

PRETEXTS THE UN EXAMINED

Twice in 2022 Russia told the world that Ukraine was preparing a weapon of mass destruction: US-run "military biological laboratories" in March, and a "dirty bomb" in October. Both claims were put to the one place that could test them — the UN system — and both were answered there. The UN's disarmament office was "not aware of any biological weapons programmes"; the Biological Weapons Convention's first consultative meeting in 25 years ended without consensus on Russia's allegations; the Security Council gave Russia's investigation commission two votes; and IAEA inspectors visited the three Ukrainian sites Russia had named and found no indications of undeclared nuclear activities or materials. Eight claims, the record, and what each concedes.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
2022

"Not aware"

UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to the Security Council, 11 Mar 2022: "The United Nations is not aware of any biological weapons programmes" — "this remains the case today", UNODA, 27 Oct 2022 [A](#)

S/PV.8991 / SC/14827; Ukrinform, 28 Oct 2022

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Security Council vote on Russia's draft resolution for a commission to investigate its BWC complaint: in favour (Russia, China) · against (France, UK, US) · abstaining [A](#)

S/2022/821, vote of 2 Nov 2022 (SC/15095)

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indications of undeclared nuclear activities or materials found by IAEA inspectors at the three Ukrainian sites Russia named [A](#)

IAEA statement, 3 Nov 2022: "did not find any indications of undeclared nuclear activities and materials at the locations"

No consensus

outcome of the BWC Article V Formal Consultative Meeting Russia requested — the second in the Convention's history: "No consensus was reached regarding the outcome" [A](#)

BWC/CONS/2022/3, para. 10; Geneva, 26 Aug and 5–9 Sep 2022

BOTTOM LINE		
Both claims were tested where Russia chose to bring them. Russia took the biolabs claim to the Security Council (11 and 18 Mar, 27 Oct 2022), to the BWC's consultative mechanism (Sep 2022) and to a Council vote (2 Nov 2022); it took the dirty-bomb claim to four defence ministers and the Council (25 Oct 2022), and Ukraine's invitation took it to the IAEA. The UN disarmament office, the BWC states parties, the Council and the IAEA each answered. None found what Russia described. The biolabs: what exists is public. Ukraine's public-health laboratories were upgraded under a 2005 Ukraine–US threat-reduction agreement that grew out of the Nunn–Lugar programme to secure Soviet-era pathogens; they are Ukrainian-owned, listed and known to the WHO. Russia's briefings relabelled that programme as "military biological" work; its complaint under BWC Article VI won two votes. The dirty bomb: the sites were inspected. Russia named the Eastern Mining and Processing Plant at Zhovti Vody and the Kyiv Institute for Nuclear Research. Both were already under IAEA safeguards; one had been inspected a month earlier. Ukraine invited inspectors in writing the day Russia's letter reached the Council; IAEA teams visited three sites and reported no indications of undeclared nuclear activities or materials (3 Nov 2022). What the claims concede. A dirty-bomb accusation concedes that the use of a radiological weapon in Ukraine would be a crime the world would condemn; a biolabs accusation concedes that the BWC binds and that the UN is the forum. Russia asked the right bodies — then rejected their answers. Fair to say. The BWC has no verification body, so "not aware" is not the same as "verified"; the WHO did recommend in March 2022 that Ukraine destroy high-threat pathogens to "prevent any potential spills"; a US official did acknowledge "biological research facilities" in Ukraine. None of this is evidence of a weapons programme, and no mandated body has found one.		
THE EIGHT CLAIMS		
Vassily Nebenzia · 11 Mar 2022, UN Security Council, 8991st meeting (requested by Russia)	"[Russia has evidence of] the Kyiv regime's emergency clean-up of the traces of the biological warfare programme... [there is a network of] at least 30 biological laboratories [in Ukraine, working for the United States]."	No evidence presented — answered in the same meeting
Maj.-Gen. Igor Konashenkov, MoD spokesman · 6 Mar 2022, briefing	"We have obtained documents from employees of Ukrainian bio laboratories... the especially dangerous pathogens of plague, anthrax, tularemia, cholera and other deadly diseases [were] urgently destroyed on February 24... the P..."	Misstates a biosafety measure as a cover-up
Russian Ministry of Defence (Konashenkov, Kirillov) · 10 Mar 2022, briefing	"[Kirillov:] A network of over 30 biological labs was formed on Ukrainian soil... [Konashenkov:] ...the transfer of pathogens by wild birds migrating between Ukraine and Russia, other countries... experiments were held with the..."	No evidence presented — rejected by the BWC states parties
Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russian Federation · Security Council, 2 Nov 2022 — vote on Russia's BWC Art. VI complaint (S/2022/796) and draft S/2022/821	"[The draft is] a considerable milestone... [Russia is] extremely disappointed [that the Council did not establish the commission]... the evidence accompanying our complaint still requires clarifications."	Rejected by the Council — two votes
Sergei Shoigu · 23 Oct 2022, calls to the defence ministers of the US, UK, France and Turkey	"[Shoigu] informed his British counterpart about Russia's concerns over Ukraine's possible provocations with the use of a dirty bomb. [MoD statement as reported by TASS]"	No evidence presented — rejected by the three recipients the same day
Lt-Gen Igor Kirillov · 24 Oct 2022, MoD briefing; Russian letter to the Security Council of the same day	"Two Ukrainian organizations have concrete instructions to create a so-called dirty bomb... Work is at the final stage. [Kirillov, TASS] — [Russia's letter to the Council the same day: the] works are at their concluding sta..."	Contradicted by the IAEA
Vladimir Putin · 27 Oct 2022, Valdai Discussion Club	"It was me who ordered Shoigu to call all his counterparts and inform them about it... We even know where it is being prepared. [English as reported by TASS]"	No evidence presented — the location was known and inspected
Sergey Lavrov · 24 Oct 2022, Moscow	"[The accusations] are not groundless... We have specific information about those institutions in Ukraine... those scientific institutes that have the technology to create this dirty bomb... this is not an empty suspicion."	Contradicted by the IAEA

