

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
STATEMENT ON AGENDA 6(g)
ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE

The OPCW's goal is in its name. The prohibition of chemical weapons. But the massive scale and flagrant nature of Russia's violations of the Convention are moving us all in the wrong direction. And while it is the Ukrainian people who are bearing the brunt of the consequences, this is an issue that touches us all because ignoring the problem only means that it will grow unhindered. And this is a technical issue. It cuts at the very core of the convention.

Instead of committing to upholding the Convention, Russia is launching ever increasing chemical attacks on the frontlines of the battle in Ukraine. As the Ukrainian delegation shared with the OPCW, it has recorded over 4,000 cases of Russia's use of riot control agents against Ukrainian forces, including over 1,000 since the end of April. We all know the use of riot control agents in warfare is a clear violation of the Convention. As we shared during the last Executive Council, the United States and others also assess that Russia has used the World War I-era chemical agent chloropicrin in the trenches of Ukraine.

And it's not as if Russia's embrace of chemical weapons came out of nowhere. Russia poisoned Alexei Navalny and the Skripals with

Novichok nerve agents. It also enabled Syria's chemical weapons usage. So it's no surprise that Russia again turned to chemical agents in its illegal and brutal invasion of Ukraine.

Even less surprising are Russia's sad and dangerous attempts to point the finger at others. Starting with its lie that it had no intention of invading Ukraine, even as 200,000 Russian troops amassed on Ukraine's borders, and continuing with the absurd story that Ukraine was attempting to weaponize migratory birds, and baseless accusations of Ukraine's supposed chemical weapons usage. As we all know, the Kremlin has a long track record of attempting to hide its obvious violations of international law with fabrications to try to distract from its own culpability. But the truth of Russia's violations is out there, including on Russia's own state-controlled media.

We welcome the two Technical Assistance Visits conducted by the Technical Secretariat in Ukraine, but it is equally important that States Parties continue to demonstrate that the prohibition of chemical weapons is important in actions, not only words, and that the use of any chemical munitions in Ukraine is unacceptable.