

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

27 July 2012

Excellency,

I am gravely concerned by recent statements made by representatives of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, most specifically the statement of 23 July 2012 confirming the existence of weapons of mass destruction and their possible use, including chemical weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic is a party to the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. As you are aware, the Protocol prohibits the use of such weapons, including chemical weapons, and is widely accepted as reflecting customary international law.

I need not remind you that the use of such weapons would have dire humanitarian consequences. Even to seriously consider it would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind. As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I appeal to you to refrain from using any such weapons under any circumstances.

I also take this opportunity to emphasize the fundamental responsibility of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure the safety and security of any stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons.

In this regard, I urge the Government to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention as promptly as possible, as well as to work with the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the safety and security of any weapons stockpiles even before your accession to the treaty.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

  
BAN Ki-moon

His Excellency  
Dr. Bashar Al-Assad  
President of the Syrian Arab Republic  
Damascus

SG's letter to President Al-Assad  
of the Syrian Arab Republic

Drafted by: DPA  
Reviewed by: MRM

Approved by:  
27 July 2012