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**UKRAINE**

**STATEMENT BY MR VASYL BODNAR  
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AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES  
PARTIES**

Fellow ministers,  
Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to take the floor during this special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. From the outset I wish to point out that Ukraine aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union. At the same time I would like to use this opportunity to add several comments concerning the issues we are discussing here in my national capacity.

The international arms control and non-proliferation architecture is under serious pressure. At the moment, we witness this on many fronts, and, unfortunately, this is also true for the Chemical Weapons Convention. The continuous use of chemical weapons in the past two years is an alarming development, and we must unite all our efforts to counter this dangerous situation. Ukraine stands firm in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, be it State or non-State actors, anywhere and under any circumstances, and expresses its conviction that perpetrators must be held accountable. The norm established by the Convention is non-negotiable and there can be no impunity.

The numerous reports on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Malaysia, and recently in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are deeply disturbing. The global norm against chemical weapons must be continually reinforced if we are to achieve their full and lasting eradication, and to ensure tragedies like those in Khan Shaykhun, Ltamenah and Douma will not be repeated. Any attempt to tolerate these serious violations undermines the extraordinary efforts undertaken by the OPCW, which must be supported in order to uphold the Convention and the entire international legal framework.

The incident in Salisbury is yet another example of a violation of international law and the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Any such act cannot be left unanswered, since doing so undermines not only the basic sense of justice, but also leads to the erosion of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and as a consequence, undermines the security of us all. These developments demand a response. There is an urgent need to act, collectively,



to reinforce the prohibition against the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Those who choose to ignore these prohibitions, and use chemical weapons, should be identified and held to account.

Against this background, the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) has played an invaluable role. It has done so by pursuing objective, impartial and independent investigations aimed at identifying, to the greatest extent possible, individuals, entities, groups, or governments who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Ukraine has had the full confidence in the professionalism and technical expertise represented in the JIM and the thorough forensic analysis they performed. Ukraine, a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2016-2017, along with other members, made serious efforts to bridge the division between the positions of the Permanent Members and to find a way to retain the JIM. We regret that two draft resolutions were vetoed by the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation blocked the world's ability to attribute the chemical weapons attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic by vetoing the renewal of the JIM. Indeed, on 9 - 10 April, the United Nations Security Council met in emergency session, and once again the Russian Federation vetoed a draft resolution that would have re-established an independent and impartial attribution mechanism that could hold the perpetrators accountable for their atrocities.

The United Nations Security Council's continuous inability to respond to the use of chemical weapons inadvertently aggravates the situation on the ground and may trigger further dangerous consequences in and beyond the Syrian Arab Republic.

We must remain vigilant against those who do not hesitate to use weapons of mass destruction, those who defend the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons and those who distort clear facts and manipulate them in an attempt to discredit independent international entities and obstruct their work.

All of that has become a hallmark of the Russian Federation's position on this issue. Notably, according to our British colleagues, in the incident in Salisbury we have situation where Russia not only covers perpetrators, but itself switches to the use of chemical weapons.

In fact, Russia still remains the only country in the United Nations Security Council that prefers to protect both the Al-Assad regime and ISIS from being held accountable. While Russia's regime was busy with doing that, Al-Assad knew he could act with impunity, and he did. The world witnesses the Russian regime's behaviour—either in the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Kingdom, Georgia, Ukraine, or elsewhere—which is unprecedented since World War II. It is in fact an aggressive attempt to rule the world, with no civilised rules to follow. That horrible chain of crimes, and impunity, must be demolished.

We live in a new reality, where chemical weapons fall into the hands of terrorist organisations and are used by irresponsible governments. Thus, we all must double our efforts in order to avert evil scenarios, which can impend anywhere. We have to spare no effort in averting the increasing risk of the further use of chemical weapons. And we have to remember the innocent victims who have already paid the ultimate price. Preventing such crimes in the future is vital and necessary.

What is the key obstacle to resolving that brutal deadlock and avoiding further massacres? What prevents us from ensuring that international law is fully respected and the legal norms in force are duly implemented? Everyone knows the answer. Therefore, everyone should be conscious about the responsibility we all bear for inaction, which may cause further tragic consequences. It is critical to find practical ways to ensure that the international legal norms related to weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation do not remain solely on paper, but that they are also properly enforced and fully respected. That is why it is important to take effective actions in response to those involved not only in the use of chemical weapons, but also in shielding perpetrators of such crimes from responsibility.

The recent events should encourage us to strongly support all relevant multilateral mechanisms, including the recently launched International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, in order to stop further erosion of the chemical weapons non-proliferation regime and to hold accountable those responsible for the use of chemical weapons.

In this regard Ukraine also welcomes the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/248. We urge the OPCW to share all relevant information, within the legal framework, on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic with this mechanism. This will ensure that the invaluable work done by the Fact-Finding Mission and the JIM in establishing the use of chemical weapons and determining those responsible is not a last step, but one on the path leading to justice.

I hope that we will be able to create an effective attribution mechanism aimed at fighting against impunity for the use of chemical weapons. We also want to see the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW involved in attribution activities. In this vein, we fully support the draft decision of the Forth Special Session prepared by the United Kingdom addressing the threat from chemical weapons use.

In concluding this statement, let me stress once again that the international community should act decisively, and in a united fashion, with a view to preventing and countering any attempts or actions that endanger the relevant international instruments, such as aggressive policies and violations of State sovereignty and territorial integrity, or the blocking of important decisions to be adopted by the United Nations or its bodies.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of the Conference.

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