



OPCW

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ESTONIA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ESTONIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. First, we take this opportunity to recognise the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for their efforts in ensuring business continuity to the extent possible in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains one of the most serious concerns for international peace and security. The international community has been appalled by the re-emergence of chemical weapons in recent years. The use of chemical weapons by anyone and anywhere is a grave violation of international law.

Estonia strongly condemns the usage of a military chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group to poison the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. We urge Russia to fully cooperate with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation, and to hold to account those responsible for the crime committed against Alexei Navalny. This is not the first time Novichok is used against people whom Russia perceives as adversaries. The 2018 attack against Sergey and Yulia Skripal on British soil and the poisoning of Navalny show a repetitive pattern. These clear violations of the core principles of the Convention should receive the strongest possible response from the States Parties to the Convention.

Estonia strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force as concluded by the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to the OPCW Executive Council (“the Council”) and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 8 April 2020.

Estonia welcomes the Council decision EC-94/DEC.2, dated 9 July 2020 that sets clear and verifiable parameters for action that the Syrian Arab Republic needs to take in order to return to full compliance with the Convention.

Estonia reiterates its full confidence in the objectivity, impartiality, and independence of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its Investigation and Identification Team, and underlines the complementarity of its work with that of the United Nations. In this context, we appreciate the regular sharing of information of the OPCW activities and investigations with the United Nations Secretary-General and the UN Security Council.



In this connection, during the Estonian Presidency of the United Nations Security Council in May, we organised a meeting of the United Nations Security Council with Director-General Fernando Arias and Mr Oñate, the Coordinator of the IIT. We are very grateful to both of them for taking the time to brief the members of the Council on the first report of the IIT.

Estonia would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

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