



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NICOLE SHAMPAINÉ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE OPCW
AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr. Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished Ambassadors and Delegates,

As we gather here for the 108th session of the Executive Council, it's important to remind the world that the United States, under President Trump, has a track record of taking decisive action against the use of chemical weapons. President Trump responded to the Assad regime's barbaric use of chemical weapons against innocent civilians in Syria with military strikes in 2017, and again in 2018 with our allies France and the United Kingdom. Under President Trump, the United States then joined our allies Canada and the Netherlands to lead a much-needed update to the Chemical Weapons Convention's Annex on Chemicals after Russia poisoned Sergei and Yulia Skripal with a Novichok nerve agent, an attack that unfolded seven years ago today. These actions demonstrated President Trump's steadfast commitment to holding those who use chemical weapons accountable and supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention, and his message is clear: the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated.

President Trump has always taken the threat of chemical weapons seriously, and we must recognize that the danger is evolving. It is becoming easier to produce, transport, and deploy different forms of chemical weapons – sometimes in ways that are incredibly difficult to attribute. These developments require a strong, unified response.

As we approach this new year as a council, the United States will focus on three areas:

1. Continued Support for the Chemical Weapons Convention

The Chemical Weapons Convention remains relevant and necessary. Following another Technical Assistance Visit requested by Ukraine, last month, the OPCW released a second report confirming the presence of CS, a riot control agent, in samples from the front lines of Ukraine. The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, and upholding the Convention means holding to account those who violate it. We commend the OPCW once again for its thorough analysis, and we condemn the ongoing chemical attacks in Ukraine. These attacks must end, just as the Russia-Ukraine war must end, and the United States is using its strength to bring Russia and Ukraine together to stop the suffering once and for all.

Moreover, recent events in Syria increase the risk of chemical weapons proliferation, and we must address this matter with the seriousness and urgency it deserves. The unprecedented transition now underway in Syria offers a unique opportunity for the international community to finally assess, secure, and dismantle the Assad regime's chemical weapons program. Until that happens, the threat persists that any remaining elements of the Assad regime's chemical weapons program could end up in the wrong hands. We are encouraged by recent high-level discussions between the OPCW and the interim authorities in Syria, and we join others in supporting the OPCW as it takes the next steps in this important mission.

2. Strengthening Chemical Threat Preparedness and Response

Mr. Chairperson,

One year ago, the United States noted to the Executive Council our concern about Iran's development of pharmaceutical-based agents for use as weapons, in violation of the Convention. We call on the Iranian government to end this program, which is just one more example of the dangerous evolution of the chemical threat landscape.

In light of growing threats, we as States Parties must work to strengthen our preparedness to respond to chemical attacks effectively and promote the assistance and protection called for in Article X of the Convention. We should support practical, on-the-ground efforts that ensure our first responders, military personnel, and governments are well-equipped and capable of dealing with chemical attacks if they occur.

3. Preventing Chemical Weapons Development

Finally, we must recognize that controlling chemical weapons goes beyond eliminating stockpiles. In today's world, the chemical supply chain must be protected from theft and diversion by non-state actors, smugglers, and rogue entities. The Convention's extensive verification regime is a cornerstone of our efforts to prevent the reemergence of chemical weapons, and the United States remains committed to using the right tools to promote peaceful uses of chemistry.

Mr. Chairperson,

In closing, the United States will work with all committed States Parties to continue President Trump's strong stance against chemical weapons, and we look forward to partnering with the OPCW in these vital efforts. Together, we can ensure a safer, more secure future for all.

Thank you.