



*The Permanent Representation of Italy to the  
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*

ITALY

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ITALY TO THE OPCW  
AT THE 105<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

*Mr Chairperson,*

*Italy wishes to express its sincere gratitude for steering the Executive Council with strong leadership and collaboration. As a Vice Chair, I would like to thank you for your wise and thoughtful leadership. I would also like to thank the Technical Secretariat and the Director General for their hard work and dedication.*

*By wilfully undermining the rules-based international order and blatantly violating the fundamental rights of Ukraine to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, principles of the international law, the Russian Federation is putting international peace and security at risk as witnessed by the current wave of instability.*

*As a State Party of this Organization, we note with concern further indications showing the Russian Army potentially conducting its illegal warfare by violating the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Indeed, there are indications that Russia is using chemical agents in Ukraine, including riot control agents, as a method of warfare. This is clearly forbidden by Article 1 of the Convention.*

*We once again call on the Russian Federation to comply with the Convention, to withdraw from this unprovoked, illegal, and violent war. We urge the Russian Federation to stop its disinformation activities and to comply fully with the international law, the provisions of the Convention and the right of independence of Ukraine.*

*Mindful of the lack of transparency with which the Russian Federation is handling the RCAs affair, it is impossible not to question the tragic death of Alexey Navalny. The Russian Federation has never really clarified its position on the proven poisoning of Mr Navalny. The tragic death of the Russian dissident does not erase those questions, and raises others.*

*The use of Chemical Weapons is unacceptable by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances. This must apply to the Russian Federation in Ukraine and to any other state and non-state actor anywhere in the world.*

*Mr Chair,*

*We welcome the recent reports published by the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM).*

*Italy would like to thank the Investigation and Identification Team for its careful reconstruction work, its professionalism, and the transparency of its actions. The IIT has concluded its investigation into Marea incident, finding that there are reasonable grounds that ISIL was the perpetrator of the chemical artillery attack, on that town in 2015.*

*With its 4th report, the IIT has confirmed its professionalism and expertise and, above all, highlighted its ability to identify the perpetrators of chemical attacks even in non-state actors' ranks. This is a valuable capability both for the Syrian theatre and for the future. These capabilities must be retained within the OPCW, fortified, and expanded as the risk of chemical weapons being used by non-state actors is clear and present. The admirable work of Ambassador Madonsela of South Africa, in his capacity as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism is a stark and timely reminder of this.*

*We would also like to welcome the 21st report of the Fact-Finding Mission. In ruling out the use of chemical weapons in Al-Yarmouk in 2017, the FFM continues its valuable work. Italy fully supports this mechanism and looks forward to the next reports.*

*The common thread in both reports is the lack of cooperation by the Syrian authorities, the same attitude of the last ten years.. We call on Syria to denounce its chemical programme, to abandon it, to clarify the too many unresolved issues of its initial declaration and to finally shed light on those tragic years that have seen so many Syrians suffer. Italy shows the highest sympathy for the Syrian victims of chemical weapons. The world, the OPCW, all of us, cannot allow these horrors to have any place in this world and cannot accept impunity as an option.*

*Mr Chair*

*In the face of these tragic events, the Technical Secretariat is working hard to implement the organizational governance actions that emerged and were commonly shared during the 5th Review Conference last May. All activities related to geographical representation, gender equality, tenure policy and civil society engagement, show the vitality of the Organization and the dedication of both the States Parties delegations and the Technical Secretariat.*

*The world still needs this Organization and the responsibility for it to be effective falls on all of us.*

*Mr Chairperson, please consider this statement as an official document of the Council to be posted on the Catalyst and on the OPCW public website.*

*Thank you.*