

*Working together to strengthen the norms
against chemical and biological weapons.*



CBW Challenges Radar no. 13

What's new at CBWNet

Written by Alexander Kelle, CBWNet [Working Paper No.20 on artificial intelligence assurance for the OPCW](#) has been published. The paper examines the necessity of an artificial intelligence (AI) assurance framework for the OPCW. It argues that the Technical Secretariat should adopt a formal governance framework to ensure AI tools are trustworthy, transparent, and legally compliant. The proposed architecture utilizes hierarchical controls, such as risk audits and data security measures, alongside relational assurance to build confidence among States Parties. Throughout CWC implementation, AI should serve as human-led decision support rather than an autonomous authority. Use of AI systems and tools should follow a phased implementation roadmap to integrate these technologies into the organization's routine governance and procurement processes while protecting confidentiality and analytical integrity.

News

- On 3 September, the UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, [informed](#) the UN Security Council about the first destruction of chemical weapons in Syria since 2014.
- From 17 to 21 August the [9th Session](#) of BWC Working Group took place in Geneva. Daily [reporting](#) was provided by Richard Guthrie for BWPP.

- On 27 July 2026, Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior-Matter [began her term](#) as the new Director-General of the OPCW, setting out her early priorities for upholding the Chemical Weapons Convention and delivering the Organisation's work worldwide.
 - On 20 July 2026, the US Federal Government [adopted](#) a new "Policy for Stopping High-Risk Life Sciences Research".
 - On 9 July 2026, the Executive Council of the OPCW, at its 112th session, adopted by consensus a [decision](#) to reinstate the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Chemical Weapons Convention, which had been suspended since 2021.
 - On 8 July 2026, the OPCW released a [report](#) by the Scientific Advisory Board's Temporary Working Group on Chemical Forensics, presented on the sidelines of the 112th session of the Executive Council, examining how advances in chemical forensics can strengthen the scientific basis for investigations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.
 - On 10 June 2026, the OPCW's 2026 [Seoul Workshop](#) brought together 21 experts from around the world to explore how artificial intelligence is transforming the chemical industry and research, and what this means for the responsible use of chemistry.
 - On 10 June 2026, the Office of Technology Assessment at the German Bundestag (TAB) presented a [detailed report](#) on the risks at the intersection of artificial intelligence and biotechnology.
 - On 4 June 2026, the UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, [briefed](#) the UN Security Council on the OPCW's discovery of undeclared chemical munitions.
 - From 26 to 29 May 2026, the OPCW and UNODA organized a [workshop](#) on policy and diplomacy for scientists, which taught researchers how to apply policy and diplomacy in the field of chemical and biological disarmament.
 - From 22 to 23 April 2026, the OPCW held a two-day [workshop](#) at which international experts in law enforcement, science, counter-terrorism and industry explored how rapidly advancing drone technology could both challenge and strengthen the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
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Publications and presentations of interest

Publications and presentations by CBWNet researchers

- CBWNet researcher [Barry de Vries](#), Kristoffer Burck and Sannimari Veini published a [paper](#) in *The Nonproliferation Review* on interactions between the norms of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 1540.
- On 12 July 2026, CBWNet researcher Alexander Kelle addressed the annual gathering of German medical faculties in Dresden on dual-use issues related to civil-military medical research.

CWC

- Kamil Kuca published an [article](#) in *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, addressing the threat of natural toxins as emerging dual-use agents in chemical security.
- Libby Flatoff published a [news analysis](#) in *Arms Control Today* on the additional US sanctions against Sudan and Washington's renewed call for an independent investigation into the alleged Sudanese use of chemical weapons in 2024.
- The *Council of the European Union* issued a [press release](#) on its decision of 3 July 2026 to impose restrictive measures on six Russian individuals involved in the development of chemical weapons, in particular epibatidine, the toxin found in samples taken from Alexei Navalny's body after his death.
- V. L. Savytskyi et al. published an [article](#) in the *Ukrainian Journal of Military Medicine* on trends in the use of chemical warfare agents against servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.
- Afif Aziz, M Rafi Arfindo Tama and Billal Al Haffis published an [article](#) in *Journal Pustaka Politika Adhikara Nusantara*, addressing the Long-Term Impact of the Use of the Chemical Weapon "Agent Orange" in the Vietnam War.
- Alexey V. Trubachev published an [article](#) in *London Journal of Research In Science: Natural and Formal analyzing Chemical-Environmental Aspects of Measures to Eliminate the Chemical Weapon Destruction Consequences*.

- Annemiek Dols published an [analysis](#) on the *IJSS* website examining the challenges Syria faces in tracking and destroying the former Assad regime's chemical weapons and dealing with their legacy.
- Mian Mazhar Waqas published an [article](#) in *Zakariya Journal of Social Sciences* on verification diplomacy and the chemical weapons in the hybrid warfare era.

BWC

- Steph Guerra published a [commentary](#) in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* arguing that the recent demonstration of AI-designed viruses is a warning, and that a window remains to build a layered system of defences against AI-enabled bioweapons.
- David Stiefel and Gabrielle Essix published an [article](#) on the *NTI* website on growing biological risks and the BWC.
- Jean-Christophe Mauduit et al. published a [chapter](#) in "*The Palgrave Handbook of Science Diplomacy*" on Biological Weapons and Science-Based Policymaking.
- *Pugwash* published a [contribution](#) on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention under the heading "Vision 2030 and beyond".
- Harald König and Arnold Sauter published a [science report](#) in *TAB-Fokus* on Biotechnology and artificial intelligence: Risks posed by research to security and biological weapons proliferation.
- Matt Field published an [article](#) in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* examining how plausible the warnings of AI executives about their technologies aiding bioterrorists actually are.
- Robert Lawless published an [article](#) in *Emory International Law Review* on the 'Multi-Normative' Biological Weapons Convention: A Study of the 2022 Article V Meeting in Geneva.
- Sabrina I. Slagowitz published an [article](#) in *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law* on the evolving threat of biological weapons and the *Jus ad bellum*.
- Matthew P. Shearer et al. published an [article](#) in *Politics and the Life Sciences* examining international cooperation and assistance in the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and how Article X can strengthen assurance under the Convention.

