

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Aiga Liepiņa
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to the Organisation for the
Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
at the 103rd Session of the Executive Council
11-14 July 2023

Mr. Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Latvia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (Convention) constitutes an important element of the global architecture of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Convention's continued vitality and the preservation of the global norms against the use of chemical weapons is more important than ever in the current security environment. Latvia regrets that despite all good efforts invested by majority of States Parties, the Fifth Review Conference (RC5) was not able to reach consensus on an outcome document that would further strengthen the Convention. Lack of constructiveness and flexibility demonstrated by a few delegations, the Russian Federation amongst them, made it difficult to achieve this goal at the RC5.

Latvia will support the continuation of the work in the Executive Council and the Conference of States Parties on a number of actionable points thus building on positive progress achieved in the OEWG and the RC5.

Mr. Chairperson,

Latvia strongly condemns Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and demands that Russia withdraws all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Russia's military attacks on and in proximity of industrial chemical facilities present a direct threat to the civilian population and to the nature. Russia has to stop these reckless and unlawful actions.

Latvia remains concerned that the Russian Federation has not responded to calls by the international community for a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination attempt on the Russian opposition politician Mr. Alexei Navalny who was poisoned in Russia by a military chemical nerve agent of the "Novichok" group in August 2020. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons must not be tolerated. It is

important that those responsible for the assassination attempt on Mr. Navalny must be brought to justice.

Mr. Chairperson,

Comprehensive and thorough investigations by the OPCW have concluded that Syria has repeatedly used chemical weapons over the past years, causing human casualties. Latvia reiterates its call to Syria to comply with the provisions of the Convention. Syria must fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons program and accept the deployment of the OPCW Technical Secretariat staff.

Mr. Chairperson,

We ask this statement to be made an official document of the Council and published on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

Thank you.