



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

---

Eighty-Ninth Session  
9 – 12 October 2018

EC-89/NAT.3  
6 September 2018  
ENGLISH only

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**REQUEST FOR CIRCULATION OF A DOCUMENT  
AT THE EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**AIDE-MEMOIRE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

The Permanent Representation of the Russian Federation to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has requested the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to circulate, further to EC-M-59/NAT.4, dated 18 April 2018, the attached aide-memoire with several attachments as a national document of the Eighty-Ninth Session of the Executive Council.

Attachment: Aide-Memoire



## **Attachment**

### **AIDE-MÉMOIRE**

The Russian Federation resolutely rejects the groundless accusations of its involvement in the poisoning by toxic chemicals in Salisbury in March 2018 of the Russian citizens Sergei and Yulia Skripal reiterated anew by Prime Minister Theresa May in her speech to the British parliament on September 5. We call on the British side to show restraint. We reaffirm our readiness to hold consultations in accordance with the bilateral Consular Convention of December 2, 1965 and the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of April 20, 1959.

Once again, we responsibly reiterate that the statements of official London that solely Russia allegedly possessed and still possesses "technical means, practical expertise and motive" for committing such acts with the use of toxic chemicals are groundless and misleading the international community.

The Russian Federation has never developed, produced, otherwise acquired, stockpiled or retained toxic chemicals, which became known as "Novichok" in the West.

The name "Novichok" itself, as well as data on the structure and mass spectrum of the relevant chemical compound began to surface in foreign specialized scientific literature and applied databases owing to certain Soviet defectors who had only an indirect connection to the former USSR chemical warfare programme. Furthermore, similar research activities have been conducted in a number of other States, including Great Britain and more specifically the laboratory of the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom in Porton Down. The latter has special significance in terms of understanding what is going on over the London-staged "Skripal case" and the subsequent incident in Amesbury involving British citizens.

The Russian Federation calls on all States to consider this matter with full responsibility and due awareness and to urge the British Government to begin consultations with the Russian Federation within the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the two above-mentioned conventions.

Attachement

**On the "Novichok" Toxic Chemicals Class**

The Soviet Union was one of the originators of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and has consistently supported the swift implementation of its provisions.

A number of initiatives to enhance transparency of the Soviet chemical warfare program had been undertaken even before the finalization of the text of the CWC. Among those was the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the USA and the Government of the USSR Regarding a Bilateral Verification Experiment and Data Exchange Related to Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (Wyoming Memorandum of Understanding), signed in September 1989. With a view to implementing that instrument, the Parties exchanged data on the national stockpiles of chemical weapons and their storage locations and later in 1990–92 organized reciprocal visits of experts to the respective Soviet/Russian and US facilities.

As the legal successor and continuer of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has always advocated the complete prohibition of chemical weapons and has consistently reaffirmed its commitments in that regard.

Russia was among the first States to sign the CWC on January 13, 1993, and proceeded without delay to its implementation despite the financial and economic difficulties of state development in the post-Soviet period. All national stockpiles of chemical weapons and its production facilities were declared in strict accordance with the provisions of the Convention. Russia produced no chemical weapons other than the declared ones.

The destruction of all Russia's stockpiles of chemical weapons was conducted under strict international supervision. The laborious process was concluded on September 27, 2017. On October 11, 2017, the Director General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat certified the completion of the destruction of the Russian Federation's chemical weapons.

As for the chemical which became known as "Novichok" in the West, information on its structure and mass spectrum was first found in the mass spectral database of the American Institute of Standards in 1998 (NIST 98). It was stated that data on the agent had been provided by the US Army Edgewood Research, Development and Engineering Center. Later on, a class of toxic agents that do not fall within the CWC scope was formed based on the said chemical.

Since the mid-1990s, about 20 Western states have been involved in research activities on organophosphates of the "Novichok" class, including on their production methods and lesion effects. Structures of at least one hundred chemicals somewhat related to the "Novichoks" have been quoted in foreign scientific publications. Most of those have been indexed in the American Society Chemical Abstract System, which means that they were synthesized and then registered in the CAS database.

