



BELGIUM

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN LEPAGE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM TO THE OPCW
AT THE FIFTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you, Chairperson, for giving me the floor.

Belgium endorses the statement made on behalf of the European Union by the permanent representative of Bulgaria. In my national capacity, I should like to contribute some additional comments.

Given the gravity of the acts committed, Belgium called for the circulation of the OPCW verification mission's final results to the States Parties, even if there is no obligation to do so. We now have the report in question, and Belgium offers sincere thanks to the Director-General of the Organisation and to the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") for their remarkable work, as well as to the British authorities for the transparency which they have shown. Belgium takes this opportunity to repeat its solidarity with the United Kingdom, which has been the victim of an inexcusable attack against the rules prohibiting the use of chemical weapons, a norm which this Organisation must safeguard.

The conclusions of the report leave no room for doubt. The OPCW confirms that the agent used in Salisbury is indeed the neurotoxic agent identified by the British authorities. The agent was almost completely free of impurity. These conclusions are based on the professional, independent work by both the Secretariat and designated laboratories located in four different States Parties. There is no difference in the results obtained independently by the laboratories concerned.

The attempts of the Russian Federation to cast doubt upon the results must cease. We call upon that country to cooperate fully with the investigations in progress, and to respect its obligations under the Convention.

No State here present has any interest in seeing the integrity of our Organisation called into question, for that would weaken our efforts to establish a world free of chemical weapons.

The rules prohibiting the use of chemical weapons must be re-established and we expect that Secretariat's report and today's meeting will be a first step in that direction.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I should be obliged if this statement could be considered an official unclassified document of today's meeting of the Executive Council.

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