



**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO  
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY**

With regard to the statements by a number of delegations, a collective demarche of 44 countries, as well as a statement delivered on behalf of the European Union regarding the alleged poisoning of Russian blogger Mr Navalny by some kind of military-grade toxic agent, we would like to express our principled position on concerning these types of bogus stories within the OPCW.

We categorically reject the demands expressed as an ultimatum for the Russian Federation to disclose and explain all the circumstances of what took place with Mr Navalny. The Russian Federation has taken steps towards this using all possible mechanisms, including the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The General Prosecutor's Office of Russia immediately requested all information on the results of the tests that were conducted from Germany, France, and Sweden, and also submitted a request to transfer to us all evidence relating to the matter. But we have not received any substantive information from them.

Instead of a willingness to hold a dialogue, a variety of farcical pretexts have been made for refusing to satisfy the official requests of the Russian side. And the versions of these reasons keep changing. At first, the German authorities said that information about the formula of the toxic chemical allegedly detected was classified, as its disclosure would have allowed the Russian side to understand the knowledge possessed by the Bundeswehr in the field of chemical weapons. Later, the focus was placed on Mr Navalny's restriction against providing any information to Russia, including his personal data. Letters from the federal justice agency, purported by the Germany side to be responses to Russia's aforementioned requests, are nothing more than boilerplate replies with no substance. We met the same situation in dealing with Paris and Stockholm. The lack of any logic or consistency in our Western partners' actions is obvious.

Information that is critically important for launching an investigation is being blatantly concealed from the Russian Federation. On what grounds, then, is it being proposed that we conduct an in-depth investigation? We are told that allegedly, specialised laboratories of three countries and the OPCW have without a doubt confirmed that Mr Navalny was poisoned with a chemical from the novichok family. Then give us the evidence! There is not a country in the world where law enforcement agencies work on a "take our word for it" principle. Concrete facts are necessary.



The uncooperativeness that we have had to deal with from our European partners leads one to believe that all the hubbub around the incident with Mr Navalny is based not on any intention to clarify the circumstances of what took place, but rather on the interest in exerting political pressure on Russia and the imposition of a new batch of sanctions against our country. This is evidenced in particular by the recent subsequent steps taken by Brussels and Washington.

There are no grounds to assert that there are any alleged possibilities to produce chemical weapons. In line with its international obligations, the Russian Federation destroyed all its stockpiles of this type of weapon of mass destruction by 2017 under strict international control from the OPCW. At the same time, the United States, acting in the role of the accuser, still has chemical weapons stockpiles and is dragging out the completion of the chemical demilitarisation process. It is an absolutely two-faced position: making up problems for other countries, while not paying any attention to their own.

We would like to cross our t's and dot our i's when it comes to the request that we sent to the Technical Secretariat on 1 October 2020 concerning technical assistance under subparagraph 38(e), Article VIII of the Convention. Russia was very interested in receiving this kind of assistance. We saw the main task as working together with OPCW experts to analyse the samples collected from Mr Navalny in Omsk, and comparing those with the results obtained through the OPCW. At the same time, we offered to do this collaboratively, honestly, and transparently. This would have helped clarify the main questions: where, how, and under what circumstances did the chemical that was detected outside the borders of the Russian Federation appear in the blogger's biomaterials? However, the Secretariat, unfortunately, did not rise to the occasion.

The Russian side's proposals for the modalities of the planned visit were rejected. The Technical Secretariat further declined to disclose the specific chemical formula allegedly detected in Mr Navalny's biomaterials. The pretence was that the analysis had been conducted at the orders of the Germans, so we should ask them. Germany is stubbornly reluctant to cooperate, in a flagrant violation of the of its obligations under the Convention. It is a vicious cycle. Since Berlin knows about this new toxic chemical that may be used as a weapon—and that is not even listed on the Schedules defined under the Convention—it is obligated to disclose it to the OPCW.

Instead, the Secretariat put forth its own conditions for cooperation, applicable only for conducting investigations into the possible use of chemical weapons. Yet that is not what Russia requested. We wanted to work together to clarify what was in Mr Navalny's samples—nothing more. We firmly believe that the way the parameters for technical assistance are set up is the prerogative of the requesting State—Russia, in this case.

The Secretariat ultimately did not satisfy our request. This was a great disappointment for us. We would underscore that the Russian side did not withdraw its proposal to have OPCW experts visit Russia, but only stated that due to the Secretariat's unconstructive approach, it was no longer relevant. Clearly, the latter continues to carry out someone's political machinations within the framework of a rabid anti-Russian campaign rolled out by the Euro-Atlantic allies over the situation with Mr Navalny. Correspondence between the Russian side with the Director-General on the matter was published on the Organisation's website. Anyone who wishes to do so can review it and decide who is responsible for this meeting not happening.

More often, an alternative view of what took place with Mr Navalny is appearing in open sources. From strictly scientific positions, specialists in the fields of medicine and biology are pointing to inconsistencies that are being blatantly ignored in this whole deliberately criminalised story. These publications will be highly interesting to representatives not only of expert circles, but to everyone who wants to know what truly took place in August 2020. Among these materials is an open letter to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr S.V. Lavrov, from a Mr V.V. Kozak, a neurologist in Switzerland. Mr Lavrov addressed the Director-General of the Secretariat with a request to examine and publicly comment on the conclusions set out by this specialist. Unfortunately, the Director-General's response thereto did not change the unconstructive position he already held.

We see that there was not and is not any desire to get to the bottom of the situation. But there is a persistent aim to blow this story out of proportion using political propaganda methods and portray the Russian Federation in a false light, as a violator of international norms. These types of tactics are well known from recent history, when the United States Secretary of State waved around a test tube allegedly full of anthrax spores at the United Nations Security Council, claiming it was found in Iraq. It all turned out to be a blatant lie, a pretext for starting a war in the region. As we know, history often repeats itself in the form of this kind of monstrous farce, as can be seen in the provocation involving Mr Navalny in the style of a political melodrama with the elements of a tragicomedy.

We call for the end of politicking in The Hague and at other international organisations in relation to the so-called attempt to poison Mr Navalny. It is time to put a stop to the bombastic demarches that completely contradict common sense. Germany, France, and Sweden are obligated to provide Russian law enforcement agencies all of the information requested by the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation so that it is able to appropriately complete pre-investigatory review of what took place with Mr Navalny in order to confirm if there were any signs of a potential crime and, if so, then to open a criminal case in strict compliance with the national legislation of the Russian Federation. This kind of obligation in terms of legal assistance is stipulated in paragraph 2, Article VII of the Convention, and the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of 1959.

We request that this statement be distributed as an official document of the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Council and published on the Organisation's extranet and website.

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