



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BETI JACHEVA,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORTH MACEDONIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE 29th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION
(The Hague, 25 - 29 November 2024)**

Agenda item eight - General debate

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

The Republic of North Macedonia expresses appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan, and to the Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral of Ecuador, Chairperson of the Executive Council, for their efforts and outstanding performance in fulfilling their duties. We also warmly congratulate and welcome H.E. Ambassador Almir Shahovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his election as the Chairperson of the 29th Conference of States Parties and we offer him our full support.

North Macedonia would also like to reiterate its full support to the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, to the Deputy Director General and to the Technical Secretariat. We extend the appreciation to their work, and express full confidence in their professionalism, impartiality and expertise in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

North Macedonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. In addition, I would like to underline the following observations in my national capacity:

We reaffirm that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances is unacceptable and contrary to the international law and its principles. We also reiterate that there can be no impunity for chemical weapons use.

Last year we have reached an important milestone of a verified destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, as a major achievement for the international community and for the disarmament regime.



Unfortunately, chemical weapons still continue to be a grave threat to international peace and security. Their re-emergence is a source of concern and poses a major challenge for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in the post-destruction phase.

In this regard, we welcome the confirmations that the Secretariat is monitoring all relevant situations and any allegations of use of chemical weapons that could arise, and stands ready to assist if requested, in accordance with the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

North Macedonia reiterates full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and right to self-defence. North Macedonia continues to condemn Russia's unprecedented and unprovoked military aggression which is a blatant breach of international law and cannot be justified under any pretext or under any context. Russia will be held accountable for its war of aggression and all the destruction it causes.

Russian Federation has not provided any credible explanation regarding reported use of riot control agents, as well as alleged use of choking agent chloropicrin against Ukrainian soldiers, which constitutes direct violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this context, we join the others in expressing deep concern regarding the findings of the TAV report issued on 18 November 2024 which confirms the presence of riot control agent "CS" in samples collected in the Dnipropetrovsk region of Ukraine. We are hoping for a timely attribution of the RCA munition collected.

The concerns expressed by many other States Parties about continuous noncompliance of Syrian Arab Republic with obligations from Chemical Weapons Convention, and its use of chemical weapons still remain. Numerous questions remain unanswered ten years after Syria's initial declaration. We recall that chemical weapons use has been independently attributed to the Syrian regime on nine occasions by the thorough and comprehensive investigations carried out by the UN and the OPCW. We call on Syrian authorities to fully and effectively cooperate with the OPCW and all its established mechanisms, including the Investigation and Identification Team.



Mr. Chair,

We would also like to reiterate the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders, from chemical industry to think tanks, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations, in the OPCW work, and their meaningful and broadest possible participation in the Conference of States Parties. We welcome the ongoing work lead by Germany and Costa Rica. The delegation of North Macedonia stands ready to further contribute to this discussion.

We support Director-General Arias' revised draft programme and budget for 2025. Its proposals, including the timely and effective reallocation of the 2022 cash surplus and the envisaged reduction in the assessed contribution requirements for 2025 are reasonable and justifiable.

Mr. Chair,

Over the years, North Macedonia has proven to be a reliable and responsible member of the OPCW which fulfils its obligations from the Convention and has engaged very actively in the work of the Organization, including serving as Vice president of the Fifth Review Conference and Vice chair of the Executive Council in its current composition.

In this regard, and with a view to continuing its active contribution to the work of this important organization, we have submitted our candidacy for the membership of the Executive Council for the period 2025-2027.

We would like to ask for support from States parties.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Twenty Ninth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.