



Ukraine: The Shadow of Chemical Weapons. Italy at the Forefront in CBRN Defense.

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Russia is intensifying the use of **chemical weapons** against Ukraine, a practice now considered "standardized and routine" by the Dutch intelligence services AIVD (General Intelligence and Security Service) and MIVD (Military Intelligence and Security Service). This serious accusation, also supported by German intelligence, highlights a worrying escalation in the conflict and a blatant violation of international conventions. The alarm is high, and the international response, also in terms of defensive capabilities, becomes crucial.

The Dutch 007 Accusation: Over 9,000 Chemical Weapon Attacks

According to information gathered by the Dutch services, citing sources within the Ukrainian government, since 2022 the Russian army has carried out **over 9,000 attacks** in Ukraine using

chemical weapons. The most commonly used substances are **tear gas** and **chloropicrin**. The latter is particularly alarming, being deadly in enclosed spaces, and its use is categorically prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention under any circumstances.

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The director of the MIVD, Vice Admiral Peter Reesink, stated that the established use of chloropicrin "demonstrates that Russia is intensifying the use of chemical weapons" and that "at the same time, we see that Russia is employing this type of weapon with increasing ease. This increases the threat posed by the Russian chemical weapons program".

The Consequences of Using Chemical Weapons

The direct victims of exposure to chemical weapons are at least three, according to Ukraine. However, the Dutch intelligence services emphasize that "indirectly, the use of chemical weapons by Russia causes a much larger number of victims". This happens because the use of such substances forces Ukrainian soldiers to abandon their shelters, making them easy targets for conventional ammunition.

The Dutch Defense Minister, Ruben Brekelmans, called the systematic use of chemical weapons by Russia "completely unacceptable", emphasizing the importance of making the issue public so that it is not "normalized". He warned that lowering the threshold for the use of this type of weapon is dangerous not only for Ukraine but also for the rest of Europe and the world.

Violations of International Conventions and Previous Accusations

Russia is a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the use of chloropicrin and CS gas as weapons. The [Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) (OPCW) has found several incidents involving CS gas in Ukraine, although it has not conducted a full investigation. The OPCW executive committee will meet soon to discuss the situation.

This is not the first time accusations of chemical weapon use by Russia in Ukraine have emerged. Already in 2024, the U.S. State Department had recorded the use of chloropicrin against Ukrainian troops. Furthermore, Russian General Igor Kirillov, who later died, had been

convicted in absentia by a Ukrainian court precisely for the use of prohibited weapons.

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Italy at the Forefront in CBRN Defense: The "BLACK POISON 2025" Exercise

Faced with increasingly concrete chemical threats, defensive readiness is essential. Italy, with its **7th CBRN Defense Regiment "CREMONA"**, confirms itself as a strategic reference point and a key player in the Atlantic Alliance for protection against Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear agents.

A clear example is the multinational exercise "[BLACK POISON 2025](#)", successfully concluded on June 30. This important training activity involved specialized units from various NATO countries, strengthening interoperability among allied forces and emergency management in contaminated environments. Held in the areas of Civitavecchia, Rieti, and Santa Severa, the exercise simulated complex scenarios of response to CBRN threats, testing reconnaissance, identification, sampling, decontamination, and crisis management capabilities.

Colonel Dario De Masi, Commander of the 7th CBRN Defense Regiment and Director of the exercise, emphasized the fundamental value of international cooperation: "BLACK POISON 2025 represents a crucial step for maintaining the readiness of the Combined Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Task Force (CJ-CBRND-TF) against asymmetric and unconventional threats. The professionalism of the personnel employed and the cooperation among participating nations are the demonstration of an integrated and timely response."

The participation of Italian assets (such as the Interforce NBC Defense School and various specialized regiments) and allies (France, Germany, Poland) highlighted the crucial role of the 7th CBRN Defense Regiment "CREMONA", the only specialized unit of its kind in Italy. The regiment continues its training, educational, and research commitment, with the aim of developing advanced equipment to ensure the protection of ground forces and provide support to state organizations for national security.

Conclusions

The "BLACK POISON 2025" exercise has further strengthened NATO's deterrence and defense capabilities against CBRN threats. In an increasingly complex and threatening global context, Italy confirms its role in strengthening allied defense capabilities, demonstrating its readiness to respond to unconventional threats and contribute to international security. The growing evidence of chemical weapon use by Russia raises serious international concerns, and as demonstrated by the exercises, preparation and cooperation among nations are essential to face such challenges.

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