

Statement delivered by Finland on behalf of the Nordic States Parties at EC-105 under agenda item 7(e) “addressing the threat from chemical weapons use”

Mr Chair,

I have the honor of speaking on behalf of the Nordic States Parties: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland.

We align ourselves with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

The Nordic States Parties condemn the unjustified and illegal war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The Russian invasion of a sovereign country is a violation of international law, including the UN Charter. Two years into Russia’s full-scale war of aggression, we reiterate our unwavering support to Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its inherent right to self-defence. Russia must immediately cease its military actions, withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognised borders. Accountability for Russia’s brutal actions must be ensured.

We remain deeply concerned by the increasing number of reports, including by Russian information sources, that Russia may be using Riot Control Agents as a method of warfare in Ukraine. We recall that such use is prohibited under Article I, paragraph 5 of the Convention, and urge Russia to ensure full compliance with its obligations.

Regrettably, Russia has failed to provide adequate answers regarding the use of RCAs pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention. In the absence of sufficient clarification, the Nordic States Parties welcome and support the request, under Article IX, paragraph 3, by Germany and others calling on the Executive Council to address reports indicating that RCAs may have been used repeatedly by Russian armed forces in combat in Ukraine. We believe that the Council should remain seized of the matter until proper clarification is provided, and call on the Russian Federation to credibly respond to the questions posed. We welcome the close monitoring of the situation in Ukraine by the Secretariat.

In this context, we denounce Russia’s continued engagement in state-controlled disinformation campaigns spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons. It is well established that Ukraine is a responsible State Party to the Convention and in full compliance with it.

Mr Chair,

The Nordic States Parties are shocked and outraged by the death of Russian opposition politician Mr. Alexei Navalny while imprisoned after politically motivated sentences in the Russian Federation, for which the ultimate responsibility lies with the Russian authorities. We join the

call for an independent and transparent international investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Navalny's death.

The Nordic States Parties reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of the use of a chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group to poison Mr. Navalny in the Russian Federation in August 2020. We joined the initiative by 45 States Parties in October 2021 seeking clarifications from the Russian Federation on its actions following the poisoning of Mr. Navalny pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention. A credible, substantial response by Russia is yet to be received. We reiterate our deep concern for the lack of sufficient response by the Russian Federation to international calls for a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination attempt of Mr. Navalny in 2020. Mr. Navalny's tragic death does not relieve Russia of its obligation to provide answers. We once again urge the Russian Federation to comply its obligation to provide answers to the questions posed.

In closing, the Nordic States Parties express their unwavering commitment to the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances will not be tolerated, and those responsible will be brought to justice.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of this session and post it on Catalyst and OPCW public website.

Thank you.