



Fifty-Seventh Meeting  
4 April 2018

EC-M-57/DG.1  
4 April 2018  
Original: ENGLISH

### **UPDATE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING**

Mr Chairperson,

1. Thank you for giving me the floor. I would like to update the Council on the work the Secretariat has done so far in response to a request from the United Kingdom seeking technical assistance with regard to the Salisbury incident.
2. The United Kingdom has requested technical assistance from the Secretariat in relation to this matter; specifically, it requested the Secretariat to identify the nature of the toxic chemical reportedly used, through the analyses of samples collected by OPCW technical experts (EC-87/NAT.7, dated 14 March 2018; EC-88/NAT.1, dated 21 March 2018). This assistance was requested—and is being provided—pursuant to Article VIII, paragraph 38(e) of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Convention), which states that the Secretariat shall provide technical assistance and technical evaluation to States Parties in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, including evaluation of scheduled and unscheduled chemicals. Information provided by the authorities of the United Kingdom has been aimed at facilitating the technical work of the Secretariat's team of experts.
3. On 19 March 2018 an advance team of OPCW experts deployed to the United Kingdom for preliminary discussions in connection with the technical assistance visit. Following this, a full team deployed on 21 March 2018. The technical assistance team is led by and composed of highly qualified officials of the OPCW. In keeping with its standard practice, the Secretariat does not disclose the identities of members of teams or mission planning details to States Parties other than the State Party hosting the technical assistance visit.
4. The OPCW experts visited the locations where two of the victims were reportedly exposed to a toxic chemical and collected several environmental samples. The team also took biomedical samples from these two victims, as well as from a third individual, a police officer reportedly exposed to a toxic chemical. These samples were sealed and brought to the OPCW laboratory on 23 March 2018. Samples were split in the presence of an expert from the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom was provided with one split of each sample. The environmental samples were then delivered to two designated laboratories, and the biomedical samples were delivered to another two designated laboratories. The collection, splitting, and transportation of the samples were carried out in-line with the relevant procedures of the Secretariat. The chain-of-custody was fully



maintained. States Parties are not informed of the designated laboratories selected by the Secretariat to perform the technical analysis.

5. The results of the sample analyses are expected to be received by early next week. Once the results of the analyses of the samples are received, the Secretariat will produce a report on the basis of these results and will transmit a copy of this report to the United Kingdom. The report will reflect the findings of the designated laboratories. Access of other States Parties to the report will be subject to the agreement of the United Kingdom, pursuant to the Confidentiality Annex of the Convention, the OPCW Policy on Confidentiality, and the consistent practice in relation to other technical assistance visits. The United Kingdom has expressed its wish to be as transparent as possible and has already indicated its preference for disclosure of the report to other States Parties.
6. The OPCW team worked independently and is not involved in the national investigation by the UK authorities.
7. No State Party is involved in the technical work that is being carried out by the Secretariat.

I thank you Mr Chairperson.

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