- James Giordano published an [blog article](#) in *Mad Scientist Laboratory* on Breaking (Bad) Biotech – revisiting the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention.
- Kevin H. Govern published a [report](#) in *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* on Biological Weapons, Bioterrorism, Agroterrorism and Ecoterrorism - Laws and Policy to Defend against these Threats.

Biosecurity

- Steph Guerra et al. published a [report](#) for *RAND*, on Building a Defense-in Depth biosecurity Strategy for the AI Era.
- Jaime Yassif et al. published an [article](#) on the *NTI* website on building real biosecurity guardrails.
- Muslim Abbas Syed and Andrew C.K. Lee published an [article](#) in *Public Health* on Biosecurity without verification.
- Damian Alexander Honeyman and David James Heslop published an [article](#) in *Global Security* on the alleged poisoning of Alexei Navalny.
- *The Council on Strategic Risks* published a [blog article](#) wrapping up the Warsaw Biosecurity Dialogue: Bolstering bioresilience to deter hybrid biothreats on June 17 – 18, 2026.
- Sumnima Singh and Anemone Franz published a [commentary](#) in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* arguing that the research-security measures currently under consideration by U.S. officials would not have caught recent laboratory incidents.
- Tyler Hoard published a [commentary](#) on the *RAND* website, addressing the Texas Screwworm Cases as a Wake-Up call for U.S. biosecurity.
- Christopher East published a [blog article](#) in *The Council on Strategic Risks* on advancing Japan’s preparedness against hybrid biological threats in an environment of escalation and ambiguity.
- Sana Zakaria et al. published an [article](#) in *Frontiers in Bioengineering and Biotechnology* on Compounding asymmetries in nucleic acid synthesis screening: policy pathways for strengthening global biosecurity governance.
- Sana Zakaria and Daniela Rodriguez-Rincon published a [commentary](#) in *Economist Enterprise* on rebuilding trust in global biosecurity.

- [Harshini Mukundan, Crystal Grant, and Christine Parthemore](#) published a [report](#) for *The Council on Strategic Risks*, addressing the issue, why Biotech and Biosecurity Policymakers Must Elevate Their Focus on Data.
- Bagrat Vardanyan published an [article](#) in the *Journal of Political Science: Bulletin of Yerevan University* addressing the Effectiveness of Biosecurity Policy Regulation in China.
- Ayelet Berman published a [paper](#) in the *Journal of Law and the Biosciences* examining Biosecurity in the age of synthetic nucleic acids: modernizing the law to manage emerging threats.

AI

- James Lewis published an [article](#) on the *CEPA* website on Negotiating AI Limits and Biological Weapons.
- Conor Griffin and Victoria Langston published an [analysis](#) in *AI Policy Perspectives* on AI and CBRN risks.
- Sonia Ben Ouagrham-Gormley published an [article](#) in the *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* on rethinking the De-skilling Narrative in AI and Biological Weapons Policy.
- Tuck Seng Wong and Kang Lan Tee published an [article](#) in *The Conversation* asking whether biosecurity safeguards are developing fast enough now that AI models can design complete, functional bacteriophage genomes.
- Jeffrey Lee et al. published a [report](#) for *RAND*, offering an initial biosecurity assessment of whether large language model agents can select and engage with biological tools.
- Allison Berke et al. published a [report](#) for *RAND* on verifiable audit trails for AI-enabled biological design tools.
- Rebecca K.C. Hersman, Lauren Blackwelder and John V. Parachini published a [report](#) for *RAND*, addressing AI Implications for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense Policy and Programs.

Other publications of interest

- Nidhi Kalra published a [commentary](#) on the *RAND* website, arguing that mirror life remains theoretical but that the dangers it poses call for action now.

- David Crouch and Natascha McVeigh published a [commentary](#) on the *RUSI* website arguing that the next CBRN crisis will be shaped as much by supply chains, industrial resilience and public trust as by sensors and detection technologies.
- David Gillum and Peter A. Carr published a [commentary](#) in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* on the oversight questions that synthetic cells raise once the line between a chemical and a living organism becomes blurred.
- Anja-Liisa Gonsior, Helene Pleil and Christian Reuter published an [article](#) in the *Journal of Cyber Policy* conceptualizing an exploratory approach to the regulation of cyber weapons using lessons learned from chemical weapons arms control.

Podcast/Interviews

- King's College London researcher Filippa Lentzos joined *Summit Talks* podcast, hosted by Beatrice Fihn, for an episode on what makes a bioweapon, the role of the Biological Weapons Convention, and how to keep the world safe over the next 50 years. Listen to the episode [here](#).
- *Arms Control Today* published an [interview](#) with Mohamad Katoub, Syrian Ambassador to the OPCW on Syria's Chemical Weapons Legacy.

Coming up!

- [One Hundred and Thirteenth Session of the Executive Council](#), The Hague, 6 –9 October 2026.
- [Thirty First Session of the Conference of the States Parties](#), The Hague, 23 – 27 November 2026.
- [Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare](#), 30. November 2026.
- [Working Group on the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention](#), Tenth session, Geneva, 7 – 11 December 2026.
- [Meeting of the States Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention](#), Geneva, 14 – 16 December 2026.



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