The leader of the global monitoring group that is helping oversee the eradication of Syria’s chemical weapons arsenal said Monday President Bashar al-Assad’s government has no more margin for delays if it is to meet the June deadline for destruction of its arsenal.

Ahmet Üzümcü, director general of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said the removal of the chemicals had fallen behind a revised schedule that called for the delivery process to be completed by April 27.

“Both the frequency and volumes of deliveries have to increase significantly to restore alignment of actual movements against the projected time frame,” the director general said in a statement released on the OPCW website. “I stress this point because only 11 weeks remain before the expiry of the deadline for the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons program on 30 June 2014.”

The OPCW, which is supervising the removal and destruction of the chemicals together with a United Nations mission, said the 13th and 14th consignments of materials have been removed from Syria, raising the overall portion of chemicals already removed to 65%, including 57.4% of the most dangerous materials.

The consignments were delivered to the port of Latakia on April 10th and 13th, respectively, and immediately boarded onto cargo ships. The materials are being delivered to a special U.S. navy ship via an Italian port for destruction in the Mediterranean.
OPCW says Syria has no margin for delays in destruction of chemical weapons

Chemical weapons experts have said the Syrian arsenal included more than 1,000 tons of munitions like sarin, mustard gas and other toxic substances.

Al-Assad agreed to a Russian-brokered plan to destroy the chemical weapons after the country came under heavy international pressure following a chemical attack in last August on the town of Ghouta on the outskirts of Damascus that left hundreds dead.