

**Statement of Ambassador Thomas Schieb, Permanent Representative of Germany to the
OPCW**

at CSP-29

agenda item 9d “Addressing the Threat of Use” – subitem use of RCA

For more than a year Germany has been expressing its grave concern about Russia using RCA as a method of warfare and other toxic chemicals in Ukraine. We raised the issue, together with a number of States Parties, time and again at the EC as well as at CSP-28, referring to reports including from Russian state media, showing Russian military bragging about having smoked out Ukrainian soldiers from the trenches, with RCA.

This is why we are not surprised at all by the report of the recent Technical Assistance Visit to Ukraine, published on 18 November, that confirms the use of RCA in Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine - on the contrary. Even if the report does not include an attribution, there are clear indications that Russia is responsible for this CWC violation. As described in the report, the circumstances in which the investigated grenade was used and found have been verified diligently by the Technical Secretariat. In addition, the markings on the sample indicate that this is a CS grenade model produced by Russia.

Mr. Chair,

The response of the Russian Federation to the many requests for clarification, in accordance with the procedures foreseen by the Convention, has been absolutely unconvincing. Russia’s response has been consisting of unsubstantiated counter-accusations and obvious distortion of facts, garnished with crude propaganda. Obviously, Russia is not taking these serious allegations – and clear indications – seriously.

Just days before the CSP, Russia shared hundreds of pages of classified information material that are supposed to prove, according to Russia, Ukraine’s responsibility for RCA use. Russia followed up with additional Verbal Notes plus attachments. However, in stark contrast to the TAV sample and report, the Russian material does not in the least fulfil OPCW standards.

If Russia really was in possession of any substantial incriminating information, why does it not submit such material in accordance with the procedures foreseen by the Convention and request technical assistance from the Technical Secretariat? Well, the answer can only be: It apparently does not possess any such information.

Mr. Chair,

Concluding, we would like to remind States Parties, and especially those who might still have been in doubt, that for the first time since the adoption of the CWC, chemical weapons are being used by one State Party against another, officially confirmed by the TS. This is a watershed moment, and it should be of great concern to all States Parties to the Convention!

Urgent, additional action by the Technical Secretariat is required. It now needs to investigate the nature and scale of breaches of the CWC and to clearly identify their origin.