

## Deal Reached on Syrian Chemical Weapons

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [United Nations](#), [US NATO War](#)

[Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Give credit where it's deserved. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov earned it. He bested John Kerry. So far at least, he made him eat crow.

The five permanent Security Council members agreed on "binding and enforceable" wording to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons.

Security Council resolution language excludes military force. Russia wants all Syrian conflict issues resolved diplomatically.

So far, things are proceeding that way. It remains to be seen what happens going forward. Obama's regime change plans remain firm.

War is his bottom line option to achieve them. Implementing it is delayed. It's not deterred. Another storm may follow today's calm.

On Friday, Lavrov said:

"We have fully agreed upon draft decisions that will be forwarded to the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Hague within the next few minutes."

"We have also agreed upon a Russian-American draft resolution that will be submitted to the UNSC today in order to support the decision that I hope will be adopted by the OPCW."

"There will be no enforcement in line with Chapter VII," he stressed.

Draft resolution language fully complies with provisions he and Kerry agreed on in Geneva weeks earlier.

According to Lavrov:

"[It] includes the agreement reached in Geneva that if there are any violations of (OPCW) procedures by any side, or if chemical weapons are used by any side, only then will the Security Council revisit these instances and may be prepared to adopt decisions under Chapter 7 proportionate to the gravity of these violations."

Eliminating Syria's CWs appears easier than first thought. They're largely "unweaponized." They're liquid precursors. Neutralizing them involves a simpler process.

Destroying them can proceed more quickly. According to a US/Russian assessment, they can be eliminated in about nine months.

On September 20, Syria provided OPCW officials with a comprehensive CW list.

From the Hague, the OPCW said the “expected disclosure from the Syrian government” was received.

It’s being reviewed by its “technical secretariat.” US officials assessed what was submitted. A senior State Department official called it “quite good.”

Resolution language is legally binding. At the same time, it excludes automatic enforcement.

Security Council members will assess violations if they occur. Further action requires agreeing on a separate resolution.

A State Department official called agreed on Security Council language “a breakthrough arrived at through hard-fought diplomacy.”

“Just two weeks ago, no one thought this was in the vicinity of possible.”

“After close consultation with the P3, the Russians have agreed to support a strong, binding and enforceable resolution that unites the pressure and focus of the international community on the Syrian regime to ensure the elimination of Syria’s chemical weapons.”

“This is historic and unprecedented because it puts oversight of the Assad regime’s compliance under international control and it’s the first (Security Council resolution) to declare that the use of chemical weapons is a threat to peace and security.”

“Equally as important, it makes absolutely clear that failure of the Assad regime to comply will have consequences. Later this evening there will be a full consultation with the UNSC to discuss text.”

Resolution language holds all sides equally accountable. It excludes the use of force.

It’s in strict compliance with Geneva agreed on terms. Previous articles discussed them. They bear repeating. They include six points as follows:

- (1) Syria will place its chemical weapons under international control.
- (2) In one week, it will provide a “comprehensive” CW list.
- (3) Extraordinary Chemical Weapons Convention procedures will be implemented to destroy them.
- (4) Syria will give international inspectors full, “unfettered access” to all chemical weapons sites.
- (5) All CWs must be destroyed by mid-2014. No precise date was stipulated.
- (6) The UN will provide logistical support and compliance assurance with what’s agreed

on.

Agreed on [Security Council provisions](#) are as follows:

- “1. Determines that the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security;
2. Condemns in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular the attack on 21 August 2013, in violation of international law;
3. Endorses the decision of the OPCW Executive Council (XX September 2013), which contains special procedures for the expeditious destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons program and stringent verification thereof and calls for its full implementation in the most expedient and safest manner;
4. Decides that the Syrian Arab Republic shall not use, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to other States or non-State actors;
5. Underscores that no party in Syria should use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, or transfer chemical weapons;
6. Decides that the Syrian Arab Republic shall comply with all aspects of the decision of the OPCW Executive Council of (XX September 2013) (Annex I);
7. Decides that the Syrian Arab Republic shall cooperate fully with the OPCW and the United Nations, including by complying with their relevant recommendations, by accepting personnel designated by the OPCW or the United Nations, by providing for and ensuring the security of activities undertaken by these personnel, by providing these personnel with immediate and unfettered access to and the right to inspect, in discharging their functions, any and all sites, and by allowing immediate and unfettered access to individuals that the OPCW has grounds to believe to be of importance for the purpose of its mandate, and decides that all parties in Syria shall cooperate fully in this regard;
8. Decides to authorize an advance team of United Nations personnel to provide early assistance to OPCW activities in Syria, requests the Director-General of the OPCW and the Secretary-General to closely cooperate in the implementation of the Executive Council decision of (XX September 2013) and this resolution, including through their operational activities on the ground, and further requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of the OPCW and, where appropriate, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, to submit to the Council within 10 days of the adoption of this resolution recommendations regarding the role of the United Nations in eliminating the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons program;
9. Notes that the Syrian Arab Republic is a party to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, decides that OPCW-designated personnel undertaking activities provided for in this resolution or the decision of the OPCW Executive Council of (XX September 2013) shall enjoy the privileges and immunities contained in the Verification Annex, Part II(B) of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and calls on the Syrian Arab Republic to conclude modalities agreements with the United Nations and

the OPCW;

