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Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

Letter dated 24 March 2025 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey herewith the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 105.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia



Annex to the letter dated 24 March 2025 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

The fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention) is on 26 March. The Russian Federation, as one of the founders and depositaries of the Biological Weapons Convention, congratulates all States Parties to the Convention on this significant event.

The Biological Weapons Convention was the first international legally binding instrument to outlaw an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In its half-century of existence, the Convention has made a significant contribution to the process of general and complete disarmament by reducing the risks of the use of biological agents and toxins for weapons purposes. To this day, the Biological Weapons Convention remains a fundamental pillar in the field of international security, which is steadily increasing in importance in the current climate. The experience of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic demonstrated the scope and nature of the possible negative consequences of working with dangerous pathogens and toxins, as well as their potential use as biological weapons.

Unfortunately, after 50 years of the Biological Weapons Convention being in force, it is not possible to say that the issue of biological weapons has been completely removed from the international agenda. Risk factors include the potential misuse of rapidly developing biotechnologies, the transboundary nature of biothreats, and the possibility of terrorists using biological agents and toxins as weapons. Of equal concern are the biological and military activities conducted outside national territory by certain States under the plausible pretext of cooperation “for preventive or other peaceful purposes”, which raises serious questions in the context of compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention.

Efforts to universalize and strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention regime are needed today more than ever. We consider the main priorities in this area to be the development of a universal, legally binding and non-discriminatory Protocol to the Convention with an effective verification mechanism, and strict compliance by States Parties with their obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention at the national level.

In order to strengthen the institutional framework of the Convention, the Russian Federation has proposed a number of specific initiatives: creating mobile biomedical units under the Convention to render assistance in the event of the use of biological weapons and help to combat epidemics of various origins; establishing a Scientific Advisory Committee and a mechanism to investigate cases of alleged violations of obligations under the Convention; and improving confidence-building measures by providing States Parties with information on biological and military activities outside national territory.

In the context of strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention, we attach particular importance to achieving tangible results within the framework of the specialized Working Group established by the Ninth Review Conference of the States

Parties to the Convention. We are convinced that only joint decisions taken by consensus can provide reliable guarantees of good-faith compliance with the obligations under the Convention and prevent the development and use of biological weapons. At the same time, it is important not to create artificial obstacles to the development of civilian biotechnologies and international cooperation, as provided for in the relevant provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention.