The US alone has issued more than 140 patents related to use of "Novichok" chemical warfare agents and protection against exposure to them.

Former British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson in his interview with Deutsche Welle on 20 March 2018 confirmed that the Porton Down laboratory also possessed a specimen of such a toxic agent. That enabled the laboratory to identify the toxic chemical agent in samples collected in the aftermath of the Salisbury incident on 4 March 2018.

In view of the fact that methods to obtain chemicals of the "Novichok" class are widely available in Western countries, where there are high-technology chemical laboratories, it seems particularly difficult to determine exactly which country the type of substance found in Salisbury originates from. The report of the OPCW Technical Secretariat on technical assistance provided to the United Kingdom following the incident in Salisbury also fails to identify the country of origin.

At the 59th Meeting of the OPCW Executive Council (the Hague, 18 April 2018), the Russian Federation, as a responsible State Party to the CWC, recommended that, in order to enhance the Convention, the Director-General of the

OPCW Technical Secretariat should prepare and submit to the Council a draft decision providing for the beginning of practical work to amend the Annex on Chemicals, in accordance with paragraph 5 of Article XV of the CWC (document EC-M-59/NAT.4 of 18 April 2018).

In May 2018, the Russian Federation sent to the OPCW Technical Secretariat its proposals to include nearly one thousand new items in the lists of controlled chemicals. We are convinced that this step would contribute to further consolidation of the regime of non-proliferation and elimination of chemical weapons.

### **Bibliography**

1. Balali-Mood M., Abdollahi M. (eds.). Basic and Clinical Toxicology of Organophosphorus Compounds. London, Springer-Verlag: 2014. ISBN 978-1-4471-5625-3.
2. Ellison, D. Hank. Handbook of Chemical and Biological Warfare Agents (2nd edition). Boca Raton, USA: CRC Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-849-31434-6.
3. Halánek E., Kobliha Z. Potenciální Bojové Chemické Látky. // Chemické Listy, 105 (5), Czech Republic, 2018. P. 323-324.
4. Hoenig, Steven L. Compendium of Chemical Warfare Agents, N.Y.: Springer Science+Business Media, 2007. ISBN 978-0-837-34626-7.
5. Patochka, Jiri. Novichok Agents - Mysterious Poisonous Substances from the Cold War Period. // Military Medical Science Letters (Voj. Zdrav. Listy, Czech Republic), 87, 1-3, 2018. ISSN 0372-7025.
6. Peplow, Mark. Nerve agent attack on spy used 'Novichok' poison. // C&N: Chemical & Engineering News (USA), Vol. 96, Issue 12, 2018.
7. U.S. Patent US 2016228416A1, USA.
8. U.S. Patent WO 2011/137317, USA.
9. U.S. Patent US 9,200,877B1, USA.

### **Russian Foreign Ministry Statement**

British Prime Minister Theresa May's remarks at the British Parliament on September 5 regarding the Skripal case and the poisoning of two British nationals in Amesbury were delivered in an absolutely unacceptable tone. They contain a number of presumptuous accusations against Russia and two allegedly Russian citizens. We strongly reject these insinuations.

In particular, we took note of her saying that "only Russia had the technical means, operational experience and motive to carry out the attack." This statement was made immediately after the release in The Hague on the previous day of a report by the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the results of the work of this organisation's experts at London's request in connection with the Amesbury incident.

The report, in particular, says that the results of the analysis of the environmental and biomedical samples taken by the OPCW experts confirm the British findings about the nature of the toxic chemicals that poisoned two British citizens in Amesbury. It's a nerve agent by chemical composition – the same substance that was found in the samples collected by the investigation into the poisoning of the Skripals and police officer Nick Bailey in Salisbury on March 4. Interestingly, the report says nothing about the origin of this nerve agent. The term "Novichok", which was offhandedly put into circulation by the British political manipulators, is not mentioned, either.

