



REGERINGSKANSLIET

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

### Statement by Sweden Twenty-Ninth Conference of the States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention

H.E. Mr. Johannes Oljelund

25 November 2024

Mr Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by welcoming you, Ambassador Almir Šahović, as Chairperson of the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I wish to add a few remarks on behalf of my country.

Chair,

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the norm against the use of prohibited chemical weapons are facing unprecedented challenges in these unsettling times. Let me list some of these:

- Firstly, Sweden remains deeply concerned about numerous reports on the illegal use of ammunition containing riot-control agents in warfare – allegations that were confirmed in the OPCW's report last week. These violations of the Convention must be seized immediately. Confirmed incidents must be investigated further in the coming year, so that the perpetrators can be identified and sanctioned. Meanwhile, we call on Russia to respond in a credible manner to questions posed pursuant to Article IX, rather than resorting to obfuscation and disinformation. Several sources, including videos posted by soldiers in the field, indicate Russian use of banned tear gas ammunition. Moreover, Sweden is concerned about the allegations of Russian use of the scheduled chemical chloropicrin.
- Secondly, Russia's deliberate attacks on Ukraine's industrial infrastructure, including chemical industrial plants, continue with severe risks for human health and the environment. Sweden condemns Russia's war of aggression in the strongest term. We stand firm in our support to Ukraine.

- Thirdly, The Syrian Arab Republic remains in breach of its obligations as a State Party to the Convention. Instead of taking steps to redress the situation, the Syrian regime keeps obstructing the OPCW's efforts to investigate and establish accountability for chemical weapons use on its territory. Sweden once again calls on Syria to provide full cooperation to the OPCW in all of its ongoing investigations. To support the Technical Secretariat's on-going work on the Syria file, Sweden made a further extrabudgetary contribution of two million Swedish Kronor this year.
- Fourthly, Russian authorities have still failed to respond to demands of the international community to disclose the circumstances around the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny, more than four years ago, and the events in Salisbury that resulted in one fatality in 2018, both of which involved the use of chemical-warfare-agents of the so-called Novichok variety.

For any responsible States Party to the Convention, it should be a priority to ensure that perpetrators of chemical weapons use are identified and held to account. Impunity can never be an option. These serious issues will continue to be on top of our agenda until all questions are answered and those responsible are brought to justice.

Chair,

Let me briefly comment on some of the work conducted in the OPCW over the past year. Sweden's thanks Director-General Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat for their untiring and professional work in promoting the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, despite some challenging circumstances, and reiterate our confidence in the OPCW's professionalism, impartiality and expertise.

The Investigation and Identification Team plays an important role in enabling accountability for chemical weapons use. We welcome its latest report, which attributes the attack conducted in Marea on 1 September 2015 to the so-called Islamic State, or Da'esh, and look forward to its next account.

Sweden commends the Director-General for his efforts, through the Gender Road Map and other initiatives, to promote gender equality, enhance women's participation and representation among its staff and strengthen gender mainstreaming across the Organisation and its activities. We look forward to further steps to address the gaps and challenges that remain.

Sweden welcomes the Executive Council's consideration of an agenda item on "Emerging Technologies". We look forward to constructive discussions, for instance, about how artificial intelligence may impact threat development. We encourage further cooperation between the ChemTech centre and the designated laboratories to develop further tools for chemical analysis, and look forward to the recommendations of the temporary working group on chemical forensics on how such tools may contribute to the implementation of the Convention.

Chair,

Sweden notes the decision of the Executive Council to recommend the proposed budget adjustment for 2025 to this session of the conference. We would like to thank the Technical Secretariat and the co-facilitators for their work on this and urge all States Parties to support the proposed budget.

Lastly, Sweden welcomes the participation of representatives from the civil society at this Session of the Conference of the States Parties and regrets that not all that applied were allowed to participate. NGOs play an important role in our common endeavour towards a world free from chemical weapons, including by promoting the universality and full implementation of the Convention. It is vital that the OPCW remains true to its fundamental values of openness and transparency.

In conclusion, for reasons outlined in the statement delivered by the European Union, let me confirm that Sweden supports the candidatures of the Czech Republic and North Macedonia to the Executive Council from May 2025 to May 2026.

I thank you Chair and ask that this statement be issued a public document of the Twenty-Ninth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and published on the OPCW external website.