



Future Generations
CalsMUN 2022

Research Report

Forum: First General Assembly

**Issue: The Prohibition of the Development, Production
and Stockpiling of Biological and Toxin Weapons**

Chairs: Elise Pleij, Yun Bapat and Anthony Boerrigter



Personal Introduction

Elise (head chair & PGA)

Hey there, my name is Elise, I'm 18 years old and currently in my final year at Cals College in Nieuwegein. I am part of the CalsMUN organising committee and will be chairing GA1 at this conference. My hobbies include dancing, singing, reading and travelling. I did the latter one of those back in 2019 when I went to Cambridge to participate in an MUN at the university there, that was definitely my best MUN experience to date. I hope to make CalsMUN 2022 a great experience all around. I hope you are just as excited as I am!



Anthony Boerrigter (Co-chair)

Hi everyone!

I am a 16 year old student at the British School of the Netherlands. I am Portuguese and Dutch, and have been living in the Netherlands for my entire life. I have been involved in MUN for several months, having attended MUNISH and BSNMUN late last year. Besides this, I am a member of the BSN Debate team and I take maths, physics, biology and chemistry A-levels. When I am not studying, I enjoy surfing and listening to music. This will be my first time chairing, and I look forward to the solutions you will come up with for the complex issues we have been presented.

Yun Bapat



Introduction

Biological weapons are weapons whose punch line lies in the biological capabilities with regards to destruction. They have harmed the human population in the past, not only physically but also socially, economically and environmentally. Only in recent years have we been able to propose and impose safety measures concerning such by constructing the necessary treaties, agreements and regulations. Despite the existence of protocols and treaties, it is still very well possible for countries and organisations to produce, export and import biological weapons in secrecy. Not only that, but the rapid development of new technology is a growing concern for the disarmament community.ⁱ

Biological weapons are set apart from other ones by the way that they cause harm to a community. They use germs and other toxic microorganisms which can cause great harm to those exposed. They are very dangerous and the consequences of such use are horrendous. Death and injury by these weapons are painful. The use of these in war is strictly prohibited and inhumane. Use of such weapons can result in mass deaths, long lasting diseases, destruction to agriculture and fauna.



Definition of Key Terms

Biological weapons

“Biological weapons are microorganisms like virus, bacteria, fungi, or other toxins that are produced and released deliberately to cause disease and death in humans, animals or plants.”ⁱⁱ - World Health Organisation (WHO)

Biological warfare

“The use of harmful living things (such as germs that cause disease) as weapons in a war.”ⁱⁱⁱ - The Britannica Dictionary

Biological agents

“Biological agents are widely found in the natural environment and as a result found in many work sectors. They include bacteria, viruses, fungi (including yeasts and moulds) and internal human parasites (endoparasites). The majority of these agents are harmless however some may have potential to cause ill health.”^{iv} - Health and Safety Authority.



General Overview

The first recorded uses of biological warfare date all the way back to 1347, when the Mongol forces catapulted plague-infested bodies to the enemies. In 1710 the Russians did the same to the Swedish and in 1763 the British infected Indian troops with smallpox. In World War I there were many uses of biological warfare agents, such as the Germans shipping horses infected with glanders to the allies, and developing many more agents such as anthrax, cholera, etc. The reasons for this were to eliminate or significantly weaken the opposition and threat by means of disease.

In 1925, the Geneva Protocol was signed as a reaction to the horrifying uses of biological warfare in World War I. The protocol puts an emphasis on forbidding the usage of *asphyxiating and poisonous gases, and other bacteriological methods of warfare.*^v The Convention On The Prohibition Of The Development, Production And Stockpiling Of Bacteriological (Biological) And Toxin Weapons And On Their Destruction, otherwise referred to as the [BWC](#) details prohibition of the manufacturing of Bioweapons and the use of them. However, it consists of only 15 articles and has evidently not been detailed enough to prevent countries from finding loopholes in the convention. Some countries use that to their advantage and continue to manufacture, import, export, and stock these biotoxins.

The main issue with this was that many powerful countries in terms of military, such as the United Kingdom, Soviet Union and the United States reserved the right to use these weapons as retaliation in the case that another military attacks them first. This ultimately meant that this situation was a “no-first-use” agreement. Due to this, countries were inclined to continue their production of the forbidden weapons. The fact that the protocol failed to mention much about the development, producing, stockpiling and transportation of these weapons did not help the case.

This, for example, did not stop the Japanese, who had signed the protocol, from invading China and making use of biological weapons between 1937 and 1945 during the second world war. They created a secret biological research unit named unit 731 where they experimented on Chinese citizens.^{vi}



The US and Soviet Union also did not halt their research after their signing of the Geneva Protocol, but rather amassed incredible amounts of biological weapons. It was soon obvious that the Geneva Protocol on its own was not enough to ensure safety and peace, thus from 1969 to 1972 additional measures were negotiated. The British proposed in 1968 to separate chemical and biological weapons. In 1969 the United States ended their biological weapons program and decided to support the British. In 1971 the Soviet Union took back their opposition to the idea of the British and submitted their own draft of the BWC which was incredibly similar to the draft of the British. On 10 April 1972 the BWC was signed and was functional in 1975. Since then, not much has been changed or added to the Geneva protocol or the BWC. However, some scientists are concerned, seeing as times are changing and there are and will be many new developments.

