



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Twenty-Seventh Session  
28 November – 1 December 2022

C-27/NAT.81  
28 November 2022  
ENGLISH only

**DENMARK**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JARL FRIJS-MADSEN  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK TO THE  
OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

At the outset let me congratulate you, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela of South Africa, on the election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We are confident that under your able stewardship, this session will come to a successful conclusion and I assure you of my delegations full cooperation and support. Let me also express our gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway for his tireless efforts in steering the work of the Conference of the States Parties until now.

The use of chemical weapons can never be legitimate or lawful. Often it will amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity, and it is always a crime. By joining the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), we have all undertaken to do our utmost to prevent the use of Chemical Weapons ever again. Despite this commitment—and our efforts—we have, in recent times, again witnessed the use of these horrific weapons in different ways. This is a clear and present threat to international peace and security. No effort must be spared in eliminating this threat now. We must put the spectre of chemical weapons back in its tomb. Safely locked away by our Convention.

Most recently, the world has witnessed the Russian Federation’s unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. Russia’s illegal military actions grossly violate international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter and undermine European and global security and stability. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression. Denmark stands in solidarity with the women, men, and children whose lives are being affected by this unjustified and unjustifiable attack. Denmark firmly rejects and unequivocally condemns the Russian aggression and demands that Russia withdraws completely from the territory of Ukraine.

In 2020, the world witnessed the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny. He was poisoned in Russia using a chemical nerve agent of the novichok group. The OPCW and other independent laboratories have confirmed this. Denmark reiterates its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of this blatant violation of the Convention. Russia must immediately disclose all relevant facts and circumstances pertaining to this crime in a verifiable manner and hold those responsible—whoever they may be—to account. Denmark continues to follow the issue closely and stands ready to take and support measures which can further this process.



Mr Chairperson, at previous Conferences of the States Parties, the States Parties sent a strong message to the Syrian Arab Republic for its failure to comply with the Convention. It is with great disappointment that we have learnt from the Director-General that the Syrian regime has chosen not to avail itself of this path. It has instead chosen the path of defiance. Defiance of our Convention and its obligations. It is now up to us, this Conference of the States Parties, to give meaning and effect to the prohibition on chemical weapons and the norms enshrined in our Treaty. We believe that the suspension of voting rights should be prolonged until the Syrian Arab Republic adheres to the Convention and its core principles. This is an appropriate measure and the bare minimum we must do to protect the integrity of the Convention and the Organisation. We call on all States Parties to exercise their duty as responsible States Parties and support the suspension. Furthermore, those responsible for these heinous crimes must be brought to justice and we must redouble our efforts aimed at accountability. Denmark is ready to do its part.

The OPCW is the guardian of the Convention and our primary tool in upholding its norms. To continue to do this as effectively, efficiently and credibly, as has been done so far, requires adequate resources. Denmark fully supports the restrained budget proposal for 2023 presented by the Director General. This is not the time to play political games with the essential resources of the Technical Secretariat. We call on all our fellow parties to the Convention to support the Director-General's budget proposal as it is. In the same vein, we also support initiatives aimed at ensuring the OPCW's continued effective functioning and the implementation of the Convention during crises.

Mr Chairperson, in closing, let me extend our deep and sincere gratitude to the Director-General and his staff for their outstanding performance. Denmark has full confidence in the professionalism, impartiality and integrity of the Technical Secretariat and its staff in carrying out the many important tasks we have given them. Often under adverse and difficult circumstances, lately more so than ever. Along the same lines, Denmark has noted with great concern the information provided by Director-General Fernando Arias that the Technical Secretariat will face a high number of departures in the Inspectorate Division in 2023 due to the OPCW tenure policy. Denmark considers that it is necessary to reevaluate the OPCW's tenure policy to ameliorate the situation.

I thank Mr. Chairperson, and kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW External Server and public website.

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