

# OPCW and chemical weapons - WHY? – A. Victoire – 1S

## What are chemical weapons?

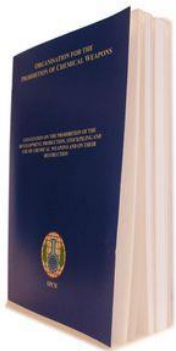
Chemical weapons are weapons, which use chemical products toxic for humans. There are a lot of different chemical weapons, some are lethal and others are only neutralizing and they can be found in different forms: liquid, gas, and solid. Those weapons are very dangerous, especially the gases because they are very volatiles, so first of all they can kill a lot of people suddenly, but they also attack the flora and fauna; and this is very bad for the environment. They are weapons of mass destruction. We saw the use of this type of weapons in particular during the First World War.

The Germans used gases like mustard gas or phosgene gas which caused lung searing, blindness, death and maiming.

As another example, we can see what happened in Syria August 21 of 2013. The rebels did an attack with chemical weapons near Damas and there were more or less 355 deaths, as we can see on the picture following.



## Are they allowed?



The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, also called Chemical Weapons Convention was established to eliminate this entire category of weapons of mass destruction. By signing this convention, a State is committed to prohibit the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons. The CWC was opened for signature during a ceremony which took place in Paris on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1993, and entered into force four years later, in April 1997, with already 190 Member States.

## Which organization takes care of it?

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is the implementing body of the CWC, which is based in The Hague. The Member States of the OPCW are working together to destroy the chemical weapons of the world to provide international security.

Their four principal goals are:

1. Destroying all existing chemical weapons;
2. Monitoring chemical industry to prevent new weapons from re-emerging;
3. Providing assistance and protection to States Parties against chemical threats;
4. Fostering international cooperation to strengthen implementation of the Convention and promote the peaceful use of chemistry.



### Glossary:

**Weapons:** any instrument or device which is used for attack or defense in combat.

**Weapons of mass destruction:** nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons that can cause indiscriminate death or injury on a large scale.

**Lethal:** causing death.

**Convention:** an international agreement, especially one dealing with a specific matter.