

## CZECH REPUBLIC

### Statement by H E Mr RENÉ MIKO, AMBASSADOR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Director-General,

Distinguished delegates,

Firstly, let me wholeheartedly congratulate on your election, Mr Chairperson, and warmly thank your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Vusimusi Madonsela for his relentless work.

Czechia aligns itself with the statement on behalf of the European Union and wishes to add the following in our national capacity.

We are meeting again in troubled times as one OPCW Member State, **Russia**, continues to wage a full scale war against another Member State, **Ukraine**, with all the devastating impact on Ukrainian people.

And this war has a much broader, destabilising effect on the global security environment. This Organisation, a firm part of the universal security architecture, clearly feels its detrimental impact.

This is why we believe that at the moment, Russia has **no place** on the OPCW Executive Council.

The inevitably high expectations from the Executive Council Members include, as an absolute minimum, basic respect to the UN Charter.

Russia is now in blatant breach of several provisions of the Charter. Its aggression has been repeatedly condemned by over 140 Members of the General Assembly.

We therefore support Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania in the upcoming election **and encourage all States to do the same.** Let me add that Lithuania submitted its candidacy five weeks ago, not the last minute.

Russia's malevolent policies were visible here, in The Hague, long before the full scale invasion against Ukraine started.

The **poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal** with the novichok nerve agent in 2018. In 2020, the attack with the same agent against opposition leader **Alexei Navalny.**

And, perhaps most significantly, **the long-standing support provided by Russia to Syria,** a country which for years has been brutally killing and torturing its own citizens, while resorting to chemical weapons use in the process.

The chemical weapons use by the Syrian Government was proven consecutively by two independent international investigative teams, the Joint Investigative Mission of the UN and the OPCW, and by the IIT of the OPCW.

To defend Syria against the uncomfortable results of these independent investigations, Russia did not hesitate to launch a massive disinformation campaign against the OPCW.

Czechia has never found a reason to doubt the investigative capabilities of the IIT. Depriving Syria of their voting rights under the Convention is an adequate response by the international community to the most serious breach of the Convention – **chemical weapons use**.

Equally, we will continue to insist that Syria must **finally live up to its obligations** and declare all chemical weapons and production facilities it possesses - a basic obligation each State Party takes upon itself when ratifying the Convention.

This is why we decided to co-sponsor the draft decision „Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use and the threat of future use“.

Mr. Chairperson,

Other important decisions are going to be adopted at this Conference.

We **support the Programme and Budget** for the next biennium. Yet, we invite the Secretariat to look for efficiencies, stemming notably from the end of destruction of chemical weapons in the United States.

Also, we encourage the Secretariat to find an integrated solution **to fully embed the investigative capabilities** at the Organisation in the standard structures of the Secretariat

Czechia supports, on a long-term basis, the **OPCW assistance and protection activities under Article X of the Convention**.

Our financial support consists of providing **regular voluntary contributions**, whereas our expertise allows us to **host training courses** on our territory and conduct trainings in other parts of the world, predominantly in African countries.

Lastly, as members of the Eastern European Group which is notoriously under-represented in the Secretariat, we support the different initiatives to increase both **geographical and gender diversity** at the OPCW.

At the same time, we trust that with adoption of the two governance-related decisions, on tenure and on geographical diversity, we will have reached the **reasonable limit** of State Parties' involvement in governance matters.

We should not forget that it is the Director-General, together with his team of Directors, whom we have entrusted the management of this organisation on our behalf.

We believe they are perfectly capable of discharging their mission to our satisfaction.

Mr. Chairperson, may I ask that this statement be made an official-series document and published on the OPCW external server and public website.

I thank you.