



REGERINGSKANSLIET

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

National statement by Sweden  
One Hundred and Fifth Session of the Executive Council  
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons  
H.E. Ambassador Johannes Oljelund  
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW  
The Hague, 5-8 March 2024

Let me first of all join others in welcoming you, Ambassador Lucian Fatu, back to the Chair of the Executive Council

I also want to express Sweden's appreciation to Director-General Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat for their untiring and professional work in ensuring the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention despite the very challenging circumstances.

Sweden associates itself with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the European Union. The following additional remarks are made in a national capacity.

Chair,

Sweden strongly condemns the threat of use and use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere at any time.

Over two years have passed since Russia's unlawful and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and the war rages on. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms this brutal and unprovoked aggression and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Sweden is appalled by the Russian forces' continued attacks on civil infrastructure in Ukraine, including chemical facilities, threatening the life and health of civilians as well as the environment. We remain seriously concerned about reports – including in Russian state media - that Russia has made use of riot control agents on the battle field in Ukraine and the lack of a sincere response to the questions posed by other States Parties on these incidents. This is yet another sign of complete disregard for Article I of the Convention.

Chair,

The Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny is dead. The ultimate responsibility for this lies with President Putin and the Russian authorities. He died under unclear circumstances, isolated in a penal colony in Siberia, Russia, serving time for several politically motivated sentences, three years after he was the victim of a murder attempt with a Novichok nerve agent.

The tragic death of Mr Navalny will not lessen our determination to establish the truth about the incident in August 2020. We must and will continue to insist that Russia cooperates with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation into this incident. It remains a priority to ensure that perpetrators of chemical weapons use are identified and held to account. Impunity can never be an option. Russian attempts to direct blame elsewhere by spreading unsubstantiated claims and disinformation, will not make these serious issues go away. Russia must also allow for an independent and transparent international investigation into the circumstances of Mr Navalny's death.

Chair,

The OPCW has Sweden's continuous support in its important work regarding the Syrian chemical file. The only way forward is for the Syrian Arab Republic to stop its obstructive behaviour, resolve all outstanding issues and declare the full extent of its chemical weapons program. The decision by the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the States Parties to suspend the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic was an appropriate and necessary response to a continued violation of the Convention. Only the Syrian Arab Republic can take the steps needed to redress the situation and we urge them to do so.

Chair,

The fourth report by the Investigation and Identification Team (the IIT), issued on 22 February, concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that units of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) used chemical weapons in Marea on 1 September 2015. Sweden strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons – be it by a State or non-State actor – and deeply regrets the suffering of the victims affected by such attacks.

The investigative work presented in the IIT's report manifests once again the proficiency and professionalism possessed by the OPCW's experts. Sweden reiterates its full support for the IIT's mandate, as decided by the States Parties on 27 June 2018, and will continue to support the efforts of the IIT in its remaining investigations.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the public website.

Thank you.