

Statement of Ambassador Thomas Schieb Permanent Representative of Germany to the OPCW at EC-108 under agenda item 6 (f)

On 14 February the OPCW issued a report on a second Technical Assistance Visit following three incidents of alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon. The report – as did the report of the first TAV in November – confirmed the use of a riot control agent on the confrontation lines in Eastern Ukraine in October 2024, thus violations of the CWC. All samples used, as the TS has confirmed, fulfilled OPCW standards for chain of custody and were analyzed by OPCW-designated laboratories.

Like the DG and like many States Parties we are deeply concerned by these findings. We should also be aware that these findings are just showing the tip of the iceberg. Ukraine has recorded around 6.700 cases of Russian forces using Riot Control Agents as a method of warfare and the listed chemical Chloropicrin in the period of February 2023 to February 2025. Neither of the two TAV reports identify those responsible for these violations of the CWC, since this was not part of the TAV's mandate. However, in our assessment the carefully described circumstances together with the subsequent analysis of the findings clearly point to the Russian military as the perpetrator.

Mr. Chairperson,

The global norm against chemical weapons is at stake here. I would like to appeal to all members of this Council to take this very seriously; it would be highly irresponsible for the Council to simply take note of these findings and continue with business as usual. These blatant violations of the CWC need to stop, and those responsible need to face the consequences.

Let me quote paragraph 6 of the NAM plus China Statement, delivered at CSP-29:

“The NAM CWC States Parties and China stress that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and international law. We also reaffirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.”

Germany couldn't agree more: Those responsible for CW use must be held accountable!

However, before it is possible to hold the perpetrators to account, they need to be identified. In view of the vast amounts of evidential information, and in line with its mandate to uphold the global ban of chemical weapons, the OPCW should now take the necessary next steps to investigate and identify the perpetrators of the use of RCA and other toxic chemicals in Ukraine and to attribute responsibility.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is of critical importance for the Council to remain seized of the matter, to do all it can to live up to its obligations enshrined in the Convention and to do to its part to help hold those responsible for violating the Convention to account.

Concluding, I would like to thank the TS for very successfully providing, in accordance with the highest professional standards technical assistance to Ukraine in these challenging times.

--