

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



CBW Challenges Radar no. 8

Working Paper No.15: Instrumentalising Biological Weapons-Related Allegations: Russia's Compliance Politics and the Norms Against Biological Weapons

The working paper analyses the impact which Russia's unfounded bioweapons-related allegations against Ukraine and the United States may have on the norms against biological weapons. It focuses on Russia's use of the compliance procedures of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 2022. Drawing on social constructivist research on international norms, the Working Paper concludes that Russia's activities, while posing serious problems for the efforts to strengthen the BWC, may counterintuitively have contributed to strengthening the norms against biological weapons at the discursive level. In practical terms, and to prevent damage to the norms in the long run, it will be important for BWC states parties to continue to reaffirm the norms' strength, react firmly to any alleged or actual violations, enhance transparency in biological activities, and strengthen the means to counter disinformation and to increase confidence in compliance with the BWC.

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Working Paper No.14: Workshop on S&T developments with relevance for the
CWC and the BWC

CBWNet-Working Paper No. 14 (Editors: A. Krin, G. Jeremias) contains a

compilation of the participant's contributions to the workshop on scientific and technological developments relevant to the BTWC and the CWC, which took place on the 17th and 18th of June 2024 at Hamburg University. Key topics presented here include: S&T advances in the context of arms control and disarmament treaties; recent developments in science and technology; verification; governance methods that could be applied to enhance the effectiveness of arms control regimes.

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Working Paper No.13: Chemical Terrorism in Context: Threat Perceptions and CWC Review Conference Responses

The new CBWNet Working Paper by Alexander Kelle examines the evolving salience of chemical terrorism within the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the contribution of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to the global fight against terrorism. It traces the response of CWC states parties to chemical terrorism, analyzing how the issue has been prioritized in relation to other OPCW objectives, such as the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. The paper finds that, much like state parties' threat perceptions, review conference responses to chemical terrorism have largely revolved around the elements identified in 2001 and have been linked most often to the international cooperation and assistance norms, and regularly noted the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism.

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What's new at CBWNet

CBWNet network coordinator Alexander Kelle on 5 July [addressed the Open-](#)

[Ended Working Group on Terrorism](#) of the OPCW Executive Council. Dr. Kelle described how the OPCW has defined a role for itself in the global fight against terrorism. He noted the importance of national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in this context and analysed capacity-building measures undertaken by the OPCW in the areas of legal accountability of non-state actors, such as terrorist groups, and the prevention of and responses to chemical terrorism. Lastly, Dr. Kelle put the OPCW's efforts in this area in the larger context of the United Nations-led global fight against terrorism.

29th Conference of States Parties to the CWC



Alexander Kelle also spoke about civil society recommendations on chemical terrorism at a side event organized by the CWC Coalition on November 25 during the recent 29th Conference of States Parties to the CWC.

CBWNet had a strong presence at the [III. International CBRN Congress](#) in Ankara, which took place November 20 to 22. CBWNet transfer network member Ambassador (R) Ahmet Üzümcü discussed the role of the OPCW in the CW disposal process, CBWNet Researcher Gunnar Jeremias talked about the role of AI for the CWC and BWC, and CBWNet consultant Ralf Trapp presented on chemical and microbiological forensics in investigations of alleged uses of CW and BW.

News

- The [UK sanctioned Russian troops](#) deploying chemical weapons on the battlefield on October 8

- [USAID announced a new project](#) on strengthening systems that prevent, detect, and respond to new and emerging health threats on October 30
 - On November 18, the OPCW published a [report](#) on its technical assistance visit to Ukraine following an alleged incident of use of toxic chemicals as a weapon
 - The [OPCW Director-General met Germany's Acting Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control](#) on November 26
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Publications of interest

Publications by CBWNet researchers

- The newly released [SIPRI Yearbook 2024](#), features a chapter from Una Jakob and Filippa Lentzos on chemical, biological, and health security threats
- Almntaser Albalawi and Kristoffer Burck published [this article](#) in the *Zeitschrift für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung*, focusing on the chemical weapons investigation mechanisms in Syria
- CBWNet Researcher Barry de Vries published a paper on [biological and chemical weapons legislation in the EU](#) in the *New Journal of European Criminal Law*
- He also published an article on [the biological weapons amendment to the ICC Statute and national provisions](#) in the *Journal of International Criminal Justice*

