



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

Finland
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Ilkka-Pekka Similä
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW
At the 110th Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW

“Read out verbatim”

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

We commend H.E. Ambassador Thomas Schieb of Germany for his able leadership as the chair of the Executive Council. We also extend our sincere gratitude to Director-General Fernando Arias and his staff and reiterate our full support to the technical secretariat and confidence in their expertise, professionalism and impartiality.

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.

Mr. Chairperson,

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.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, as well as its use of other chemical munitions against the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The OPCW has published three Technical Assistance Visit reports each confirming the presence of riot control agent "CS" in samples collected in the battlefield in Ukraine. The findings of the reports confirm a pattern of riot control agent use as a method of warfare in the frontlines in Ukraine. 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 reinforce the international norms prohibiting the use of chemical weapons, we call for a prompt attribution of responsibility for this substantiated breach of the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

We commend the Syrian transitional authorities' collaboration and cooperation with the OPCW. It is important that Syria returns to full compliance with the Convention as soon as possible. We thank the Secretariat for its briefings and deployments to Syria. It is important to clarify the full extent of the Assad regime's chemical weapons program and to make sure that all chemical weapons stockpiles and sites are secured. We look forward to the swift implementation of the planned measures to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons program, counter proliferation risks and to hold the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons to account.

The allegations of the use of chemical weapons should be addressed swiftly in an objective, transparent and independent manner. We reiterate our concern about the information indicating possible use of chemical weapons in Sudan. We welcome the Secretariat's confirmation to monitor the situation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OPCW needs adequate and predictable funding to be able to implement its mandate in a sustainable manner. However, the current challenging financial situation requires

strict budgetary discipline. The bi-annual budget 2026-27 must provide the OPCW with the necessary financial resources to continue its vital work in verification and international cooperation and assistance.

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!