

Press release: Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson responds to defeat of Russia's proposals at OPCW

The international community has once again stood with Britain in the face of Russian attempts to obscure the truth of the Skripal case.

At today's special session of the Executive Council in The Hague called by Russia, Russia proposed a joint UK-Russia inquiry into the attempted murder in Salisbury. Russia demanded this session before the OPCW has completed its technical assistance to the UK. Russia's proposal for a joint investigation was robustly defeated, receiving only six votes from the 41-strong Executive Council. Russia is continuing its diversionary tactics by asking now for an emergency session of the UN Security Council tomorrow, again without waiting for the OPCW to do its work.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The purpose of Russia's ludicrous proposal at The Hague was clear – to undermine the independent, impartial work of the international chemical weapons watchdog. Russia has had one goal in mind since the attempted murders on UK soil through the use of a military-grade chemical weapon – to obscure the truth and confuse the public.

The international community has yet again seen through these tactics and robustly defeated Russia's attempts today to derail the proper international process.

It shows that many countries around the world continue to share our assessment of what happened in Salisbury and are determined to stand up to Russia's behaviour.

What's more, none of us have forgotten that today marks a year since so many people were barbarically killed in a chemical weapons attack in Syria. After the OPCW-UN investigation found that the Syrian regime was responsible, Russia blocked that body from doing any more work.

It seems Russia will never accept the legitimacy of any investigation into chemical weapons use unless it comes up with an answer Russia likes.

Notes to Editors

At the OPCW at The Hague today:

- Only six of the 41 members voted in favour of the Russian draft decision proposing the joint UK/Russian investigation. 15 voted against, including the UK, 17 abstained, 2 were absent, and one was not entitled to vote.
- Only 13 signed up to Russia's statement, according to Russia. There are 192 States Parties, any of whom could have decided to sign up.

Further information