



Chemical Weapons Convention

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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 GoI.

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