



**STATEMENT OF H.E. AMBASSADOR JURAJ MACHÁČ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE OPCW
AT THE 101st SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 4-7 October 2022)**

General Debate

The Slovak Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Kateřina Sequensová, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the OPCW, on behalf of the Member States of the European Union and aligned countries.

In my national capacity, I wish to make following comments:

In the beginning, I would like to extend our appreciation to those who have contributed to the meticulous preparation of this session of the Executive Council, especially to H.E. Ambassador Ziad M.D. Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia, Chairperson of the Executive Council, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, OPCW Director-General, and all members of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. The Slovak Republic commends your determination, impartiality, and high level of professionalism, which are unquestionable. We categorically refuse any questioning of your competencies and fulfillment of duties conferred upon you. You have all our confidence.

Firstly, the Slovak Republic feels obliged to turn the attention of all OPCW Member States to the ruthless aggression and the full-fledged war of Russia towards its neighbour – Ukraine. It is necessary to underline that the Russian Federation, moreover as Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council, has flagrantly violated the basic principles of international law as set forth in the UN Charter. Since 24 February, or even earlier albeit under cover, we have witnessed the behaviour of the Russian Federation that outcasts itself from the majority of the international community. The Slovak Republic strongly refuses its neo-imperial intentions under any pretext. Waging this unpardonable war campaign against Ukraine must not stay uncondemned.

Therefore, we urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease all its belligerent activities against sovereign, free and independent Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We will continue to provide Ukraine with all the possible assistance. The Russian bombardment of civil infrastructure, multiple and extremely serious violations of Geneva Conventions, most likely war crimes committed and other actions since the beginning of the aggression are highly reprehensible and deplorable.

Moreover, since the very first days of its war, the Russian Federation has disseminated many disinformation concerning also the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention when accusing Ukraine of violations of its provisions. Its military campaign has exposed many Ukrainians to toxic chemicals as one of the consequences of the bombardment of Ukrainian civil industrial infrastructure. We take this opportunity to condemn the Russian actions in Ukraine in the strongest possible terms.

Secondly, we recall that the assassination attempt of Mr Alexei Navalny on Russian soil in August 2020 is still not resolved. As confirmed by the OPCW designated laboratories in Germany, Sweden, France and the OPCW itself, there is no doubt that Mr Navalny was poisoned by military-grade nerve agent of Novichok group which was developed by the Russian Federation. We do condemn the Russian Federation in the strongest possible terms on this issue and we urge Russia to change its disruptive and non-cooperative approach, so the OPCW can shed light on the assassination attempt of Mr Navalny.

Thirdly, the Syrian Arab Republic continues in its uncooperative approach and still fails to cherish all its commitments stemming from the Chemical Weapons Convention. Moreover, we do consider its stance on refusing to grant visa to one member of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team as highly deplorable, and as a clear violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution no. 2118. As far as the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission and OPCW Investigation and Identification Team are concerned, we urge the Syrian Arab Republic to provide both missions with all necessary assistance and to not question the existence and functioning of the IIT. We need to stress that the position of the Syrian Arab Republic within the OPCW is a result of its own policy; it is not a failure of the OPCW nor its Member States.

Fourthly, in preparation for the Firth Review Conference, we wish to express our gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia for his dedication, professionalism, and constructive approach when chairing the Open-Ended Working Group. We firmly believe that thanks to his determination, the Member States will move forward in order to prepare the OPCW for the challenges in the future.

Last, but not least, the Slovak Republic encourages all Member States to support the so-called “Business Continuity Initiative” led by Germany. As one of the co-sponsors, we are persuaded about its added value, bearing in mind our common experiences in the recent past.

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

* * *