

What is it?

A **1975** legally binding treaty that bans biological weapons

Membership:

- **185** state parties to the Treaty, including Palestine
- **4** signatories: Egypt, Haiti, Somalia, and Syria
- **8** have neither signed nor ratified: Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Israel, Kiribati, Micronesia, and Tuvalu

Why is it important?

The first multilateral treaty to **ban an entire class of weapon**

Requires states that join the Treaty to **destroy** or **divert** for peaceful uses all biological agents and toxins, weapons, and means of delivery

Prohibitions:

- The development, stockpile, production, or transfer of biological agents and toxins
- Delivery systems, weapons, and other equipment designed to deliver biological agents in an armed conflict
- The transfer of or assistance with acquiring biological weapons or their delivery systems

What should I know?

There is **no implementation body** to assess treaty compliance

It **does not** explicitly ban “use” of biological weapons, however, 1996 Final Declaration of the Review Conference says their use is a violation of the convention

It has been **violated** in the past by several countries:

- **Soviet Union:** maintained biological weapons program **after ratifying BTWC**
- **Iraq:** covert biological weapons program uncovered by the UN Special Commission on Iraq
- North Korea, Iran, Libya, Syria, and Cuba **accused** of violating treaty by the United States