



OPCW

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ENGLISH and FRENCH only

SWITZERLAND

**STATEMENT BY NADINE OLIVIERI LOZANO
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW AT
THE FIFTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**UNDER AGENDA ITEM 3
REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN SUPPORT OF A REQUEST FOR
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BY THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND (TAV/02/18)**

Mr Chairperson,

Switzerland is extremely concerned by the use of a nerve agent in Salisbury, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. My government condemns in the strongest possible terms this attack and emphasises once again that any use of chemical weapons is contrary to international law and prohibited under all circumstances.

As States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention we must find a strong and collective response to the intolerable weakening of the norm against the use of chemical weapons. The ongoing investigation by the authorities of the United Kingdom into the background of this crime and the origin of the nerve agent is of central importance. Those responsible must be held to account.

Before drawing further conclusions regarding the background and authorship of this act, the results of the ongoing criminal investigation by the authorities of the United Kingdom should be awaited. Switzerland has full confidence in the ongoing investigation and is following it with great attention.

The use of a nerve agent of the Novichok class, as confirmed by the OPCW, is extremely worrying. As nerve agents of the Novichok family have reportedly been developed and produced in the former Soviet Union, Switzerland believes that the Russian Federation has legitimate questions to answer and must contribute to the clarification of fact. Switzerland calls on the Russian Federation to cooperate with the authorities of the United Kingdom in their investigation and to provide relevant information clarifying the facts and the origin of the nerve agent.

Moreover, should the Russian Federation or any other State possess stockpiles of chemical weapons of the Novichok class, these must be immediately declared to the OPCW and destroyed under its supervision. Furthermore, this Executive Council and the Organisation as



a whole must carefully consider how to address these toxic chemicals in the framework of the Convention and its schedules.

Before I conclude, Mr Chairperson, my government wishes to express its incomprehension about a statement by the Russian Federation regarding the Swiss designated laboratory at Spiez. Whether or not Spiez Laboratory was one of the designated laboratories involved in the analysis of the Salisbury samples, an analysis report of our designated laboratory would not have been drafted in the way and contained the type of language alleged to be a quote from a Spiez Laboratory report. I am referring to an English translation of a statement by the Russian Foreign Minister available on the official website of the Ministry.

How such a statement could be made is incomprehensible to us. Such actions weaken the credibility and integrity of this Organisation and are as such absolutely unacceptable. The confidentiality agreements between the OPCW and its designated laboratories precisely exist to ensure the impartiality of the analysis. In this context, we thank the Director-General and the head of the OPCW laboratory for their clarifying remarks at the beginning of this session.

Thank you.

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