

**Statement of Mr. Mindaugas ŽIČKUS,
Charge d’Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the Netherlands
at the 111th Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW
(agenda item 5)**

Mr. Chairperson,

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

We commend Ambassador Thomas Schieb for his firm and effective leadership of the Executive Council. Let me assure him of Lithuania’s full support in guiding the work of this Session.

Mr. Chairperson,

Lithuania unequivocally condemns Russia’s unjustified, illegal, and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, now in its fifth year. This war constitutes a flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of international law, including the UN Charter. Lithuania strongly condemns Russia’s continued large-scale systematic and deliberate attacks on civilian and critical infrastructure. We support all efforts aimed at achieving comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine. We remain steadfast in our support to Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will not recognize any attempts to alter Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders by force, and we will support Ukraine until its victory and beyond.

Mr. Chairperson,

Lithuania wishes to express its gratitude to all the State Parties, who have co-sponsored the Joint Statement on the Full Implementation of the Provisions of the CWC, Including the Prohibition of the Use of RCAs as a Method of Warfare delivered at CSP29 and most recently at CSP30.

11,299 cases of RCA use were documented by Ukraine at the time the Joint Statement was delivered. Four months later, this number has grown to more than 12,500.

Mr. Chairperson,

Numbers speak for themselves, but there is even more evidence demonstrating beyond any doubt that Russia’s use of chemical agents as a weapon – in Ukraine and beyond – has become systematic:

- In March 2018 – at the request of the UK Government, OPCW carried out a TAV visit with regard to the suspected poisoning to Sergei and Yulia Skripals, as well as Nicholas Bailey. Reports from the OPCW-designated laboratories confirmed the presence of toxic chemical Novichok in the samples taken from them.
- On July 8, 2018 – Dawn Sturgess died of a Novichok-filled perfume bottle used four months earlier in the attempted assassination of Sergei and Yulia Skripal. Thousands could have died.
- In July and August 2018 – at the request of the UK Government, OPCW carried out two TAV visits under Article VIII of the Convention. From the samples collected, four OPCW-designated laboratories confirmed that the chemical found in the perfume bottle that killed Dawn Sturgess was the exact same Novichok nerve agent used against the Skripals.
- In September 2020 – at the request of the Government of Government, OPCW carried out a TAV visit to collect samples from Alexei Navalny, who was suspected of being poisoned. Three OPCW-certified labs in Germany, France, and Sweden confirmed that Alexei Navalny was poisoned with a Novichok-group nerve agent.

- In July 2025 – Dutch and German intelligence services confirmed that Russia has been systematically using banned chemical agents, including riot control agents and more dangerous choking agents such as chloropicrin, against Ukrainian forces.
- In February 2026 – UK, France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands reported that Alexey Navalny was killed in 2024 using epibatidine.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite repeated requests, Russia has not provided any credible explanations in response to legitimate concerns raised under Article IX of the Convention. Instead, it continues to resort to denial, deflection, distortion and disinformation.

Lithuania urges Russia to comply fully with its obligations under international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention, cease all prohibited activities, and engage constructively with the OPCW.

Mr. Chairperson,

This takes us to the question: what exactly the OPCW community at large can and must do to react. The answer is clear:

In June 2018 – following the Salisbury events, OPCW member states voted to grant the organization powers to attribute responsibility for chemical attacks. With this in mind, Lithuania underlines the paramount importance of timely, independent and credible attribution.

We stand ready to support Ukraine and the OPCW Technical Secretariat in pursuit of effective attribution of all confirmed chemical attacks in Ukraine, as well as full accountability.

This is not just about Ukraine and Russia: it is about safeguarding the integrity and authority of the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Lithuania reiterates its full support for a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition and for the complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination of Syria's chemical weapons program. This is a difficult-to-achieve, but essential task for the OPCW. Therefore, we commend the Technical Secretariat and Syria for the progress achieved so far and encourage them to step up their efforts, if and where possible.

Mr. Chairperson,

Lithuania also attaches importance to the issue of chemical weapons dumped at sea, which pose long-term environmental and security risks.

We also stress the importance of maintaining a strong, effective and resilient OPCW – one that is fully capable of responding to both current and emerging threats.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, Lithuania reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention, its unwavering support to Ukraine and Syria, and its full confidence in the OPCW's ability to address current and upcoming challenges with professionalism and impartiality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.