

AUSTRALIA
STATEMENT BY H.E. DR GREGORY FRENCH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9D IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY

Chair, I exercise our right of reply, given criticism of our position as set out in the CANZ statement on this agenda item. In our national statement we shared the serious concerns expressed by many States Parties regarding the grave humanitarian crises caused by ongoing global conflicts, including in places like Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine. Where there is credible evidence of possible CWC breaches, the Technical Secretariat should act as mandated by the CWC. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is such a case.

Around three decades ago we, the States Parties to the CWC, including the Russian Federation, developed rigorous procedures, set out particularly in the verification annex of the CWC, to identify chemical weapon use in an independent and impartial manner. These procedures were employed by the Technical Secretariat in producing its 18 November report identifying CS use on the frontlines in Ukraine.

In contrast, the voluminous Notes Verbales of the Russian Federation alleging Ukrainian use of chemical weapons demonstrated Russia's failure to reflect the CWC procedures and protocols, which require independent and impartial analyses. The Russian Federation, like all of us States Parties, committed solemnly to these procedures and protocols, which are designed to enable rigorous procedures through the Technical Secretariat, independent of specific national interests. The obvious question is why the Russian Federation chose unilateral national procedures instead of those procedures set out in the CWC.

Thank you, Chair.