

# Understanding Biological Weapons and an Introduction to the BWC

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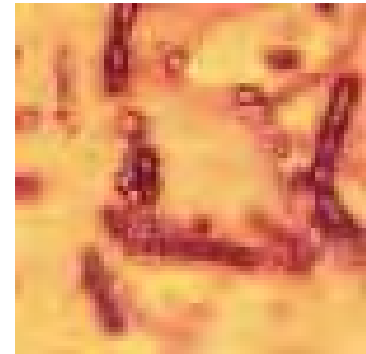
United Nations Office for Disarmament  
Affairs

# Amb. Mazlan Muhammad, Malaysia



# What are biological weapons?

- Systems that disseminate disease-causing organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals or plants
- Generally consist of two parts – a weaponized agent and a delivery mechanism
- The agents can be enhanced to make them more suitable for mass production, storage and dissemination











# “Public health in reverse”

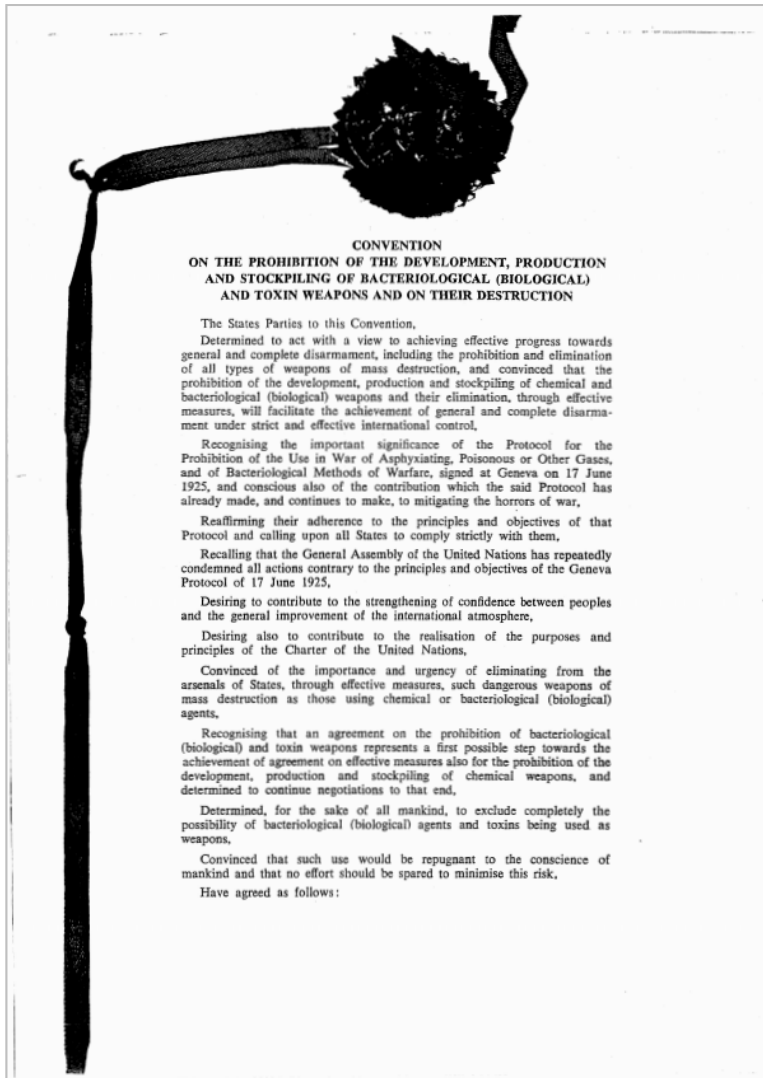












“Determined, for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins being used as weapons”

“Convinced that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of mankind and that no effort should be spared to minimise this risk”

# Definition

- Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain:
  - (1) microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes;
  - (2) weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict

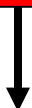


- Article I** Never under any circumstances to acquire or retain biological weapons
- Article II** To destroy or divert to peaceful purposes biological weapons and associated resources prior to joining
- Article III** Not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone else to acquire or retain biological weapons
- Article IV** To take any national measures necessary to implement the provisions of the BWC domestically
- Article V** To consult bilaterally and multilaterally to solve any problems with the implementation of the BWC
- Article VI** To request the UN Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC and to comply with its subsequent decisions
- Article VII** To assist States which have been exposed to a danger as a result of a violation of the BWC
- Article X** To do all of the above in a way that encourages the peaceful uses of biological science and technology

