



OPCW

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KENNETH D. WARD
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
THE OPCW AT THE FIFTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished ambassadors and delegates,

It is extraordinarily troubling that we find ourselves together again this week to discuss chemical weapons use. Today we are dealing with the brazen and deliberate use of a military-grade nerve agent on the territory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 4 March, 2018. The OPCW Technical Secretariat completed its independent and impartial laboratory analysis confirming the United Kingdom's findings. The United States of America wholeheartedly supports the United Kingdom's request to convene this session of the Executive Council to discuss further the chemical weapons attack in Salisbury and the detailed analysis that has been made available to this Executive Council. The United States welcomes the OPCW's technical assistance visit (TAV) report and applauds the swift and thorough work of the Technical Secretariat and its network of designated laboratories. Once again the OPCW has proven itself as a highly professional, independent, and effective international tool for addressing chemical weapons use. The United States also commends the United Kingdom for its transparency in supporting the release to States Parties, as a highly-protected document, the full TAV report without redaction and an executive summary that has been released publicly.

As expected, the TAV report clearly confirms the United Kingdom's findings, which are definitively conclusive on the type of toxic chemical used in the Salisbury attack. Based on the results of the technical assessment of biomedical and environmental samples conducted by multiple OPCW designated laboratories, there is no doubt whatsoever that a military-grade nerve agent of "high purity" was used. The strict chain of custody and confirmatory analysis detailed in both the executive summary and the full report make clear that the findings are beyond reproach. Further, to be clear, the United Kingdom asked the OPCW to independently confirm its analysis of the toxic chemical used, not to attribute responsibility.

The United States agrees fully with the United Kingdom's assessment that the Russian Federation is responsible for the attack on United Kingdom soil using a chemical weapon – either through deliberate use or through its failure to declare and secure its stocks of this nerve agent. There is no question here: The Russian Federation is known to have developed the type of military-grade nerve agents used in the Salisbury attack, and the OPCW designated laboratories have verified the United Kingdom findings of the toxic chemical used. The Russian Federation has provided no explanation for how the nerve agent



it developed in secret was used to poison a British citizen, his daughter, and a United Kingdom police officer in Salisbury. The United Kingdom posed unambiguous questions to the Russian Federation seeking explanations – but where are the Russian Federation’s answers? Why has the Russian Federation not responded to the United Kingdom’s requests?

Although the Russian Federation has not responded, the answers are self-evident. Only the Russian Federation has the means, motive, and record to conduct such an attack. Any suggestion otherwise is pure fiction. Moscow’s denials of responsibility follow a familiar script: From the invasion of Crimea to the downing of MH17 to the Donbas incidents – they misrepresent facts and attempt to distort reality. The Russian Federation has a record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations. The Russian Federation, as made clear in public statements by its own officials, views defectors and so-called “traitors” as legitimate targets for assassination. Sadly, Sergei Skripal joins the growing list of individuals targeted by the Kremlin.

The United States agrees with the United Kingdom’s Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson’s statement that “[t]here can be no doubt what was used and there remains no plausible alternative explanation about who was responsible.” The only question that remains is how this Organisation will respond. Through its involvement in the use of a military-grade nerve agent in Salisbury, a member of the Executive Council has violated the Chemical Weapons Convention– we cannot allow this to occur with impunity. The United States firmly believes that this Executive Council must come together to condemn the Russian Federation for its failure to declare its entire chemical weapons programme and, further, to condemn the Russian Federation for its involvement in the Salisbury attack – an attack for which the perpetrators must be held accountable by the international community.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I ask that my statement be designated an official document of this special meeting of the Executive Council and posted on the external server and the public website.

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