WHAT WE ASK

Answer any revival of the "biolabs" or "dirty bomb" claims with the UN record: SC/14827 (11 Mar 2022), the BWC consultative meeting outcome (Sep 2022), the vote of 2 Nov 2022 and the IAEA statement of 3 Nov 2022 · support a BWC verification mechanism at the next review cycle and ask Russia whether it will · invite Council members to recall that Ukraine, not Russia, asked for the IAEA inspection · keep the OPCW's findings on riot-control agents on the front line in the same conversation · ask that WMD allegations against any state be brought with evidence to the competent body before they are repeated at the Council.

THE OCCASION AND THE RECORD		
Occasion	Two pretext narratives advanced in 2022: "US military biological laboratories in Ukraine" (from 6 Mar 2022, after the invasion stalled) and a Ukrainian "dirty bomb" (23 Oct 2022, after Ukraine's Kharkiv and Kherson counter-offensives and Russia's declared annexations)	
Where the claims were made	Russian MoD briefings (Konashenkov, 6 and 10 Mar 2022; Lt-Gen Igor Kirillov, RCB Defence Troops, 10 Mar and 24 Oct 2022); UN Security Council meetings requested by Russia on 11 Mar (8991st, S/PV.8991), 18 Mar and 27 Oct 2022; Russia's letters to the Council of 24 Oct 2022 (BWC Art. VI complaint, S/2022/796, with a draft resolution; and a letter on the "dirty bomb"); Shoigu's calls to the defence ministers of the US, UK, France and Turkey (23 Oct 2022); Lavrov (24 Oct 2022); Putin at Valdai (27 Oct 2022)	
Record	S/PV.8991 and SC/14827 (11 Mar 2022); BWC Formal Consultative Meeting, Geneva, 26 Aug and 5–9 Sep 2022, final report BWC/CONS/2022/3; S/2022/796 and draft S/2022/821, vote of 2 Nov 2022 (SC/15095); IAEA statements of 24 Oct and 3 Nov 2022; Security Council Report, What's in Blue, 27 Oct and 1 Nov 2022	
What happened next	No biological or radiological weapon has been used in Ukraine · Russia did not return to the Council with the "dirty bomb" after the IAEA report · the biolabs claim continued in Russian briefings · OPCW technical assistance visits confirmed the riot-control agent CS in samples from front-line positions (Nov 2024, Feb 2025) · Lt-Gen Kirillov, author of the briefings, was sanctioned by the UK for chemical-weapons use (8 Oct 2024) and killed in Moscow (17 Dec 2024)	
Status of the claims	Neither withdrawn; neither substantiated before any mandated body	

