSP-27) to the Chemical Weapons Convention**

The Hague, The Netherlands  
28 November – 2 December 2022

NGO Joint Statement:  
***Challenges of Chemical Terrorism***

Statement prepared by:<sup>1</sup>  
Animesh Roul (Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict, India);  
Maria Espona (ArgIQ-Argentina Information Quality, Argentina)

Statement Co-Signers:  
Ahmed Alwassiti, Charity Peace Organization (C.P.O);  
Hallo Marif, Peace Foundation and International Cooperation;  
Kochar Murad, Organisation of Defending Mass Graves Victims' Rights;  
Dora Abotsi, Doors Foundation (NGO);  
Nourhan Moustafa, Maat for Peace Development and Human Rights, Egypt;  
Segun Michael, Global Network for Sustainable Development (GNSD)

***Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, Civil Society Colleagues,***

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW have accomplished many important milestones over the years only because of the noblest purpose - ‘to make the world free of chemical weapons.’

The threat from terrorist groups or violent non-state actors and their sympathisers using toxic or incapacitating chemicals as weapons remains as dangerous as before. The challenges posed by national and transnational terrorist groups and the covert state actions sponsoring them remain unchanged. Consequently, they will continue to pose more significant challenges for the OPCW, other multilateral institutions and the international community.

Broadly, we understand that terrorist groups and organised criminal syndicates with different ideologies and motivations are willing and capable of using toxic substances to cause harm. Civil society members of the world also realise the danger witnessed in the last decades, and

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<sup>1</sup> Please note: the following statement reflects the views and opinions of the authors and the co-signers, and does not necessarily reflect the views of all organizations and individuals within the CWC Coalition.

unfortunately, the future doesn't look bright. Cases in which states act like non-state actors using hybrid and unconventional ways to fulfil their objectives are in the public domain.

Several CW-related terrorism events in the past, notably, the nerve agent used in Malaysia in early 2017, Islamic State's CW use in Syria and Iraq war theatres, and last but not least, Novichok events in UK and Russia in 2018 and 2020 critically increased the threat perception from non-state actors or terrorists. The international efforts towards limiting non-state actors' access to toxic chemicals may have some impact. Several CW attacks were identified and, in some cases, brought to justice.

Regarding chemical weapons and terrorism threats, the CWC was more or less passive on this danger before October 2017. The Eighty-Sixth (86th) Session of the Executive Council (EC) of the OPCW recognised and adopted a decision to address this urgent chemical terrorism threat posed by terrorist groups or non-State actors. This step undoubtedly heralded a new chapter addressing chemical terrorism, even though the CWC was originally focused on States. Now the time has come to go beyond provisions of assistance and protection of the affected State party. Along with the existing collective support system and cooperation among State Parties, an effective strategy for the prevention of chemical terrorism and robust response mechanisms, including accountability and persecution of the perpetrators, would undoubtedly deter both terrorists and their supporters, eventually strengthening the CWC treaty regime for future threats and challenges.

We are honoured to be associated with the CWC Coalition, and We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Dr Paul Walker for leading the Coalition and special thanks to all our members for their active participation as a growing and cohesive team offering valuable contributions for the accomplishment of CWC's objectives.

**We wish this joint statement is included in the final CSP records and posted on the external server and website.**

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**Statement Endorsements** (Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only):

Faris Hussein Abdullah, *Agricultural Leader and Member of the Board of Directors, Kurdish Organizations Network Coalition for the International Criminal Court (KONCICC)*

Ndham Omar Abdullah, *Writer and Environmental Activist, Kurdistan Without Genocide*

Qasim Kadhim Hama Ali, *Director and Victim of Genocide, Manawa Organization For Martyars & Anfal's Inquiry*

Karwan Abdulrahman Omar Bibani, *Member, Director, and Board Member; Organization of the Justice Campaign - OJC*

Maria Espona, *Director, ArgIQ*

Chimaoge Anita Ezeigwe, *Program Manager, Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation*

Sameerah Ahmed Hasan, *Director and Women's Activist, Culture & Social Development Society in Kirkuk*

Halwest Abdullah Karim, *Member, Director, Writer and Environmental Activist; Organization Against Weapons of Mass Destruction in Kurdistan*

Oliver Meier, *Senior Researcher, CBWNet*

Ali Mahmoud Mhamad, *Member, Director, End Genocide Activist, and Writer, A World Without Chemical and Biological Weapons - WWW*

Ayad Ismael Muhammed, *Secretary, President of Kurdistan Lawyers Union Erbil Branch, Anfal case lawyer, and volunteer lawyer in the trial of chemical weapons companies, Kurdish Organizations Network Coalition for the International Criminal Court (KONCICC)*

Farhad Khalid Mustafa, *Secretary and Lecturer, Kurdistan Without Genocide*

Adeniji Olawale, *Senior Researcher, Center for Countermeasures Against Chemical and Biological Warfare Agents*

Nihro Jalal Othman, *Member, Director, and Board Member; ICAN Kurdistan Network-IKN*

Kawa Nader Qader, *Member of the Board of Directors, End Genocide Writer and Activist, ICAN Kurdistan Network-IKN*

Dashti Sleman Qadir, *Director, Organization Against Weapons of Mass Destruction in Kurdistan*

Paul Walker, *Vice Chair, Arms Control Association*

Kareem Abbas Yaseen, *Member, Director, and Board Member, Organization of the Justice Campaign - OJC*