Memorandum

To: Fernando Arias, Director-General

Through: Evandro De Souza Nogueira, Director of Inspectorate

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From: 

Subject: Concerns over the FFM Report on Douma

Background

1. At the Tuesday morning meeting of the Inspectorate Management Team, the DOI raised a topic that had been discussed with you that morning. He emphasised that any serious issues or matters of concern, should be raised directly with you through the office of the DOI.

2. Yesterday I followed the deliberations in the EC in regard to agenda item 6(g). Through the debate, in particular the references to (i) the FFM, as in “the courage of the FFM in performing their work often in difficult circumstances”, and “the report of the FFM”, and (ii) your defence of the expertise and impartiality of the TS staff who participated in the FFM, it became clear to me that the picture is not clear. What is “the FFM”?

3. It is in this context that I must clarify the situation, and also to advise you of an incident that occurred in the week prior to the release of the FFM report on Douma.

4. My reasons for doing this are twofold: (1) to ensure that this situation is known at the highest levels, as there are about 20 inspectors who have expressed their concern over the current situation; (2) to identify the best way to resolve this situation in a way that does not negatively impact on the credibility and integrity of the TS.

5. I realise now that it would be remiss of me not to report this to you.

The Situation

6. The FFM report does not reflect the views of all the team members that deployed to Douma. Only one FFM team member (a paramedic) of the so-called “FFM core team” was in Douma. The FFM report was written by this core team; thus by people who had only operated in Country X.

7. I made requests on behalf of the FFM team members who deployed to Douma, to (1) receive updates on progress of the work, (2) to be allowed to review the draft report of the FFM. Both requests were denied.
8. Upon my return from the FFM mission deployment to Douma (and my subsequent manning of the Command Post in Syria for an additional 5 weeks), I was assigned the task of analysis and assessment of the ballistics of the two cylinders. I undertook this in the understanding that I was clearly the most qualified team member, having been to locations in Douma and because of my expertise in metallurgy, chemical engineering (including pressure vessel design), artillery and Defence R&D.

9. In subsequent weeks I found that I was being excluded from the work, for reasons not made clear. I reported this to the Head of OPB, the Director of Inspectorate and Chief of Cabinet. I was also assigned to other missions. However I made clear that I would complete the work and submit my report to the FFM.

10. I engaged engineering expertise, to get access to sophisticated engineering computational tools, after receiving authorisation from the DOI. This was done as a collaboration using (only) unclassified information for theoretical calculations, with two highly-esteemed institutions within WEOG. They were selected for their impartiality and credibility, in that they perform consulting work for major companies in the international automotive and aviation industries.

11. During the work I ensured the involvement and review of FFM team members, including the only “core team” member who was assigned to this task (and who had some relevant expertise). My impression was that we were leading to the same conclusions.

The Incident

12. Towards the end of January 2019 I received the final report from consultants. I also completed my analysis, and drafted an executive summary for submission to the FFM team leader for internal deliberations.

13. After incorporating comments from FFM team members, I attempted to submit my report to FFM team leaders, starting from 15 February 2019. Regarding timings, I had continuously tried to find out when the FFM report was going to be drafted and reviewed, but unsuccessfully. The response was utmost secrecy.

14. After noting continued reluctance from the FFM to receive my report (which was described in a covering memorandum as a report from the engineering, and Douma sub-team), I deposited the report in DRA for collection on 27 February 2019, and advised all relevant persons of this.

15. Three days later, during the night of 1 March 2019, I was informed that the OPCW FFM report had been published.


**Recommendations**

16. At the conclusion of the in-country activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, the consensus within the FFM team was that there were indications of serious inconsistencies in findings. After the exclusion of all team members other than a small cadre of members who had deployed (and deployed again in October 2018) to Country X, the conclusion appears to have turned completely in the opposite direction. The FFM team members find this confusing, and are concerned to know how this occurred.

17. The report of the engineering assessment of the two cylinders is attached. This needs to be considered as part of the technical assessment of the incident.

18. On Tuesday I was summoned to the IIT office to contribute to their initial briefings on the Douma case. I was advised by the Head IIT that they expected I would provide everything I knew of the case, and this I subsequently did.

In conclusion, I must stress that I hold no opinion, interest or strong views on the technical part of the matter, nor any interest in the political outcomes. My interest is in sound technical rigour; the science, engineering and facts will speak for themselves. Obviously my current assessment is that the FFM report is incomplete, for reasons that will become clear once my report is properly assessed by experts. At the very least, this was intended to be the basis for deliberation within the team, involving the external experts as necessary, to reach consensus or to agree to disagree. If I am wrong I will humbly apologise for the disruption this may have caused.

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