THE SPEAKERS		
Sergei Shoigu	Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation (to May 2024) · under EU, US and UK sanctions	On 23 Oct 2022 telephoned Lloyd Austin, Ben Wallace, Sébastien Lecornu and Hulusi Akar; the MoD said he informed the UK minister of "Russia's concerns over Ukraine's possible provocations with the use of a dirty bomb" (TASS)
Lt-Gen Igor Kirillov	Chief of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defence Troops · UK sanctions (8 Oct 2024) for chemical-weapons use; killed by a bomb in Moscow, 17 Dec 2024	Co-author of the MoD's "biolabs" briefings (from 10 Mar 2022: "a network of over 30 biological labs") and of the 24 Oct 2022 dirty-bomb briefing naming two Ukrainian organisations
Vassily Nebenzia	Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN	Requested the Council meetings of 11 and 18 Mar and 27 Oct 2022; told the Council on 11 Mar of "at least 30 biological laboratories" in Ukraine
Sergey Lavrov	Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation	24 Oct 2022: the dirty-bomb accusations "are not groundless"; Russia has "specific information" about the institutes

WHAT OTHERS SAID	
United States (11 Mar 2022)	"Ukraine does not have a biological weapons programme" (S/PV.8991); voted against the draft on 2 Nov.
United Kingdom (11 Mar 2022)	There is "not a shred of credible evidence that Ukraine has a biological weapons programme" (S/PV.8991); voted against on 2 Nov.
France	"Russia's lies are not fooling anyone" (11 Mar 2022); with the UK and US rejected the dirty-bomb allegation as "transparently false" (23 Oct 2022); voted against on 2 Nov.
China	Said "the international community could consider invoking Article VI of the Convention"; the only member besides Russia to vote in favour on 2 Nov 2022.
India	BWC obligations should be upheld "in both letter and spirit" (11 Mar 2022); abstained on 2 Nov.
Brazil	Accusations must be "thoroughly substantiated by solid evidence" (11 Mar 2022); abstained.
Ghana, Kenya, Gabon	Open in principle to an independent, impartial investigation through established mechanisms; abstained on 2 Nov.
Albania	The Council "should not be served with fantasies or starry-eyed stories" (11 Mar 2022); abstained on 2 Nov, with Ireland, Mexico, Norway and the UAE.
UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (I. Nakamitsu; A. Ebo)	"The United Nations is not aware of any biological weapons programmes" (11 Mar 2022); "This remains the case today" (27 Oct 2022).
IAEA (R. Grossi)	Both named sites under safeguards, one inspected a month earlier with "no undeclared nuclear activities or material" (24 Oct 2022); after visits to three sites, "no indications of undeclared nuclear activities and materials" (3 Nov 2022).

