

I. The Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

Recent Developments

The situation in the Syrian Arab Republic has quickly escalated over the summer of 2013. In early October, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) forecasted that by the end of 2013, 8.3 million people would be refugees, and that this number would rise by an additional 2 million people by the end of 2014.¹ Australia, in October, joined the Syrian refugee programme, run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accepting Syrian refugees in their country.²

On August 21, 2013, chemical weapons were used in the town of Ghouta.³ The UN Secretary-General requested the UN investigation team that was already in Syria to conduct an investigation of other potential cases of chemical weapons use to shift their focus to the August 21 attack.⁴ On August 26, the UN convoy came under attack en route to Al-Moadamiya.⁵ The team successfully arrived in Ghouta and spent a week interviewing local doctors and suspected victims of the chemical attack.⁶

On September 14, 2013, Russia and the United States negotiated the “Framework for the Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons,” which calls for the elimination of Syrian stockpiles of chemical weapons by mid-2014.⁷ The report of the UN Mission confirmed, on September 16, 2013, the use of chemical weapons in Syria.⁸ In response, on September 27, 2013, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution S/RES/2118 (2013).⁹ The resolution imposed responsibilities and a timeline on the Syrian government for the destruction of its chemical weapons and associated facilities.¹⁰

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) began destroying chemical weapons in Syria on October 6, 2013.¹¹ In addition, the OPCW is destroying and disabling a range of items including missile warheads, aerial bombs and other mixing equipment.¹² The OPCW and the United Nations (OPCW-UN) Joint Mission in Syria was established on October 16, 2013.¹³ The organization was established as a result of Security Council resolution 2118 and through provisions established by the OPCW on September 27, 2013.¹⁴ The intent of

¹ Reuters, *U.N. sees four million more Syrians fleeing homes or country in 2014*, 7 October 2013, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/07/uk-syria-crisis-refugees-idUKBRE99608H20131007>

² The Guardian, *Australia agrees to take 500 Syrian Refugees under UNHCR crisis plan*, 3 October 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/australia-accepts-500-syrian-refugees>

³ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *UN Investigation Team Returns to The Hague from Syria*, 2 September 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/un-investigation-team-returns-to-the-hague-from-syria/>

⁴ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *UN Investigation Team Returns to The Hague from Syria*, 2 September 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/un-investigation-team-returns-to-the-hague-from-syria/>

⁵ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *UN Investigation Team Returns to The Hague from Syria*, 2 September 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/un-investigation-team-returns-to-the-hague-from-syria/>

⁶ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *UN Investigation Team Returns to The Hague from Syria*, 2 September 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/un-investigation-team-returns-to-the-hague-from-syria/>

⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons*, 14 September 2013, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/09/214247.htm>

⁸ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *The OPCW Prepares for Historic Challenge*, 14 October 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/the-opcw-prepares-for-historic-challenge/>

⁹ United Nations News Centre, *Security Council Requires Scheduled Destruction of Syria's Chemical Weapons, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2118*, 16 October 2013, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sc11135.doc.htm>

¹⁰ United Nations News Centre, *Security Council Requires Scheduled Destruction of Syria's Chemical Weapons, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2118*, 16 October 2013, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sc11135.doc.htm>

¹¹ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *Syria Chemical Weapons Destruction Begins*, 6 October 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/syria-chemical-weapons-destruction-begins/>

¹² Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *Syria Chemical Weapons Destruction Begins*, 6 October 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/syria-chemical-weapons-destruction-begins/>

¹³ United Nations News Centre, *Joint Statement from Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations*, 16 October 2013, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/Syria/chemicalweapons.asp?NewsID=1269&sID=47>

¹⁴ United Nations News Centre, *Joint Statement from Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations*, 16 October 2013,

the OPCW-UN is to achieve the timely elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.¹⁵ On October 14, 2013, Syria became the 190th State Party to the *Chemical Weapons Convention*, while still denying usage of chemical weapons altogether.¹⁶ Towards the end of October, it was reported that Syria had met the first of its deadlines to destroy chemical weapons production facilities.¹⁷

There is also the ongoing escalating issue of providing medical care to the Syrian people.¹⁸ On October 25, 2013, the UN officials indicated their fears of an outbreak of polio in Syria.¹⁹ The UN has mobilized a team to vaccinate 2.5 million children and eight million other people.²⁰ Tests conducted by the Syrian government and rebel group said a discovery of paralyzed children in Deir al-Zour strongly suggested that the children were infected with polio.²¹ Further to this, the World Health Organization indicated that they would be treating these cases as polio unless otherwise proven.²² The plan is to vaccinate people from Deir al-Zour and other areas including Turkey, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian territory, Egypt and Lebanon.²³

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/Syria/chemicalweapons.asp?NewsID=1269&sID=47>

¹⁵ United Nations News Centre, *Joint Statement from Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations*, 16 October 2013,

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/Syria/chemicalweapons.asp?NewsID=1269&sID=47>

¹⁶ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, *Syria's Accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention Enters into Force*, 14 October 2013, <http://www.opcw.org/news/article/syrias-accession-to-the-chemical-weapons-convention-enters-into-force/>

¹⁷ Evans, *Syria meets deadline to destroy chemical production facilities*, 31 October 2013.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/31/us-syria-crisis-chemical-idUSBRE99U08N20131031>

¹⁸ New York Times, *U.N. Fearing a Polio Epidemic in Syria, Moves to Vaccinate Millions of Children*, 25 October 2013,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/26/world/middleeast/syria-polio-epidemic.html>

¹⁹ New York Times, *U.N. Fearing a Polio Epidemic in Syria, Moves to Vaccinate Millions of Children*, 25 October 2013,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/26/world/middleeast/syria-polio-epidemic.html>

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²¹ New York Times, *U.N. Fearing a Polio Epidemic in Syria, Moves to Vaccinate Millions of Children*, 25 October 2013,

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²² New York Times, *U.N. Fearing a Polio Epidemic in Syria, Moves to Vaccinate Millions of Children*, 25 October 2013,

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²³ New York Times, *U.N. Fearing a Polio Epidemic in Syria, Moves to Vaccinate Millions of Children*, 25 October 2013,

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