

**PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR
GLOBAL ACTION
WORKSHOP ON THE
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION
HELD AT
FREETOWN SIERRA LEONE
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PAPER PRESENTED BY
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EFFORTS TOWARDS RATIFICATION OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVECTION IN TANZANIA

Tanzania is a country in East Africa, bordering quite a few countries including Kenya and Uganda in the North; Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Malawi in the West; and Mozambique in the South. In the East it borders the Indian Ocean. The population of Tanzania is about **56,800,000** people **(with 55,155,473 in the year 2016)** with the annual growth of about 3%.

Tanzania is also not very far from Somalia, a home country of the terrorists Al Shabaab. It is only Kenya that stands between Tanzania and Somalia. Indeed, as Tanzania's Eastern border is the same Indian Ocean, and as Somalia's Eastern border is the same Indian Ocean, it is very easy for Al Shabaab to come to Tanzania by crossing unheeded the **400kms** or so of the ocean and do great harm to Tanzania. In fact there had been two incidences of mass murders in Tanzania in the years 2015 and 2016, one in the coastal city of Tanga and another in the City of Mwanza, suspected to be sponsored or committed by Al Shabaab.

There had been reports that Al Shabaab is or might be working in collaboration with Boko Haram of Nigeria. These two terrorist groups are said to be trying to acquire Biological Weapons Capabilities. If this happens, then the danger facing countries affected by these groups or any of them could be very grave indeed. We all know the extent of damage done by Al Shabaab and Boko Haram to Somalia, Nigeria, Kenya, and other countries.

In the context of the foregoing, and in many other contexts, it is indeed very imperative for Tanzania to sign and Ratify the Biological Weapons Convention. Unfortunately, Tanzania has not ratified that Convention. When I received the invitation to attend this Workshop, I made efforts to see to what the position is relating to Tanzania's position regarding this Convention. I could not get much assistance from the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs. But luckily as I was in Parliament, I made a very strong statement in the House questioning as to why Tanzania had not ratified the Biological Weapons Convention. The reply from the Deputy Minister, as indeed from the Minister himself (Supplementary) were that efforts were underway to make sure that Tanzania Ratifies the Convention.

A more useful reply came from the Minister of Defence. He spent about 8 minutes explaining that Tanzania had actually on 16th August 1972 SIGNED the Convention. What was missing to date was the RATIFICATION. He said that steps were ongoing to make sure that Tanzania RATIFIES the Convention. He said that as of that time, **(January 2017)** papers were with the Cabinet Secretariat for presentation to the Cabinet and eventual presentation to the Parliament.

He also said that Tanzania had **SIGNED** and **RATIFIED** the **CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)** which entered into force of **29th April 1997**. He said that Tanzania Signed it on 25th February 1994, deposited it on 25th June 1998, and the Convention entered into force respecting Tanzania on 25th July 1998. He said CWC currently had 192 States Parties. He said one State had signed but not ratified it and that is Israel. He said four States have neither signed nor ratified it, and those are **Egypt, North Korea, South Sudan and Palestine**.

He said that Tanzania has no reason whatsoever not to ratify the Biological Weapons Convention, and he said that actually Tanzania has every reason to ratify it. He said that it could probably be due to some kind of inadvertence. Some kind of inaction/lack of action by some officers.

I am Member of Parliament for 7 years now. We have ratified so many conventions/treaties, some of which are less important than the Biological Weapons Convention. The minister of Defence said that the fact that Tanzania had signed it, and the additional fact that it had **signed** and **ratified** and Chemical Weapons Convention, were proof of

its good intentions towards the Ratification of the Convention. He said that this would surely take place in the very near future.

I take this opportunity to say that since this fact has now come to my attention, I will take it personally and pursue it closely. I promise to follow it up vigorously during the ongoing Parliamentary Session, during debates of the budgets of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and that of the Ministry of Defence. I will take this paper together with the list of countries that have not ratified to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the ministry of Defence and to Parliament of Tanzania. I will make this issue my business. I will write to these Ministries and say that this workshop was on Tanzania's non ratification. I will push very hard.

I hope results will be positive and fast. It will be my success.

Thanking you for your very kind attention in listening.

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Jasson Samson Rweikiza, Mp, Tanzania.