



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

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**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATIONS OF ALBANIA, ANDORRA,
AUSTRALIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CANADA, COLOMBIA,
THE COOK ISLANDS, CROATIA, CYPRUS, THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
DENMARK, ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GEORGIA, GERMANY, GREECE,
HONDURAS, HUNGARY, ICELAND, IRELAND, ITALY, JAPAN, LATVIA,
LIBERIA, LIECHTENSTEIN, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALTA,
THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, MONACO, MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS,
NEW ZEALAND, NIUE, NORWAY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, POLAND,
PORTUGAL, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH
MACEDONIA, ROMANIA, SAN MARINO, THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC,
SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, TURKEY, UKRAINE,
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND,
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND VANUATU TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

Mr Chairperson,

I am making this statement on behalf of 55 States Parties., namely: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, the Cook Islands, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niue, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, San Marino, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Vanuatu.

We, as States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon in the Russian Federation against Mr Alexei Navalny on 20 August 2020. We remain gravely concerned by this use of a chemical weapon.

We welcome the assistance provided by the OPCW Technical Secretariat in relation to Mr Navalny’s poisoning. The OPCW analysis of biomedical samples confirmed the presence of a cholinesterase inhibitor. We note that the cholinesterase inhibitor was identified as a nerve agent from a group of chemicals known as novichoks. We have full confidence in the OPCW’s independent scientific finding that Mr Navalny was exposed to a novichok nerve agent. We note that a novichok nerve agent was also used in an attack in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2018.



Any poisoning of an individual with a nerve agent is a use of a chemical weapon. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable and contravenes international standards and norms against such use. States Parties to the Convention have repeatedly condemned all use of chemical weapons and reiterated their commitment to the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons under Article I of the Convention. Use of a chemical weapon constitutes a direct threat to the object and purpose of the Convention.

We reiterate and reaffirm our strong support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. The Convention is an essential pillar of the international disarmament and counter-proliferation architecture and the rules-based international order on which we all rely. We underline the importance of the full implementation of the Convention and underscore our enduring commitment to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons.

Article VIII, paragraph 20 of the Convention provides that the Conference of the States Parties shall oversee the implementation of the Convention, act in order to promote its object and purpose, and review compliance with it. We urge the Russian Federation, on whose territory this attack on a Russian political opposition figure took place, to assist the Conference of the States Parties in this role by disclosing in a comprehensive and transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack. We note that the Russian Federation submitted a request for a technical assistance from the Technical Secretariat, with reference to Article VIII, paragraph 38(e) of the Convention, but that the Russian Federation has not agreed to the OPCW Technical Secretariat's standard terms of reference for such assistance to take place.

On 5 October 2021, 45 States Parties posed questions to the Russian Federation pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention, which provides for States Parties to exchange information within a set timeframe on any matter which may cause doubt about compliance with the Convention, or which gives rise to concerns about a related matter which may be considered ambiguous. The Russian Federation's response on 7 October 2021 did not answer the questions posed. The Russian Federation has not provided information sufficient to answer the doubts and concerns raised in the questions submitted by 45 States Parties. On 5 November 2021 the 45 States Parties responded to the Russian Federation and again set out the questions, including the requests related to what actions the Russian Federation has taken since 20 August 2020 in light of its obligations under the Convention, including Article VII, paragraph 1; an explanation of what further steps the Russian Federation envisages to address the incident; and the Russian Federation's failure to agree to the standard modalities for a technical assistance visit.

We urge the Russian Federation to provide the necessary clarification in accordance with its obligations under the Convention. There must be no impunity for those who use chemical weapons. Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and I request that this statement be made available as an official document of Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and made available on the OPCW website and external server.