



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ) AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AGENDA SUBITEM 7(E): ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE

Thank you Chair. I have the honour of taking the floor on this agenda item on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Despite achieving the historic milestone of the destruction of the world's declared chemical weapons stockpiles last year, our work is far from complete. Significant challenges remain concerning the use and threat of chemical weapons use.

Two years on from its full-scale invasion, Canada, Australia and New Zealand condemn Russia's unprovoked, unjustified, and illegal war of aggression on Ukraine and its people. The invasion is a gross violation of international law. We join many other States Parties in calling on Russia to cease all military operations in Ukraine and to immediately and permanently withdraw from Ukraine.

In this context, CANZ remains deeply concerned about credible reports of Russia's repeated use of riot control agents on the battlefield in Ukraine. Article 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention ('the Convention') prohibits the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare. Any use of chemical weapons by Russia would be a further grave violation of international law and an escalation in this conflict. We also condemn Russia's disinformation campaigns aimed at sowing confusion or discrediting the OPCW. Any well evidenced breaches of the Convention should be investigated and identified in an OPCW report.

CANZ remains deeply concerned by Russia's repeated use of Novichok nerve agents: in 2018 against the Skripals, and in 2020 against Alexei Navalny. CANZ is deeply saddened to learn of Mr Alexei Navalny's death. His incredible courage and opposition to Putin's repressive and unjust regime inspired the world. We hold the Russian government solely responsible for his treatment and death in prison. Russia still has not responded to questions from 45 States Parties that were raised under Article IX of the Convention in October 2021 in relation to the poisoning of Mr Navalny. CANZ urges Russia to provide a full account of the incident and to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat in good faith.

CANZ calls on Russia to comply with its obligations under the Convention. There can be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons and we will work to ensure that all perpetrators are held to account.

Thank you, Chair. I kindly ask you to consider this CANZ statement as an official document of the 105th Session of the Executive Council, and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.