Again, we emphasise that neither the OPCW, nor the British laboratory in Porton Down are in a position to determine the country of origin of the poisonous agents from Salisbury and Amesbury. Work on such chemical compounds has been underway for several decades now in a number of countries, including the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. This is evidenced by the information from open sources obtained during independent investigations. We repeat this for those who may have a short memory.

This topic requires careful consideration by the OPCW. We call on the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation to take a very careful look at the information coming from the states parties to the Convention in response to its request regarding chemicals not controlled by the CWC. Back in May, Russia officially submitted a 400-page document listing about 1,000 new types of nerve agents that would be useful to consider from the point of view of amending the CWC Chemicals Supplement. We are interested to find out how much of such information came from the countries that so peremptorily associate the notorious Novichok agent with Russia. Did they provide such information to The Hague at all?

Clearly, Britain doesn't care about the OPCW experts' findings. What matters for London is to involve the OPCW into its outrageous accusations against Russia and use openly unscrupulous methods to associate the name of this organisation with the results of the corresponding investigations conducted by military chemists from Porton Down. That is, to have the OPCW approve unsubstantiated accusations.

We will continue to use facts to counter the anti-Russian hysteria around the Skripal case. It is regrettable that the OPCW Technical Secretariat, wittingly or unwittingly, is being drawn into the unscrupulous political game played by Britain and its allies, who do not care about the Convention.

We have previously stated on several occasions: there is nothing in the CWC that would require the Technical Secretariat to assist a member state in confirming the results of its national investigation. Strictly speaking, assistance is provided to those participating states that need it to fulfil their obligations under the Convention that are primarily related to destroying stockpiles of chemical weapons. Normally, these countries have no corresponding equipment or specialists. The British, as far as we know, have both in ample supply. The Porton Down laboratory is exactly the place that works with the substance referred to as Novichok in the West.

According to the CWC, a consultation procedure is used whenever a member state has questions for another member state. It can be conducted either directly in a bilateral format, or with the assistance of the Technical Secretariat and the OPCW Executive Council. We made relevant proposals to the British on many occasions, but they rejected them. Well, that's the choice of London.

We remind everyone of the futility of attempts to juggle the Convention provisions or to pile up groundless accusations. London must return to the legal framework of this document.

In the near future, we will again submit to the international community the background material pertaining to that matter. We will do so in The Hague and New York. We are confident that Britain's attempts to find excuses for more attacks against us sooner or later will be brought to a stop.



**Comment by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova on the recent statements by British officials regarding the incidents in Salisbury and Amesbury**

The British officials are once again focusing their attention on Russia's alleged involvement in the incidents in Salisbury and Amesbury, following a scenario that has become familiar to everyone. Without any documentary support or trustworthy testimonials, they have declared that there is sufficient evidence to bring charges against two Russian nationals and published photos of the two men whose actual nationality is still to be confirmed.

These steps follow the same pattern over and over. Russia receives unsubstantiated accusations while the accuser also declares its emphatic refusal to have any contact in order to establish the truth. Instead, we hear ridiculous demands that we clarify a situation that has nothing to do with us, as we have repeatedly stressed.

We cannot but notice that both British and American colleagues are following the same scenario. Not troubling themselves with producing any substantial evidence, they simply compile lists of "Russian agents" to justify, one way or another, the witch hunt started by London and Washington.

Our requests for a joint investigation and legal assistance in the criminal case opened by Russian law enforcement agencies on the attempted murder of a Russian national in the United Kingdom continue to be ignored. Moreover, we can clearly see London's reluctance to cooperate in establishing the truth.

One thing is clear: the so-called Skripal case instigated by the British officials is being brought to a deadlock on purpose. Instead of carrying out a genuinely independent, objective and transparent investigation into the Salisbury and Amesbury incidents, London stubbornly uses the anti-Russian speakerphone diplomacy and continues the propaganda show in the spirit of the notorious "highly likely".