



**Statement by Ambassador Erling Rimestad**  
**Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Norway**  
**to the 109<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council of the OPCW**  
**Item 5 - General Debate**

Chair,

Mr. Director-General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Norway aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Melgaard on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

This summer marks one-hundred years since the signing of the Geneva Protocol, the first crucial step to where we are today: a world united in the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Despite our collective efforts this last century to ensure atrocities of the past may never be repeated, chemical weapons are still being used. As members and observers to the OPCW's Executive Council, we voluntarily signed on to a convention which includes privileges, duties, and responsibilities. It is paramount that we all take these responsibilities seriously, including the full cooperation with the OPCW's Technical Secretariat.

Norway has repeatedly condemned the use of chemical weapons, be it in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, Russia, Ukraine or the United Kingdom. We note with great concern reports alleging the use of missiles containing toxic gas in Sudan and we welcome the OPCW's monitoring of all relevant situations, including in Gaza.

Chair,

Norway is prepared to contribute 1 million Norwegian Kroner to support the OPCW mission in Syria in 2025. We are considering additional ways to contribute to the mission. Currently, Norway's total contributions to Syria in 2025 will amount to more than 400 million Norwegian Kroner.

We greatly welcome the Syrian transitional authorities' cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. It is crucial to consolidate this opportunity with real and lasting progress, towards Syria's full compliance with the CWC.

Chair,

Norway has repeatedly – and in the strongest possible terms – condemned Russia’s despicable and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine. Now *three* OPCW Technical Assistance Visit reports confirm the presence of the riot control agent CS on the battlefield in Ukraine. We are appalled by reports, including the joint statement from the Dutch and German intelligence services, that the frequency of Russia’s chemical attacks against Ukrainian forces is increasing, as is the variety of chemical munitions that Russian forces are using. The use of chloropicrin as a Chemical Weapon and the use of Riot Control Agents as a method of warfare is a blatant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Russia has a lamentable track record of failing to credibly account for its use of Chemical Weapons. We saw this after the attack against the Skripals in the United Kingdom in 2018 and the attempted assassination of Mr. Alexei Navalny in August 2020.

We have repeatedly called on Russia to provide immediate and complete disclosure of its Novichok programme to the OPCW and to meaningfully account for its use of Chemical Weapons in and against Ukraine. Instead, Russia spreads unsubstantiated allegations and engages in extensive disinformation campaigns to sow confusion and discredit the OPCW.

Clear violations must be confronted. Russia must be held to account.

We urge the Technical Secretariat to further examine any evidence of use of chemical weapons in Ukraine through forensic and other means to support possible future attribution.

Chair,

It is our shared responsibility that the OPCW is fit for purpose, both for present and future challenges. We must jointly ensure that women are part of decision-making bodies at all levels, and that the rights and needs of women are recognized in the work of the OPCW, in line with Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Norway has full confidence in the professionalism, expertise and impartiality of the Technical Secretariat. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Director-General Fernando Arias as you embark on the final year of your important mission.

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

Thank you.