



Day of Remembrance for all victims of chemical warfare

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

The Hague, 26 November 2025

Statement by Christiaan Rebergen, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

On this special Day of Remembrance, I am honoured to have this opportunity to reflect and to pay tribute to the victims of chemical warfare.

One hundred years ago, in June 1925, the Geneva Protocol was signed. Today, we mark the anniversary of this historic document which bans the use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare and laid the groundwork for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The Kingdom of the Netherlands, one of the original signatories of the Geneva Protocol and the host state of the OPCW, actively promotes the full and effective implementation of the global norms against the possession and use of chemical weapons. Now more than ever.

The OPCW, the most successful disarmament organisation of our era, can be proud of its accomplishments over the years. The completion of the destruction of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles in 2023 is a notable example.

Despite having reached this milestone, we need to recommit to the goal of eliminating the threat of chemical weapons. To achieve this, we reiterate our call to those States not yet party to the CWC to join the Convention without further delay.

Chemical weapons continue to pose a significant threat to international peace and security. This risk is real and we must remain vigilant. We are seriously concerned by the use,

confirmed by the Technical Secretariat, of riot control agents as a method of warfare in Ukraine. The use of chemical weapons is explicitly prohibited under the Convention. Such an act by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances must be condemned unequivocally. In this context, we emphasise the importance of attribution. We need to hold perpetrators of chemical weapons use accountable for their actions. For the sake of all generations, past, present and future.

Today we honour the memory of all those who have suffered the atrocity of chemical warfare. As members of the international community and, more specifically, Member States of the OPCW, we owe it to our nations and citizens to ensure that chemical weapons never claim another victim.