

STATEMENT BY H.E. MARCIN CZEPELAK
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND TO THE OPCW

*The 25th Session of the Conference of the States Parties
The Hague, April 20-22, 2021*

Agenda subitem 9d – Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use

*Mister Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,*

At this point of the discussions I would be very brief, mainly echoing comments already made by many States Parties and the European Union, also within the general debate.

Beyond any doubts, we, the States Parties, must take necessary steps to defend the Convention and send a clear and strong signal for those violating its core principles and commitments. There is no acceptance for the use of chemical weapons!

Our message for today and for the future should be as follows:

- firstly, that we support the implementation of the Convention and expect every State Party to fully observe it;
- secondly, that we support the OPCW and its Director-General in their efforts in this regard;
- thirdly, that we support the whole chemical disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

For the above mentioned reasons Poland has decided to co-sponsor the submitted draft decision and calls other States Parties to support it.

Thank you!

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[I would like to comment upon one more issue under this agenda item]

Poland reiterates its concern that threats and challenges related to the use of chemical weapons persist and continue to undermine key goals and objectives of the Convention. We need to do our utmost in order to ensure full compliance of each and every State Party with the Convention. It is a fundamental matter for the OPCW's credibility and – in a broader sense and longer perspective – for the future of the whole chemical disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Similarly to many States Parties and the European Union who expressed their views earlier, also in the context of the general debate, Poland would like to reiterate its deep concern about the use of toxic chemical – a military-grade nerve agent of the “Novichok” group – against a Russian oppositionist Mr Alexey Navalny. The poisoning of Mr Navalny with a chemical weapon has been a serious breach of the CWC and requires adequate resolute and decisive reaction of the international community and the OPCW States Parties.

Poland strongly condemns the heinous attack on Mr Navalny and stresses that those guilty of the attempted murder, with the use of prohibited chemical warfare agent, must be brought to justice. It is an absolute necessity to conduct a thorough investigation in this regard, in full transparency and without further delay in accordance with the obligation defined in the Convention. The withdrawal of Russia's request for an OPCW Technical Assistance Visit seems to be a step in the opposite direction.

Poland has been promoting the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention for years, strongly advocating the full elimination of such weapons. We will continue our efforts on the international stage in this regard, also in the context of our ongoing membership in the Executive Council.

Thank you!