

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



CBW Challenges Radar no. 9

Working Paper No.17: Industry and the Norms Against Chemical and Biological Weapons

The new working paper by Ralf Trapp explores the crucial role of industry in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The paper highlights how industry engagement has shaped CWC negotiations, compliance measures, and verification mechanisms. As discussions on strengthening the BWC advance, the paper underscores the need for greater industry involvement to address evolving security challenges while balancing regulatory and business interests.

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Working Paper No.16: Non-transfer vs International Cooperation? Evolving Norm Contestation in the Chemical Weapons Prohibition Regime

The new working paper by Alexander Kelle analyzes the evolving debate over non-transfer and international cooperation norms in the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The paper tracks how states, particularly the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and developed nations, have contested these norms across CWC Review Conferences. While NAM states push for stronger international

cooperation, developed countries prioritize non-proliferation obligations, such as export controls. The research highlights persistent divisions and their impact on global chemical weapons governance, predicting that conflicting norm interpretations may persist for the foreseeable future.

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What's new at CBWNet

CBWNet is co-sponsoring NTI | bio's [Ninth Annual Next in Biosecurity Competition](#), which invites global teams of early-career professionals to submit innovative papers redefining "biological weapons" in light of evolving threats.

CBWNet researcher Una Jakob participated online as an expert in the [BWC Advanced Education Course \(BWC.edu\)](#) organized by UNIDIR, the Fondation de Recherches Stratégiques, and the Diplo Foundation, in the modules on international cooperation under BWC Article X (6 December 2024) and on S&T advice for the BWC (17 January 2025).

News

- An [extraordinary meeting of the OPCW Executive Council](#) on December 12, 2024 discussed recent developments in Syria
- The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists updated the Doomsday Clock to [89 seconds to midnight](#) on January 28, 2025, citing the potential misuse of biological science as one of the major threats
- The [OPCW Director-General visited Syria](#) to discuss next steps in eliminating Syria's chemical weapons programme on February 8, 2025

Publications of interest

Publications by CBWNet researchers

- Kathryn Nixdorff, Una Jakob, and Alexander Kelle published an [article on security-relevant research in the life sciences](#) in *Biologie in unserer Zeit*
- CBWNet researcher Una Jakob co-authored a [PRIF report](#) on the investigation of alleged uses of biological weapons
- She also wrote [this article](#) on the *PRIF blog* on opportunities for chemical disarmament in Syria in light of the fall of the Assad regime
- [This article](#) in the *Journal of Conflict & Security Law* by Elisabeth Hoffberger-Pippan and Christian Pippan investigates the complaint procedure under the BWC and the UN Charter rule on obligatory abstention in the Security Council
- She also co-authored a [compendium on the state of the art on AI, non-proliferation and disarmament](#), published with the EUNPDC

CWC

- Tomas Rozsypal and his co-authors [review the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile in Russia](#) in *Environmental Chemistry Letters*
- A new paper by Gyanesh Mishra et al in the *International Journal of Environmental Analytical Chemistry* analyzes the [extraction of Novichoks for verification analysis in the CWC](#)
- Greta Heydenrych explores [new perspectives on the fight against chemical weapons](#) in *Chemistry International*
- [This article](#) by Longest et al in *Society & Natural Resources* examines the debate surrounding the U.S. Army's chemical weapons demilitarization program

Chemical Weapons in Syria

- [This article](#) by Mina Rozei in *Arms Control Today* looks into the fate of Syrian chemical weapons after Assad's fall
- Richard Stone also [explores this topic](#) in *Science Insider*

Biosecurity

- Jon Cohen recounts the recent "Spirit of Asilomar" Conference in a [Science Insider article](#)

- Glenn A. Cross [reviews](#) Michelle Bentley's "The Biological Weapons Taboo" in *The Nonproliferation Review*
- Stephen A. Morse discusses [grand challenges in biosafety and biosecurity](#) in *Frontiers in Bioengineering and Biotechnology*
- Katarzyna P. Adamala et al. started a [discussion on the risks of potential research on mirror-life](#) in *Science*
- NTI | bio launched a [special report on disincentivizing bioweapons](#)
- [This paper](#) by Daniel Greene et al in *Applied Biosafety* explores life scientists' views on biorisk and responsibility
- Jez Littlewood and Filippa Lentzos explore [how to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention](#) in *Arms Control Today*
- Riya M. Sharma and her co-authors examine and compare DURC policies in the US and Canada in [this paper](#) in *Applied Biosafety*

AI

- Nicole E. Wheeler writes about [balancing discovery, innovation and biosecurity risks in the integration of AI in bioengineering](#) in *Frontiers in Bioengineering and Biotechnology*
- A [new report](#) from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine discusses benefits and biosecurity considerations of AI in the life sciences
- Eva Siegmann explores [how to prevent AI-enabled terrorism](#) in this NTI | bio blog post
- [This article](#) by Matthew E. Walsh in *Risk Analysis* investigates how to assess the risk of AI on the deliberate biological threat landscape

Multimedia

- The new [PRIF Podcast #11](#) with Malte Götttsche and Una Jakob explores research as a security risk (in German)
- A [bonus episode of the Poison and Pestilence podcast](#) with Jerry Smith dives into the operational aspects of the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons
- UNIDIR hosted an event on April 2 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the BWC; you can watch the recording [here](#)

- Similarly, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine held a related event, with the recording available [here](#)
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Coming up!

- [One Hundred and Ninth Session of the Executive Council](#), The Hague, 8 Jul - 11 Jul 2025
- [Working Group on the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention](#), Sixth session, Geneva, 11 Aug - 22 Aug 2025
- [One Hundred and Tenth Session of the Executive Council](#), The Hague, 7 Oct - 10 Oct 2025
- [CSP-30 - Thirtieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties](#), The Hague, 24 Nov - 28 Nov 2025
- [Working Group on the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention](#), Seventh session, Geneva, 8 Dec - 12 Dec 2025
- [BWC 2025 Meeting of States Parties](#), Geneva, 15 Dec - 17 Dec 2025



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