

# Security Council briefing on Syria's use of Chemical Weapons

Thank you, Mr President. May I also thank Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing on the implementation of Resolution 2118, and I also want to thank the OPCW Director General for his monthly report on the activities of the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

Now, colleagues, the Secretary-General, the High Representative and this Council have repeatedly emphasised the importance of upholding the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons and identifying those responsible for their use. I thought Nicolas it us all a good service today by setting out some of the stories so far behind how he got here.

The OPCW, as Jerry said, is the technical body responsible for upholding that prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. The United Kingdom fully supports the OPCW as a key part of our multilateral system, and we therefore welcome the first report of the OPCW Investigation Identification Team, or IIT, into three chemical weapons attacks in Ltamenah, Syria in March 2017. I want to commend the OPCW Director General for his leadership and the IIT's members for its tireless and methodical work in producing the clear conclusions set out in its report.

We note that the IIT reached its conclusions with a high-level of confidence through an extensive investigation which relies on the totality of evidence, its consistency and corroboration by multiple sources and expert analysis. And we therefore support the IITs conclusions that units of the Syrian Air Force were responsible for all three abhorrent chemical weapons attacks against the Syrian people in Ltamenah in March 2017.

The IIT's investigation adds to the evidence produced by two separate previous UN-mandated investigations, which found that the Assad regime was responsible for using chemical weapons against its own people on at least four separate occasions. By using these terrible weapons, by retaining a chemical weapons capability inconsistent with both its initial declaration and its alleged full destruction of its chemical weapons program in 2014, and by failing to comply fully with the OPCW, Syria remains in breach of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Security Council decisions set out in Resolution 2118.

I took note of what our Russian colleagues said. But the problem is, one cannot just assert what one wants to be true in the face of evidence, which may well be inconvenient evidence to the contrary. It remains a fact that the Syrian authorities have not answered the questions raised over their CW programme since it was declared. We hear month after month in this Council about the refusal of the Syrians to cooperate fully with the OPCW and with the outstanding questions of the declaration, just as it's a fact demonstrated by different bodies over the years that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons against its own people. We must not colleagues that

dust be thrown in our eyes by Syria's defenders.

Mr President, in November, this Council unanimously reaffirmed that the use of chemical weapons was a threat to international peace and security. We expressed our strong conviction that those responsible for their use should be held accountable. In the face of clear evidence of the repeated use of chemical weapons, it is essential that we act accordingly and take steps to ensure that the threat of chemical weapons in Syria is addressed and that they are not used again – indeed, that they are never used again. We therefore urge all members of the Council to consider the report in detail and to work together towards the goal of preventing impunity and upholding UN Security Council Resolution 2118. And let me just finish by echoing Mark's question to Izumi about transmission of the report to the Security Council.

Thank you very much.

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## [National Assessment and Accreditation System \(NAAS\) grants](#)

Published 1 December 2017

Last updated 15 April 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 15 April 2020

Added a grant determination letter to cover 13 new sites with additional support for further research and evaluation of the NAAS roll out.

2. 18 April 2019

Updated 'NAAS wider phase 2 grant determination letter' to include Lancashire county council.

3. 21 February 2019

Added research support letter for original phase 1 and 2 LAs, and NAAS wider phase 2 grant determination letter.

4. 20 March 2018

Added the phase 2 grant determination letter.

5. 1 December 2017

First published.

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## Amy signs up as a community volunteer

A couple of weeks ago we confirmed that Sellafield Ltd employees could, if they were not identified as a key worker, volunteer to support the local community response to Covid-19 during work time.

One of the first people to sign up was Amy Caddy.

Normally a work week manager at Sellafield, Amy is now helping to coordinate help for people living in or around Cleator Moor.

Amy said:

The Cleator Moor support group was set up by two friends of mine, Gary Meagan who works for Kaefer and local councillor Mike Eldon.

Chaired by John Murphy who also works at Sellafield within the supply chain, the group is made up of 6 zones, each of which has a manager.

We manage and allocate requests for help, from posting letters and collecting essentials to collecting and delivering prescriptions, to one of our army of local volunteers.

I am also the lead for the Pharmacy, and it's my job to liaise with the team in Cohens, ensuring that the prescriptions are delivered on time with no problems to the individuals who require them.

Amy has also continued with her role as a Sellafield Ltd mental health champion, and is regularly checking in with colleagues who need her support.

Volunteering gives Amy a real sense of satisfaction, knowing that she is helping people when they need it most.

She added:

I volunteer because I love to help people. It's just in my nature to want to do that. I get a great sense of reward and achievement with all jobs which I carry out, whether that is for the Cleator Moor support group, being a mental health champion or helping out at The Hornets rugby club.