WHAT THE STATEMENTS LEFT OUT
- What the laboratories are: public-health and veterinary facilities upgraded under a 2005 Ukraine–US threat-reduction agreement to secure pathogens left from Soviet-era programmes; Ukrainian-run, with "no U.S. personnel at these labs"; US investment of "approximately \$200 million in Ukraine since 2005"; Ukraine declares its biological research laboratories in its BWC confidence-building measures (US Department of Defense briefing, 10 Mar 2022). - The verification gap: "The BWC lacks a multilateral verification mechanism" (Nakamitsu, S/PV.8991, 11 Mar 2022). "Not aware" is therefore the strongest finding the UN can make without an inspectorate. - Ukraine's invitation: on 24 Oct 2022, the day Russia's letter reached the Council, Ukraine wrote to the IAEA inviting inspectors to verify the two sites Russia had named; Russia, which named the sites, made no such request (IAEA, 24 Oct 2022; Security Council Report, 27 Oct 2022). - Russia's own record: the Soviet Union ran an offensive biological-weapons programme in breach of the BWC, acknowledged by President Yeltsin in 1992; the radiological murder of Alexander Litvinenko (2006) was attributed to the Russian state by the UK's public inquiry (2016) and the European Court of Human Rights (Carter v. Russia, 2021). - The OPCW record since 2022: technical assistance visits requested by Ukraine confirmed the riot-control agent CS in grenades and soil collected from front-line positions (OPCW, 18 Nov 2024 and 14 Feb 2025); the use of riot-control agents as a method of warfare is prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention. The OPCW did not attribute the use; the United States (1 May 2024) and the United Kingdom (8 Oct 2024) attributed such use to Russian forces.

HOW IT TRAVELS
The biolabs claim travelled furthest. After the MoD's briefings of 6 and 10 March 2022, TASS and RIA Novosti carried every briefing and Russia took the claim to the Security Council three times. The dirty-bomb claim ran for ten days: Shoigu's calls (23 Oct), Kirillov's briefing, Lavrov's "not groundless" and Russia's letter to the Council (24 Oct), the Council's "any other business" discussion (25 Oct), Putin at Valdai ("we even know where it is being prepared", 27 Oct) — then silence after the IAEA report of 3 Nov.

CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION (1-4)

Each claim as made, with the date, the venue and a link; the record it runs into, with the tier of the evidence; and what it concedes. Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

2022

CLAIM 1 · VASSILY NEBENZIA · 11 MAR 2022, UN SECURITY COUNCIL, 8991ST MEETING (REQUESTED BY RUSSIA)

“[Russia has evidence of] the Kyiv regime's emergency clean-up of the traces of the biological warfare programme... [there is a network of] at least 30 biological laboratories [in Ukraine, working for the United States].”

S/PV.8991, 8991st meeting, 11 Mar 2022 (UN verbatim record, via un-project.org/meeting/S-PV-8991); summary SC/14827

un-project.org/meeting/S-PV-8991

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED — ANSWERED IN THE SAME MEETING

Evidence

A

C

Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefed the same meeting: "The United Nations is not aware of any biological weapons programmes"; "The BWC lacks a multilateral verification mechanism" (S/PV.8991). The "30 laboratories" are Ukraine's public-health and veterinary laboratories supported under a 2005 threat-reduction agreement — about \$200 million since 2005, with "no U.S. personnel at these labs" (US Department of Defense briefing, 10 Mar 2022). The "emergency clean-up" was the destruction of high-threat pathogens that the WHO had "strongly recommended" to "prevent any potential spills" (WHO to Reuters, 10–11 Mar 2022). No document presented by Russia described a weapon, an agent or a delivery system.

What the claim concedes: That the UN Security Council and the BWC are the competent fora — where the claim was then examined and failed.

CLAIM 2 · MAJ.-GEN. IGOR KONASHENKOV, MOD SPOKESMAN · 6 MAR 2022, BRIEFING

“We have obtained documents from employees of Ukrainian bio laboratories... the especially dangerous pathogens of plague, anthrax, tularemia, cholera and other deadly diseases [were] urgently destroyed on February 24... the Pentagon has developed serious concerns about the disclosure of information about its secret biological experiments.”

MoD briefing, 6 Mar 2022, as reported in English by Interfax (interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/75769)

interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/75769

MISSTATES A BIOSAFETY MEASURE AS A COVER-UP

Evidence

C

The WHO said it had "strongly recommended" that Ukraine's Ministry of Health destroy high-threat pathogens to "prevent any potential spills" as fighting approached (WHO to Reuters, 10–11 Mar 2022). The pathogens named are endemic disease agents held by public-health laboratories worldwide for diagnosis and surveillance. Destroying stocks under threat of bombardment is a biosafety step, not evidence of a weapons programme.

