Chemical Weapons Convention
- a multilateral framework

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Chemical Weapons

World War I

90,000 fatalities and 1.3 million casualties due to chemical weapons

Over 100,000 tonnes of chemical weapons used

- Chlorine gas
- Phosgene
- Mustard gas

*British troops blinded by tear gas at the Battle of Estaires, April 1918*
Chemical Weapons

Tokyo subway *sarin* gas attack
Japan, 1995

Use of nerve agent *VX* in international airport
Malaysia, 2017

Nerve agent *novichok* attack in Salisbury
UK, 2018
Chemical Weapons

Civilian casualties due to sarin attacks in Syria, 2013 -

Douma, Eastern Ghouta, in Damascus, Syria. © Bassam Khabieh © Reuters
193 NATIONS COMMITTED TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

29 April 1997
Chemical Weapons Convention ENTERED INTO FORCE
Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

- Technical assistance to States Parties
- Support the Conference of the States Parties (CSP), Executive Council (EC) and subsidiary organs

Annual budget: ~ EUR 69m (2019), 462 staff members
Chemical Weapons Convention: key features

1. Equal rights & obligations
2. An entire category of weapons of mass destruction
3. Definition – all toxic chemicals and their precursors
4. Non-self-executing treaty – requires implementing national legislation
6. Cooperative methods of compliance management - verification regime
7. Assistance & protection against chemical weapon
and coordinating peaceful uses of chemistry

DESTRUCTION and confirming the complete destruction declared chemical weapons stockpiles

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION and coordinating peaceful uses of chemistry

VERIFICATION and ensuring that toxic chemicals are only used for peaceful purposes

ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION and supporting national protection programmes
State Party obligations (Article 7)

1. To establish / designate a National Authority
2. To enact penal law with prohibitions and penalties
3. To ensure extraterritorial application
4. To cooperate with other States Parties and afford appropriate legal assistance
5. To inform the OPCW of measures taken to implement CWC

Regional Meeting of CWC National Authorities of States Parties in Asia
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 25 June 2019
Implementing national legislation

Why is it necessary?

1. The Convention is not self-executing
2. Political commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation
3. Business and industry/economic development
4. Emerging threats/chemical terrorism
5. Regulatory frameworks for production, transfer and use of toxic chemicals
“Initial measures”

A set of criteria agreed on by States Parties in 2013, to be used by OPCW to monitor the status of implementing legislation.

1. Definitions
2. National Authority
3. Prohibitions and penalties
4. Extraterritorial application
5. Control regime and reporting on transfers
6. Basis for implementing regulations
Status of national implementing legislation
- Out of 56 States Parties in Asia -

Covering only some of the initial measures
Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Bhutan, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Nepal, Samoa, State of Palestine and Timor-Leste

Yet to have legislation in place
Afghanistan, Lebanon, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu
Common challenges

- Political commitment and awareness among high-level officials, including parliamentarians
- Awareness of the relevance of and need for CWC implementing legislation in light of national context and priorities (e.g. States with limited trade in chemicals, and no chemical industry)
- Engaging decision-makers on national implementing legislation
- Enforcing the legislation with law enforcement entities
- Engaging the public to disseminate information
- Fulfilling multiple obligations with regard to other international agreements
What parliamentarians could do

Commitment, highlighting the relevance of the Convention

✓ Management of toxic chemicals and wastes – it is also an environmental concern
✓ Chemical terrorism and non-State actors – can any country be spared of threats?

Adoption of legislation

✓ Inclusion of “initial measures” in the implementing legislation
✓ Put in place necessary regulations

Oversight

✓ Allocation of sufficient resources to the National Authority, national laboratories, customs administration and border management authorities
Parliaments and CWC implementation

“In our complex world, people of goodwill everywhere must play their part individually and through their representative bodies in civil society. In this scheme, parliamentarians occupy an extremely important position.”

Former OPCW Director-General, March 2018
OPCW

منظمة حظر الأسلحة الكيميائية
禁止化学武器组织
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
Organisation pour l’Interdiction des Armes Chimiques
Организация по запрещению химического оружия
Organización para la Prohibición de las Armas Químicas