



OPCW

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ENGLISH and FRENCH only

FRANCE

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF THE FRENCH
REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

Mr Chairperson,

We were all shocked by the nerve-agent attack perpetrated against Mr Alexei Navalny on 20 August 2020 on the territory of the Russian Federation. The attack, which happened three years after the events in Salisbury, took place within the context of the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, which we continue to fight against.

Based on its own analyses, France agrees with the conclusions of several of its European partners in regard to the fact that a novichok nerve agent was used in the poisoning. France condemns in the strongest terms this shocking and reckless use of such an agent.

The use of chemical weapons, anywhere, anytime, by anyone, and under any circumstances, is unacceptable and is a violation of the international norms against the use of these weapons.

We regret that, during the regular session of the Executive Council in October 2020, Russia withdrew its request for a technical assistance visit. It is imperative that the circumstances surrounding this crime and those who perpetrated it be brought to light. We still expect Russia to provide credible explanations regarding this assassination attempt on its territory, against a Russian citizen, with a nerve agent developed by Russia.

We must remain seized of this matter because it concerns a violation of international law, which affects all of us here as States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Any use of chemical weapons undermines this near-universal instrument, which is a pillar of our collective security.

The Russian Permanent Representative has indicated that a request for mutual assistance in criminal proceedings has been addressed to the French authorities. This is correct. We have examined the request, like Sweden and Germany, and have elected not to honour it. It is the responsibility of Russia, first and foremost, to open a credible and transparent investigation into this criminal act that occurred on its territory, against a Russian citizen, involving a nerve agent developed by Russia.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Conference of the States Parties and that it be published on the OPCW public website and extranet.

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