



Permanent Representation
of Ukraine to the OPCW

English

Subitem 9 d: Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Oleksandr Karasevych
during the 28th Conference of States Parties
(November 27 - December 1, 2023)**

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Director-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ambassadors and Delegates,

Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the most important areas of our State's policy in the field of arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This issue is under the close oversight of the Ukrainian Government. That being said, I can assure you that Ukraine would never use any chemicals as a means of warfare.

Ukrainians will never allow such type of disaster to happen on our land.

However, the continued Russian missile terror against the population of Ukraine, destruction of energy infrastructure and chemical industry facilities have reinforced our concerns about Russian hostile intentions. These attacks pose a serious threat of release of large quantities of toxic chemicals.

We are also deeply concerned by evidence coming to light of Russian military forces using riot control agents against Ukraine defensive units.

Each State Party undertakes not to use riot control agents as a method of warfare as stated under Article 1 of the Convention.

Ukrainian authorities continue to gather facts related to all potential violations of the chemical weapons convention.

At the same time, the Russian side actually does not conceal the use by their occupying forces prohibited by the Convention substances in the course of full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Information about such facts is public and was widely disseminated by the official Russian mass media.

As confirmed by the Security Service of Ukraine, the K-51 and RGR aerosol grenades, which contain substances identified as riot control agents, were not and are not in service with the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Guard of Ukraine, or the Security Service of Ukraine. The specified type of special means was not produced on the territory of Ukraine; the developers and manufacturers are located on the territory of the Russian Federation (GNPP "Basalt" and JSC "FNPC "Research Institute of Applied Chemistry").

I would like to emphasize that the use of riot control agents (in particular K-51 grenades and RGR) against the Defense Forces of Ukraine by the Russian occupying forces has been recorded since the beginning of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2014, but their use became especially intense at the end of 2022.

The specified facts are documented within the framework of the relevant criminal proceedings initiated by the investigative division of the Security Service of Ukraine on the grounds of the committing of the crime provided for in Part 1 of Article 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine "Violation of the laws and customs of war" in the form of the use of means of warfare prohibited by international law. Thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, these facts also became the subject of attention of foreign partners of Ukraine and relevant international organizations.

The Russian Federation claims that Ukraine is using chemical weapons. These false accusations do not contain any specific data or evidence of the use of toxic chemicals by the Defense Forces of Ukraine for military purposes. The given videos, photos and links, provided by Russia, as well as their origin, are dubious; all accusations against Ukraine are based on assumptions and conjectures and probably inspired by the Russian special services.

The specified actions of the Russian side are a poorly prepared analogue of the special information operation of the Russian special services to spread disinformation about cooperation between Ukraine and the USA in the field of biosecurity and biodefense. For a long time, the aggressor state has been using international organizations and working bodies of non-proliferation regimes as platforms for carrying out similar destructive actions.

Unfortunately, a few countries, most notably Russia, continue to threaten the international prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. They have done so in the recent past, including in the poisoning of Alexei Navalny. Previous Russian chemical weapons attacks have involved chemicals that are easily concealed. In light of recent Convention violations, we must stand strong in our efforts to hold those guilty accountable and to defend and uphold the Convention and our common security. We once again urge Russia and the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil their duties. We must also engage all new and developing threats as we look to the future.

Let me express my appreciation for all the statements of support from OPCW Member States about the situation in Ukraine. We are very grateful for the strong international support.

A world free of chemical weapons is our common goal. This is only achievable with our unwavering commitment to fully implement the Convention. While remaining a strong supporter of the OPCW and the Convention, Ukraine will continue to do all of these things.

I ask that this statement be designated an official document of this session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on both the external server and the public website.

Thank you for your attention.