



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Sixth Session
29 November – 3 December 2021

C-26/NAT.41
29 November 2021
ENGLISH only

ARMENIA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

At the outset I would like to thank Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo of Mexico, Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and congratulate Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway for his election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

It is obvious that the role of the Chemical Weapons Convention remains critical, and it is our responsibility as States Parties to guarantee its full implementation. As a strong supporter of disarmament and non-proliferation, Armenia has always been committed to the letter and spirit of the Convention and honoured the obligations under its legally binding instruments. Since the ratification of the Convention, the Armenian Government has adopted relevant laws, rules and regulations for implementing the provisions of the Convention. These legal documents have become an integral part of Armenia's export control system that is basically consistent with international good practices.

I would also like to underline the role of the National Authority, which has formed an effective mechanism in preparing a national implementation plan and serves as a bridge for operative liaison with the Organisation, and other international partners and stakeholders. It is worth mentioning that all annual declarations have been submitted in a timely manner, and here we commend the role of national experts in the preparation thereof.

We are living in unconventional times that require unconventional solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way of life around the world in a short period of time, leaving its toll also on security-related domains. More than a year ago the United Nations Secretary-General officially called upon the international community, particularly those involved in military conflicts, to adhere to Global Ceasefire and focus all efforts on fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. As a strong promoter of peace and security, Armenia was among the first countries that supported this initiative. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan ignored the United Nations Secretary-General's appeal by launching a large-scale war of aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), with direct involvement of its ally Turkey. On 30 October 2020, the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan used an incendiary ammunition of mass destruction, allegedly containing chemical elements (probably white phosphorus) against the peaceful residents of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), causing long-term, severe damage to both the peaceful population and environment. More than 1815 hectares of forest area was damaged almost in



the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, and on top of that many civilians suffered burns of different degrees.

This was another stark manifestation of the Azerbaijani aggressive policy to totally exterminate the Armenians of Artsakh (the Nagorno-Karabakh). On numerous occasions, the Armenian side has applied to the OPCW Technical Secretariat as well as partner nations to dispatch a fact-finding mission to give a proper assessment to these war crimes, which are in total contradiction to international humanitarian law and other conventions, including the Chemical Weapons Convention. The importance of this request is especially emphasised by the report of the team of independent medical experts from France on the evidence of chemical burns during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, which was officially presented to the Technical Secretariat by our Permanent Representation, and was distributed to the Member States by the Technical Secretariat upon the request of Armenia. Regrettably, yet again Armenia's appeals were turned a blind eye upon. This is why we use this opportunity to once again call upon the Technical Secretariat to be consistent and to carry its functions and responsibilities in an impartial and objective manner.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, I would like to reiterate Armenia's adherence to the principles and objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on Catalyst and on the public website.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---