



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

National statement by Sweden
One Hundred and Sixth Session of the Executive Council
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
H.E. Ambassador Johannes Oljelund
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW
The Hague, 9-12 July 2024

Let me begin by welcoming you, Ambassador Andrés Teran Parral of Ecuador, as the new Chair of the Executive Council, and to thank Director-General Fernando Arias for providing us with useful guidance through his reports to the Council.

Sweden is fully aligned with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Sweden reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of Russia's unlawful, unprovoked and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Sweden recalls that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances, is unacceptable and unlawful. We all share the responsibility to uphold the global norm on the non-use of chemical weapons. Despite this, non-compliance issues continue to dominate our agenda.

Sweden is appalled by the Russian forces' repeated use of riot control agents as a method of warfare in Ukraine. This is a blatant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We continue to wait for Russia to provide clarifications.

The OPCW plays a crucial role in this context, and we appreciate the assistance provided by the Secretariat to Ukraine with regard to detection and training. We also expect the Secretariat to take appropriate action if requested by a State Party in line with the Convention.

Chair,

After the poisoning of opposition leader Alexej Navalny by a nerve agent in August 2020, Russia has still not provided any credible answers.

It remains a priority to Sweden to ensure that perpetrators of chemical weapons use are identified and held to account. Impunity can never be an option.

On nine occasions chemical weapons use has been independently attributed to Syria. This is unacceptable and we urge Syria to fully comply with its international obligations. The OPCW has been given a mandate, in line with the Convention, to independently investigate alleged chemical weapon use in Syria. This work is conducted professionally by the Investigation and Identification Team.

Sweden reiterates its call on Syria to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat and all its established mechanisms in order to resolve all outstanding issues and to completely and verifiably end its chemical weapons program. This responsibility lies solely with Syria.

As a sign of Sweden's commitment to ensure accountability for the use of chemical weapons, Sweden continues to contribute to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria Missions, amounting to 2 million SEK in 2024.

Chair,

The advancement on disarmament and non-proliferation issues requires the integration of gender perspectives. Sweden is fully committed to assist the OPCW in achieving its goals of gender mainstreaming and balanced gender representation. We commend the Director-General for his efforts to that end, but work must continue – through the Gender Road map and other actions – to improve gender mainstreaming and integrate gender perspectives throughout the Organization and all of its activities.

As my last point, I would like to emphasise the value of civil society engagement in our common goal to uphold the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. Transparency and openness are fundamental values of the OPCW and we support and encourage the widest possible participation and engagement of NGOs. The accreditation process must be designed to ensure that relevant voices are not excluded based on politically motivated reasoning.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the public website.

Thank you.