



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ) AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AGENDA SUBITEM 6(G): ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE

Thank you Chair. I have the honour of taking the floor on this agenda item on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Chair, we remain deeply concerned by Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine and its blatant disregard for the international obligations of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the United Nations Charter, and the international system built on agreed rules and norms. Russia's illegal invasion of another State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, is an attack on us all.

We are concerned by the continued credible reporting of Russia's use of riot control agents as a method of warfare in Ukraine. Much of this reporting comes from Russia itself. The use of riot control agents as a method of warfare is strictly prohibited under the Convention. We also note the allegations that Russia has used at least one scheduled chemical substance in its invasion of Ukraine. We condemn the reported use of choking agent Chloropicrin, and call on Russia to ensure full compliance with its Convention obligations. Canada, Australia and New Zealand offer our full support to the Technical Secretariat as they monitor and respond to these allegations. We again call on Russia to credibly respond to the requests submitted under Article IX of the Convention. Russia has, to date, failed to do so. Instead, Russia continues its malicious efforts to undermine this Council and distract attention from Russia's international obligations, through a concerted disinformation campaign.

Chair, the start of this year marked the sombre milestone of two-years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This year also brought the death of one of the Russian administration's most vocal critics. We continue to call for answers on Mr Navalny's death in a Russian prison, and to the questions posed to Russia by 45 States Parties in 2021 regarding Mr Navalny's poisoning.

Chair, we also acknowledge the positive steps taken toward addressing the threat of chemical weapon use. We welcome the signing of the privilege and immunities agreement between Ukraine and the OPCW, which entered into force on 24 May. This will enable greater cooperation in the appropriate investigation of alleged chemical weapons attacks, and greater support to protection and assistance activities. We applaud the results of the first Technical

Assistance Visit in July, and the more recent visit, completed on 12 September, both of which delivered protection equipment and training. These are welcome and necessary developments. The Technical Secretariat continues to prove its ability to respond to the needs of States Parties in a timely and transparent manner and we will continue to support them in fulfilling this mandate.

To close, Chair, this organisation has made great strides in countering the threat of chemical weapons use. We all committed to upholding international law when signing on as States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention should stand the test of time, compliance as a State Party is an obligation – not an option. Any violation, be that by Russia, Syria or any other state, is a threat to our peace and our integrity; it is a threat to us all. We cannot watch idly as these obligations and principles are disregarded by states to serve their national agendas. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand stand by the victims of chemical warfare and place our full support behind the Technical Secretariat as it continues its important work against these threats.

As Parties to the Convention, we must continue to call on Russia to meet these fundamental international obligations, with transparency, with honesty, and with true intention. On this our voices must be loud and clear.

Thank you, Chair.

I kindly ask you to consider this CANZ statement as an official document of the 107th Session of the Executive Council and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

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