

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



CBW Challenges Radar no. 2

Working Paper: Legal Effect of the BWC RevCons

Every five years, states parties of the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction* (BWC) meet for a Review Conference to ensure that the agreement remains relevant in light of changing circumstances. The decision-making procedures at such conferences and their exact legal impact however often remains opaque to observers.

With the 9th periodic Review Conference of the BWC scheduled to convene at the end of 2022, our newest CBWNet working paper provides an overview of the legal and practical significance of such RevCons. It discusses their legal foundation within the BWC, decision-making procedures and the impact of decisions and Final Declarations on subsequent RevCons and states parties.

The authors will present this working paper during the 9th Review Conference on December 12 from 13:00 to 15:00 CET, in Room XXIII of the Palais des Nations, Geneva.

[Click here to read our working paper](#)

Working Paper: Biosecurity Governance within the BWC

With the extremely rapid developments in science and technology since the negotiation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), biosecurity concerns have become more and more significant for the convention. As biological risks associated with life sciences research and development of

advanced technologies occur on a global level, the BWC is the pertinent international forum for dealing with biosecurity governance issues.

BWC states parties have been considering biosecurity governance issues including oversight, education and codes of conduct since the first Intersessional Process (ISP) began in 2003.

Due to different cultures and methods of implementing the provisions of the convention, no single security governance policy could be suitable for all states parties. A set of voluntary ethical elements applicable to all the BWC norms could to serve as a guideline in formulating codes of conduct for implementing biosecurity risk management programmes.

At the 2015 BWC Meeting of Experts, China proposed a voluntary code of conduct for scientists. These Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines are designed to provide BWC states parties with a set of biosecurity ethical elements applicable to all members of the convention.

In April, 2022 China and Pakistan, with the co-sponsorship of Brazil, submitted the latest version of the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines to the Ninth Preparatory Meeting of the BWC. It would be a significant step forward if states parties were to adopt the Guidelines at the Ninth BWC Review Conference.

[Click here for our working paper on biosecurity governance](#)

What's new at CBWNet

26-27 September, we [hosted our Implementation Partners](#) from the German Federal Foreign Office and the Committee for the Handling of Security-Relevant Research at the German Academy of Sciences (Leopoldina) in the IFSH Berlin Office. We discussed the impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence in the chemical field. Topics also included challenges and opportunities at the upcoming 9th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention.

CBWNet-member [Dr Una Jakob discussed the importance of intersectoral cooperation for strengthening the norms against bioweapons](#) during the G7 Global Partnership against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Biosecurity Conference in Berlin, 7 October.

CBWNet doctoral researcher [Almuntaser Albalawi presented his research on](#)

[advancing Disarmament, Non-proliferation, and Arms Control education in the MENA region](#) as one of the #Leaders4Tomorrow, an initiative by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), during a side event at the UNGA First Committee in New York, 28 October.



The Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) is looking for a new member of our CBWNet-team: [PRIF is hiring a postdoctoral researcher](#) to work on the norms against chemical and biological weapons. Applications are open until 31 November, 2022.

[Vacancy: Postdoctoral researcher at CBWNet](#)

Publications of interest

- Aurelia Attal-Juncqua, Matthew Shearer, Gigi Kwik Gronvall published a *Think Global Health* analysis on [Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention's Contribution to Health Security](#), 21 September, 2022.
- Filippa Lentzos and Jez Littlewood conclude from the BWC Article V Consultations in September that [Russia's alleged bioweapons claims have few supporters](#) in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 11 October, 2022.
- The [fourth issue of the Historical Notes series](#) by Jean-Paul Zanders features Dr Gabriele Kraatz-Wadsack. She describes the biological weapons inspection regime in Iraq, 2 October, 2022

- Jean-Paul Zanders writes in *The Trench* about the [implications of Russia's invocation of BWC Article V and VI](#), 13 November, 2022.
- A *Think Global Health* article by Brian McCloskey, Jennifer B. Nuzzo, David Heymann argues that [The World is Unprepared for the Unthinkable](#), aka a biological attack, 21 September, 2022.
- [The Biological Weapons Convention should endorse the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct](#), a set of ten principles designed to promote responsible science and strengthen biosecurity governance, scientists argue in *Trends in Microbiology*, 10 October, 2022.
- A recent *Nature* article by Smriti Mallapaty argues that [COVID prompts global surge in labs that handle dangerous pathogens](#), 11 October, 2022.
- A *Science* article deals with the controversy about possible dual-use risks of an experiment which combined Omicron with a more deadly SARS-CoV-2 variant, 18 October, 2022.
- In an article for *Wired*, Emiliy Mullin describes how the [US government funds efforts to detect a man-made biothreat](#), 1 November, 2022.
- The *RAND Corporation* published a new report entitled [Characterizing the Risks of North Korean Chemical and Biological Weapons, Electromagnetic Pulse, and Cyber Threats](#).
- Stefano Constanzi and Gregroy Koblentz published an article in the *NCT Magazine* on [Controlling Novichok Nerve Agents after the Skripal and Navalny Incidents](#).

What we are listening to:

- Brett Edwards released [The Retort](#) on his Youtube Channel, a new podcast series on chemical and biological weapon disarmament
- For German-speakers: the podcast *Pandemia* released a [new episode on the Sverdlovsk Anthrax Outbreak of 1979](#), suspected to be a Soviet bioweapon leak.

News

- The [UN still sees no sign of biological weapons in Ukraine](#), the Director and Deputy to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, Adedeji Ebo, stated on 27 October in a briefing for the UN Security Council during its third session

addressing Russia's bioweapons allegations since the invasion of Ukraine. On 2 November, [Russia failed again to establish a formal inquiry into the allegations](#), with only China joining Russia in voting for a Security Council resolution on the measure.

- The Robert-Koch-Institute, Germany's most important public health institute, conducted an exercise on the UN General's Mechanism, concluding that it is fully functional. More information [here](#) and [here](#).
- The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) conducted [two training sessions on investigating and prosecuting chemical and biological crimes](#) during the Biosafety Association of Central Asia and the Caucasus (BACAC) conference in Tbilisi, 3-4 October, 2022.
- The US published its new [National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan](#).
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) published its [Global guidance framework on the responsible use of the lifesciences: mitigating biorisks and governing dual-use research](#).
- The [US Department of States designated three Syrian military officers involved in the Sarin attacks](#) on Ghouta in 2013.

Coming up!

- [Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference](#), 28 November - 16 December, 2022, Geneva
 - CBWNet Side Event on the Legal Impact of BWC Review Conferences, 12 December, 2022.
- [Chemical Weapons Convention Conference of the State Parties](#), 28 November - 2 December, 2022, The Hague
 - CBWNet Side Event on Disinformation in cooperation with the German Federal Foreign Office, 29 November, 2022.





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