



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](#)

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