



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ) AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AGENDA SUBITEM 6(F): ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE

Thank you, Chair. I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

CANZ remains gravely concerned by mounting and credible reports of chemical weapons use in the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. Since the earliest days of the invasion, reports have pointed to a clear and escalating pattern of the use of riot control agents on Ukraine's frontlines. Three reports from Technical Assistance Visits by the Secretariat have confirmed the presence of these agents and degradation products in environmental samples and munitions collected from near sites in Ukraine under attack by Russian forces. We have also seen deeply troubling allegations of the systematic use of more toxic substances, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention Scheduled choking agent chloropicrin.

In July, German and Dutch intelligence services published their conclusions that Russia is pursuing an expanding and large-scale programme of producing and using chemical weapons. This adds to mounting evidence of such use.

These acts are in direct contravention of the Convention, which strictly prohibits the use of such agents as a method of warfare.

Such findings underscore the urgent need for action. CANZ therefore unequivocally supports Ukraine's formal request for the Director-General to progress the establishment of an independent and impartial mechanism to investigate cases of alleged use of chemical weapons in Ukraine and to identify those responsible. Attribution is not optional—it is integral to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' mandate. In the first instance, it is imperative to launch a Ukraine-led investigation with OPCW technical support. In due course, we would also welcome a full, independent investigation.

We reject Russia's attempts to deny, distract, and disinform. We recall, too, Russia's past use of chemical weapons agents in the attempted assassinations of Sergei Skripal and Alexei Navalny. Considering this, it would be untenable for a State Party credibly under investigation for chemical weapons use to hold a seat on this Council.

Chair, the use of chemical weapons against Ukraine is not an isolated incident but part of an escalating pattern. This Council cannot look away. CANZ condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances. Russia's actions harm Ukraine, undermine this Organisation, and erode the global norm we are all bound to defend.

Thank you, Chair.