Becoming a volunteer has helped me develop my personality so much and I have gained a lot of confidence working with people from a variety of professional backgrounds.

What I love the most is you're not only made aware of your own strengths, but also get confronted with your own flaws which you have to deal with, getting to know yourself!

If you are a Sellafield Ltd employee, and not a key worker, visit the [employee area](#) of our website for more details of how you could volunteer during work time.

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## [Ofqual seeks views on GCSE and A level grading proposals for 2020](#)

Following the government's decision to cancel exams to help fight the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), and that students should be provided with calculated grades this summer, [we have set out exceptional arrangements for awarding GCSEs, AS and A levels, along with the Extended Project Qualification and the Advanced Extension Award in maths](#), so that as far as possible students are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances.

We have worked quickly to develop these arrangements so that schools and colleges know what is expected of them and that students can have their results in time to progress to further study or employment as planned. We have consulted with a variety of representative groups, and have sought views from those representing students. We explained when we published our information document that we would consult on some of the implementation decisions we must take, and changes to our regulatory framework. [We have today \(Wednesday 15 April\) launched a consultation](#) seeking views on the following.

### **Who should receive a calculated grade**

#### **Whether students entered for exams in year 10 or below should receive a calculated grade this summer**

We set out in our information document that we considered the arrangements should only apply to students in year 11 or above, who needed grades to progress, and that we would consult on this view. We have since received representations from centres, parents and others indicating that the progression of some such students would be disrupted if they were not awarded a grade this summer, and to exclude them would have an unfair impact. We now consider the fairest option is that results should be issued for students in year 10 and below who anticipated sitting exams this summer and we are seeking views on this proposal.

## **The impact of our proposals on private candidates**

In line with our information document, we propose that exam boards should issue results for private candidates for whom a Head of Centre can confidently submit a centre assessment grade and include the student in their centre's rank order. Other private candidates will have studied with an established provider, such as a distance learning provider that is also an approved exam centre and might similarly be able to receive a calculated grade. However, other private candidates will have no existing association with an exam centre. Exam boards are exploring, with us, whether it might be possible for some centres, such as those with particular experience of working with distance learners, to work with those private candidates who need a grade this summer in order to progress. The centre might be able to submit centre assessment grades and a rank order for those candidates, even though there is no existing relationship between the centre and the candidate by considering a range of evidence about their likely attainment. We do not yet know whether this will be possible, or how many students will be able to receive a grade in this way. Exam boards will continue to work with us to explore all options for how such a process could work and will provide an update on this no later than 30th April

## **Standardising centre assessment grades**

### **The aims of our approach to standardising grades and the principles which underpin it**

For example, the document sets out our proposals to address key questions such as:

- how should we use statistical evidence to identify and adjust overly generous or harsh centre assessment grades?
- should evidence of changes in a school or college's past performance inform our interpretation of this evidence?
- how can any issues of bias be addressed through statistical adjustment?

Our overriding aim is to make sure arrangements this summer are as fair as possible for all students. We are alert to concerns that unconscious bias could influence the grades schools and colleges might have expected their students to have achieved in the exams and assessments. Our consultation includes an equality impact assessment, of which we will take account when finalising these arrangements, and we have separately published [a review of the research literature on bias in teacher assessments](#).

## **Appealing calculated grades**

Whether appeals should include an opportunity to review:

- the centre's professional judgements
- the procedures followed by the centre and/or exam board
- the outcomes of the statistical process

We explain in the consultation why we consider that, in the exceptional circumstances of this summer, appeals should only be allowed on the grounds that the centre made a data error when submitting its information; or similarly, that the exam board made a mistake when calculating, assigning or communicating a grade

## **The autumn exam series**

We explain our proposals to allow exam boards to run an autumn series for those students who were entered for the cancelled summer series. We are still considering with government how the autumn series should operate, and will set out our proposals in a further consultation soon.

## **Putting in place the regulatory requirements**

Proposals to suspend temporarily a number of the provisions in our current rules so that the exam boards can deliver the results in line with the exceptional arrangements necessary this year. We will also put some new regulatory arrangements in place to make sure all exam boards work in line with the agreed new arrangements so that, as far as possible, standards and public confidence in the qualifications are maintained

In light of the speed with which the arrangements must be finalised if students are to receive their results in good time, and no later than the dates originally published, this consultation will close on Wednesday 29 April 2020. We encourage everyone with an interest to read the proposals and respond.

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## **[Response to 31 March direction from Secretary of State for Education](#)**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.