



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

National statement by Sweden
One Hundred and Eighth Session of the Executive Council
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
H.E. Ambassador Johannes Oljelund
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW
The Hague, 4-8 March 2025

Sweden is aligned with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add the following points in my national capacity.

Chair,

Sweden is hopeful that the fall of the Assad regime will lead to the submission of a complete and accurate Syrian chemical weapons declaration, and the verified destruction of any remaining chemical weapons. Meanwhile, physical security at all sites where chemical weapons or precursors are stored remains of utmost importance to guard against their potential spread and the risk of reemergence of chemical weapons.

We welcome the Director-General's active engagement on this issue, the "frank and positive" meetings conducted in Damascus on 8 February 2025, the Syrian transitional authorities' stated commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and designation of Mr. Ibrahim Olabi as focal point and the report contained in document EC-108/DG.10. Sweden has contributed to the OPCW's fund for Syria verification and investigations for many years. We are currently considering further contributions, taking into consideration the need for an updated inventory of chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) and the elaboration of a plan for their destruction or conversion.

While accountability for chemical weapons use and other war crimes continues to be an important principle to Sweden, we respect the right of the Syrian people to decide how to proceed with regard to accountability and national reconciliation.

Chair,

Sweden reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We take note of the second technical report issued by the OPCW last month, reconfirming the

use of riot control agents as a method of warfare in Ukraine. The findings are in keeping with Ukraine's alarming reports of daily Russian attacks with such banned munitions. As stated by the Director-General, the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare is tantamount to chemical weapons use, since it is explicitly prohibited in the Convention. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances, is unacceptable and unlawful, and it will now be important to move forward from confirmation of use to attribution and accountability.

Meanwhile, Russia has yet to respond to calls for clarifications regarding the use of riot-control agent munitions and to provide credible answers regarding the poisoning by use of a nerve agent of Sergey and Yulia Skripal in 2018 and opposition leader Alexey Navalny in 2020. We call on Russia to respond to States Parties' legitimate questions rather than resorting to evasion and disinformation.

Chair,

As stated in October, Sweden welcomes the addition of an agenda item on "Emerging Technologies" on the agenda of the Council. We look forward to constructive discussions on how emerging disruptive technologies may impact threat development, as well as potential benefits for capacity-building and threat reduction. Moreover, we are looking forward to the recommendations of the Temporary Working Group on Chemical Forensics on how newly developed forensic tools may contribute to the implementation of the Convention.

In conclusion, Sweden once again commends the Director-General for his efforts to promote gender equality and the integration of gender perspectives. We look forward to further progress in enhancing gender mainstreaming and the sharing of the results with States Parties.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the public website.

Thank you.