



107th SESSION OF THE OPCW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 5: GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY TO THE NATIONAL STATEMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have asked for the floor in exercise of our right of reply to the national statement of the Russian Federation.

As Canada indicated in its statement yesterday, we continue to seek answers from the Russian Federation on the strong evidence that it uses riot control agents, and possibly more toxic chemicals as weapons, on the battlefield in Ukraine. Instead of responding to these entirely legitimate questions that were posed in line with the Convention, Russia continues to cast aspersions on the “collective West” with a concerted campaign of disinformation. Such disinformation jeopardizes global security, and it represents a direct threat to the object and purpose of the Convention.

In its latest attempt to spread disinformation and to subvert accountability, Russia has circulated a hefty highly protected document that purports to be impartial evidence substantiated by an OPCW-designated laboratory. As the Technical Secretariat has clarified and as Ukraine has noted, that is a mischaracterization of the lab’s status in doing this analysis.

For those of us who may be intimidated by pages of graphs, let’s summarize it in an unclassified way by saying what isn’t in it. There is no chain of custody. There were no seals applied. There’s no documentation of provenance. In places, it goes beyond the factual basis of a scientific analysis. What it lacks is the context which we see painstakingly developed and documented by OPCW missions when they have investigated alleged use in other contexts. It’s a document that may confuse those who look at it quickly and it takes time to realize what it is and what it isn’t. The Russian document, like their presentations yesterday, is so much noise. To quote another author, “sound and fury signifying nothing”. More disinformation, more attempts to distract this Council and all states parties from the serious allegations Russia faces regarding its use of chemicals in combat.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.