



# Chemical Weapons Convention

## Why in News

Recently, the **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** informed the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) that in **17 cases chemical weapons were likely or definitely used by Syria**.

- **OPCW** was formed under the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)** 1997.

## Key Points

- **Chemical Weapons:**
  - A Chemical Weapon is a **chemical used to cause intentional death** or harm through its toxic properties.
  - **Munitions, devices and other equipment** specifically designed to weaponize toxic chemicals also fall under the definition of chemical weapons.
- **Chemical Weapons Convention:**
  - **About:**
    - It is a **multilateral treaty banning chemical weapons** and requiring their destruction within the stipulated time.
    - Negotiations for the CWC began in 1980 at the **United Nations Conference on Disarmament**.
    - The convention was **drafted in September 1992** and **opened for signature in January 1993**. It became **effective from April 1997**.
    - It makes it **mandatory to destroy old and abandoned chemical weapons**.
    - Members should also declare the **riot-control agents** (sometimes referred to as 'tear gas') **in possession** of them.
  - **Members:**
    - It has **192 state parties and 165 signatories**.
    - **India** signed the treaty in **January 1993**.
  - **Convention Prohibits:**
    - The development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, or retention of chemical weapons.
    - Transferring of chemical weapons.
    - Using chemical weapons.
    - Assisting other States to indulge in activities that are prohibited by the CWC.
    - Using riot-control devices as 'warfare methods'.
- **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons:**
  - **About:**
    - It is an **international organization** established by the CWC in 1997 to implement and enforce the terms of the CWC.

- By the **2001 Relationship Agreement** between the **OPCW and the UN**, the OPCW reports on its inspections and other activities to the UN through the office of the Secretary General.
- The OPCW was awarded the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 2013.
- **Headquarters:**
  - **Hague, Netherlands.**
- **Functions:**
  - It is **authorized to perform inspections** to verify that signatory states are complying with the convention.
    - This **includes a commitment to grant inspectors** full access to chemical weapons sites.
  - It also **performs testing of sites and victims** of suspected chemical weapons attacks.
  - It also **provides for assistance to and protection of States attacked or threatened with chemical weapons**, cooperation in the peaceful use of chemicals.
- **Indian Initiative:**
  - The **Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000** was passed to implement the CWC.
  - It provided for the establishment of a **National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention or NACWC**. This institution, formed in 2005, is the **chief liaison between the government of India and the OPCW**. It is an office in the Cabinet Secretariat of the Gov.

### **Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (Hazardous Chemicals and Wastes)**

- The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions are **multilateral environmental agreements**, which share the common objective of **protecting human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes**.
- **The Basel Convention:**
  - It came into force in **1992, intended to reduce transboundary movements of hazardous waste** from developed to less developed countries (LDCs), and ensure their safe disposal as closely as possible to the source of generation.
    - **India is a member.**
- **Rotterdam Convention:**
  - It was adopted in **September 1998** by a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rotterdam, Netherlands and entered into force **in February 2004**.
    - **India is a member.**
  - It **covers pesticides and industrial chemicals that have been banned or severely restricted** for health or environmental reasons by Parties and which have been notified by Parties for inclusion in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
  - The Convention **creates legally binding obligations** for the implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
- **The Stockholm Convention:**
  - It is a global treaty **to protect human health and the environment from [Persistent Organic Pollutants \(POPs\)](#)**. **India is a member**. The Convention entered into force in **May, 2004**.
    - **POPs** are chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of living organisms and are toxic to humans and wildlife.

**Source:TH**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/chemical-weapons-convention>