

OPCW  
Mr. Fernando Arias  
Johan de Wittlaan 32  
2517 JR The Hague  
The Netherlands

October 22, 2021

**Subject: Use of Chemical Weapons by Turkey**

Dear Mr. Director-General Fernando Arias,

We are addressing you today as women from different countries regarding a matter of grave concern. Once again, the Turkish army is facing accusations of having used internationally prohibited weapons.

Since April 23, 2021, the Turkish state has been conducting a military offensive in North Iraq against the Kurdish guerrilla and the civilian population. Beyond the fact that this military operation in one of its neighboring country is illegal under international law, Turkey is also committing war crimes by using internationally banned weapons.

According to information provided by the press office of the People's Defense Units (HPG), the Turkish army has carried out a total of 138 attacks with chemical weapons in the last 5 months, as a result of which several fighters have lost their lives. On September 3 alone, three fighters were killed in Gire Sor in the region Avashin. Not only are guerrilla fighters the target of these atrocities. The village of Hirore was attacked with chemical weapons on September 4 and one family suffered injuries from the attack. The NGO 'Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq' has confirmed that these injuries were caused by the use of chemical weapons.

This is not the first time: Already in 2010, 2013 and especially due to a bombing in the North Syrian town of Serekaniye (Arabic: Ras al-Ayn) in October 2019, Turkey has been accused of the use of chemical weapons against civilians. Incriminating footage and expert opinions in the international media supported this accusation at the time. On October 17, 2019, Turkey used white phosphorus during its airstrikes on the town of Serekaniye, and dozens of people including children and women were seriously injured. At that time, too, international organizations and the state community remained silent towards Turkey's crime.

History is full of state atrocities against individuals or ethnic groups because they are exposed to states without protection. To prevent this, international laws and mechanisms such as your organization have been established as an achievement of humanity. But we see that this state of affairs continues because these very laws and mechanisms do not consistently fulfill their obligations.

We are sorry to see that neither national nor international law applies when it comes to the Kurds. Turkey, as a ratifying state of the OPCW, has been carrying out atrocities for years before the eyes of the international public and your organization without being held accountable.

The poison gas attack by Saddam Hussein against the Kurdish people in North Iraq in 1988 could have been prevented if his activities had been stopped beforehand. For the more than 5000 victims of the poison gas attack and their relatives in the city of Halabja, it was nothing but a mockery that 15 years later they were used as a pretext for attacking Iraq and for causing even more suffering.

We do not want to aid and abet this crime through inaction. We expect you, as the Director-General of an international organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons, to fulfill your responsibility, to investigate these serious allegations, to take clarifying action and to hold Turkey accountable for its crimes.

Yours Sincerely,

1. **Silvia Federici**, Professor Emerita of Political Philosophy and International Studies, Hofstra University – USA
2. **Nancy Fraser**, Professor of Philosophy and Politics - USA
3. **Gloria Steinem**, Writer and feminist organizer, Co-founder of Ms. Magazine and the Women's Media Center - USA
4. **Debra Winger**, Actress - USA
5. **Charlotte Bunch**, Founding Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership and Distinguished Professor, Rutgers University.
6. **Marina Sitrin**, Associate Professor of Sociology, State University of New York (SUNY) Binghamton; JD in International Women's Human Rights, City University of New York Law School.
7. **Joy James**, Ebenezer Fitch Professor of the Humanities, Williams College.
8. **Joya Misra**, Professor of Sociology & Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst Director, Institute for Social Science Research, and Chair, Sex & Gender Section of the American Sociological Association
9. **Debbie Bookchin**, Journalist and author - USA
10. **Meredith Tax**, Writer - USA
11. **Miriam Miranda**, OFRANEH (Organización Fraternal Negra de Honduras), Coordinator - Honduras
12. **Claudia Korol**, Feministas del ABYA YALA - Argentina
13. **Margara Millan**, Academic - Mexico
14. **Sylvia Marcos**, Writer and academic- Mexico
15. **Cheryl Hayles**, President of International Alliance of Women (IAW) - Canada
16. **Kurdish Women's Relations Office (REPAK)** - Kurdistan Region of Iraq
17. **Democratic Plurinational Women's Platform** – Iran
18. **Bese Shamari**, Board member of Democratic Platform of Iran – Iran
19. **Women's Democratic Front** – Pakistan
20. **Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)** - Afghanistan
21. **Selay Ghaffar**, Spokeswoman of Solidarity Party of Afghanistan (Hambastagi) – Afghanistan
22. **Belqis Roshen**, Member of National Assembly - Afghanistan
23. **Gita Sahgal**, Writer and film producer, co-founder of Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism, former head of Amnesty International's Gender Unit - India
24. **Helda Khasmy**, Chairwoman of SERUNI - Indonesia
25. **Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights** - Egypt
26. **Dr. Angela Al-Maamari**, President of Center of Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children - Yemen
27. **Fathia Hezem**, Tunisian Association of Democratic Women - Tunisia
28. **Bushra Al-Tai**, Seba Center for Studies and Human Development - Iraq

29. **Shereen Karim Murad**, Democratic People's Front Women's Committee President - Iraq
30. **Dr. Maha Al-Sakban**, Academic - Iraq
31. **Insaf Abdullah**, Women's rights activist - Sudan
32. **Dr. Heba Haddadini**, Feminist activist - Jordan
33. **Kanir Abdullah Hama Aziz**, Writer, Sulaymaniyah Governorate - Kurdistan Region of Iraq
34. **Ramzieh Muhammed**, Kongra Star spokeswoman - Rojava
35. **Eman Fetaih**, President of Syrian Women's Forum for Peace - Lebanon
36. **Rima Barakat**, Co-Chair of Justice Council - North East Syria
37. **Mona Yaya**, Sahrawi Community of Human Rights Defenders - West Sahara
38. **Dr. Sophia Zaza**, President of Health and Shield Association - Lebanon
39. **Rahila Gupta**, Southall Black Sisters, Journalist - UK
40. **World Women's March** - Basque Country
41. **Jule Goikoetxea Mentxaka**, Academic - Basque Country
42. **Oihana Etxebarrieta**, Basque parliamentarian and secretariat of Feminisms of EH Bildu - Basque Country
43. **Eider Azkunaga Hernández**, International Department Euskal Sindikatua - Basque Country
44. **Women Defend Rojava Madrid** - Spain
45. **Rojava Azadi Madrid** - Spain
46. **Commons Foundation** (Fundación de los Comunes) - Spain
47. **Ann-Margarethe Liv**, Founder of Solidaritet med Kurdistan - Sweden
48. **Lorena Delgado Waras**, MP - Sweden
49. **Amineh Kakabaveh**, MP – Sweden
50. **Parvin Ardalán**, Writer, journalist and women's rights activist - Sweden
51. **Seher Aydar**, MP - Norway
52. **Sofie Marhaug**, MP - Norway
53. **Hege Bae Nyholt**, MP - Norway
54. **Anina Jendreyko**, Artist - Switzerland
55. **Maja Hess**, Doctor - Switzerland
56. **Mitra Darvishian**, Writer and women's rights activist - Germany
57. **Women Defend Rojava** - Germany
58. **Cansu Özdemir**, MP - Germany
59. **Şeyda Kurt**, Journalist and writer - Germany
60. **Elif Küçük**, Visual artist - Germany
61. **Antonella Valenti**, Calabria University Professor - Italy
62. **Italian Coordination in Support of Afghan Women (CISDA)** - Italy
63. **Dr. Palmira Tavolaro**, Academic - Italy
64. **Donata Chirico**, Calabria University - Italy
65. **Maria Laura Corradi**, Researcher - Italy