



Statement by North Macedonia

H.E. Ambassador Beti JACHEVA, Permanent Representative

105th Executive Council of the OPCW - The Hague, 5-8 March 2024

Agenda item 6 - General debate

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

North Macedonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. On this occasion, I would like to highlight the following points in my national capacity.

Allow me to first express sincere gratitude and to reiterate our full support to the chairman of the Executive Council, Ambassador Lucian Fatu from Romania.

We also extend the appreciation and reiterate our full support to the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias and also to the Technical Secretariat for its professionalism, impartiality and expertise in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

We repeat that the use or threat of use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances is unacceptable and goes against the obligations we all undertook under the Convention. Therefore, North Macedonia welcomes the confirmation by the Director-General that the Secretariat is monitoring all relevant situations, and any allegations of use of chemical weapons that could arise, and stands ready to assist if requested, in accordance with the Convention.

North Macedonia also welcomes the work of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and its fourth report, which concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that units of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) used chemical weapons at several locations in Syrian Arab Republic on September 1st, 2015. North Macedonia strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons, particularly - as it constitutes violation of international law and can amount to the most serious of international crimes - war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In this context, we again join the others in calls to Syrian Arab Republic to immediately comply with its obligations under the Convention and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, including calls to fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

We continue to condemn unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression over Ukraine and join the others in calls to Russian Federation to withdraw and end military activities from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. This war of aggression constitutes flagrant violation of the UN Charter obligations and international law. Those responsible must be brought to justice.

We are concerned about the reports regarding the alleged use of riot control agents by Russia as a method of warfare. Such use is prohibited under Article I, paragraph 5 of the Convention and we urge the Russian Federation to address these reports and provide answers.

North Macedonia is deeply saddened by the untimely death of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny and as was asked today by many delegations, we expect an independent and transparent international investigation into circumstances of his sudden death.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the positive progress achieved on all actionable items following the Fifth Review Conference, including the adoption of an Action Plan on improving geographical diversity within the Technical Secretariat, with merit as the primary principle.

We also welcome the ongoing work steered by Ecuador and Germany on enhanced interaction with Civil Society and its meaningful and broadest possible participation in the Conference of States Parties.

We also welcome the signing of a “Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation between the European Union and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons” on 20 February 2024, as a concrete expression of the EU’s continued support to the OPCW and its activities, which will bring benefit to all parties and partners.

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

Thank you for your attention.