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SLOVAKIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JURAJ MACHÁČ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

The Slovak Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Kateřina Sequensová, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the OPCW, on behalf of the Member States of the European Union and aligned countries.

In my national capacity, I wish to make the following comments and observations.

To begin, I would like to extend our appreciation to those who have contributed to the meticulous preparation of this session, especially to H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela, the designated Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties, the OPCW Director-General Fernando Arias and all staff members of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. The Slovak Republic commends your determination, impartiality and high level of professionalism. You may rest assured of the full confidence and support of my delegation throughout the session.

Firstly, the Slovak Republic feels obliged to turn the attention of all OPCW Member States to the ruthless aggression and the full-fledged war of Russia against its neighbour Ukraine. It is necessary to reiterate and underline that the Russian Federation has flagrantly violated the basic principles of international law as set forth in the United Nations Charter. The actions of the Russian Federation are even more alarming considering its status as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the global body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Since 24 February 2022—or even earlier, albeit under cover—we have witnessed the behaviour of the Russian Federation that contravenes the values of the international community as a whole. The Slovak Republic strongly refuses its neo-imperial ambitions under any pretext. Waging this outrageous war against Ukraine must not stay without consequences.

Therefore, we urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease all its belligerent activities against the sovereign, free and independent Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We will continue to provide Ukraine with all possible assistance.

The Russian bombardment of civil infrastructure, including industrial facilities, constitute serious violations of the Geneva Conventions, and expose the civilian population to unnecessary suffering and more specifically to toxic chemicals.



Moreover, since the very first days of its war, the Russian Federation has disseminated disinformation concerning inter alia the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) for example by accusing Ukraine of violations of its provisions. We take this opportunity to condemn once again the Russian actions in Ukraine in the strongest possible terms.

Secondly, we recall that the assassination attempt on Mr Alexei Navalny on Russian soil in August 2020 has still not been resolved. As confirmed by the OPCW designated laboratories in Germany, Sweden, France, and the OPCW itself, there is no doubt that Mr Navalny was poisoned by a military-grade nerve agent of the novichok group which was developed by the Russian Federation. We do condemn the Russian Federation in the strongest possible terms on this issue and we urge Russia to change its disruptive and non-cooperative approach, so the OPCW can, in line with its mandate, establish all facts on the assassination attempt on Mr Navalny.

Thirdly, Slovakia regrets that the Syrian Arab Republic continues its uncooperative approach and still fails to fulfil all its obligations stemming from the Convention and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Moreover, we do consider the refusal to grant a visa to one member of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team to be a clear violation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118. In this respect, we recall that properly assessing its declaration is, in the first place, in the interest of the Syrian Arab Republic itself. Of course, the international community, especially the States Parties to the Convention and the OPCW, have an equally important interest in assuring that any State Party has properly declared its chemical weapons programme and enabled the verification of its declaration. Only openness and faithful following of the rules can create trust which is indispensable for any international mechanism.

As far as the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission and OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) are concerned, we urge the Syrian Arab Republic to provide both missions with all necessary assistance and not to question the establishment and functioning of the IIT. We wish to stress that the position of the Syrian Arab Republic within the OPCW is the result of its own policy; not a failure of the OPCW or of its Member States.

Fourthly, in preparation for the Firth Review Conference, we wish to express our gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia for his dedication, professionalism, and constructive approach when chairing the Open-Ended Working Group. We firmly believe that thanks to his determination, the Member States will move forward in order to prepare the OPCW for the challenges in the future.

I wish to kindly request the issuance of this statement as an official-series document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties, as well as its posting on the OPCW public website.