10. Encourages Member States to provide support, including personnel, technical expertise, information, equipment, and financial and other resources and assistance, in coordination with the Director-General of the OPCW and the Secretary-General, to enable the OPCW and the United Nations to implement the elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons program, and decides to authorize Member States to acquire, control, transport, transfer and destroy chemical weapons identified by the Director-General of the OPCW, consistent with the objective of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to ensure the elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons program in the soonest and safest manner;

11. Urges all Syrian parties and interested Member States with relevant capabilities to work closely together and with the OPCW and the United Nations to arrange for the security of the monitoring and destruction mission, recognizing the primary responsibility of the Syrian government in this regard;

12. Decides to review on a regular basis the implementation in the Syrian Arab Republic of the decision of the OPCW Executive Council (XX September 2013) and this resolution, and requests the Director-General of the OPCW to report to the Security Council, through the Secretary-General, who shall include relevant information on United Nations activities related to the implementation of this resolution, within 30 days and every month thereafter, and requests further the Director-General of the OPCW and the Secretary-General to report in a coordinated manner, as needed, to the Security Council, non-compliance with this resolution or the OPCW Executive Council decision of (XX September 2013);

13. Reaffirms its readiness to consider promptly any reports of the OPCW under Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which provides for the referral of cases of non-compliance to the United Nations Security Council;

14. Decides that Member States shall inform immediately the Security Council of any violation of resolution 1540 (2004), including acquisition by non-State actors of chemical weapons, their means of delivery and related materials in order to take necessary measures therefore; Accountability

15. Expresses its strong conviction that those individuals responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic should be held accountable; Political transition

16. Endorses fully the Geneva Communique of 30 June 2012 (Annex II), which sets out a number of key steps beginning with the establishment of a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers, which could include members of the present Government and the opposition and other groups and shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent;

17. Calls for the convening, as soon as possible, of an international conference on Syria to implement the Geneva Communique, and calls upon all Syrian parties to engage seriously and constructively at the Geneva Conference on Syria, and underscores that they should be fully representative of the Syrian people and committed to the implementation of the Geneva Communique and to the achievement of stability and

reconciliation; Non-Proliferation

18. Reaffirms that all Member States shall refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, and calls upon all Member States, in particular Member States neighbouring the Syrian Arab Republic, to report any violations of this paragraph to the Security Council immediately;

19. Demands that non-State actors not develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer, or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, and calls upon all Member States, in particular Member States neighbouring the Syrian Arab Republic, to report any actions inconsistent with this paragraph to the Security Council immediately;

20. Decides that all Member States shall prohibit the procurement of chemical weapons, related equipment, goods and technology or assistance from the Syrian Arab Republic by their nationals, or using their flagged vessels or aircraft, whether or not originating in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic; Compliance

21. Decides, in the event of non-compliance with this resolution, including unauthorized transfer of chemical weapons, or any use of chemical weapons by anyone in the Syrian Arab Republic, to impose measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter;

22. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.”

It bears repeating. Security Council resolution language holds all sides equally accountable.

Condemning Ghouta’s attack stopped short of assigning blame. Syria had nothing to do with it. Insurgents bear full responsibility. Previous articles explained in detail.

[Geneva I](#) (June 2012) “agreed on guidelines and principles for a political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.”

In other words, Syrians alone will decide who’ll lead them. Other nations, groups or elements have no say.

Efforts going forward require “facilitat(ing) a Syrian-led political process” representing all its citizens.

Transitional government must be “genuinely democratic and pluralistic.”

It must comply with “international standards on human rights.”

It must include an independent judiciary respecting rule of law principles.

It must offer “equal opportunities and chances for all.”

Ending conflict depends on establishing “a transitional governing body” with “full executive powers.”

“It could include members of the present government and the opposition and other groups and shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent.”

Syrians alone must “determine the future of the country.”

All groups and segments of society must be able “to participate in a National Dialogue” process. Outcomes achieved “must be implemented.”

“The result of the constitutional drafting would be subject to popular approval.”

Once established, “free and fair multi-party elections” must be held. Women must be “represented in all aspects of the transition.”

“The sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria must be respected.”

Conflict resolution must be achieved through peaceful dialogue and negotiation. Force is ruled out.

Washington ignored Geneva provisions. It systematically violated them repeatedly. It still does so.

It remains to be seen what follows passage of the first Security Council resolution on Syria. Its binding language may not matter.

US duplicity is longstanding. Washington policymakers can’t be trusted. There’s great reason for concern going forward.

Events require close monitoring. Obama may get the war he wants. Odds strongly favor it. Preventing it matters most.

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