

RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture

"Is the Use of Chemical Weapons No Longer a Taboo? How to Reduce Such Risks (Or Threats)?"

By

Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü

Distinguished Visiting Fellow, RSIS

(Former Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)

Thursday, 7 November 2019, 3.30 – 5.00 pm

Lecture Theatre 301, Level 3

NTU@one-north

PROGRAMME

- 2.45 pm** **Guests Arrival & Registration**
- 3.15 pm** **Guests to be seated**
- 3.30 pm** **Introductory Remarks**
Professor Ralf Emmers
Dean, RSIS, and
President's Chair in International Relations,
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture**
Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü
Distinguished Visiting Fellow, RSIS
(Former Director-General of the Organisation
for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)
- Questions and Answers**
- Presentation of Memento**
- 5.00 pm** **End of RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture**

Dress Code: Office attire

Lecture Abstract

There have been several attempts to ban the use of chemical weapons (CWs). However, it took almost a century to reach a global ban on these weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) which entered into force in 1997 prohibited the production, stockpiling and use of CWs, under the verification of the Organization for the Prohibition of CWs (OPCW).

The implementation of the CWC over the past twenty-two years has been successful. 193 countries joined the OPCW. 97% of declared stockpiles declared by eight member states, including Syria, have so far been destroyed under the verification of the OPCW. The remaining stocks in the United States will be eliminated by 2023. In view of this progress the member countries have decided to focus more on the prevention of the re-emergence of CWs.

In spite of this multilateral success which is also recognized by the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013, CWs were used in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom over the past six years. These incidents led the international community to consider different measures to deter further uses of CWs and to strengthen the international norm against such weapons. The erosion of the taboo against CWs would undermine one of the important pillars of the international order. This should be prevented.

However, there are political challenges. The OPCW membership is divided. States Parties supporting the Syrian Government are questioning the impartiality and the credibility of mechanisms established to investigate CW attacks in Syria. The UN Security Council could not agree on resolutions based on reports by investigative mechanisms. This situation prevents the international community from taking effective measures mitigating the risks for our security. It is imperative to overcome these problems for the well-being, security and prosperity of our peoples.

About the Speaker



Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü was Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague from July 2010 to July 2018. He is a career diplomat with vast experience in multilateral diplomacy.

Prior to his appointment as OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Üzümcü served as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations Office in Geneva from 2006 to 2010. In an earlier assignment, he was the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Council in Brussels, from 2002 to 2004. Ambassador Üzümcü also held the post of Ambassador of Turkey to Israel, from 1999 to

2002.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara, Ambassador Üzümcü has served, inter alia, as Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Bilateral Political Affairs in charge of Russia, Central Asia, Caucasus, the Middle East, Asia and Africa, from 2004 to 2006 and as Head of the Personnel Department from 1996 to 1999.

From 1989 to 1994, Ahmet Üzümcü served in an international capacity as Staff member in NATO's Political Directorate. During this posting he contributed to NATO's initiatives in the aftermath of the Cold War, such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP). In this capacity he travelled extensively to Eastern European countries and former Soviet Republics.


Ambassador Üzümcü received the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the OPCW in December 2013. In December 2015, H.E. Mr Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, decorated Ambassador Üzümcü with the Légion d'honneur (rank of officer).

Ambassador Üzümcü is fluent in English and French and a native speaker of Turkish. He is married and has one daughter.

ABOUT THE S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a think tank and professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An autonomous school, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. With the core functions of research, graduate education and networking, it produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-traditional Security, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security and Terrorism Studies.

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Nanyang Technological University, Block S4, Level B3, 50 Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798
Tel: +65 6790 6982 | Fax: +65 6794 0617 | www.rsis.edu.sg
NTU Reg. No.: 200604393R