

Russian operatives carried out Salisbury chemical attack alleges UK; accusations part of 'post-truth world' asserts Moscow

The United Kingdom and Russia traded a volley of words at the United Nations Security Council on Thursday, with the former laying out information which, it alleges, clearly places two Russian military intelligence operatives behind the deadly nerve-agent attack in the English city of Salisbury on 4 March.

The charges were categorically refuted by Russia, which instead accused the UK of trying to sow "anti-Russian hysteria."

Today's meeting, requested by the UK, follows evidence it released on its investigation into the Salisbury incident that left former Russian intelligence officer, Sergei Skripal, his daughter Yulia, and a local police officer, seriously injured. In July, two additional people living in the Salisbury area, were exposed to the chemical, and one of them died as a result.

The UK alleges that the deadly chemical is the Soviet-era nerve agent, Novichok. In April, the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) (OPCW) agreed with that assessment.

UK Permanent Representative, Karen Pierce, told the Council that her country's investigation had identified two Russian nationals, who travelled under the names of Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov – both members of the Russian Military Intelligence Service (known as the GRU) – as those behind the nerve-agent attack and has issued international arrest warrants against them.

Ms. Pierce also said that the P5 – China, France, Russia, UK and the United States, the five permanent members of the Security Council – bear an important responsibility to uphold international law, especially against weapons of mass destruction.

"One P5 member has not upheld these important norms [...] and played dice with the lives of the people of Salisbury," she said, noting that her country has no quarrel with Russia but that the UK will "respond robustly when our security is threatened and the lives of our citizens are endangered."



UN Photo/Loey Felipe

Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia of the Russian Federation addresses the Security Council meeting considering the letter from the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations.

No convincing evidence, says Russia

Forcefully denying and rebutting the investigation's findings, Russia's Permanent Representative Vassily A. Nebenzia said that the UK had not provided any convincing evidence relating to the Salisbury incident, but instead only lies concerning double agents, cyberattacks and military-grade chemical agents.

"I am not going to go through the list of this unfounded and mendacious cocktail of facts," he said.

Saying that Russia had offered to help the investigation, he said that "London has been refusing us this cooperation. London needs this story for just one purpose – to unleash a disgusting anti-Russian hysteria and to involve other countries in this hysteria," Mr. Nebenzia added.

Citing several inconsistencies in allegations levelled against his country, the Russian Permanent Representative said it remains impossible to know the real names of the suspects and therefore whether they are connected to the Russian Military Intelligence Service.

He claimed that the charges were yet another part of the "post-truth world" crafted by Western countries, he stressed, rejecting UK's sensational disclosures, as well as all unfounded allegations about his Government's involvement in the Salisbury events.

Several other Council members, including the United States and France, extended their support for the UK investigation and its findings, but the Bolivian Ambassador said that there needed to be restraint by Members,

warning against "slinging allegations" in the chamber, and calling for the use of diplomatic channels to ensure cooperation in resolving the dispute over the Salisbury chemical weapons incidents.