What the claim concedes: That the laboratories held diagnostic stocks and destroyed them — i.e., that no agent was retained for use.

CLAIM 3 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (KONASHENKOV, KIRILLOV) · 10 MAR 2022, BRIEFING

“[Kirillov:] A network of over 30 biological labs was formed on Ukrainian soil... [Konashenkov:] ...the transfer of pathogens by wild birds migrating between Ukraine and Russia, other countries... experiments were held with the samples of bat coronavirus... the creation of a mechanism of the covert spread of deadly pathogens.”

MoD briefing, 10 Mar 2022, as reported by TASS, "US bankrolled mechanism of covert spread of pathogens in Ukraine, Russian top brass says" (tass.com/world/1419559)

tass.com/world/1419559

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED — REJECTED BY THE BWC STATES PARTIES

Evidence

A

C

Russia took these allegations to the BWC under Article V (request of 29 Jun 2022). The Formal Consultative Meeting in Geneva (26 Aug and 5–9 Sep 2022, chaired by Ambassador György Molnár of Hungary) — only the second ever, after Cuba's in 1997 — ended with "No consensus was reached regarding the outcome of the Formal Consultative Meeting" (BWC/CONS/2022/3, para. 10). Of the 42 states parties that made national statements, none backed Russia's claims (Council on Strategic Risks, 13 Sep 2022 — Tier C). Surveillance of migratory birds and bats for zoonotic pathogens is standard public-health epidemiology, not weaponisation.

What the claim concedes: That the material Russia relied on was public documents — which it could cite because the programme was not secret.

CLAIM 4 · DMITRY POLYANSKIY, RUSSIAN FEDERATION · SECURITY COUNCIL, 2 NOV 2022 — VOTE ON RUSSIA'S BWC ART. VI COMPLAINT (S/2022/796) AND DRAFT S/2022/821

“[The draft is] a considerable milestone... [Russia is] extremely disappointed [that the Council did not establish the commission]... the evidence accompanying our complaint still requires clarifications.”

Security Council, 2 Nov 2022, as reported by AP (via [News4Jax](https://www.news4jax.com/news/world/2022/11/02/security-council-rejects-russian-call-for-bio-weapons-probe)) and UN Meetings Coverage SC/15095

www.news4jax.com/news/world/2022/11/02/security-council-rejects-russian-call-for-bio-weapons-probe

REJECTED BY THE COUNCIL — TWO VOTES

Evidence

A

C

At the 27 Oct 2022 briefing, UNODA's Adedeji Ebo told the Council that the UN's position of March — not aware of any biological weapons programmes in Ukraine — "remains the case today" (Ukrinform, 28 Oct 2022). On 2 Nov 2022 the draft received 2 votes in favour (Russia, China), 3 against (France, UK, US) and 10 abstentions; it failed for want of nine votes, so no veto was cast (SC/15095). Even members open in principle to an investigation did not vote for it: Ghana wanted "independent and impartial investigations by internationally-recognised and mandated bodies", Kenya asked states parties "to make use of the established mechanisms", Gabon called for "a transparent and impartial independent inquiry" (Security Council Report, 1 Nov 2022).

What the claim concedes: That its own evidence "still requires clarifications" — and that the Security Council, under BWC Art. VI, is the lawful route for such a complaint; Russia has not resubmitted it.

Sources: S/PV.8991 / SC/14827, 11 Mar 2022 · BWC/CONS/2022/3 · SC/15095, 2 Nov 2022 · Security Council Report, What's in Blue, 27 Oct and 1 Nov 2022 · IAEA, 24 Oct and 3 Nov 2022 · Interfax, 6 Mar 2022 · TASS, 10 Mar, 23–24 and 27 Oct 2022 · RFE/RL, 24 Oct 2022 · US–France–UK joint statement, 23 Oct 2022 · US DoD briefing, 10 Mar 2022 · WHO via Reuters, 11 Mar 2022 · OPCW, Nov 2024 and Feb 2025 · full list on page 6



CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION (5–8)

Each claim as made, with the date, the venue and a link; the record it runs into, with the tier of the evidence; and what it concedes. Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

CLAIM 5 · SERGEI SHOIGU · 23 OCT 2022, CALLS TO THE DEFENCE MINISTERS OF THE US, UK, FRANCE AND TURKEY

“[Shoigu] informed his British counterpart about Russia's concerns over Ukraine's possible provocations with the use of a dirty bomb. [MoD statement as reported by TASS]”

Russian MoD statements on Shoigu's calls with L. Austin, B. Wallace, S. Lecornu and H. Akar, 23 Oct 2022, as reported by TASS (tass.com/defense/1526311)

CLAIM 6 · LT-GEN IGOR KIRILLOV · 24 OCT 2022, MOD BRIEFING; RUSSIAN LETTER TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE SAME DAY

“Two Ukrainian organizations have concrete instructions to create a so-called dirty bomb... Work is at the final stage. [Kirillov, TASS] — [Russia's letter to the Council the same day: the] works are at their concluding stage. [as summarised by Security Council Report]”

MoD briefing, 24 Oct 2022, as reported by TASS (tass.com/politics/1526769); letter from the Russian Federation to the President of the Security Council, 24 Oct 2022 (Security Council Report, 27 Oct 2022) tass.com/politics/1526769

CLAIM 7 · VLADIMIR PUTIN · 27 OCT 2022, VALDAI DISCUSSION CLUB

“It was me who ordered Shoigu to call all his counterparts and inform them about it... We even know where it is being prepared. [English as reported by TASS]”

Plenary session of the Valdai Discussion Club, 27 Oct 2022, as reported by TASS (tass.com/politics/1528733)

CLAIM 8 · SERGEY LAVROV · 24 OCT 2022, MOSCOW

“[The accusations] are not groundless... We have specific information about those institutions in Ukraine... those scientific institutes that have the technology to create this dirty bomb... this is not an empty suspicion.”

As reported by RFE/RL and Censor.net, 24 Oct 2022; TASS, 24 Oct 2022 (tass.com/politics/1526717)

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED — REJECTED BY THE THREE RECIPIENTS THE SAME DAY

Evidence

A

France, the UK and the US issued a joint statement on 23 Oct 2022 rejecting Russia's "transparently false allegations" that Ukraine was preparing to use a dirty bomb on its own territory, and warning against using the allegation as a "pretext for escalation" (US Department of State, 23 Oct 2022). The IAEA, 24 Oct: both sites Russia named are under safeguards; one was inspected a month earlier and "no undeclared nuclear activities or material were found there".

What the claim concedes: That a radiological attack in Ukraine would be an atrocity the world must prevent — a principle that binds the state that holds Europe's largest nuclear plant under military occupation.

CONTRADICTED BY THE IAEA

Evidence

A

Ukraine invited the IAEA in writing on 24 Oct 2022 to verify both sites. IAEA inspectors visited three locations — the Institute for Nuclear Research in Kyiv, the Eastern Mining and Processing Plant in Zhovti Vody and the Pivdennyi Machine-Building Plant in Dnipro — and on 3 Nov 2022 the Agency reported that it "did not find any indications of undeclared nuclear activities and materials at the locations" and had "unfettered access" (IAEA, 3 Nov 2022). Russia, which named the organisations, requested no inspection and submitted no evidence to the Agency. The Council took up the letter under "any other business" on 25 Oct 2022 with no briefer and no outcome.

What the claim concedes: That the sites were identifiable and inspectable — and that the IAEA was the competent judge. Russia named them; the IAEA went; Russia has not mentioned them since.

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED — THE LOCATION WAS KNOWN AND INSPECTED

Evidence

A

Russia had already named the organisations on 24 Oct; the IAEA inspected the sites within ten days and found nothing undeclared (3 Nov 2022). Putin's statement came two days after the Council's "any other business" discussion produced no outcome.

What the claim concedes: That the allegation rested on claimed knowledge of a place — which the IAEA then inspected — not on evidence of a device.

