



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Seventh Meeting

4 April 2018

EC-M-57/NAT.3

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ENGLISH and FRENCH only

SWITZERLAND

**STATEMENT BY M. MIRKO ZABELLI
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF SWITZERLAND
TO THE OPCW AT THE FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**UNDER AGENDA ITEM 3
INCIDENT IN SALISBURY, THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
NORTHERN IRELAND ON 4 MARCH 2018**

Mr Chairperson,

Switzerland is extremely concerned by the use of a chemical warfare agent in Salisbury, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which adds to a series of corresponding violations of international law in recent years.

The Swiss Government condemns in the strongest possible terms this attack by means of a nerve agent of the Novichok class as reported by the Government of the United Kingdom, and emphasises once again that any use of chemical weapons is contrary to international law and is prohibited under all circumstances.

The investigation into the background of this crime and the origin of the warfare agent, which is currently being carried out by the British authorities with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), is of central importance. Those responsible must be held to account.

Switzerland has full confidence in the ongoing investigation and welcomes the fact that the British authorities have involved the OPCW with its unique technical expertise to verify the analysis of samples through its network of designated laboratories. In our view, it is the sovereign right of the United Kingdom to investigate the use of a chemical weapon on its territory in a way that it deems appropriate.

While we are awaiting the results of this investigation and the full establishment of facts, we do not see any need for launching an additional, simultaneous investigation at this point in time. We believe that this would undermine the ongoing investigation and question the work being done by the OPCW.

The incident in Salisbury is a heinous attack against civilians in a British town and an attack against the pillar of international law, disarmament and non-proliferation that the Chemical Weapons Convention represents. It is our collective responsibility as parties to this Convention to react firmly and uphold the credibility of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW.

Thank you.

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