



*The Permanent Representation of Italy to the
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*

ITALY

Agenda item 9 (d): Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use –

Ukraine, Navalny & RCA

Mr Chair,

Italy fully align itself on the statement delivered by the Hungarian Ambassador. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

I take the floor today with a deep sense of responsibility, representing the voice of Italy in this Conference, which has always stood for the protection of international peace and security against the threats of chemical weapons.

The war in Ukraine, which began with the illegitimate aggression of the Russian Federation, represents one of the most serious threats to global stability and to the system of international law that we are committed to defend. For a long time, worrying reports indicate the possible use by the Russian Federation of Riot Control Agents (RCAs) as a method of warfare.

Today, we can unfortunately state with certainty that RCAs have been used in Ukraine. This is stated in the recently published report by the Technical Secretariat on the Technical Assistance Visit in Ukraine.

What we feared has been confirmed, and although the report is not aimed at attribution of responsibility, it is worryingly associated with the several indications of the use of RCAs given in the Russian media.

The use of these chemical agents should prompt us all, to request for an immediate, transparent and independent investigation.

Mr Chair,

this Conference cannot ignore another critical point: The Russian Federation's systematic refusal to respond, in a satisfactory manner, to questions submitted under Article IX of the Convention. These requests, made in good faith and in full accordance

with our procedures, aim to clarify concrete doubts about the use of RCAs in Ukraine and more, the poisoning of the Russian citizen Alexei Navalny with a chemical agent of the Novichok family.

Furthermore, we cannot underestimate the disinformation campaigns promoted by the Russian Federation, even using misleading arguments and illegally implicating the Technical Secretariat to distort the facts and deflect attention from its responsibilities. Such actions are a further attack on the transparency and integrity of the international regime for the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The evasive, incomplete or non-existent responses provided by the Russian Federation, together with systematic disinformation, are unacceptable not only to the individual States Parties that have raised these concerns, but to the entire international community and the chemical non-proliferation regime we have built together. Such behavior undermines mutual trust, an essential element in the functioning of the Convention, and risks paving the way for further abuses and violations.

I conclude with a series of appeals:

We call on the Russian Federation to:

- 1. Immediately and fully cooperate with the OPCW and this Conference to clarify the incidents reported in Ukraine and in the Navalny case.*
- 2. Provide clear and documented answers to the questions received, helping to remove doubts and reinforce the international regime of prohibition of chemical weapons.*
- 3. Stop disinformation campaigns, respecting the impartial and independent role of the OPCW and ensuring that its articulations are not instrumentalized.*
- 4. Actively engage in dialogue and transparency, reaffirming its adherence to the core principles of the Convention.*
- 5. End the war of aggression in Ukraine and immediately withdraw its military forces from Ukrainian territory, in accordance with the basic principles of international law and guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.*

Global peace and security cannot be compromised by the use of chemical weapons, disinformation or conflict that ignores human rights and the international law.

Thank you.