NATO Allies condemn assassination attempt on Russian opposition leader



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg addresses the Navalny poisoning. NATO

The North Atlantic Council met Friday, Sept. 4 to address the assassination attempt on Russian opposition politician Alexey Navalny.

Last month, Navalny was hospitalized after getting sick during a Russian flight. He was later evacuated to Berlin, where experts said he was poisoned, and not by a "non-state actor."

Germany briefed allies on the toxicology findings of their specialist laboratory.

"There is proof beyond doubt that Mr. Navalny was poisoned using a military-grade nerve agent from the Novichok group," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in a press conference today.

According to a NATO statement, all NATO allies condemned the attack and called on Russia to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on an impartial, international investigation.

Stoltenberg called on Russia to provide "complete disclosure of the Novichok program to the OPCW."

Stoltenberg called the assassination attempt on Navalny "appalling," and said "the use of such a weapon is horrific."

"Any use of chemical weapons shows a total disrespect for human lives, and is an unacceptable breach of international norms and rules," he said.

“Time and again, we have seen opposition leaders and critics of the Russian regime attacked, and their lives threatened. Some have even been killed. This is not just an attack on an individual, but on fundamental democratic rights; and it is a serious breach of international law, which demands an international response,” Stoltenberg said.

The secretary general said the allies were united in condemning the attack, and will continue consultations and consider the implications of this incident.

“Those responsible for this attack must be held accountable and brought to justice,” Stoltenberg said.