



# CZECH REPUBLIC

**Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations**

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Statement by

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*As delivered*

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Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates,

Czechia fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Let me begin by expressing our unequivocal support for the vital work of the United Nations in investigating and preventing the use of chemical and biological weapons. These weapons, by their very nature, represent a grave threat to humanity, transcending national borders. They have no place in the modern world. We therefore fully support the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for the investigation of the alleged uses of chemical or biological weapons. Moreover, as an independent and expert driven tool available to the international community, we should further strengthen this Mechanism, bolstering its independence and ability to impartially investigate any possible chemical or biological weapon use.

Calls to replace this Mechanism or to call into question the investigation mechanisms established by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons risk undermining the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. We therefore welcome the continued effort and commitment of state parties within the Working Group on Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention. The strengthening of both the CWC and the BTWC must be conducted with the aim of increasing the capacity to investigate alleged uses and ensure compliance with their provisions.

Chair,

As we said previously, the erosion of the international non-proliferation norms and the entire disarmament architecture is the unfortunate reality of today's world. Two examples stand out – first is that of proven chemical weapons use by the Syrian Government against its own population. Two consecutive international investigative bodies – the Joint Investigative Mechanism as well as the Investigation and Identification Team of the OPCW – conclusively proved that the Syrian Government used these abhorrent weapons. We therefore call upon the Syrian Government to comply with its obligations under the CWC and respective UNSC Resolutions.

The second example is that of credible reports of the use of Riot Control Agents by Russia in its military aggression against Ukraine – in direct violation of CWC. But the use of RCAs by Russia should come as no surprise; such illegal and inhumane acts unfortunately fit the pattern of Russian behaviour, as exemplified by its use of nerve agents in Salisbury in the United Kingdom and its poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny in 2020, murdered earlier this year in a Russian prison. Attempting to divert attention from its crimes, Russia continues to spread fabricated stories of alleged military biological laboratories in Ukraine, which have no basis in reality.

As part of its disinformation campaign, Russia is attempting to undermine and discredit international investigative bodies, the OPCW chiefly among them. It is therefore our collective task to ensure the preservation of the OPCW's expert knowledge and skills, as part of our commitment to uphold international disarmament instruments in a tangible, practical manner.

Chair,

As technology advances, so too do the threats posed by chemical and biological agents. With the emergence of new pathogens, synthetic biology and novel ways to create dangerous chemical compounds, the risk of weaponization has grown. This makes our work more urgent than ever. That is why Czechia provides regular voluntary contributions, offers a number of capacity and expertise building programmes, and defends the peaceful use and research cooperation in the areas of chemistry and biology. In this regard, it is important to stress that export control regimes are the bedrock of the peaceful use chemistry and biology, as well as any new technologies in these fields. They ensure that materials, technologies and know-how are not used for illicit activities endangering global security, thereby promoting peaceful development of all States.

Thank you.