

## Sixth annual conference of MUNoH

Forum: 1<sup>st</sup> Committee of the General Assembly  
Issue: Preventing terrorists from gaining access to biological weapons  
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### **Description of the issue:**

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica biological weapons, like chemical weapons, radiological weapons, and nuclear weapons, are commonly referred to as weapons of mass destruction, although the term is not truly appropriate in the case of biological armaments. Lethal biological weapons may be capable of causing mass deaths, but they are incapable of mass destruction of infrastructure, buildings, or equipment. Nevertheless, because of the indiscriminate nature of these weapons--as well as the potential for starting widespread pandemics, the difficulty of controlling disease effects, and the simple fear that they inspire--most countries have agreed to ban the entire class.

As of 2013 a total of 180 states and Taiwan had signed the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and 170 of those states and Taiwan had signed and ratified the treaty, which was opened for signature in 1972. Under the terms of the BWC, member states are prohibited from using biological weapons in warfare and from developing, testing, producing, stockpiling, or deploying them.

However, a number of states have continued to pursue biological warfare capabilities, seeking a cheaper but still deadly strategic weapon rather than following the more difficult and expensive path to nuclear weapons. In addition, the threat that some deranged individual or terrorist organization will manufacture or steal biological weapons is a growing security concern.

(<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/938340/biological-weapon>)

So we know that the problem of bioterrorism is a dangerous threat in our world. But what can we do against it?

A lot of actions (e.g. inventing new medication against germs or ensuring the security standards when monitoring one's own inventory of biological weapons) have already been taken by different states and governments, but these actions mainly helped to highlight the dangers of bioterrorism as a whole. So far no terrorists have been caught; therefore there is no further more information on what kind of biological weapons could be, owned by terrorists.

According to some media information some governments (names were not mentioned) have lost parts of their biological weapons, but do not know where their weapons could be.

In conclusion a new world war could emerge from bioterrorism. Also new diseases could spread which then lead to further epidemics. Therefore the cooperation of all UN members is of the utmost importance to find solutions for this problem.

**Background information:**

One can differentiate between different types of terrorism, such as for example domestic terrorism, religious terrorism and of course biological terrorism.

Within biological terrorism one has to distinguish between biological weapons and biological materials which can cause diseases.

Although both aspects are important, we will be discussing the threats of biological weapons. So what exactly are biological weapons or what do they consist of?

Biological weapons are weapons of mass destruction.

In these weapons of mass destruction the main materials used are germs or toxins.

Nowadays there are about 200 kinds of germs which could be used in weapons of mass destruction.

Toxins are actually no biological materials, but they have got their origin in biological material. Thus they cannot be regulated by organizations which fight against chemical weapons.

Another interesting question is: How do the terrorists get a hold of biological weapons?

The answer is very simple: They build them themselves.

Most of the materials for biological weapons are found in nature. Therefore the terrorists only have to search for them and then prepare them to get more dangerous, for example viruses of Ebola mixed with poison of a cobra.

There are two big countries which could have large inventories of B-class programs of biological weapons.

These two countries are Russia and Iraq. It is believed that Russia's inventories are leftovers from the Soviet Union, which had intended to destroy its biological weapons together with the USA, but so far no clear evidence has been found.

Sources say that a lot of terrorists have tried to get material for biological weapons from scientists of those warehouses and some of these scientists agreed.

But the general and most important question is: Could the biological weapons of terrorists do serious harm?

A lot of experts say that the density of the toxic and dangerous gas is not strong enough to "survive". So actually we are not in danger. But ask yourself: Do you really want to risk the health of the civilization of your country?

All in all the media say that there are no reasons why we should worry, but a lot of experts state that they have a critical stand regarding the topic.

Thus you have to check which position your country has.

