



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Ninth Meeting
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ITALY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANDREA PERUGINI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY TO THE OPCW
AT THE FIFTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

The Italian Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by Ambassador Krassimir Kostov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria.

I would like to add additional remarks on some issues that are of particular concern to my delegation.

First of all, I would like to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive statement delivered today on the very unquestionable and professional report on the activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat in support of a request for technical assistance by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and for Mr Marc Blum's briefing which was exhaustive and clear.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has now independently confirmed the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury.

The Italian Republic condemns, once again, in the strongest possible terms, the attack that took place against Sergei and Yulia Skripal, using a military-grade nerve agent in Salisbury, on 4 March, 2018. Numerous civilians were exposed to this nerve agent and required specific hospital treatment, and the lives of many more British civilians have been threatened. We express our deepest sympathies to them all and our support for the United Kingdom first responder and the emergency services for their professional work.

Italy stands in solidarity with the United Kingdom.

Thus, I would also like to express our appreciation and support to the Government of the United Kingdom for its transparency and willingness to share technical information with all States Parties.

I wish to seize this opportunity to recall that Italy concurs with the European Union in agreeing the United Kingdom's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible for the incident and that there is no plausible alternative explanation. We call



on the Russian Federation to urgently address all legitimate questions related to the incident in Salisbury addressed by the United Kingdom's Government.

The Italian Republic wishes to draw the Executive Council's attention to the fact that the identification of a new family of non-scheduled nerve agent is a major concern and a worrying challenge to the OPCW's verification regime. We are of the view that this issue should be considered as an urgent priority for its obvious implications. The Technical Secretariat in cooperation with the industry cluster and the Scientific Advisory Board should quickly be involved so as to reach conclusions on a scientific basis proposing the necessary measures to be adopted considering the sensitive possible consequences related to the Chemical Weapons Convention's verification regime. The Italian Republic is ready to provide its technical contribution.

I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Fifty-Ninth Meeting of the Executive Council and posted on the OPCW external server and website.

Thank you.

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