



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

National statement by Sweden
One Hundred and Fourth Session of the Executive Council
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
H.E. Ambassador Johannes Oljelund
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW
The Hague, 10-13 October 2023

Sweden associates itself with the statement made by Spain on behalf of the European Union. The following additional remarks are made in a national capacity.

Let me begin by welcoming you, Ambassador Lucian Fatu back to the Chair of the Executive Council, and to thank Director-General Fernando Arias for providing us with useful guidance through his comprehensive reports to the Council.

Chair,

We meet against the backdrop of a continuously severe security environment. Russia's unlawful and unjustified invasion of Ukraine rages on. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms this brutal and unprovoked aggression and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Sweden is appalled by the Russian forces' continued attacks on civil infrastructure in Ukraine, including chemical facilities, threatening the life and health of civilians as well as the environment. We demand that Russia abide by its international obligations, immediately ceasing all military actions and withdrawing from Ukraine.

Chair,

The fact that the Syrian Arab Republic continues its stance of non-cooperation with the OPCW is unacceptable. The decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Fifth Session to suspend the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic was an appropriate response to a continued violation of the Convention. Only the Syrian Arab Republic can take the steps needed to redress the situation. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to immediately stop its obstructive behaviour, to reveal the full extent of its chemical weapons programme and to fully comply with the Convention.

Sweden reiterates its full support for the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). We continue to follow the reporting of the FFM and the IIT closely, as crucial steps towards accountability for the use of chemical weapons. We commend the relentless efforts of the DAT to ensure that the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic can be considered accurate and complete. Non-compliance can never be tolerated. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with the Organization and its Technical Secretariat.

Chair,

Over three years have passed since the attempted murder of Alexei Navalny with a Novichok nerve agent. It is deeply regretful that Russia continues to deny involvement and refuses to cooperate with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation into this incident. The questions that were put to the Russian Federation by 45 States Parties in October 2021 remain unanswered. Russian attempts to direct blame elsewhere by spreading unsubstantiated claims and disinformation, will not make this serious issue go away.

Sweden reiterates that it is the responsibility of all States, including the Russian Federation, to ensure respect for the global ban on chemical weapons and accountability for the use of chemical weapons.

Further, we find Russian unsubstantiated attacks on the Technical Secretariat deeply offensive. The role of the OPCW within the disarmament and non-proliferation framework remains crucial. I reaffirm Sweden's strong confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Organisation and its Technical Secretariat, and thank them for their unwavering professionalism in carrying out important and very difficult tasks.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the public website.

Thank you.