**Nuclear  
Weapons**



**Nuclear  
Non-proliferation  
Treaty**



**International  
Atomic Energy  
Agency**

**Chemical  
Weapons**



**Chemical  
Weapons  
Convention**

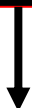


**Organization for  
the Prohibition of  
Chemical Weapons**

**Biological  
Weapons**



**Biological  
Weapons  
Convention**



**?**

IAEA \$368 MILLION

CTBTO \$130 MILLION

OPCW \$70 MILLION

BWC \$1.4 MILLION



# Role of the RevCon

“... a conference of States Parties to the Convention shall be held at Geneva, Switzerland, to review the operation of the Convention, with a view to assuring that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Convention... are being realized. Such review shall take into account any new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention.”

**BWC Article XII**

# 10-14 August – Meeting of Experts



# 14-18 December – Meeting of States Parties

# Seventh Review Conference 2011

## 2012 - 2015 Intersessional Programme

System of  
Confidence-  
Building Measures

Procedures &  
Mechanisms for  
Responding to Use

### Standing Agenda Items

Assistance &  
Cooperation

Reviewing  
S&T

Strengthening  
Implementation

**“The purpose of the intersessional programme is to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action”**



173



BWC 1975-2015

192



CWC 1997-2015



# BWC in Europe

Sheet 1



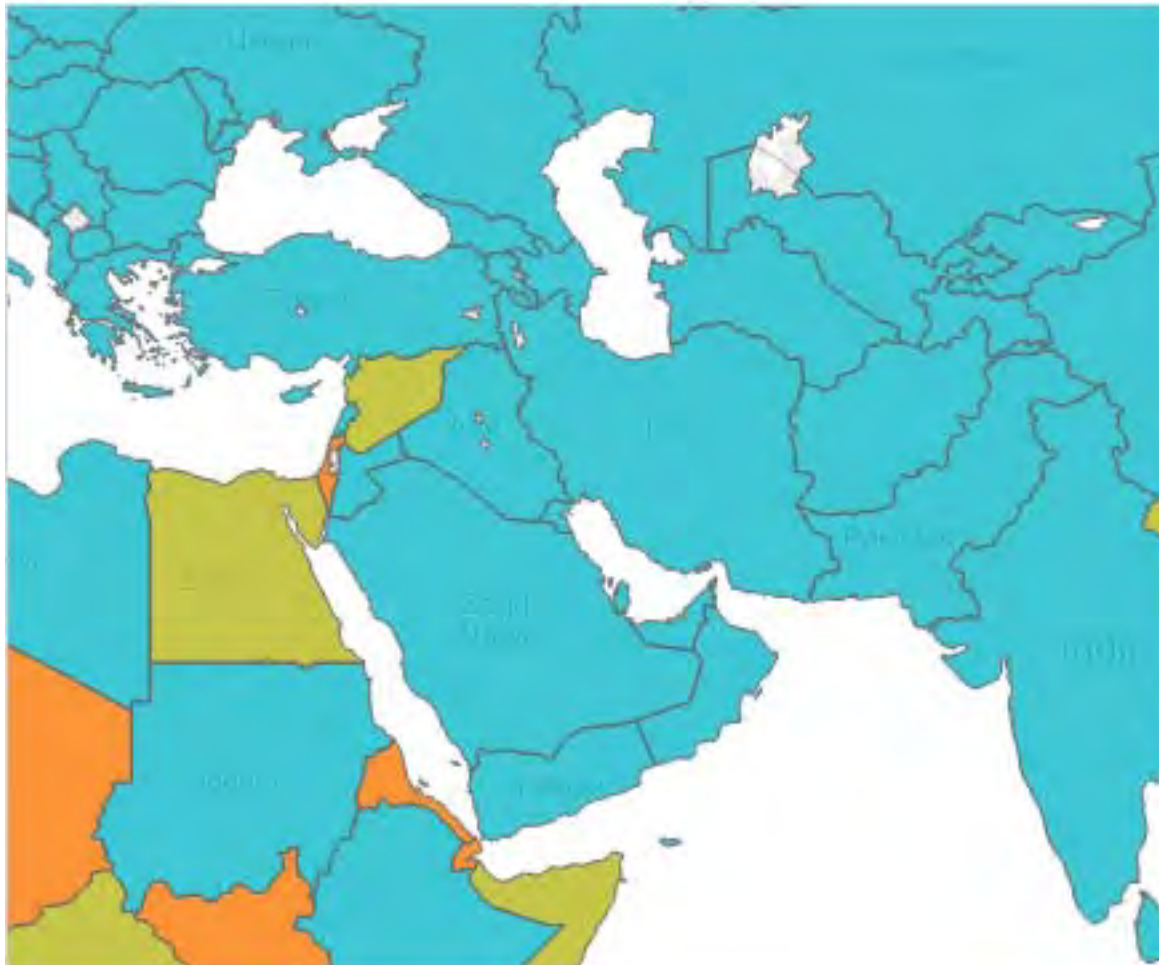
Status

- State Party
- Signatory
- Non-State Party



# BWC in the Middle East

Sheet 1



Status

State Party

Signatory

Non-State Party

1. Egypt
2. Israel
3. Syria

# BWC in Asia and the Pacific

Sheet 1



Status

State Party

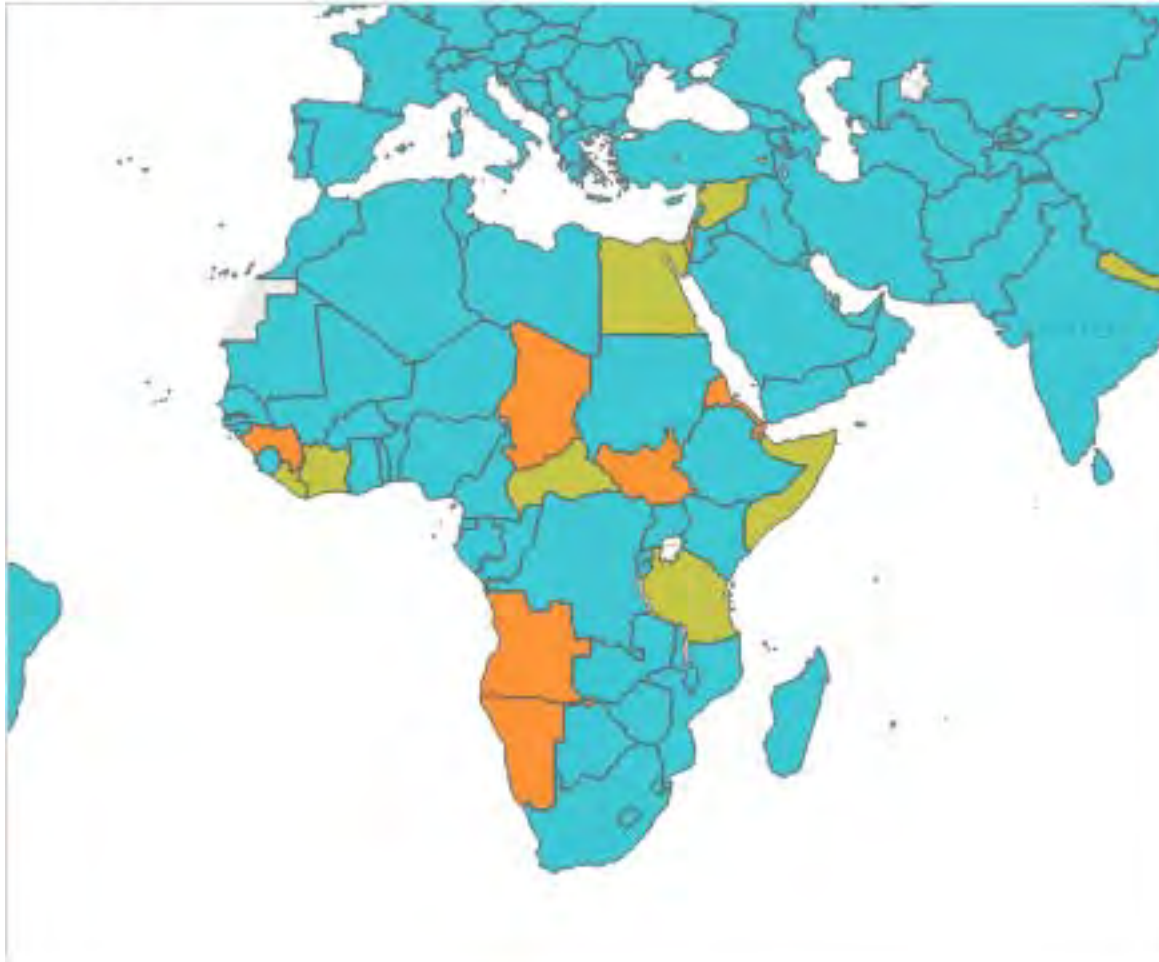
Signatory

Non-State Party

1. Kiribati
2. Micronesia
3. Nepal
4. Niue
5. Samoa
6. Tuvalu

# BWC in Africa

Sheet 1



## Status

- State Party
- Signatory
- Non-State Party

1. Angola
2. Central African Rep.
3. Chad
4. Comoros
5. Côte d'Ivoire
6. Djibouti
7. Egypt
8. Eritrea
9. Guinea
10. Liberia
11. Namibia
12. Somalia
13. South Sudan
14. Tanzania

