



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Ninth Meeting
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CANADA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SABINE NÖLKE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE OPCW
AT THE FIFTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE OPCW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Canada is grateful for the technical briefing provided this morning by the Director-General and Dr Blum.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has now independently confirmed the findings of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury.

We note that the Technical Secretariat's assessment was made in accordance with the provisions of Article VIII, namely technical assistance provided to a State Party at that State Party's request. We commend the United Kingdom for the transparency it has shown in immediately sharing the report with all States Parties upon receipt.

This work and these results have again confirmed the value of the OPCW Laboratory and its network of designated laboratories. The expertise and professionalism of these labs have allowed for independent verification of the work done by the United Kingdom's national facilities.

The report from the Technical Secretariat sets out in detail the care taken to maintain a chain of custody for the samples.

The laboratories also remarked on the purity of the environmental samples. Such purity suggests that this toxic chemical was produced in a sophisticated state-operated facility under highly controlled conditions.

We share the United Kingdom's assessment that it is highly likely the Russian Federation was responsible for this chemical attack. There is no plausible alternative explanation. We agree with the conclusion that only the Russian Federation had the technical means and operational experience to carry out this attack, in addition to an established record of similar behaviour.

We condemn the Russian Federation's continued failure to address legitimate requests from the British Government, which further underlines its responsibility. We call on the Russian Federation to urgently address all questions related to the incident in Salisbury, and to provide full and complete disclosure to the OPCW of its previously undeclared Novichok program in line with its international obligations.



We also call on the Russian Federation to refrain from spinning any more of its fanciful theories about the source of the agent, the means of delivery, or the involvement of third States. We heard new such theories today, including that the chemical agent was administered after the Skripals fell into a coma. Canada finds it deeply regrettable that, as part of this disinformation campaign, the Russian Federation's Foreign Minister this past weekend publicly named one of the OPCW's designated laboratories it believes was involved in the Secretariat's analysis. If the minister's statement is true, it represents a breach of the treaty's Confidentiality Annex, and prompts serious questions about the means by which the Russian Federation obtained this information. If the statement was not true, it shows a craven intent to mislead the international community by attacking the integrity of the Technical Secretariat.

In this context, Canada was grateful to hear from the Director-General in his unclassified statement that there was no BZ toxin or precursor in any of the samples taken by the Technical Secretariat in Salisbury. Given those statements, I would ask the Russian Federation whether they will correct their public declarations in this regard.

I ask that this statement be made an official document of this meeting of the Executive Council and published on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

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