



The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has congratulated Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the OPCW, who today was awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize.

OPCW, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize almost 100 years after the first chemical attacks and 50 days after the “appalling use of chemical weapons in Syria”. “Far from being a relic of the past, chemical weapons remain a clear and present danger,” Ban Ki-moon, said in a statement.

“The OPCW has greatly strengthened the rule of law in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Thanks in large measure to its efforts, eighty per cent of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been destroyed. I strongly believe this success can inspire other parts of the global disarmament machinery to live up to the expectations of the international community,” the UN Secretary-General said.

Later today the Security Council is expected to approve a first-of-its-kind OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria following the landmark work of the UN Chemical Weapons Investigation Mission.

Meanwhile the advance team from OPCW and the United Nations has made good progress, according to a statement from the UN, in verifying the information submitted by the Government of the Syria on its chemical weapons programme. At the end of the first ten days of operations on the ground the verification teams have inspected three sites and plans are underway for further site visits.

A second group of OPCW inspectors and more UN support staff have arrived in Damascus, bringing to about 60 the number people on the advance team.

As OPCW has received initial and supplementary information from Syria on its chemical weapons programme, the advance team is now in the process of verifying that information. It has also overseen the destruction by Syria of some of its munitions stockpile as well as some of its chemical weapons production equipment.