

**Formal Consultative Meeting 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**

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**2022 Meeting**

**Geneva, 26 August and 5-9 September 2022**

Item 6 of the agenda

**Respective outstanding questions by the Russian Federation  
to the United States and to Ukraine concerning the fulfilment  
of their respective obligations under the Convention in the context  
of the operation of biological laboratories in Ukraine**

**Questions to Ukraine regarding the observation of the  
obligations under Part 2 of Article I of the Convention  
on the Prohibition of the Development, Production  
and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and  
Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC), in  
the context of biological laboratories' activities**

**Submitted by the Russian Federation**

1. The examination of the results of the research, conducted on the territory of Ukraine by the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the Science and Technology Center in Ukraine (STCU) demonstrates a clear interest in zoonotic infections, as well as the mechanisms of transport and vectors of pathogen transmission (insects, arthropods, birds, and mammals). We would like to focus only on the most obvious ones.
2. Materials of the UP-4 project indicate that it was aimed at studying the risk of spread of certain particularly dangerous pathogens by birds, including pathogens of highly contagious quarantine infections posing a threat to agriculture (highly pathogenic avian influenza, Newcastle disease). Despite the seemingly peaceful nature of this work, special attention should be paid to the fact that the report materials obtained indicate bird species whose migration routes mainly pass through the territory of the Russian Federation, as well as the timing, directions and distances of similar routes.
3. The risks posed by diseases similar to highly pathogenic avian influenza for the agricultural industry are well known: if even a single case of the disease is detected, the entire livestock of the poultry farm must be slaughtered. In 2021 alone, more than 6 million poultry were killed in the Russian Federation as a result of this infection.
4. Only direct economic damage from bird flu in Russia from 2016 to 2021 amounted to almost 9 billion rubles (about 140 000 000 U.S. dollars), and for the three months of 2022, 498 million rubles (7 600 000 U.S. dollars). At the same time about 17 million poultry were destroyed during the period of anti-epizootic measures.
5. At the same time, UP-4 is not the only project to study the migration routes of birds that are vectors of economically significant infections. We are aware of another similar project (Flu-Fly-Way), which was also implemented in Ukraine.
6. The UP-8 project involved the study of vectors of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever and hantaviruses. The vectors were collected, as well as studies involving volunteers and



blood sampling for detection of antibody titers. In accordance with the project, blood samples were taken from four thousand volunteer servicemen for antibodies to hantaviruses and four hundred for antibodies to the Crimean-Congo fever virus. The hantaviruses Puumala and Dobrava, considered to be potential agents of biological weapons, were identified as priority targets for study.

7. Also noteworthy is the June 12, 2019 decision of the ethics committee of the UP-8 project. The document directly testifies to the research with unknown risks to the life and health of the participants. If the research program of this project involves only a standard diagnostic blood sampling procedure, it begs the question: what kind of life-threatening trials we are talking about. Moreover, it is unclear why the document prescribes that 'minor incidents involving volunteers must be reported to the US Bioethics Committee within 72 hours of the event, and serious incidents, including death of subjects, within 24 hours...'

8. We would like a detailed explanation from the Ukrainian side, including what life- and health-threatening research is involved in this project.

9. Project UP-2 "Mapping of particularly dangerous infectious diseases in Ukraine" and its continuation - project "Studying the risks of anthrax reoccurrence in Ukraine" were sent to identify burial sites of dead animals and to take soil samples from anthrax burial sites.

10. These projects involved the collection of tularemia and anthrax vectors - ticks and small mammals - between 2012 and 2013. According to the submitted documents, the decision to approve the project was made by U.S. Department of Defense officials, and the U.S. Defense Department's dedicated scientific institution, the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, was involved in its implementation.

11. This raises a legitimate question about the need to involve specialized military professionals in this study and the tasks that were performed while carrying out the project. Taking into account that the epidemiological situation with anthrax in Ukraine remains favorable, the question arises in general regarding the necessity of the conducted research and its true purposes.

12. The study of transmissible rickettsioses and *Coxiella burnetii* was devoted to the UP-1 project, subsequently reformatted into UP-6: Ecological and epidemiological assessment of natural reservoirs of infections caused by rickettsiae and *Coxiella burnetii* in different landscape zones of Ukraine. The work also included selection of arthropods and mammals that are carriers of rickettsial infections and Q fever.

