



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Fourth Session
25 – 29 November 2019

C-24/NAT.57
28 November 2019
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR A. V. SHULGIN
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

Dear Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

The Russian Federation has already stated multiple times—and this is our principle position—that the decision taken at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to assign attribution functions to the OPCW Technical Secretariat is illegitimate, as it extends beyond the scope of the Chemical Weapons Convention and encroaches upon the exclusive prerogative of the United Nations Security Council. It contradicts Article XV of the Convention, in which it is clearly stipulated that this kind of change, one that affects the essence of the Convention, must be adopted by consensus.

This was done under the false pretext of the inevitability of punishment for the use of chemical weapons. However, we have every reason to believe that the establishment of such a mechanism is nothing more than a smoke screen. It was conjured up not to conduct objective investigations, but to carry out the geopolitical motives of certain States Parties, primarily in Syria, with the goal of expanding that experiment into other countries, while at the same time using it as a very real tool to exert pressure upon undesirables. Any of the States represented here may find themselves in the sights of this body if it suddenly comes to pass that their policy is inconvenient for those that pushed this initiative through.

This solution—according to the interpretation of its authors—presumes that the prerogative to establish the guilt not only of individuals but of entire States is to fall fully on the shoulders of a rather limited circle of parties. At the same time, States Parties were in fact not familiarised with the “terms of reference” of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), nor the conditions of its work, the principles for selecting incidents for investigation, nor the sources and modalities of its financing. If the funds for the IIT’s work are to be allocated from a fund of voluntary contributions, then that essentially means only one thing: the hiring by sponsors of “investigators” into crimes involving the use of chemical weapons, in order to prepare the corresponding conclusions aligned with their political orders. Moreover, it will not even be possible to cast any doubt upon the conclusions, contest them, or prove the opposite. In contrast to the United Nations Security Council, which has been provided with



all necessary authorities to take this type of decision, the IIT will do nothing more than present its fait accompli.

The situation that developed within the OPCW involving the investigation of the so-called chemical incident in the Syrian city of Douma on 7 April 2018 is confirmation of such. It is already well known that not only States Parties and independent international experts, but also Secretariat staff members who had been at the site of the incident, have expressed substantiated doubts regarding the conclusions in the Fact-Finding Mission's report. However, in addition, in order to shed light on what has taken place and dispel any doubts, it has been proposed that we unconditionally believe the word of some third-party "irreproachable" experts, categorically refusing the opportunity to be convinced of the grounds for their conclusions.

In light of the above, there is no doubt that this is exactly how things will stand when it comes to the work of the attribution mechanism. We are confident that the implementation of this initiative will be detrimental not only to the OPCW, but to the entire system of international relations that developed following World War II.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I request that this statement be distributed as an official document of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

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