

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 104th Session of the Executive Council
10-13 October 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 its national capacity.

Latvia strongly condemns Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and demands Russia to withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Russia's illegal military actions, war crimes committed against the Ukrainian population and continuous destruction of civilian infrastructure constitute a gross violation of international law including the United Nations Charter. Russia must be held accountable for all of these unlawful actions.

Latvia is concerned about a growing number of reports regarding the alleged use of riot control agents by Russia as a method of warfare in the territory of Ukraine. Convention prohibits such use. Russia must comply with its obligations under the Convention. Latvia greatly appreciates the Technical Secretariat's assistance provided to Ukraine thus raising Ukraine's readiness and preparedness to react to a potential chemical weapons attack.

Regrettably, the Russian Federation has still 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 are 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 stockpile and engage in full cooperation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

Mr. Chairperson,

The recent resurgence of chemical weapons calls for immediate international action to preserve the Convention's integrity. Acknowledging the importance to safeguard the global norm against the use of chemical weapons, Latvia will support the continuation of the work on a number of actionable points discussed at the Fifth Review Conference of the CWC, including tenure policy, geographical diversity, gender equality and NGO participation.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Council and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.