



March 26, 2017

The Honorable Kenneth D. Ward
Department of State
Washington, DC 20521

Dear Ambassador Ward,

We are writing to you in your capacity as U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). *Act for Sudan* is an alliance of over 70 U.S.-based organizations that advocate for an end to genocide and mass atrocities in Sudan. In October last year we wrote to you to urge you to use your influence in the OPCW to push for a full, thorough investigation of allegations made by Amnesty International that Sudan's government had used chemical weapons in attacks against civilians in the country's Darfur region.¹

We are writing now to express our dismay that the OPCW has greeted these violations with yet more impunity, by instituting Sudan as Deputy Chairperson of its Executive Council. Given the serious nature of the allegations made by Amnesty International, the fact that these allegations remain uninvestigated, and with the government of Sudan blocking access to the besieged Jebel Marra region which was targeted in these attacks, this appointment of Sudan to a leadership role in OPCW is a shocking disgrace and a grave affront to the victims of these attacks.

We hope that you can act in support of the strong leadership statements at this month's Council session. You declared, "Any use of chemical weapons, anywhere in the world, is a threat to all of us and a challenge to our shared determination to rid the world of these despicable weapons."² Your British colleague, Geoffrey Adams, declared that the OPCW "and this Executive Council must do all we can to protect the international norm against their use and promote it globally."³

We understand that Sudan's appointment may now be difficult to reverse, but we are certain that you agree that the failure to take even the preliminary steps toward investigating the allegations of violations in Sudan risks delegitimizing the OPCW's core mission. We urge you to use this opportunity to show that no member of the OPCW is beyond reproach.

Since the beginning of the genocide in Darfur 14 years ago, we have seen the violence in Darfur and more broadly in Sudan escalate in the face of international inaction and continued impunity for grave crimes. Action by the OPCW on Sudan can have a very significant impact. We ask that you push your OPCW colleagues to consider and approve a formal investigation into Amnesty International's claims and demand access to Jebel Marra to investigate. Should Sudan deny access to the OPCW, then Sudan will be exposed as opposing the mission of the OPCW and confirmed as inappropriate for a leadership role.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours, on behalf of *Act for Sudan*,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Cohen", written in a cursive style.

Eric Cohen
Co-Founder, *Act for Sudan*

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/09/sudan-credible-evidence-chemical-weapons-darfur-revealed/>

² <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/03/10/malaysias-handling-of-jongnam-murder-probe-praised/#geyJ0BR0keozp7Bk.99>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/british-ambassador-addresses-the-opcw>