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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY TO THE STATEMENTS
BY THE DELEGATIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE OPCW
AND THE COLLECTIVE STATEMENTS OF 58 STATES
AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

With regard to the statements of a number of delegations, as well as the joint statement by 58 countries at the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, with insinuations concerning the alleged poisoning of the Russian blogger A. Navalny, we would like to note the following.

Unfortunately, an entire group of countries continue to pursue the bad practices of unfounded politicisation with an anti-Russian bent in the agenda of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the perversion of the truth of the situation within this specialised international body, putting the lid on any instances of violation of the Convention that they find to be inconvenient and, as a result, deliberately misleading the States Parties to the Convention.

The problems with Mr Navalny's health are nothing more than an "established" fact of intentional "poisoning" with a nerve agent, unsubstantiated accusations against the Russian authorities since, apparently, "there is no plausible explanation" for what happened. But in fact, not one single rational witness has been brought forward in support of the Western version of what happened with Mr Navalny. All of the actions of the participants of this conspiratorial spectacle give rise to a pile of questions.

Germany, France, and Sweden stubbornly refuse to work with the Russian Federation, ignoring their obligations to provide the Russian side with legal assistance with law enforcement and other specialised bodies, as stipulated in Article VII of the Convention and the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of 1959.

We find it necessary to underscore that the materials presented by Germany (EC-95/NAT.15 and EC-95/NAT.16, both dated 6 October 2020) lack any type of analytical method; furthermore, they do not provide the names or structural formulas of the chemicals allegedly detected or the products of their destruction. At the same time, Berlin has refused to provide the analysis results, claiming that Russia, apparently, should not know the technologies and methods possessed by the Bundeswehr and used to identify novichok-type substances. This approach fully shows that Germany's conclusions are purely political and made to order.



Nevertheless, Paris and Stockholm loyally agreed to this approach and stated that the results of their analyses confirmed the findings of the German side. In Sweden, they basically claim that the disclosure of this information would go against certain State interests. Germany stubbornly insists that this matters is multifaceted and all of Russia's questions should be addressed to the OPCW Technical Secretariat. However, the management of the latter has been taking a rather long time to answer the questions asked by the Russian side and has basically hidden the fact that it provided technical assistance to Germany. In the end, it was admitted that they took the analyses from Mr Navalny, but that the results could not be given to Russia since doing so would require the consent of Berlin and Mr Navalny himself.

The Secretariat issued a Note entitled "Summary of the Report on Activities Carried Out in Support of a Request for Technical Assistance by Germany (Technical Assistance Visit – TAV/01/20)" (S/1906/2020, dated 6 October 2020), which states that "Mr Navalny was exposed to a toxic chemical [one, as we understand it] acting as a cholinesterase inhibitor". It is also noted that "the biomarkers of the cholinesterase inhibitor found in Mr Navalny's blood and urine samples have similar structural characteristics to the toxic chemicals belonging to schedules 1.A.14 and 1.A.15, which were added to the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention at the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties in November 2019". However at the same time, the provision is made that "[t]his [read: the detected] cholinesterase inhibitor is not listed in the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention". It then refers to the Secretariat's classified report.

Meanwhile, the Secretariat's classified report on providing technical assistance to Germany gives rise to many questions, and does not give any answer providing a basic explanation of "what happened" with Mr Navalny. It is rather clearly demonstrated that no one is making any effort to be accurate, since the report was issued by the Secretariat ten days after the summary had been issued. Consequently, the question arises: what materials serve as the basis of the summary?

I would recall that it was the Russian Federation, opposed by Western countries—the United States, in particular—that proposed the inclusion in the Schedules of all of the chemicals that, based on the results of research at Western laboratories, were given the name "novichoks". The question then arises: what is this new novichok that was so easily identified by laboratories in Germany, France, and Sweden, as well as two other (unnamed) OPCW designated laboratories?

It would be much clearer if the governments of the laboratories that conducted the analyses would, in this situation, make public—within the framework of the OPCW—the formula of this substance in the interests of updating the Schedules of chemicals in the Annex on Chemicals. However, this is the very thing that the governments do not want to do, so as not to disclose their continuing research into new toxic chemicals.

At the same time, the Western community demands a certain investigation, and Russia should now disclose "in a swift and transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack". In response to all of this doublespeak and fabrication, we can only state once again: no cholinesterase inhibitor was detected in the analyses of the blogger that were done in Omsk, where the doctors saved his life.

In this complex situation, the Russian Federation attempted to contact the Director-General of the Secretariat with a request for the provision of technical assistance in accordance with paragraph 38(e) of Article VIII of the Convention. The main request was to—together with OPCW experts—analyse the remainder of the samples collected from Mr Navalny at the Omsk

hospital and compare them with the results of the analyses obtained via this specialised international body, which would make it possible to clarify the main question at hand: where, how, and under what circumstances did these chemicals—which were detected outside the borders of the Russian Federation and which the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany, France, and Sweden, as well as the OPCW Secretariat peremptorily relegated to the group of compounds known in the West as novichoks—appear in the blogger’s biomaterials? The only condition imposed by our side was to do this work collaboratively.

After roughly three months of agreeing upon the modalities of this collaboration, the Secretariat has essentially refused to satisfy our request, saying that this kind of approach does not fit in with the canon of investigation according to the standards of the Convention. We were asked to provide the remainder of our samples to OPCW-certified laboratories for analysis without our participation. And this is while trust in the Secretariat, after everything that has happened at the OPCW in recent years with regard to the Syrian “chemical dossier”, has been noticeably shaken not only in Russia, but in other States Parties to the Convention.

The Secretariat’s reaction to the assistance we requested once again clearly demonstrated that the managing structure of the OPCW is being held hostage by those attempting to use this international platform for their own political interests. Moreover, willingly or not, the management of the Secretariat has become a participant in the anti-Russian campaign of Western countries with Russian blogger Mr Navalny—convicted of fraud—as their central figure; in the West, zealous efforts are made to create his image as a “prisoner of conscience” and a “victim of the Kremlin”.

As before, the Russian Federation expects substantive responses to the legal requests sent to the relevant bodies in Germany, France, and Sweden. Without these responses, it will not be possible to determine whether there were signs of a crime applicable to what took place with Mr Navalny. In January, the General Prosecutor’s Office of Russia sent what was already a sixth request to the Federal Office of Justice of the Federal Republic of Germany, as everything that had been received prior were replies with no real answers. We view the refusal to cooperate in the legal field and the concealment of information that could shed light on what happened as an obstruction to establishing the truth.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference and published on the Organisation’s external server and website.

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