



IRELAND

Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Ann Derwin,

Permanent Representative of Ireland to the OPCW

At the Twenty Ninth Session of the Conference of the States Parties

25 November – 29 November 2024

Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished delegates,

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland joins others in warmly congratulating you, Ambassador Šahović of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on your appointment as Chairperson of the 29th Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. You can count on Ireland's full support in the work ahead. I would also like to express Ireland's appreciation to the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Tarar of Pakistan, as well as paying tribute to the work of Ambassador Terán Parral of Ecuador, Chairperson of the Executive Council.

Chairperson,

Ireland condemns the use of chemicals as warfare anywhere, by anyone, and under all circumstances. In that regard, we remain deeply concerned that Syria has yet to provide full and accurate declarations to the OPCW on its chemical stockpiles, especially given its independently attributed use of chemical weapons in the past. All States Parties should be seized of this matter. Although Syria might argue that this is primarily a Western concern, the threat of chemical weapons knows no nationality, race, or religion. It is a concern that binds us all and one that will not diminish in the face of obfuscation, whether by Syria or by any other actor. We therefore repeat our call for Syria to show its commitment to the CWC and this organisation by co-operating fully in resolving the outstanding 19 issues on its file.

To be clear, the passage of time will not affect Ireland's resolve in bringing the Syrian chemical file to a close. Nor will it make the issue go away. The responsibility is Syria's alone and that will continue to be the case until there is real and tangible progress on their part.

Chairperson,

Ireland reiterates its full support for the integrity and professionalism of the Technical Secretariat and its various Syrian missions, including the Declaration and Assessment Team, the Fact Finding Mission, and the Investigation and Identification Team. Six years ago, States Parties voted in favour of the Technical Secretariat having the capacity and capability to attribute chemical weapons use. The IIT is a beneficial tool at the disposal of all States Parties that seek to uncover those responsible for chemical weapons attacks on their territory, whether by State or non-state actor. With the rise in conflicts all over the globe, the importance of this mandate has never been clearer. We call on all States Parties to stand unconditionally behind the Convention as the Technical Secretariat seeks to fulfil its mandate.

Chairperson,

We condemn in the strongest terms the use of riot control agents “CS” on Ukrainian battlefields as identified by a Technical Assistance Visit in September of this year. This comes on top of multiple requests by States Parties and Executive Council members to receive a response from Russia regarding reports of the use of riot control agents in Ukraine. We note the absence of a real and credible response from Russia regarding these allegations and, confirmation from the Technical Secretariat that riot controls agents are in fact being used in Ukraine. We urge the Secretariat to further identify origins and make an attribution of this serious violation of the Convention.

Russia has persistently spread disinformation in an attempt to deflect responsibility and accuse others of wrongdoing, in spite of their obligations under the CWC. The OPCW itself has had to refute a recent claim that OPCW designated laboratories were involved in producing results purporting to support their propaganda. Such deliberate actions only serve to make Russia less trustworthy in the eyes of States Parties. This is the same State Party that now seeks re-election to the Executive Council. There should be no serving Member

of the Executive Council that blatantly undermines the Convention and shows repeated contempt for the organisation's work.

Chairperson,

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the threat it poses to the re-emergence of chemical weapons use. The situation in Gaza is abhorrent, with the number of civilian casualties growing with every passing day. Ireland has repeatedly called for an end to all hostilities, the release of hostages, and the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza. We also condemn the mounting deaths and damage to civilian properties caused by Israel's invasion of Lebanon. This war must end now.

We once again welcome the Director General's statement to monitor the situation in Gaza and any potential use of chemical weapons.

Chairperson,

Incorporating a gender lens in the Technical Secretariat's work remains a priority for Ireland and we encourage gender mainstreaming in all aspects of their work. We welcome the consideration that has been made to this issue and the commitment by the Director General to advance gender equality in the Organisation. It is imperative that women's participation and inclusion in our work and that of all people from underrepresented regions and backgrounds, remains high on the agenda. The engagement of civil society organisations with the OPCW is of utmost importance in this regard, since they are the channel through which the organisation's work connects and reaches a wider audience through a range of thematic areas.

We commend Germany and Costa Rica's stewardship in exploring concrete ways to increase this engagement, among them improving the accreditation process for civil society organisations. We regret that a consensus could not be achieved within the informal consultations on streamlining the

recommendations to the General Committee on this matter. The co-facilitators had exerted all effort to find consensus, and for that, we are grateful.

Chairperson,

Ireland would like to express its full confidence in the work of the Technical Secretariat, and the effective leadership of the Director General Arias. The significance of the OPCW's work cannot be understated in the face of increased reports of, and threats from, chemical weapons use around the world. We reiterate our call for all States Parties to adhere to the provisions of the CWC and fully support the organisation's mandate at this critical juncture. The pursuit of a peaceful world may not be easy, but there is simply no other way, for the sake of all humanity and future generations.

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

Thank you.