The production of biological weapons is much easier and cheaper than the production of other highly lethal weapons. It is even plausible for terrorist groups to be able to create a biological weapon undetected. Any country or organisation with a decent amount of money and biologists is capable of creating a successful biological weapon.^{vii} To hide the production and process is also much easier, as the equipment and ingredients necessary to produce such weapons also have other societal purposes, such as for the development of medicine. This also gives more hiding spots, as a production site can be disguised as a vaccine plant or something similar.



Major Parties Involved

Organisations

Australia Group (AG)

The Australia Group checks and manages the exports to ensure there are no exports that contribute to the development or production of any biological and chemical weapons. ^{viii}

Countries

The Soviet Union (now The Russian Federation), United States and United Kingdom

These three countries have had the most influence on the development of the BWC and are all depositary governments. The Soviet Union and United States were also the top countries in the production of biological weapons. The United Kingdom and Soviet Union both created the drafts for the BWC. The Soviet Union had the world's largest most sophisticated biological weapons program. They were also suspected of violating the treaty in 1979 after an abrupt anthrax outbreak that killed up to 100 citizens, which in the end did turn out to be due to “military developments”. In 1980 people were worried about the Soviet Union’s stance on the treaty. After the Soviet Union had fallen, The United Kingdom, United States and Russia reaffirmed their commitment to the Convention in 1992.

Iraq

In 1985 Iraq weaponised a multitude of biological agents, and much more. This of course violates the BWC, which Iraq did sign. Iraq’s biological and chemical weapons program was uncovered by UNSCOM after the Gulf war. From 1991 Iraq is said to have eliminated all biological and chemical weapons programs.

Japan

As aforementioned, Japan broke the Geneva Protocol by using biological warfare methods against the Chinese during World War II. Not only that, but they also used thousands of Chinese citizens to their disposal when experimenting their biological toxins on them. The United States granted the Japanese immunity if they would share their findings to only them, and no other countries.



Timeline of Key Events

1347	First recorded uses of biological warfare
1710	Russian forces using biological weapons against Swedish forces
1763	British troops infecting the Indians with smallpox
1914-1918	World War I: use of horrifying biological warfare.
1925	The signing of the Geneva Protocol
1937-1945	The Japanese use biological warfare against the Chinese.
1969	The termination of the American bio ware system
1972	The signing of the Biological and Weapons Convention (BWC)
1975	Ratification of the Biological and Weapons Convention (BWC)

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The 1925 Geneva Protocol ^{xi}

The 1925 Geneva Protocol outlawed the use of both biological and chemical weapons, but lacked the specifications on the development, production, stockpiling and transportation of said weapons.

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

As previously mentioned, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is a treaty signed in 1972 to ensure no biological weapons and methods of warfare can be easily used. Despite dealing with such a grave subject, the treaty itself is quite short, containing only 15 articles. Here are a few important articles highlighted and shortly explained: ^{ix}

Article I: Never under any circumstances develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain biological agents that aren't for constructive purposes and equipment or materials that can use agents for hostile purposes.



Article II: Destroy all things mentioned in Article I when signing the Convention or to reuse for peaceful purposes.

Article V: Consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the Convention.

Possible Solutions

There should be an emphasis on the new developments regarding technology. New regulations should be made for new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence. All of these new technologies could provide a new way to develop or produce biological weapons. Not only that but there need to be more sources for funds that go towards the BWC and maintaining it. Re-emphasising all articles, particularly Article I in order to remind member states of the regulations. Preambular clauses reminding the house and all nations of the immense devastation past uses of biological weapons and biotoxins has caused humans in the past would also be advisable.

Recognising and being aware of the fact that biological weapons are weapons of mass destruction is their own way also would be advisable. Reminding member states of the effects and devastations caused by such weapons could be another possible solution. Reinstating the prohibition of uses, stockpiling, and manufacturing such weapons could serve as a slight deterrent to nations manufacturing the aforementioned. Another solution which would be unadvisable would be to deal with this issue in a similar way that the UN General Assembly did, which resulted in and the passing of (A/RES/71/258)^x.

Lastly, new ways must be found to better discover the production of biological agents and weapons. It is quite easy for the biologists to cover up their tracks and disguise their work as something else. Especially with the combination of new technologies, the easiness in creating a biological weapon successfully will become a problem not only between governments, but also terrorist groups. There have also been financial issues that inhibit the BWC intersessional program meetings. A way to find more funds to go toward this issue would be a good step to take as well.



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Appendices

CITATIONS AND FURTHER READING

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- viii. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/minisite/theaustraliagroupnet/site/en/index.html>
- ix. <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/BWC-text-English-1.pdf>

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS AND PROTOCOLS/CONVENTIONS

- x. [A/RES/71/258](#)
- xi. [Geneva Protocol](#)
- xii. [A/RES/67/35](#)
- xiii. [A/RES/65/51](#)
- xiv. [A/RES/63/53](#)
- xv. [A/RES/61/61](#)
- xvi. [A/RES/59/70](#)
- xvii. [A/RES/57/62](#)



xviii. [A/RES/55/33](#)