



Twenty-Ninth Session
25 – 29 November 2024

C-29/DG.18
28 November 2024
Original: ENGLISH

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
ON ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

I wish to respond to comments raised by some delegations questioning the methodology of the OPCW technical assistance visit (TAV) team deployed in Ukraine.

Regarding the comments related to the Secretariat's activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, in Salisbury, and in the case of Mr Navalny, I consider that there is no need to add anything to the many remarks that have already been made over the past several years.

The experts we deploy are the best international specialists of the highest professional competence—fully prepared, trained, and totally independent—and they have my total trust. They use the best tools and modern technologies. I wish to commend them for their work and dedication.

Each report produced by the Secretariat contains detailed explanations on how facts are collected and analysed, and on the methodologies applied. The Secretariat conducts its activities in accordance with the Convention and the decisions of the policy-making organs. As always, we work in line with the highest international standards, including the assessment, analysis, and authentication of materials provided by States Parties.

The Secretariat follows a comprehensive approach using corroboration and combination of all evidence collected. Conclusions are reached following a thorough assessment of all the information gathered and analysed.

We received samples from Ukrainian experts, who comply with international standards, and who also provided supporting documentation, photographs, videos, and first-hand witnesses. The OPCW TAV team exploited only verifiable high-quality information. The Secretariat's experts verified and obtained information and analysis of the metadata of videos and pictures that confirm the place and time of sample collection. The chain of custody of the samples collected was fully guaranteed. The designated laboratories analysed samples in total independence, without any external influence, and I thank them for their professionalism, independence, and support.

I recall that the Secretariat was tasked exclusively with identifying the content and nature of the grenade it received.

The TAV team's work concluded, based on the evidence, that a grenade containing the riot control agent CS was found in a war zone, along confrontation lines. When used at war, riot control agents can create a situation far different than that of maintaining order, forcing soldiers



out of the trenches, to be shot by the enemy. It is this situation that was addressed when you, States Parties, included such a prohibition in the Convention under paragraph 5 of Article I.

I recall that we have not been seized—yet—of establishing the full facts surrounding the allegation of use of this grenade, or any other. Nor have we been requested to cooperate in identifying perpetrators.

Still, the Secretariat reports solely on facts, and no facts can be bent to accommodate anyone's perception of reality.

Finally, I recall that the Secretariat engages only when seized.

--- 0 ---