

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

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Biological Weapons Convention Latest News

The External Affairs Minister recently called for urgent reforms to strengthen global biosecurity and modernise the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), warning that biological threats are becoming harder to manage in a rapidly evolving scientific landscape.

About Biological Weapons Convention

- It is a **legally binding international treaty** that **bans the use of biological and toxin weapons** and **prohibits all development**, production, acquisition, **stockpiling, or transfer** of such weapons.
- The treaty **also bans any equipment or means of delivery** that is **designed to use biological agents** or toxins for hostile purposes or armed conflict.
- It **requires signatories to destroy biological weapons**, agents, and production facilities within nine months of the treaty's entry into force.
- It opened for signature on 10 April 1972 and **entered into force** on 26 March **1975**.
- It was the **first multilateral treaty categorically banning a class of weapon**.

- **Membership:**

- It currently has **187 states-parties, including Palestine**, and **four signatories** (Egypt, Haiti, Somalia, and Syria).
- **Ten states have neither signed nor ratified** the BWC (**Chad, Comoros, Djibouti**, Eritrea, **Israel**, Kiribati, Micronesia, Namibia, **South Sudan**, and Tuvalu).
- **India signed and ratified** the BWC in **1974**.
- The convention stipulates that **states shall cooperate bilaterally or multilaterally to solve compliance issues**.
- **States may also submit complaints to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** should they believe another state is violating the treaty.
- However, there is **no implementation body** of the BWC, allowing for blatant violations.
- There is a **review conference every five years** to review the convention's implementation, and establish confidence-building measures.

What Are Biological Weapons?

- Biological weapons **disseminate disease-causing organisms or toxins** to harm or kill humans, animals, or plants.
- They generally consist of **two parts - a weaponized agent** and a **delivery mechanism**.
- Almost any disease-causing organism (such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, prions, or rickettsiae) or toxin (poisons derived from animals, plants, or microorganisms, or similar substances produced synthetically) can be used in biological weapons.

Source: DDN

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