

Visby, 3 September 2013

Foreign Minister Bob Carr

President of the Security Council

Dear Minister,

Please find enclosed a statement relating to the reports on the use of chemical weapons in Syria, made by the Nordic and Baltic Foreign Ministers at a meeting 3 September in Visby, Sweden.

We will provide a copy to the members of the Council.

Yours sincerely,



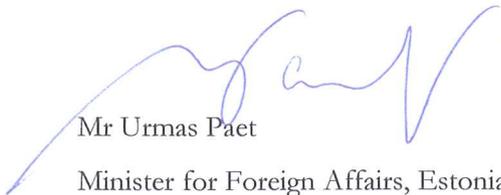
Mr Carl Bildt

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden



Mr Villy Søvndal

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Denmark



Mr Urmas Paet

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Estonia



Mr Erkki Tuomioja

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland



Mr Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iceland



Mr Edgars Rinkēvičs

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Latvia



Mr Linas Linkevičius

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lithuania



Mr Espen Barth Eide

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Norway

Statement by NB8 Foreign Ministers on chemical weapons in Syria

It is with grave concern that we have received reports on the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The use of chemical weapons has been outlawed by the shared will of mankind. We commend and join those who condemn their use in the strongest possible terms, and we are convinced a strong international reaction is required.

While highly regrettable, we note that the UN Security Council has proved unable to address the broader perspectives of the tragic situation in Syria. Our appeal today is, however, much more specific:

The Security Council must declare unequivocally that any use of chemical weapons represents a grave violation of international law. Such use must be condemned in no uncertain terms, appropriate measures be taken, and those responsible must be brought to justice. Failing to respond will weaken the respect for the global prohibition against the use of chemical weapons, and the very authority of the Council itself.

Our shared ambition has been to build a United Nations that is both legitimate and effective, providing the pivotal framework for international peace and security. The international community has entrusted the Security Council with the primary responsibility for international peace and security. This is a responsibility the Council bears on behalf of all the 193 members of the United Nations.

The Security Council should assess all relevant facts and reports relating to the use of chemical weapons, and take appropriate action. The prohibition against chemical weapons is applicable in *all* circumstances. Moreover, breaches may entail criminal responsibility for war crimes and/or crimes against humanity under international law, also as set out in the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The permanent members of the Security Council are all parties to the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention requires all parties to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons. The combined role of being States Parties to this crucial Convention and holding seats on the Security Council entrusts a particular responsibility.

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