CWC

- Michael Crowley and Malcolm Dando published an article in the *Journal of Biosafety and Biosecurity*, discussing the [regulation of toxins and bioregulators under the CWC and the BWC](#)
- Nadia Ahmad recently published [this article](#) in *Human Rights Quarterly*, discussing the ICC's ability to prosecute chemical warfare
- Natasha Hall published [this article](#) on emerging trends in chemical weapons usage in the Middle East

- Mina Rozei published an [article](#) with the *Arms Control Association*, focusing on the OPCW visit in Ukraine investigating the CW allegations
- The *Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI)* published a [report](#) on North Korea's chemical facilities
- The German Federal Foreign Office published an article on the [30th anniversary of Germany's accession to the CWC](#)
- Doreen Horschig and Natasha Hall published an [article](#) in the *Next Generation Nuclear Network* on reviving chemical weapons accountability in a multipolar world

BWC

- Jaroslav Krasny, a researcher at UNIDIR, published an [article](#) focused on the challenges and opportunities of the BWC
- Joby Warrick and Jarrett Ley published an [article](#) in *The Washington Post*, addressing the Russian expansion of laboratories that have been linked with BW development in the past
- James Revill published a UNIDIR report on possible [models of BWC verification](#)
- Jez Littlewood and Filippa Lentzos published an [article](#) for the *Arms Control Association* on strengthening the BWC
- The WHO published the [laboratory biosecurity guidance](#), which follows and complements the revision of the Laboratory biosafety manual, fourth edition
- Eva Siegmann published an [article](#) with the *European Leadership Network* focusing on rethinking responses to biological threats
- Sarah R. Carter, Nicole E. Wheeler, Christopher R. Isaac and Jaime Yassif published a [report](#) for NTI, discussing the development of guardrails for AI biodesign tools
- Roger Brent, T. Greg McKelvey, Jr., and Jason Matheny published an [article](#) in *Foreign Affairs* on how synthetic biology could destabilize the world
- Christopher W. Blair and Michael C. Horowitz published a [paper](#) in *The Journal of Politics*, focusing on Military Attitudes on the CW taboo

- Zélie Petit published an [article](#) in CSIS on the strategic imperative of biotechnology and implications for the US National Security
- Lijun Shang, Malcolm Dando, and Weiwen Zhang published a [paper](#) in the *Journal of Strategic Trade Control*, addressing the biological security educational gap
- Christopher Bobier and Daniel Hurst published an [article](#) in the journal *Philosophy & Technology* in which they seek to clarify dual use research of concern

United Nations

- The UN General Assembly recently adopted the [Pact for the Future](#), expressing concern over actions contrary to existing disarmament norms and reiterating the importance of disarmament treaties in the context of CW and BW (Action 26, 19/56)

CBW Terrorism

- The UNSC 1540 Committee released the [second issue of the 1540 Compass](#)
- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine published a [report](#) on US strategies regarding chemical terrorism

AI

- Aurelia Attal-Juncqua, Anita Cicero, Alex Zhu, and Thomas V. Inglesby from *Johns Hopkins University*, published a [paper](#) focusing on the potential of AI in strengthening health security
- The *Financial Times* published an [article](#) on the risks of OpenAI's models to help create bioweapons
- Patrick Norén published an [article](#) for *CBNW*, addressing the challenges for CW policymakers on balancing the prospects and perils of AI
- *The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine* published a [paper](#) on AI and automated laboratories for biotechnology

Alleged use of chemical weapons in Ukraine

- Asami Terajima published an [article](#) in *The Kyiv Independent*, focusing on Russia's chemical warfare in the Donbas

- John V. Parachini and Svitlana Slipchenko published an article for RAND on [Russia's deflections and denials about CW use in Ukraine](#)
- Parachini also released an [article](#) on the international community's response to Russia's non-compliance with the CWC

Multimedia

- There are two new episodes of [the BWC Global Forum](#), episode 14 on AI & drug discovery and episode 15 on open-source intelligence
- The [Poison and Pestilence podcast](#) released a number of new episodes, including episode 33 on the history of bio-threat assessment with Michael Parker and episode 38 with Jean-Pascal Zanders on the emergence of the norm against CW and BW

Coming up!

- [BWC 2024 Meeting of States Parties](#), Geneva, 16 Dec - 18 Dec
- [One Hundred and Eighth Session of the Executive Council](#), The Hague, 4 Mar - 7 Mar 2025
- [One Hundred and Ninth Session of the Executive Council](#), The Hague, 8 Jul - 11 Jul 2025



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