

Statement by H E Mr René Miko, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the  
OPCW

at the One-Hundred Ninth Session of the Executive Council

8 – 11 July 2025

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and wishes to make a few remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset, let me thank you, Excellency, dear Ambassador Thomas Schieb, for your stewardship of the Executive Council, and assure you of our continued support.

We also extend our deep gratitude to the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his steadfast commitment to the mission of the OPCW and for his leadership of the Technical Secretariat whose professionalism, integrity, impartiality, independence, courage and tireless efforts continue to advance the objectives of the Convention.

Mr Chairperson,

We view positively the recent engagement between the OPCW and **Syria's** transitional government. The visit of the Director-General to Damascus in February 2025 marked a significant turning point after more than a decade of deliberate non-cooperation by the Assad regime. The opening of a dialogue has laid the groundwork for establishing a direct and transparent working relationship, which will hopefully allow for a final closure of the infamous Syrian dossier.

We reiterate our strong support for the Declaration Assessment Team, the Fact-Finding Mission, and the Investigation and Identification Team, whose impartial work has been essential to upholding the integrity of the Convention. We find it truly encouraging that Syria has expressed willingness to cooperate fully with the OPCW. Syrian government is engaging with the Secretariat's proposed 9-point Action Plan, a clear roadmap to address unresolved issues, facilitate access to relevant sites, and ultimately restore Syria's standing within the Organization.

Regarding the situation in **Ukraine**, we remain gravely concerned by the continued reports of chemical weapons-related incidents due to the Russian aggression - the findings based on samples that were taken in accordance with international standards and within the OPCW-verified chain of custody. These confirm the presence of the riot-control agents in multiple locations of UA battlefield, close to UA observation posts.

We emphatically remind everyone that the RCAs use as a method of warfare is strictly prohibited by the Convention.

We commend the OPCW for its swift deployment of the Technical Assistance Visits to Ukraine throughout 2024 and 2025. These missions have, above all, provided critical evidence on prohibited RCAs use. The situation in Ukraine underscores the urgent need for vigilance, accountability, and international solidarity in upholding the norms of the Convention.

The TAV reports indicate a pattern of RCAs use as a method of warfare in Ukraine, which is deeply disconcerting. We call on Russia to clarify this use.

It is regrettable that **Russia**, a country that ratified the Convention and thus committed itself to complying with its provisions, resorts to false accusations and distortion of facts. Indeed, these is a well-known Russian practice we have witnessed in cases of Alexei Navalny's as well as Skripals' and Dawn Sturgess's poisonings. Russia is still to provide clarifications on those chemical weapons uses. We repeat that Russia must fully cooperate with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation.

Any use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone is unacceptable. All perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable.

We have noted a request for an investigation of a possible use of chemical weapons in **Sudan**. We are seriously concerned by yet another alleged use of chemical weapons, a clear threat to international peace and security.

We welcome that the OPCW Programme for **Africa** is part of the agenda for this Executive Council's session as we believe that Africa deserves our utmost attention. Czechia supports Africa both financially and in-kind by providing voluntary contributions earmarked for Africa programme and by conducting trainings under Art X of the Convention with mostly African participants.

We encourage continued efforts to support further **national implementation** of the Convention, especially in developing countries.

We appreciate the attention given to the **emerging technologies and the AI**. Synthetic biology, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and advanced chemical synthesis are transforming the way chemicals are produced, detected, and potentially weaponized. These developments offer both opportunities and risks for the OPCW. The Convention must remain technologically relevant and future-proof. That is why we support the efforts of the Director-General to explore the challenges on this field and we welcome the report of the SAB temporary working group on AI from its April meeting. We look forward to interacting more closely on this agenda.

Mr Chairperson,

Yesterday, we listened intently to the responses and presentations of the candidates wishing to fill the position of the Director-General of this esteemed Organisation. As a State Party fully committed to the goals and principles of the Convention, the Czech Republic wants to actively help identify the right person ready to lead the OPCW into its future with courage, integrity, resolve and with a vision. The international staff of the Technical Secretariat whose work - often carried

out under complex and challenging circumstances - continues to uphold the credibility and effectiveness of this Organisation, the States Parties and international community as a whole deserve nothing less.

I thank you.