



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JURAJ MACHÁČ,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE OPCW,
AT THE 27th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
(The Hague, 28 November – 2 December 2022)**

General Debate

The Slovak Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. 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 the following comments and observations.

In the beginning, I would like to extend our appreciation to those who have contributed to the meticulous preparation of this session, especially to H.E. Bård Ivar Svendsen, Chairperson of the 26th session of the Conference, H.E. Vusimuzi Philemon Madonselathe, designated Chairperson of the 27th session of the Conference, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, Director-General of the OPCW and all members of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. The Slovak Republic commends your determination, impartiality and high level of professionalism. You may rest assured of the full confidence and support of my delegation throughout the session.

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 against its neighbour – Ukraine. It is necessary to re-state and underline that the Russian Federation has flagrantly violated the basic principles of international law as set forth in the UN Charter. The actions of the Russian Federation are even more alarming considering its status as a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council, the global body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Since 24 February 2022, or even earlier, albeit under cover, we have witnessed the behaviour of the Russian Federation that contravenes the values of the international community as a whole. The Slovak Republic strongly refuses its neo-imperial ambitions under any pretext. Waging this outrageous war against Ukraine must not stay without consequences.

Therefore, we urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease all its belligerent activities against the sovereign, free and independent Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We will continue to provide Ukraine with all possible assistance.

The Russian bombardment of civil infrastructure, including industrial facilities, constitute serious violations of the Geneva Conventions, and expose the civilian population to unnecessary suffering and more specifically to toxic chemicals.

Moreover, since the very first days of its war, the Russian Federation has disseminated disinformation concerning, *inter alia*, the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention for example by accusing Ukraine of violations of its provisions. We take this opportunity to condemn once again the Russian actions in Ukraine in the strongest possible terms.

Secondly, we recall that the assassination attempt on Mr Alexei Navalny on Russian soil in August 2020 has still not been 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 a military-grade nerve agent of the 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, in line with its mandate, establish all facts on the assassination attempt on Mr Navalny.

Thirdly, Slovakia regrets that the Syrian Arab Republic continues its uncooperative approach and still fails to fulfil all its obligations stemming from the Chemical Weapons Convention and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Moreover, we do consider the refusal to grant visa to one member of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team to be a clear violation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118. In this respect, we recall that properly assessing its declaration is, in the first place, in the interest of the Syrian Arab Republic itself. Of course, the international community, especially the States Parties to the CWC and the OPCW, have in equally important interest in assuring that any State Party has properly declared its chemical weapons program and enabled the verification of its declaration. Only openness and faithful following of the rules can create trust which is indispensable for any international mechanism.

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 not to question the establishment and functioning of the IIT. We wish to stress that the position of the Syrian Arab Republic within the OPCW is the result of its own policy; not a failure of the OPCW or of its Member States.

Fourthly, in preparation for the Fifth 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.

I wish to kindly request the issuance of this statement as an official-series document of the session, as well as its posting on the OPCW public website.

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