CONTRADICTED BY THE IAEA

Evidence

A

The "institutions with the technology" are the same two safeguarded sites. Possessing nuclear material under IAEA safeguards is lawful and was already verified; the question was whether anything undeclared existed, and the IAEA answered no (3 Nov 2022). The sequence — four phone calls, a Council letter, a presidential statement, then silence once inspectors reported — is the record of a pretext tested and abandoned.

What the claim concedes: That the claim could be tested by inspection of named institutions — which is what then happened.



THE RECORD			
QUESTION	WHAT RUSSIA SAYS	WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS	SOURCE
Biological weapons programme in Ukraine	"At least 30 biological laboratories"; "emergency clean-up of the traces of the biological warfare programme"	UN "not aware of any biological weapons programmes" (11 Mar 2022), "remains the case" (27 Oct 2022); public-health laboratories under a 2005 threat-reduction agreement; ~\$200 m US investment since 2005	S/PV.8991; Ukrinform 28 Oct 2022; US DoD briefing 10 Mar 2022
BWC consultative meeting	Russia's request under Art. V (29 Jun 2022)	Formal Consultative Meeting, 26 Aug and 5–9 Sep 2022: "No consensus was reached regarding the outcome"	BWC/CONS/2022/3, para. 10
Security Council commission	Draft S/2022/821 under BWC Art. VI, report by 30 Nov 2022	2 in favour, 3 against, 10 abstentions — not adopted (2 Nov 2022)	SC/15095; Security Council Report, 1 Nov 2022
Dirty bomb sites	Two Ukrainian organisations; work "at the final stage"	Both under IAEA safeguards; one inspected a month before; three sites inspected: "no indications of undeclared nuclear activities and materials"	IAEA, 24 Oct and 3 Nov 2022
Who asked for inspection	Russia: none	Ukraine: written invitation to the IAEA, 24 Oct 2022	IAEA; Security Council Report
Chemical agents on the front line since 2022	—	OPCW confirmed riot-control agent CS in samples from front-line positions (Nov 2024, Feb 2025), without attribution; the US and UK attributed CS use to Russian forces	OPCW, 18 Nov 2024 and 14 Feb 2025; US State Dept, 1 May 2024; UK, 8 Oct 2024

FAIR TO SAY

"Not aware of any biological weapons programmes" is the UN's honest formulation, not a verification finding: the BWC has no inspectorate, and the UN did not inspect Ukrainian laboratories. What the record shows is that Russia brought no evidence that survived scrutiny in any forum, not that an external body certified every laboratory.

The WHO did advise Ukraine in March 2022 to destroy high-threat pathogens held in its public-health laboratories, and the US did state that Ukraine has "biological research facilities" it feared Russian forces might seize (V. Nuland, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 8 Mar 2022: "Ukraine has biological research facilities"). Both facts are consistent with a public-health network and were the starting point for Russia's narrative; neither is evidence of weapons.

The IAEA's 3 November 2022 statement concerned three named sites; it is not a certificate for all of Ukraine. The Agency reported that it had "unfettered access" to all three.

The Council's 2 November vote was lopsided but ten members abstained rather than voting against, and several (Ghana, Kenya, Gabon; China, which voted in favour) said they were open in principle to an impartial investigation. The Hub does not describe the result as a rejection of the Article VI mechanism — it was a rejection of this complaint.

ESTABLISHED, PATTERN, POSITION

What mandated bodies have established, what the record shows as a pattern, and what is a position — kept apart. Then the lines to take and the questions to expect.

THE LAW

Biological Weapons Convention, arts. I, V and VI: states parties undertake never to develop or stockpile biological agents for hostile purposes, to consult on compliance concerns (Art. V) and may lodge a complaint with the Security Council (Art. VI). Russia used both procedures; the consultative meeting reached no consensus and the Council declined to investigate. The Convention has no verification body.

IAEA safeguards (NPT art. III; Ukraine's comprehensive safeguards agreement and Additional Protocol): nuclear material in Ukraine is declared and inspected; the Agency's finding of no undeclared activities at the named sites is the only authoritative answer to a radiological-weapon allegation, and Ukraine invited it.

