



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

Finland
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Ilkka-Pekka Similä
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW
At the 111th Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW

“Read out verbatim”

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, Distinguished Colleagues,

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by Cyprus on behalf of the European Union. In addition, we wish to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

We thank H.E. Ambassador Thomas Schieb of Germany for his effective leadership as the chair of the Executive Council. We also commend the Director-General Fernando Arias and his staff for their commitment and efforts to support the implementation of the CWC.

We reiterate our full support to the technical secretariat and confidence in their expertise, professionalism and impartiality.

Mr. Chairperson,

Last month marked a stark fourth anniversary of the Russian Federation’s full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. Finland reiterates its condemnation of 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 reaffirm 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.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia’s ever-growing use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, as well as its use of other chemical munitions against Ukrainian soldiers.

Three OPCW Technical Assistance Visit reports have confirmed the presence of riot control agents in samples collected from the frontlines in Ukraine. These reports point to a pattern of systematic riot control agent use by Russia as a method of warfare. Russia has not provided a credible explanation pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 and 3 of the Convention. Russia continues to deflect its responsibilities and distort facts with disinformation.

Continued non-compliance undermines the credibility of the Convention and is a serious threat to the purpose and object of the Convention. In view of the gravity of the situation, we call for a prompt attribution of responsibility for this substantiated breach of the Convention.

We have taken note with deep concern of the recent conclusion of the Governments of the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, Germany and the Netherlands that poisoning was highly likely to have been the cause of Mr. Alexei Navalny's sudden death on 16 February 2024 in a Russian penal colony.

Mr. Chairperson,

We commend the Syrian transitional authorities' sustained efforts and continued collaboration with the OPCW with a view to dismantle the remnants of the Assad-era secret chemical weapons programme. However, we note with concern the handling of 75 cylinders of Category 3 chemical weapons in the Aleppo region. We encourage Syria to complete its inquiries into this matter and share its findings with the OPCW and the States Parties.

The fifth OPCW Investigation and Identification Team report issued in January 2026 found Syrian Arab Air Force responsible for the chemical weapons attack in Kafr Zeita in Syria on 1 October 2016. The IIT's work is an important contribution to efforts to end impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

The proliferation of chemical weapons remains a serious threat to international peace and security. Compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention is a fundamental pillar of global efforts to uphold the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and to prevent its erosion.

To conclude, we wish to express our appreciation and strong support to the Director-General's efforts towards gender equality in the Organization. We emphasize the need for further progress in gender mainstreaming at the OPCW and for a more geographically diverse and representative Secretariat while securing the highest standards of effectiveness, efficiency, competence and integrity.

I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on Catalyst and the public website. Thank you!