



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JURAJ MACHÁČ,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
TO THE OPCW,  
AT THE 102<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
(The Hague, 14 – 17 March 2023)**

*General Debate*

The Slovak Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered 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.

At the outset, I would like to extend our appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Ziad Al Atiyah, the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the OPCW and Chairperson of the Executive Council, as well as H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, Director-General of the OPCW and all members of the OPCW Technical Secretariat for the meticulous preparation of this session. 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.

The current session marks the conclusion of the membership of Slovakia in the Executive Council. It has been a true privilege for my delegation to serve in this capacity and to contribute to the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Conventions and compliance with it. A world free of chemical weapons has been and remains to be the ultimate goal of the Convention.

However, the international community still faces significant challenges in achieving this goal. Most recently, the findings of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) contained in its Third Report have highlighted once again the alarming fact that chemical weapons had repeatedly been used on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic by its armed forces. The Slovak Republic is deeply concerned by the use of chemical weapons and condemns the Syrian Arab Republic for its actions.

Slovakia is also deeply concerned by the efforts of a small group of States Parties aimed at spreading misinformation about the IIT, calling into doubt its creation and legitimacy. Such actions weaken not only this specific mandate or the Organisation

itself but also multilateralism in general which should be the fabric for the peaceful solution of matters of concern to the international community.

Furthermore, 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. We recall that the refusal to grant visa to one member of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) is a clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118. Providing a full and complete declaration and its proper assessment is even more important with view to the findings of the IIT and of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM).

Lastly, it is necessary 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.

Unfortunately, chemical weapons have been used in recent years also outside the territory of Syria.

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 non-cooperative approach, so that the OPCW can, in line with its mandate, establish all facts on the assassination attempt on Mr Navalny.

Last but not least, more than a year has already passed since start of the ruthless and full-fledged war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. This blatant violation of international law is even more alarming considering the fact that this aggression – a flagrant violation of the basic principles of international law and of the UN Charter – is committed by a permanent member of the Security Council, the body tasked with maintaining international peace and security.

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 wish to reiterate that we will continue to provide Ukraine with all possible assistance.

The war has affected this Organisation as well. Firstly, the Organisation and its membership simply cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that a brutal neo-imperial war is

raging with one of the States Parties being the aggressor. Secondly, since the start of the 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. While allegations of use of chemical weapons during this armed conflict have not been substantiated, considering the history of use of chemical weapons by the Russian Federation, whether in its own territory (against Mr. Navalny) or on the territory of other States, like in 2018 in Salisbury, we call on the Russian Federation to adhere to all its obligations under the CWC in the first place.

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.

I thank you.

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