

Netherlands Statement Executive Council 111th Session.

Agenda item 6(f)

Mr. Chairperson,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands remains gravely concerned about the Russian Federation's persistent and blatant disregard for its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Recently, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom have conclusively confirmed the presence of the lethal toxin epibatidine in the body of Mr. Alexei Navalny at the time of his death in a Russian prison. Russia had the means and opportunity to administer this poison to him. We consider it highly likely that this toxin caused Mr. Navalny's death.

As DG Arias confirmed in his letter of 2 March, Article II of the Convention is clear: any toxic chemical, regardless of its origin or method of production, when used for its toxic properties to kill or harm people, is considered a chemical weapon. Such prohibited use falls under the CWC.

Mr. Chairperson,

This brings me to another example of prohibited use of chemical weapons. Over the past year and a half, at the request of Ukraine, the Technical Secretariat has conducted three Technical Assistance Visits to that State Party. The three reports clearly demonstrate that samples of the riot control agent CS have been found on the front lines in Ukraine. The Ukrainian authorities have documented over 12,500 cases of riot control agent use.

Furthermore, the Netherlands – in a joint publication with Germany last July – presented compelling evidence of the

Russian use of the choking agent chloropicrin on the frontlines in Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

These actions - together with the use of Novichoks in Salisbury in 2018 and in the poisoning of Alexei Navalny in 2020 - form a pattern of Russian chemical weapons use. Despite several requests for clarification over the years, the latest of which is the Note Verbale of 5 March of five States Parties with questions concerning the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, the Russian Federation has failed to provide any credible or plausible explanation for these findings.

This demands action and we call for attribution of responsibility. We expect the Secretariat to take the necessary steps to assist Ukraine at their request and in line with the provisions of the Convention and decisions by the States Parties.

We need to hold the Russian Federation accountable for these blatant violations of the Convention. We cannot allow the Organisation to lose its credibility. This is the shared responsibility of us all.