



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-First Session
28 November – 2 December 2016

C-21/NAT.14
1 December 2016
ENGLISH only

ARMENIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS DZIUNIK AGHAJANIAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARMENIA TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

I have the honour to present this statement on behalf of Her Excellency Ambassador Dziunik Aghajanian. She regrets that due to an unfortunate emergency situation, she was unable to participate in this meeting today.

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, I would like to welcome you as Chair of the Conference of the States Parties and assure you of my delegation's full support to your efforts. Let me express also my delegation's appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico for his stewardship throughout last year.

We are about to elect new members to the Executive Council of the OPCW, and we have to be considerate of the mandate that they would be assigned to fulfil. We have to remind ourselves that “The Council's mandate is to promote the effective implementation of, and compliance with, the Convention.” This should be the departure point for all members of this decision-making body, and all efforts should be exerted to achieve the objectives and goals of the Organisation.

Armenia has always opposed any attempt to politicise the work of the OPCW, including through introduction of issues to this purely technical body that are beyond its mandate. However, the developments in the Eastern European Group during the first half of the year were very disconcerting and demonstrated complete disregard by one of its members towards the culture of consensus characterising the work of the OPCW and the constructive and cooperative manner in which the Eastern European Group had operated until then.

The actions taken by Azerbaijan risked bringing the work of the Executive Council to a standstill and jeopardise the work of the Organisation as a whole.

Moreover, Azerbaijan did not shy away from fabricating alleged use of chemical agents against civilian population, spreading unfounded accusations against Armenia for the sole purpose of serving an internal political agenda, and attempting to introduce issues unrelated to the OPCW into the latter's discourse.

All of the above clearly demonstrates the lack of commitment by Azerbaijan towards the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the principles and norms enshrined in the Convention.



Armenia considers that the actions carried out by Azerbaijan and the destructive approach demonstrated by this country while bidding for membership to the Executive Council of the OPCW are counterproductive to the attainment of the goals and purposes of the Organisation. Henceforth, Armenia questions the effectiveness of the full participation of Azerbaijan in the work of the Executive Council, the very reasons for it and the genuine intention to carry out its mandate.

Under those circumstances, Armenia cannot join the consensus on Azerbaijan's candidacy to fill-in the vacancy for the Eastern European Group for the period from 12 May 2017 to 11 May 2019.

However, we believe in this Organisation that has rightfully earned the Nobel Peace Prize. Being a founding member of this Organisation, we have been very supportive of its work and participated in its workings in all possible ways. Hence, given the long-standing principles of my country, and in the spirit of compromise, Armenia would disassociate from the decision on the election of Azerbaijan to the Executive Council, allowing the session of the Conference not to go to a vote on this issue, and to avoid creating new rifts in this body that has so many urgent issues at hand to be dealt with.

I would like to request that the position of Armenia on the voting proceedings on the election of the members of the Executive Council be duly reflected in the report of the Conference.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

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