



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

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

Thank you, Chair. I speak today on behalf of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Chair, last month was the sobering anniversary of three years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Since the start of its war, Russia has grown more blatant in its disregard for its international obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We reiterate our serious concern about repeated, credible reports of Russia's use of riot control agents on the battlefield.

The OPCW reports on two Technical Assistance Visits (TAV) to Ukraine confirmed that grenades containing the riot control agent CS were used in Ukraine in September and October 2024. Their presence should alarm us all. It represents a clear violation of the Article I of the Convention, which prohibits the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare.

Chair, we also condemn the reported use of choking agent Chloropicrin. We again call on Russia to credibly respond to the requests submitted under Article IX of the Convention. Russia has, to date, failed to answer these requests. Let us not forget that Russia has used chemical weapons agents in the attempted assassinations of Sergei Skripal in the United Kingdom and of Alexei Navalny. Questions remain unanswered, while the Russian government continues to spread disinformation and undermine confidence in the credibility of the OPCW. Russia chooses not to employ the rigorous procedures foreseen in the Convention. Russia has instead continually blocked concrete cooperation with the OPCW to investigate past reports of chemical weapons use.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand offer our full support to the Technical Secretariat as they monitor and respond to allegations. We welcome the important and impartial work they are doing to provide technical assistance to Ukraine, and to report back and document their findings for all States Parties to see.

Chair, the two OPCW reports confirm that prohibited use of chemical weapons is occurring right now in Ukraine. This should cause us all as States Parties to stand up and voice our

condemnation. We cannot accept a normalisation of the use of chemical weapons. With all the challenges we currently face, it is more important than ever to focus on the greatest threats before us, and the core purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Russia's actions are a threat to Ukraine, a threat to the OPCW, and a threat to us all.

Thank you, Chair.