



**STATEMENT OF CANADA TO THE 102<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE OPCW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**  
DELIVERED IN WRITING BY H.E. LISA HELFAND, AMBASSADOR OF CANADA TO THE NETHERLANDS  
AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF  
CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW)

Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

This year marks a milestone in our efforts to make our planet safer and more peaceful. The total destruction of all declared stockpiles is a momentous occasion and a testament to the power of diplomacy, multilateralism and respect for an international system based on rules.

As we hold our last scheduled meeting before the Fifth Review Conference, we are encouraged by the constructive engagement of the vast majority of States Parties in the preparatory process and their commitment to a successful outcome.

Once declared stockpiles are eliminated, the OPCW will need to refocus its efforts from destruction to prevention. We have collectively emphasized the enduring value of the Convention and the OPCW in responding to current and future threats. We have launched new tools to respond to these new challenges. Consolidating these gains will serve as a strong deterrent against the future use of chemical weapons.

Chair,

The Syrian regime's breaches of Article 1 keep growing. The Investigation and Identification Team recently concluded that the regime used chlorine on 7 April 2018 in Douma, killing no fewer than 7 men, 17 women, 9 boys, and 10 girls. This is the ninth confirmed use of chemical weapons by the regime to kill and terrorize people. We join the loved ones of the victims in their grief. Nobody can deny the truth anymore.

The scientific and technical basis for the conclusions reached in the report are undebatable, and the Investigation and Identification Team has conducted itself professionally as always. The report discredited Russia, Iran, and the Syrian regime's tired arguments against the OPCW's investigation, exposing them for what they really are: deceptions that seek to obfuscate the truth and protect the perpetrators from accountability.

We take note of Russia's role in the military offensive to regain control of the besieged enclave of Douma, in particular the close relationship between the perpetrators and Russian forces, their co-location at the airbase from where the attack was launched, and their joint control of the airspace at the time of the attack.

The Syrian regime's breaches of the Convention do not stop there. Every proposal by the Technical Secretariat to re-launch consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and Syrian authorities has been either sabotaged or simply ignored. Syrian authorities alone are to blame for their failure to complete a credible declaration. Their repeated use of chemical weapons and deliberate attempts to avoid their obligations point to the truth of the matter: The Syrian regime has retained a chemical weapons capability.



Chair,

It has been more than one year since Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression on Ukraine. One year of human suffering and cruelty inflicted on the people of an independent, sovereign country. Ukrainians have bravely stood up to their aggressor, and Canada will stand by and support Ukraine for as long as it takes.

We repeat our call for an end to this brutal war and to Russia's unnecessary provocations. Russia claimed numerous times that Ukraine was preparing to use chemical weapons, even though Ukraine possesses none. Russia claims to have evidence of impending chemical attacks, none of which have been substantiated.

The possibility of chemical weapons use by Russia, either as a false flag operation or an incident caused by reckless or deliberate targeting of civil chemical facilities, remains a grave concern.

Russia's track record with chemical weapons is appalling. Russia deployed Novichoks in unsuccessful assassination attempts in 2018 and 2020, accompanied by the Russian regime's hallmark disinformation campaigns. Despite repeated calls to do so, Russia has yet to investigate the assassination attempt of Alexei Navalny on its own territory, as it should have done according to Article VII. Any use of a chemical weapon, in Ukraine or elsewhere, is unacceptable and subject to accountability.

Canada looks forward to the inauguration of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology in May. Canada is proud to be a leading supporter and funder of the Centre, reflecting our steadfast commitment to the OPCW's work and to the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons & Materials of Mass Destruction. This new Centre will enhance the OPCW's efforts to strengthen the norm against the use of chemical weapons, in support of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Finally, Chair, we are so pleased to see a growing number of States Parties voicing their support for gender equality and diversity in the implementation of the Convention. Our Review Conference paper offers practical, concrete recommendations to improve gender equality and diversity in the context of the CWC and its implementation. We urge States Parties from all regions to co-sponsor this paper, thereby adding their voice to the growing call to pay more attention to this important issue