13. According to the documents approved by the officials from the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, it was noted that a laboratory of the third level of biological safety maximum for Ukraine is necessary for conducting the research. The curator of the project is the Ukrainian Research Center, and a specialized organization of the U.S. Department of Defense, the Naval Medical Research Center, is involved in the research.

14. The need for such participation raises serious questions and complaints in the context of the fulfillment of obligations under the BTWC. We would like to reiterate the thesis that it is unacceptable for the Russian Federation to have representatives of foreign military agencies working with pathogens and vectors of especially dangerous infections in the immediate vicinity of Russian borders.

15. The STCU was directly involved in Project P-781, «Risk of New Infections from Insectivorous Bats in Georgia and Ukraine». The priorities include the study of bacterial and viral pathogens that can be transmitted from bats to humans: there was also a study of coronaviruses and filoviruses, apart from the agents of plague, leptospirosis, brucellosis

16. The STCU research in this area is systematic and has been carried out since at least 2009 under the direct supervision of U.S. specialists in the framework of projects P-382, P-444 and P-568. According to reports, in the course of their implementation, representatives of six families of viruses (including coronaviruses) and three types of pathogenic bacteria (plague, brucellosis and leptospirosis pathogens) were isolated from vectors.

17. Serious complaints are caused by the fact that studies contrary to the BTWC have been conducted in the immediate vicinity of Russia's borders - in areas along the Black Sea coast and in the Caucasus.

18. Summing up the results of activities to study vectors of potential biological weapons agents, we would like to dwell on projects to study economically significant diseases - African and classical swine fever.

19. In addition to the TAP-6 project, which evaluated the epizootic potential of the wild boar population, including the regions bordering Russia and Belarus, the UP-9 project aimed at studying the genome and phylogenetic features of agents, and the UP-10 project dedicated to the study of the spread of the African swine fever virus through the territory of Ukraine by trade routes.

20. Thus, the coverage of the research program of the Pentagon Defense Threat Reduction Agency, implemented in Ukraine, of the entire spectrum of vectors and the natural reservoir of especially dangerous pathogens, which are potential biological weapons agents, geographical localization of places of selection of field material, as well as participation in research of specialized professionals from the U.S. military department indicate the violation by Ukraine of obligations under Part II of Article I of the BTWC, since the mentioned vectors can be used as a medium of warfare.

21. Separately, we would like to mention documentary evidence of Ukraine's interest in acquiring equipment and means of delivery designed for the use of biological agents or toxins for hostile purposes and armed conflicts.

22. As an example, we would like to mention the materials concerning the inquiry of the Ukrainian company "Motor Sich", which deals with the production, repair and maintenance of aircraft engines, to the Turkish manufacturer of unmanned aerial vehicles "Bayraktar Akinci" dated December 15, 2021 regarding the possibility of equipping this UAV with aerosol dispersion systems and mechanisms with a capacity of over 20 liters, to which the Turkish side gave a negative answer.

23. "Bayraktar Akinci" is a high-altitude unmanned aerial vehicle designed for air strikes against enemy ground facilities and operational-strategic aerial reconnaissance. If it is equipped with aerosol spraying mechanisms and the declared maximum payload mass - up to 1350 kg, there is a real threat of large-scale use of biological weapons on the territory of the Russian Federation.

24. The above document shows signs of violation by Ukraine of the obligations in Part 2 of Article I of the BTWC, which prohibits States Parties from acquiring equipment and means of delivery designed for the use of biological agents or toxins for hostile purposes and armed conflicts.

25. In the light of the information provided, we would like to hear detailed explanations from the Ukrainian side on the following issues that require clarification:

- what tasks were solved by the specialists from the research organizations of the US Department of Defense (the research was conducted by the specialists from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Naval Medical Research Institute) within the framework of the implemented UP-1 and UP-2 projects, and is there a justification of their involvement as participants of the research, aimed, as it is declared, at performing "purely peaceful" tasks?
- what is the reason for the interest of the Ukrainian Enterprise "Motor Sich" in supplying an unmanned aerial vehicle "Bayraktar Akindzhi" (request dated December 15, 2021) and how does document correlate with the obligations of Ukraine within the framework of Part 2 of Article I of the BTWC?

26. In this connection, we would request the Ukrainian side to provide detailed explanations.