



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ) AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AGENDA SUBITEM 6(E): ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE

Thank you, Chair. I have the honour of addressing the Council today on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Since the earliest days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we have been deeply troubled by credible reports of the use of riot control agents (RCAs) by Russian forces against Ukraine. We also condemn the reported use of even more deadly toxic chemicals, such as the choking agent Chloropicrin.

There is a well-known adage that emphasizes the significance of repetition in identifying a deliberate pattern: "once is an accident, twice is a coincidence, three times is a pattern". With its most recent report issued on 20 June 2025, we now have three separate reports from the OPCW on its Technical Assistance Visits (TAV) to Ukraine which confirm that grenades containing the riot control agent CS were used in Ukraine in September and October 2024 and February 2025. This undeniable pattern, in direct violation of Article I of the Convention which prohibits the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, should alarm us all. This is not an accident. This is not a coincidence. It is not "one or two" cases, but shows evidence of an escalating pattern of use. To safeguard the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Canada, Australia and New Zealand support calls for the timely attribution of the confirmed use of riot control agents on the battlefield in Ukraine.

Chair, CANZ once again calls on Russia to credibly respond to the questions raised under Article IX of the Convention regarding the use of RCAs as a method of warfare. So far, Russia has not responded meaningfully to these requests. We also recall that Russia used chemical weapons agents in the attempted assassinations of Sergei Skripal in the United Kingdom and of Alexei Navalny on its own territory. Questions there too remain unanswered, while Russia continues to spread mis- and disinformation about chemical weapons use in order to deny, distract, misdirect and undermine confidence in the credibility of the OPCW.

Chair, the three OPCW TAV reports to date confirm that the prohibited use of chemical weapons is ongoing – and escalating – in Ukraine. We should all voice our unequivocal condemnation. Canada, Australia and New Zealand unreservedly condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone under any circumstances. As Russia works to weaken the global norm against the use of chemical weapons, it is more important than ever to focus on the greatest threats before us, and the core purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Russia's actions not only damage Ukraine day by day, but they also seek to weaken the OPCW and are, therefore, a threat to us all.

Thank you, Chair.