

**Statement by
POLAND
at the 106th session of the Executive Council
(The Hague, 9 - 12 July 2024)
AGENDA ITEM SIX – Status of implementation of the Chemical Weapons
Convention**

Subitem 6(e): Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use

Mr Chairperson,

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Let me add the following in my national capacity.

As I stated in my intervention in the general debate, Poland reiterates its unwavering support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

Poland calls on the Russian Federation to immediately stop its unprovoked war against Ukraine, which constitutes a gross violation of the UN Charter.

Mr Chairperson,

The Russian Federation as State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) must comply with its obligations. The same rules apply to everyone. Therefore, we are deeply alarmed and concerned about alleged systematic use of riot control agents (RCA) and other chemicals by Russian armed forces in combat operations in Ukraine. Article I para 5 of the CWC clearly forbids to use riot control agents as a method of warfare.

The Russian Federation claims that allegations are untrue, because they are based on media and NGO reports. Let me say this. It is a very important role of the media and the civil society to report on violations of international law, be it human rights law, international criminal or humanitarian law, or any other laws and treaties, including the CWC. Secondly, there is no reason to doubt in the information provided by Ukraine. And thirdly, in this particular case the alleged use of riot control agents and other chemicals by Russian soldiers has been openly admitted also by Russian state media.

Mr Chairperson,

Attempting to clarify an alleged violation of the convention is far from politicizing the organization. It is the right and obligation of all States Parties that signed up to the ideal of a world free of chemical weapons and their use. The credibility of the CWC and the OPCW depends on it. For that very reason Poland and a number of other States Parties have joined the German Note Verbale requesting the Executive Council to assist in clarifying the matter in view of mounting concerns.

Verification of the information, which puts into question the Russian Federation's compliance with its obligations under the CWC, is especially necessary in view of Russia's already dubious

track record regarding the observance of the Convention. We all remember too well about the use of chemical nerve agents from the Novichok family in assassination attempts against Sergei Skripal and Alexei Navalny.

There is no other organization better equipped than the OPCW to investigate any instance of non-compliance with the CWC. Therefore, in order to assess properly the situation and address the concerns, Poland supports sending a full-fledged Technical Assistance Visit (TAV) or a fact-finding mission to Ukraine to establish facts. Once there is independent confirmation, States Parties need to take further steps in order to redress the situation. There must be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

Mr Chairperson,

Poland welcomes the growing co-operation between Ukraine and the OPCW and the information that the Technical Secretariat has positively responded to Ukrainian's request for assistance and protection under Article X of the CWC and has recently delivered non-military protection and detection equipment to Ukraine, providing also the appropriate training.

We call on the Technical Secretariat to continue to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine and all further developments related to the CWC.

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

Thank you.