## Angola - PGA congratulates PGA Member Dip. Palmira Bernardo for her actions contributing to parliamentary ratification of BTWC and CWC

Related Programme: [Peace and Democracy](#)

Luanda | New York, 29 April 2015

PGA congratulates its Members in the National Assembly of Angola, in particular Dip. Palmira P. Bernardo, for their continuous efforts leading to parliamentary approval on April 21, 2015 for accession to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention, by the Government of Angola

**PGA Member, Dip. Palmira P. Bernardo, Angola commented from Luanda -** *"As a longstanding PGA Member, I was very pleased to push for support for - over the past few years - and to vote in favour of ratification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention, in our National Assembly here in Luanda on April 21, 2015. The National Assembly has now approved ratification of these two vital international treaties. That it did so on Earth Day is also very appropriate, as we sadly still live on an Earth where Weapons of Mass Destruction continue to cast a long shadow of threat over the very existence of our planet and its people. I now urge the Government of Angola to promptly deposit its Instruments of Accession".*

**Portuguese version -** *"Como membra de longa data da PGA, fiquei muito satisfeita em participar no apoio ao longo dos últimos anos - para votar a favor da ratificação da Convenção sobre Armas Biológicas e Tóxicas, assim como da Convenção sobre Armas Químicas em nossa Assembleia Nacional aqui em Luanda em 21 de Abril de 2015. A Assembleia Nacional aprovou a ratificação destes dois vitais tratados internacionais. Feitos estes, realizados no Dia da Terra, é também muito apropriado*



Dip. Palmira Bernardo (Angola) participates in PGA's 33rd Annual Forum, Colombo, Sri Lanka

### Related Pages



[PGA's Peace and Democracy Programme](#)



[Biological Weapons Convention \(BWC\) Issues in the Media](#)





Angela Kane, Former UN High  
Representative for Disarmament Affairs

The BWC represents an “ironclad norm against the possession and use of biological weapons, and the abhorrence associated with the very idea of using disease as a weapon. How many States today boast that they are “biological weapon States”? Who argues now that the bubonic plague and smallpox are legitimate weapons to use under any circumstances?”





**IFBA** International Federation of  
Biosafety Associations

[www.internationalbiosafety.org](http://www.internationalbiosafety.org)



## **Biosafety and Global Public Health**



## **Laboratory Biosecurity Handbook**

Reynolds M. Salerno  
Jennifer Gaudioso



CRC Press  
Taylor & Francis Group







Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Today, the norm against the use and possession of biological weapons remains strong, and no country identifies itself as possessing biological weapons. However, we must remain vigilant. The eighth Review Conference in 2016 is an opportunity to consolidate progress and consider how to adapt this landmark Convention to the challenges posed by advances in science and technology, ... As we witness ever more remarkable breakthroughs in the life sciences, it is incumbent on us to ensure that such advances are used responsibly.



# For more information:

**Disarmament**  
Implementation Support Unit

**Related Information**  
FURTHER INFORMATION  
→ Launch of the BWC ISU  
DOCUMENTATION  
→ BWC ISU Leaflet

**Events & Meetings**  
November 2010  
M T W T F S S  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
8 9 10 11 12 13 14  
15 16 17 18 19 20 21  
22 23 24 25 26 27 28  
29 30 1 2 3 4 5  
6 7 8 9 10 11 12  
Palais des Nations Map

The ISU provides:

- Administrative support and assistance;
- National implementation support and assistance;
- Support and assistance for Confidence-Building Measures; and
- Support and assistance for obtaining universality.

For more information see the page on the [role of the ISU](#). The Unit has also developed a number of online tools to assist States Parties in their activities. The three [staff members](#) of the ISU are paid for by States Parties.

**Reports of the Implementation Support Unit**

As part of its mandate, the ISU provides an annual report of its activities to the Meeting of States Parties:

2007 Report (BWC/MSP/2007/3)  
العربية 中文 English Français Pycckий Español

2008 Report (BWC/MSP/2008/3)  
العربية 中文 English Français Pycckий Español

2009 Report (BWC/MSP/2009/2)  
العربية 中文 English Français Pycckий Español

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