

Chemical watchdog confirms UK findings on Salisbury toxic chemicals

Results of sample analysis collected by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons ([OPCW](#)) from the individuals and the site of an alleged exposure to a nerve agent in Salisbury, United Kingdom, confirm the country's findings relating to the identity of the chemical, the Security Council [heard today](#).

"[The OPCW] Technical Assistance Visit team has noted that the toxic chemical in question was of high purity," said Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

The [statement](#) from the OPCW does not specifically name the substance, it says technical experts confirm the findings of the UK relating "relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury and severely injured three people."

The UK has alleged that the toxic chemical in question is the nerve agent, Novichok, and said that it was "highly likely" that Russia was behind its use in the 4 March incident that seriously injured Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, and one other person – a police official – in the British town of Salisbury.

Russia has firmly denied the charge.

An OPCW expert team was deployed to the UK at the country's request seeking technical assistance in identifying the nature of the toxic chemical reportedly used.

The team collected biomedical samples from the three individuals, as well as environmental samples from the site, under full chain of custody and transported them to its designated laboratories for testing.

OPCW's report on its finding was submitted to the UK, and at the country's request, to the States Party to the Convention on Chemical Weapons on 12 April. A [public summary](#) of the report can be found on the OPCW website.



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Ambassador Karen Pierce of the United Kingdom addresses the Security Council meeting on the Salisbury incident in the United Kingdom.

Also at today's meeting, Karen Pierce, the Permanent Representative of the UK to the UN, updated the 15-member Security Council of the investigations conducted by UK authorities.

She went on to explain why, "there is no plausible alternative explanation than Russian State responsibility for what happened in Salisbury."



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia of the Russian Federation addresses the Security Council meeting on the Salisbury incident in the United Kingdom.

Vassily Alekseevich Nebenzia, the Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN, dismissed the charges and alleged lack of transparency by UK, stating “the British barred [OPCW] experts from even mentioning the type of technical assistance requested and from naming the toxic chemical that Porton Down identified.”

He added that the UK instead had that information placed in the classified part of the OPCW report, which cannot be discussed in an open meeting of the Security Council.

The OPCW is the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which came into force in 1997 and outlaws the production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons and their precursors.