

**Statement of Estonia at the OPCW 29th Session of the Conference of the State Parties
The Hague, 25 November - 29 December 2024**

Mr. Chairperson,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

Let me congratulate you on the assumption of the Chairmanship of the 29th Conference of States Parties and assure you of our strongest support in steering the work of the Conference.

At the outset, I wish to commend the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for their commitment to maintaining compliance with and ensuring effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). Their work remains vital in the post-destruction phase, particularly in light of the current global security landscape, the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the rise of emerging technologies.

Estonia has full confidence in the professionalism, impartiality, and technical expertise of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its established mechanisms. We emphasize the complementary role of their work alongside that of the United Nations. Together, they have demonstrated unwavering integrity and dedication to upholding the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons.

The reappearance of chemical weapons poses a serious threat to international peace and security. We are concerned by the increasing number of findings and unresolved issues regarding the Syrian chemical weapons programme, which signal its even greater scope, and recall that the Syrian regime’s use of chemical weapons exemplifies the horrific and indiscriminate nature of this form of warfare. We urge the Syrian regime to fully cooperate with the OPCW, declare and destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles and programme, and ensure full compliance with its international obligations.

Mr. Chairperson,

The use of chemical weapons, anywhere, anytime, and in any form, is unacceptable. Russia’s illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified full-scale war of aggression against the sovereign state of Ukraine has persisted for over 1000 days. The war is marked by deliberate attacks on civilians and strikes on residential areas, schools, and hospitals, leaving thousands dead and many more wounded. Russia is systematically violating international law and the United Nations Charter, attempting to undermine the international rules-based order and multilateralism. Furthermore, growing number of reported uses of Riot Control Agents (RCA) by Russian forces as a method of warfare on the frontlines in Ukraine represent clear violations of the Convention. We are deeply concerned about the findings of the TAV report dated 18 November 2024 which confirmed the presence of riot control agent “CS” in samples collected in the Dnipropetrovsk

region. We call on the Secretariat to continue work towards timely identification of the origin and attribution of the RCA munition used. Needless to say – such breaches of the Convention are entirely intolerable and demand accountability.

Moreover, Russia's documented history of chemical weapons use, including the 2018 and 2020 "Novichok" nerve agent attacks on Sergei and Julia Skripal and Alexei Navalny, underscores its cynicism and blatant disregard for human life and international norms. Russia has not provided any credible answers on these poisonings and has not reacted to international calls for a thorough and transparent investigation.

Mr. Chair,

The Russian Federation has completely compromised its standing within the international community through its own actions. Estonia, together with an overwhelming majority of the EEG, is not comfortable with the idea that Russia, an aggressor against another State Party in the same region, would represent us in the Executive Council of the OPCW. Estonia encourages delegations to respect the will of the EEG majority and support the candidacies of Czechia and North Macedonia, who have shown strong support for the Convention, demonstrated responsible membership in the Organization, and proven to be credible and committed partners to other States Parties in achieving our shared goal of a world free from the threat of chemical weapons.

Estonia would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.
