



## **IRELAND**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Brendan Rogers, Permanent Representative  
of Ireland to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**

**At the One Hundredth and Fifth Session of the Executive Council**

**5 – 8 March 2024**

Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished delegates,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

I will add the following in a national capacity.

I would like to begin by thanking Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Lucian Fatu of Romania and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Council for their leadership in guiding the preparatory work for this session.

Chair,

For the last two years we have met in the shadow of Russia's unprovoked and illegal military attack on Ukraine. Two years marked by the inhumanity and sheer brutality of Russian aggression.

Ireland stands with Ukraine as it seeks to defend itself. We unequivocally condemn Russia's conduct and once again join the chorus of voices around the world calling on Russia to cease all military operations in Ukraine, and to immediately and permanently withdraw.

This Council has continuously discussed the possibility of chemical weapons use by Russia in Ukraine, either as a false flag operation or an incident caused by reckless or deliberate targeting of civil chemical facilities. We have received increasing numbers of reports on the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare by Russia. Intelligence shared by Ukraine in advance of this meeting further reveals the extent of Russia's use of riot control agents and other grave transgressions in Ukraine since the outbreak of the war. If confirmed these would constitute a breach of the CWC. We support the Article IX initiative from Germany requesting Russia to provide an explanation to these reports and we call on Russia to provide a credible response to these questions. We also request that the Secretariat continue to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine.

Chair,

Ireland is deeply saddened at the untimely death of the Russian opposition politician Mr. Alexei Navalny in the Russian prison where he was being detained. We have consistently called for Mr Navalny's unconditional release and his death is the clear manifestation of the lack of respect for the rule of law and protection of human rights in Russia, and is a reminder, if one were needed, of the repressive nature of the regime against its own people.

Russia has displayed an appalling readiness to use lethal and inhumane substances in the past. Novichok nerve agent was deployed in the UK in 2018 and, in all likelihood, this extended to Alexei Navalny, poisoned inside Russia in August 2020. Navalny's poisoning attracted worldwide attention, not least because of his courageous decision to return to Russia after months of treatment in Germany. Navalny bravely returned to continue his efforts to fight corruption and promote democracy in full knowledge of the risks. Sadly we know the outcome.

We now call for an independent investigation into his death.

Chair,

The use of chemical weapons by any country is unacceptable and Syria's recurrent violations of its obligations under the CWC continues to be a matter of great concern. Syria has consistently failed to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities.

We welcome the most recent round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and Syria and note the developments reported by the Director-General. There unfortunately remains a large number of outstanding issues with Syria's initial declaration. For over a decade, we have witnessed a pattern of obstruction by Syria in an effort to frustrate the work of the Technical Secretariat. We once again call on Syria to work with the TS to resolve all outstanding issues swiftly and without conditions.

Ireland welcomes the Fourth Report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

The international community must not permit the re-emergence of chemical weapons use by any actor, whether state or non-state. Ireland condemns the chemical attack by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Marea in the strongest possible terms, and reiterates unequivocally our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstances.

Ireland also takes note of the recent conclusion of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in the reported incident in Al-Yarmouk, Syria in 2017.

We thank the Technical Secretariat for its on-going work to address the Syrian chemical weapons file and for its continuous commitment to this important issue.

Chair,

Ireland recalls its unequivocal condemnation of the terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas against Israel on and after 7 October. We are also gravely concerned by the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the unacceptable level of civilian deaths. Ireland continues to call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages and unhindered humanitarian access. We welcome the statement by the Director General to monitor the situation in Gaza and any allegations of chemical weapons use. We express our full confidence in the capabilities of the Technical Secretariat to detect and to bring to light any use of chemical weapons if requested to do so.

Chair,

We appreciate the efforts made by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat to enhance the gender representation and diversity among staff, including through the Gender and Diversity Audit. We welcome the progress under this topic over the last year and we would like to thank the Human Resources Branch for providing States Parties with a briefing on internal workforce related aspects of gender equality at the end of last year. The publication of the Gender Equality Roadmap will be another milestone on the road towards mainstreaming gender throughout the Organisation and its external activities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to once again emphasise the vital role which civil society plays in supporting our work and reiterate Ireland's support for Germany and Ecuador who are leading efforts to enhance and increase the level of engagement with civil society.

Finally, I would like to express Ireland's full confidence in Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the Technical Secretariat. We commend the professionalism, integrity and impartiality of the OPCW, and continue to support the vital role played by the Organisation in the global prohibition of chemical weapons.

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

Thank you.