

**Statement**  
**by Viacheslav Yatsiuk, Head of the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the Ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the**  
**Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological**  
**(Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**  
(29 November 2022, Geneva)

**Mr. President,**

Let me extend my warmest congratulations to you on the assumption of your duties and wish you every success in this endeavor.

Being one of the co-authors of the Biological Weapons Convention, Ukraine has always promoted the enhancement of this indispensable instrument in the field of disarmament and nonproliferation, including the assurance of compliance by States Parties with their obligations under the Convention and strengthening its integrity. We do put great hopes that this Review Conference will make an important contribution towards achieving these goals.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statements that were delivered on behalf of the European Union and the members of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Ukraine is also supportive of a number of proposals contained in the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and some national statements, for example by Canada and the Netherlands. Those statements put forward many important ideas on how to help the Convention to operate more effectively in our dramatically changing world.

I will not repeat all of them in my statement in my national capacity. And actually I don't have much choice as to the main thrust of my remarks on behalf of Ukraine – in this statement I will address the Russian criminal war of aggression against my country and how it bears direct relation to the purposes of the BWC and our Review Conference.

It has become commonplace to acknowledge that with its genocidal war against Ukraine, Russia not only teared down the UN Charter and destroyed the cornerstones of the international security architecture, but made a direct assault against the very foundations of our human civilization. Whether we belong to Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, Muslim or any other tradition, we all agree on a number of basic rules. We don't use war in the interstate relations in order to achieve our political goals. We don't change the internationally recognized borders by force. We don't kill civilians intentionally in warfare. We don't torture prisoners of war. We don't use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction.

These universal principles were also the point of departure for the founding fathers of the Biological Weapons Convention. We don't use the most primitive forms of life to kill more advanced forms of life, including our own human lives.

It took us humans many thousands of years to arrive at these essential principles. For some unconceivable reasons people in one country on our planet decided that they can breach and destroy all these rules, and do this in full impunity.

This will not happen. Because none of us would like to live in a world in which these new Russian standards reign supreme. A world in which an entire nation can be put to extermination only because that nation wants to be independent and free on its own land.

The evil has to be stopped. Not by rhetoric, but by concrete deeds. Deeds that depend on us. I would like to single out two major areas which fall under the scope of the BWC and in which our Review Conference could make a difference.

First area is related to the assurance of compliance and prevention.

I would like to thank all delegations who called the Russian bluff about non-existing biological weapons laboratories in Ukraine. Indeed, these allegations were rejected by the overwhelming majority of States that participated in the Formal Consultative Meeting held under BWC Article V in September. Later the same allegations were rejected by the UN Security Council. Ukraine agrees with a need to work out effective measures in order to prevent abuses of the mechanism of summoning of formal consultative meetings under the Article V of the Convention.

However, we have very serious reasons to be worried about the real Russian goals behind these false allegations. Russia proved to be very unscrupulous in its criminal methods. From our experience of dealing with Russia, when they accuse their neighbors of some wrongdoings, it is almost certain that they are preparing the grounds for some very serious provocations. In this case, it could be provocations with the use of biological materiel under a "false flag".

This is why the international community has to be vigilant and well prepared. We all know that Russia inherited from the Soviet Union a lot of bio-medical research and development facilities, which were used to develop the biological weapons. However, we know nothing about whether these facilities are not used for the purposes inconsistent with the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention. We also know nothing about the situation with the biomedical facilities on the territory of Ukraine, temporarily occupied by Russia, including in Crimea.

Therefore, we request Russia to provide full and unconditional access to all these facilities for international inspections for the purposes of verification of compliance.

At the same time, I would also like to express hope that our Review Conference could consider alternative measures to this effect in case Russia quite predictably refuses to cooperate on these serious matters.

And the second area is about addressing the consequences of the harm to the biosafety and biosecurity already being caused by the Russian aggression.

Members of our delegation arrived to Geneva from a beautiful Kyiv where for several days in a row there have been no light, no heat, no water. But only Russian strikes targeting one of the biggest European capitals. Because Russia – being unable to defeat the Ukrainian resistance against its invasion on the battlefield – decided to try its fortunes by using rocket terror and freezing weather against the unarmed population of our big cities.

This represents a clear attempt against the purposes of the Biological Weapons Convention. Besides all human sufferings and other damage caused by those criminal rockets attacks, they are also destroying Ukraine's medical and veterinary infrastructure. This directly affects the biosafety and biosecurity well beyond the borders of Ukraine. For example, if a Russian rocket destroys one of our medical facilities that uses vaccines or explores pathogens, or if such a facility is affected by long-term energy blackouts, the consequences can be very dangerous for the people and the environment. On the other hand, the constant Russian shelling is also leading to disintegration of cattle burial sites and increasing the risks of circulation of dangerous pathogens and outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Our delegation hopes very much that the Review Conference could send another strong message to Russia to stop its inglorious fighting with Ukrainian elderly, women and children, and our civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities. At the same, when Ukraine will liberate all its occupied territory from the Russian invaders, we will very much rely on the support and solidarity of the international community in dealing with the negative impact of this terrible war on our biosafety and biosecurity system.

Mr President,

Let me conclude by reiterating that the delegation of Ukraine will be among your most constructive supporters in ensuring a fruitful outcome of this Review Conference.