



# Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022

**For Prelims:** United Nations Security Council, Financial Action Task Force, Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968, Biological Weapons Convention of 1972, Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993

**For Mains:** Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022.

## Why in News?

Recently, the Government of India introduced in the Lok Sabha the **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022**.

- The bill envisages to **prohibit financing of any activity in relation to WMD** and to **empower to act against financiers of such activities**.

## What are the highlights of the Bill?

- **Background:** The bill **seeks to modify the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005**.
- **Original Legislation:** The 2005 Act was enacted to prohibit unlawful activities in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
  - This Act **covers unlawful activities relating to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems**.
  - It also provides for **integrated legal measures** to exercise controls over the export of materials, equipment and technologies in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and for prevention of their transfers to non-State actors or terrorists.
- **Need of Amendment:** The **existing Act** pertaining to weapons of mass destruction **does not cover the financial aspect of such delivery systems** and the **new provisions are essential to meet international obligations**.
  - The [United Nations Security Council](#)'s targeted financial sanctions and the recommendations of the [Financial Action Task Force](#) have mandated against financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- **Objectives of the Bill:** The Bill aims to achieve three objectives:
  - **Prohibit financing** of activities linked to WMD.
  - Empower the **Centre to freeze, seize or attach funds**, financial assets or economic resources for preventing such financing.
  - **Prohibit making available funds**, financial assets or economic resources for any prohibited activity in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

## What are Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)?

- These are weapons with the **capacity to inflict death and destruction** on such a massive scale

and so indiscriminately that its very presence in the hands of a hostile power can be considered a grievous threat.

- Modern weapons of mass destruction are either **nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons**—frequently referred to collectively as **NBC weapons**.
- The term weapons of mass destruction has been in currency **since at least 1937**, when it was used to describe **massed formations of bomber aircraft**.
  - For example, **Nuclear bombs used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki attack in Japan**.
- Efforts to control the spread of WMD are enshrined in international agreements such as:
  - [Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968](#)
  - [Biological Weapons Convention of 1972](#)
  - [Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993](#)
- **India has not signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, but is signatory to both Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. Recently, the USA decided to support India's membership in multi-lateral 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)**

**Exp:**

- The Australia Group is a multilateral export control regime and an informal group of countries (now joined by the European Commission) established in 1985 (after the use of chemical weapons by Iraq in 1984) to help member countries to identify those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons.
- The Wassenaar Arrangement, formally established in July 1996 is a voluntary export control regime for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies is a multilateral export control regime.
  - The Wassenaar Arrangement is a grouping of 42 countries, of which India is the latest entrant.

**Q. With reference to 'Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)', consider the following statements: (2016)**

1. It is an organization of the European Union in working relation with NATO and WHO.
2. It monitors the chemical industry to prevent new weapons from emerging.
3. It provides assistance and protection to States (Parties) against chemical weapons threats.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**Exp:**

- The coming into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1997 led to the establishment of international chemical weapons disarmament regime headed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).
- Its headquarters are in the Hague, Netherlands

**Source: IE**

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