

“The Seville declaration on the use of chlorine in warfare

We, the Member Societies of the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS), deplore the use of chlorine in the Syrian conflict or any other and call upon the international community to bring to justice those responsible for the misuse of chlorine.”

At the 6th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress in Seville, 36 Presidents of Chemical Societies in Europe and beyond or their representatives have signed a declaration deploring the use of Chemical weapons in Syria and calling for the misusers of chlorine to be brought to justice.

After the use of chemical weapons in Syria in 2012, Syria signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and their stockpiles of chemical weapons were removed for destruction.

However, chlorine is still being used in the conflict as a chemical weapon.

Chlorine is a yellow-green gas which is stored in cylinders as a liquid. It has many benign uses and saves billions of lives every year because it is used to ensure water supplies are free of pathogens. It is used as a bleach and in making a variety of household chemicals.

It is diabolical that stocks of chlorine that are kept for benign purposes have been hijacked for use in warfare.

If chlorine is breathed in, it attacks the mucous membranes and respiratory system because it forms hydrochloric and hypochlorous acids on contact with water. This causes blistering, great difficulties with breathing and intense pain. People die a slow and painful death gasping for air, coughing and spluttering.

It is essential that everyone who uses chlorine for benign purposes should keep their supplies in secure sites where they cannot be taken for use in warfare.

Those who do use chlorine as a weapon should be prosecuted for war crimes.

About EuCheMS

Representing more than 160,000 chemists from more than 40 Learned Societies and other chemistry related organisations, EuCheMS, the Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences, relies on a unique network of active researchers involved in all the fields of chemistry. Through this network, EuCheMS organises several specialised academic conferences as well as the biannual EuCheMS Chemistry Congress, the European congress of chemical sciences. EuCheMS also promotes the role and image of the chemical sciences among the general public and policy-makers through social media, newsletters and through the organisation of conferences and workshops open to the society. Through the promotion of chemistry and by providing expert and scientific advice, EuCheMS aims to take part of the solution to today’s major societal challenges.

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