



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Ilkka-Pekka Similä,
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW
at the 30th Conference of the States Parties to the CWC
Agenda item 8: General Debate**

Mr. Chair, Mr. Director-General, Distinguished Delegates,

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. In addition, we wish to highlight some key issues from a national perspective.

We welcome H.E. Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez as the Chairperson of the 30th Conference of States Parties. We thank H.E. Ambassador Almir Šahović of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his steering of the 29th Conference of States Parties and H.E. Ambassador Thomas Schieb of Germany for his chairmanship of the Executive Council. We congratulate H.E. Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior Matter for her appointment as the next Director-General.

Mr. Chair,

In 2025 – almost thirty years after the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force – the global security situation, the re-emergence of chemical weapons use, new and emerging technologies, and abandoned chemical weapons present major challenges for the implementation of the Convention. Today, the full and effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention is more important than ever.

We thank the OPCW and Director-General Fernando Arias for their efforts to advance the implementation of the Convention. We reiterate Finland's unwavering support to the Technical Secretariat and confidence in its expertise, professionalism and impartiality.

We are encouraged by the broad support that the Secretariat has received for its efforts to render the organization more equal, diverse, and inclusive. We welcome the OPCW's efforts to promote geographic representation, tenure flexibility, and gender equality throughout the organization. Furthermore, we underline the importance of strengthening meaningful interaction with and the participation of various stakeholders such as academia, chemical industry, non-governmental organizations, and youth in the OPCW's work.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the Syrian transitional authorities' cooperation with the OPCW. It is essential that a verified and irreversible elimination of all remnants of the Assad-era chemical weapons program begins without delay. The Secretariat's in-country missions and the efforts to establish a permanent presence in Damascus demonstrate the OPCW's commitment to implement the planned measures to eliminate remnants of the Assad regime's program. It is important that Syria returns to full compliance with the Convention and the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons are held accountable.

We reiterate our concern about the information indicating possible use of chemical weapons in Sudan. We welcome the Secretariat's confirmation that it is monitoring the situation.

Mr. Chair,

The Russian Federation's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine has continued since February 2022. Finland condemns Russia's unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. The Russian invasion of a sovereign country is a violation of international law, including the UN Charter.

We reiterate our unwavering support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its right to self-defense. Russia must immediately cease its military actions, withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr Chair,

There is an ever-growing number of registered cases of the use of Riot Control Agents (RCA) by Russia as a method of warfare. There are also credible reports of the use of choking agent chloropicrin against Ukrainian soldiers. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, which is explicitly prohibited by the Convention, as well as its use of other chemical munitions against Ukraine.

So far, the OPCW has published three Technical Assistance Visit reports that have confirmed the presence of riot control agent "CS" in samples collected in the battlefield in Ukraine. These reports were prepared following strict international protocols for investigation, sample analysis, and chain of custody. The TAV reports, together with the ever-growing number of cases

registered by the Ukrainian authorities, confirm a pattern of systematic riot control agent use by Russia as a method of warfare. Russia continues to ignore legitimate international concerns and has not provided a credible explanation pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 and 3 of the Convention. Russia's response to compromising findings is to continue to deflect its responsibilities and distort facts with disinformation.

In view of the gravity of the situation and with a steadfast commitment to reinforcing the international norm prohibiting the use of chemical weapons, we call for a prompt attribution of responsibility for this substantiated breach of the Convention.

The repeated violations of the Convention are deeply concerning. The use of chemical weapons—by anyone and under any circumstances—is a threat to international peace and security, and a clear violation of international law. All those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable and brought to justice.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude we take this opportunity to express our support the candidacies of Ukraine, Slovakia and Slovenia for the Executive Council. Russia's invasion of Ukraine undoubtedly remains an important regional factor that the Convention foresees for consideration in designations for Executive Council Membership.

I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the OPCW's external server and public website.

Thank you!