Norway has become the first country to offer concrete assistance to Syria's chemical weapons disarmament, pledging a civilian cargo ship to remove chemical weapons from the country and a Norwegian frigate as an escort.

Norwegian chancellor Børge Brende said Thursday Norway would also provide U$S 14 million to the effort to destroy the chemical weapons.

“It is vital that the chemical agents and precursors are destroyed as quickly as possible, to prevent weapons of mass destruction being used to target the people of Syria again,” Brende said in a statement released by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

The Executive Committee of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was scheduled to approve a detailed plan for the destruction of the weapons and the weapons production facilities at a meeting being held Friday. It was not yet known where the weapons would be sent for destruction.

Minister of Defence Ine Eriksen Søreide said it was “essential” that the weapons be transported safely. He said that in addition to the frigate, Norway would offer relevant military personnel to support the civilian cargo ship.

Syria is believed to possess around 1,000 metric tons of chemical weapons, including mustard...
Norway provides funds and ships to move Syrian chemical weapons
gas and sarin. While was the first to offer assistance, Denmark is considering similar transport assistance and is awaiting parliamentary approval.

According to the UN, about 40% of the Syrian population, about 9.3 million, live in constant fear of attack and rely on humanitarian assistance for food, water and means of survival. Norway is providing almost U$S 16 million to in funding to help this population, and those who have had to leave their homes - two million of whom have left the country and have become refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey or Iraq.