



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Fifth Session
20 – 22 April 2021 (Part II)

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**JOINT STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF FIFTY-NINE MEMBER STATES OF THE OPCW
DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

Mr Chairperson,

This statement is on behalf of the 59 co-sponsors—Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Cook Islands, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, Nauru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New guinea, Palau, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Principality of Monaco, Republic of Korea, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Vanuatu.

We, as States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention, condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon in the Russian Federation against Mr Alexei Navalny on 20 August 2020.

We welcome the assistance provided by the OPCW Technical Secretariat in the aftermath of Mr Navalny's poisoning. OPCW analysis of biomedical samples confirmed the presence of a cholinesterase inhibitor. We note that the cholinesterase inhibitor has been further identified as a nerve agent from a group of chemicals known as novichoks. We have full confidence in the OPCW's independent expert finding that Mr Navalny was exposed to a novichok nerve agent. We note with concern that a novichok nerve agent was also used in an attack in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2018. These agents serve no other purpose than to be used as a chemical weapon.

Any poisoning of an individual with a nerve agent is considered a use of a chemical weapon. This is a matter of the utmost concern. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable and contravenes international standards and norms against such use. States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") have repeatedly condemned all use of chemical weapons and reiterated their commitment to the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons under Article I of the Convention. Any use of chemical weapons constitutes a direct threat to the object and purpose of the Convention.



Article VIII, paragraph 20 of the Convention provides that the Conference shall oversee the implementation of the Convention, act in order to promote its object and purpose, and review compliance. We urge the Russian Federation, on whose territory the attack on a Russian opposition figure took place, to assist the Conference in this role by disclosing in a swift and transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack. We note that the Russian Federation has requested technical assistance from the Technical Secretariat, with reference to Article VIII, subparagraph 38(e) of the Convention, and look forward to the specifics of this request being finalised in order to enable a positive outcome. We also note that the Russian Federation has provided no further information on its findings ahead of this Conference commencing.

We reiterate and reaffirm our strong support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, an essential pillar of the international disarmament and counter proliferation architecture and the rules based international order on which we all rely. We underline the importance of the full implementation of the Convention and underscore our enduring commitment to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons.

We commit to remain seized of this issue and feel strongly that chemical weapons cannot be used with impunity. It is our firm conviction that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

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