



India Abstains Russia's UNSC Resolution on Bioweapons

For Prelims: Biological Weapon Convention, 1925 Geneva Protocol, UN Resolutions, Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

For Mains: India's stand on Russia-Ukraine Crisis, Biological Weapon Convention - Features and its Significance.

Why in News?

India has abstained from a [UNSC resolution](#) sponsored by Russia alleging US and Ukraine carrying out **"military biological activities"** violating the [Biological Weapons Convention \(BWC\)](#).

- Before this resolution, India recently **abstained** from another UNSC resolution, which sought to declare **Russia's annexation of four Ukrainian territories as invalid**.

What is the Biological Weapon Convention?

- **About Biological Weapons:**
 - Biological weapons use microbiological agents (such as bacteria, viruses or fungi) or toxins to intentionally cause death or harm to humans, animals, or plants.
- **Biological Weapon Convention:**
 - **About:**
 - Formally known as **"The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction"**, the Convention was negotiated by the **Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland**.
 - It entered into force on 26th March **1975**.
 - **Ambit:**
 - It effectively **prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use** of biological and toxin weapons.
 - **Significance:**
 - It is a key element in the international community's efforts to address the proliferation of the [Weapons of Mass Destruction \(WMD\)](#).
 - It was the **first multilateral disarmament treaty** banning an entire category of **WMD**.
 - It supplements the **1925 Geneva Protocol**, which prohibited only the use of biological (and chemical) weapons in war.
 - The Geneva Protocol was **signed at a conference held in Geneva** under the auspices of the **League of Nations**.
 - It entered into force in **1928**.
 - **India has ratified this protocol**.
 - **Members:**
 - The Convention has an **almost universal membership** with **184 States Parties** and **four Signatory States**.

- **India is a signatory** of the convention.

What are UN Resolutions?

- **About:** The UN Resolutions and decisions are formal expressions of the opinion or will of UN organs.
 - The nature of the resolution determines if it is considered binding on States.
- **UNGA Resolutions: Articles 10 and 14 of the UN Charter** refer to General Assembly resolutions as "**recommendations**".
 - The recommendatory nature of UNGA resolutions has **repeatedly been stressed by the International Court of Justice**.
 - However, some **UNGA resolutions dealing with matters internal to the United Nations**, such as budgetary decisions or instructions to lower-ranking organs, are **clearly binding**.
- **UNSC Resolutions:** In general, resolutions adopted by the **UN Security Council** acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, **are considered binding**, in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter.
 - However, they are **subject to veto exercised by permanent members** of UNSC.

What has been India's Stand on Previous UN Resolutions Involving Russia and Ukraine?

- **India has abstained from the following UN Resolutions:**
 - **US-sponsored UNSC resolution** that deplored in the strongest terms Russia's aggression against Ukraine.
 - **Russia drafted UNSC resolution on the Humanitarian situation in Ukraine** calling for a negotiated **ceasefire for enabling safe, rapid, voluntary and unhindered evacuation** of civilians.
 - **Resolution passed at the UN Human Rights Council to set up an international commission of enquiry** into Russia's actions in Ukraine.
 - **UNGA resolution that censured Russia for its military actions in Ukraine.**
 - There were 34 other nations that abstained from this resolution including China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, besides Central Asian and some African countries.
 - **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolution related to safety at four nuclear power stations** and a number of nuclear waste sites including **Chernobyl**, as the Russians seized control of them.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Recently, the USA decided to support India's membership in multilateral export control regimes called the "Australia Group" and the "Wassenaar Arrangement". What is the difference between them? (2011)

1. The Australia Group is an informal arrangement which aims to allow exporting countries to minimize the risk of assisting chemical and biological weapons proliferation, whereas the Wassenaar Arrangement is a formal group under the OECD holding identical objectives.
2. The Australia Group comprises predominantly of Asian, African and North American countries whereas the member countries of Wassenaar Arrangement are predominantly from the European Union and American Continents.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council. (2015)

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