



Statement of the Republic of Albania

Delivered by Ms. Eva Nastas,

Charge d'Affairs a.i. of the Republic of Albania to the OPCW

at the 104th session of the Executive Council

(The Hague, 10 - 13 October 2023)

Agenda item 6: General Debate

Mr. Chairperson,
Your Excellences,

The Republic of Albania extends its thanks to the Chair of the Executive Council, H.E. Ambassador Lucian Fătu of Romania, for his leadership and the preparation of this Council and assures him of our full support.

We express our unwavering support and gratitude for the OPCW's Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, as well as for the professional work and expertise of the OPCW Technical Secretariat (TS).

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russia's war in Ukraine is the most critical issue for peace and security in Europe today. Albania has firmly condemned Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, which is in blatant breach of UN Charter and international law. We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Regarding the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine these past 20 months, a rapidly growing concern also stems from numerous reports of the alleged use of riot control agents by the Russian Federation, as a new tactic in the ongoing war. This action is in violation of Article I of the Convention. We strongly urge the Russian Federation to address these reports and provide an answer to the Note Verbal's issued by the Embassy of Ukraine in the Netherlands from May until September 2023. Albania remains in strong solidarity with Ukraine, and in unwavering support of its right to self-defence, as established by Article 51 of the UN Charter, and applauds the continuous support of the TS of the OPCW in assisting the Ukrainian people with equipment and training on how to respond in face of a potential attack. We call on Russia, as we have done on all previous occasions, to stop its brutal attacks and put an end to this disastrous war.

Albania would like to call on the Russian Federation once again with growing urgency, to allow a transparent international investigation to be issued regarding the 2020 assassination attempt of Russian opposition politician, Mr. Alexei Navalny. We are saddened that this is still an ongoing unresolved issue, a resurfacing testament to the lack of cooperation and transparency by the Russian Federation. We still wait from the Russian Federation to provide answers to the questions it has received from the 45 State Parties regarding the attempted assassination.

Furthermore, Albania is in complete alignment with the statement of the European Union, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Consuelo Femenia, regarding the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Albania condemns unequivocally the lack of transparency and cooperation the Syrian regime has demonstrated in continuous non-alignment with its own declaration to the OPCW ten years ago now. Not issuing a visa to DAT's senior technical expert, the limitation to inspection teams, and the use of chemical weapons on multiple occasions, to mention some, are all alarming actions by the Syrian regime. We firmly urge Syria to take accountability for this systematic deference from its obligations, to provide answers they took upon themselves to give when becoming a member of the OPCW, and to show some form of compliance, some proof of progress to justify these past ten years. We simply expect Syria to comply with its obligations under UN Resolution 2118 and the CWC, documents signed by Syria of free will. Lastly, on this issue, we urge and await explanation and accountability from the Syrian regime for the indifference towards the lives lost as a cause of all the chemical weapon attacks during the past years.

Accountability matters and as members of this noble organisation, it is not much to be asked that we remain aligned, cooperative and transparent.

As member of the Executive Council, Albania is dedicated to continue to engage for a fruitful outcome in the meetings of the Executive Council and we look forward to the outcomes of the Conference of the State Parties in December this year, as the most important goal of being a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention is to assure its full implementation and to rid the world of chemical weapons use.

Thank you Mr. Chair.

We kindly request to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.