**Top 10 list of terrorist organizations :**

1. Al- Qaeda
2. Hamas
3. Taliban
4. Hezbollah
5. Liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam
6. Kurdistan Worker's Party
7. Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia
8. Jamaat Ansar al-Sunna
9. Aden-Abyan Islamic Army
10. Armed Islamic Group of Algeria

(link for the explanation of these organizations: <http://planetarticle.blogspot.de/2011/08/10-most-famous-terrorist-group-in-world.html> )

**List of studies published and papers by Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)**

**Commission:**

- **No 1** “Review of Recent Literature on WMD Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation”  
by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute  
May 2004
- **No 2** “Improvised Nuclear Devices and Nuclear Terrorism” by Charles D. Ferguson and William C. Potter  
June 2004
- **No 3** “The Nuclear Landscape in 2004: Past Present and Future” by John Simpson, June 2004
- **No 4** “Reviving the Non-Proliferation Regime”  
by Jonathan Dean, June 2004
- **No 5** “Article IV of the NPT: Background, Problems, Some Prospects” by Lawrence Scheinman, June 2004
- **No 6** “Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones: Still a Useful Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Tool?” by Scott Parrish and Jean du Preez, June 2004
- **No 7** “Making the Non-Proliferation Regime Universal”  
by Sverre Lodgaard, June 2004
- **No 8** “Practical Measures to Reduce the Risks Presented By Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons”  
by William C. Potter and Nikolai Sokov, June 2004
- **No 9** “The Future of a Treaty Banning Fissile Material for Weapons Purposes: Is It Still Relevant?”  
by Jean du Preez, June 2004
- **No 10** “A Global Assessment of Nuclear Proliferation Threats” by Joseph Cirincione, June 2004
- **No 11** “Assessing Proposals on the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle” by Jon B. Wolfsthal, June 2004
- **No 12** “The New Proliferation Game”  
by William C Potter, June 2004

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- **No 13** “Needed: a Comprehensive Framework for Eliminating WMD” by Michael Krepon, September 2004
- **No 14** “Managing the Biological Weapons Problem: From the Individual to the International” by Jez Littlewood, August 2004
- **No 15** “Coping with the Possibility of Terrorist Use of WMD” by Jonathan Dean, June 2004
- **No 16** “Comparison of States vs. Non-State Actors in the Development of a BTW Capability” by Åke Sellström and Anders Norqvist, October 2004
- **No 17** “Deconflating ‘WMD’” by George Perkovich, October 2004
- **No 18** “Global Governance of ‘Contentious’ Science: The Case of the World Health Organization’s Oversight of Small Pox Virus Research” by Jonathan B. Tucker and Stacy M. Okutani, October 2004
- **No 19** “WMD Verification and Compliance: The State of Play” submitted by Foreign Affairs Canada and prepared by Vertic, October 2004
- **No 20** “WMD Verification and Compliance: Challenges and Responses” submitted by Foreign Affairs Canada, October 2004
- **No 22** “Bioterrorism and Threat Assessment” by Gary A. Ackerman and Kevin S. Moran, November 2004

(All papers and studies are available on the Commission’s website: [www.wmdcommission.org](http://www.wmdcommission.org))

### **Questions to prepare the delegates for the conference:**

- What is the country's position on the whole issue?
- Is your country hosting one of the named terrorist groups?
- Does your country play a role on biological weapons? (export and import)
- Could your country have the materials for biological weapons?
- Does one of your neighbor countries use or have biological weapons?
- Which countries could be your partner and which could be your opponent?

### **Useful links and sources:**

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- <http://carnegieendowment.org/images/npp/bio.jpg>
- <http://planetarticle.blogspot.de/2011/08/10-most-famous-terrorist-group-in-world.html>
- [http://www.medicinenet.com/bioterrorism/article.htm#what\\_is\\_bioterrorism](http://www.medicinenet.com/bioterrorism/article.htm#what_is_bioterrorism)
- <http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=18548>
- <http://www.un.org/disarmament/education/wmdcommission/files/No22.pdf>
- <http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Bio/pdf/bwc20Novb.pdf>
- <http://omicsonline.org/ArchiveJBTBD/currentissue-bioterrorism-biodefense-open-access.php>
- <http://healthyamericans.org/bioterrorism-and-public-health-preparedness/>
- <http://www.fda.gov/drugs/emergencypreparedness/bioterrorismanddrugpreparedness/default.htm>
- <http://www.liebertpub.com/BSP>

**In case of any further questions don't hesitate to contact me!**

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