UN Charter art. 2(4) and the law of armed conflict: a fabricated WMD allegation is not itself a crime, but an attack justified by one is; the Commission of Inquiry and the ICC assess attacks by their lawfulness, not by the pretext offered.

Three layers. *Established:* no mandated body has found a biological or radiological weapons programme in Ukraine; the IAEA found none at the sites named. *Pattern:* WMD allegations advanced at moments of Russian military setback (March and October 2022) and dropped when tested. *Position:* that the allegations were intended as pretexts for escalation — the view stated by France, the UK and the US on 23 Oct 2022, not a finding.

LINES TO TAKE

1. "Russia took the biolabs claim to the Council three times and to a vote once. It got two votes."
2. "The UN's disarmament office said it in March 2022 and confirmed it in October: not aware of any biological weapons programmes in Ukraine."
3. "Russia named the dirty-bomb sites. Ukraine invited the inspectors. The IAEA found no indications of undeclared activities. Russia never mentioned the sites again."
4. "A consultative meeting of all BWC states parties could not agree that Russia's allegation deserved an outcome. That is the record."
5. "Every WMD pretext in this war has come from the side that holds Europe's largest nuclear plant at gunpoint."
6. "Ask the Russian delegation: which of the UN bodies you appealed to in 2022 do you now accept?"

Q&A

"The US admitted there are biolabs in Ukraine."

The US acknowledged biological research facilities — public-health laboratories supported since 2005 under a threat-reduction agreement to secure Soviet-era pathogens. They are Ukrainian-owned and publicly listed. A laboratory is not a weapons programme; the UN's disarmament office is "not aware" of any such programme, and Russia's complaint failed in the BWC and in the Council.

"Ukraine destroyed pathogens on 24 February. Why, if not to hide something?"

Because the WHO "strongly recommended" it, to "prevent any potential spills" of diagnostic stocks under bombardment. Those stocks — plague, anthrax, cholera — are held by public-health laboratories in every country for diagnosis. Destroying them under threat is biosafety, not concealment.

"The Council abstentions show doubt about Ukraine."

Ten members abstained because Russia's draft gave no mandate or method for a commission and the evidence was found insufficient; several said they were open to Article VI in principle. The draft got two votes. No member endorsed Russia's allegation.

"The IAEA only inspected three sites."

They were the sites Russia named. Russia said the work was "at its concluding stage" there; inspectors found no undeclared activities or materials. If Russia had other sites in mind, it had the same route Ukraine used — a letter to the Agency — and did not take it.

"Why would Russia invent a dirty bomb?"

We do not need to prove motive; we need the record. France, the UK and the US said on 23 Oct 2022 that the allegation should not become a pretext for escalation. Russia took the claim to four defence ministers, to the Council and to the President's podium, and dropped it once the IAEA reported.

"The BWC meeting failed because the West blocked consensus."

A consultative meeting reaches an outcome only if states parties agree on one. Of the 42 states parties that made national statements, none backed Russia's claims (Council on Strategic Risks). Two months later the Council vote on Russia's commission drew two votes in favour.

WHAT WE ASK

Answer any revival of the "biolabs" or "dirty bomb" claims with the UN record: SC/14827 (11 Mar 2022), the BWC consultative meeting outcome (Sep 2022), the vote of 2 Nov 2022 and the IAEA statement of 3 Nov 2022 · support a BWC verification mechanism at the next review cycle and ask Russia whether it will · invite Council members to recall that Ukraine, not Russia, asked for the IAEA inspection · keep the OPCW's findings on riot-control agents on the front line in the same conversation · ask that WMD allegations against any state be brought with evidence to the competent body before they are repeated at the Council.

Sources: S/PV.8991 / SC/14827, 11 Mar 2022 · BWC/CONS/2022/3 · SC/15095, 2 Nov 2022 · Security Council Report, What's in Blue, 27 Oct and 1 Nov 2022 · IAEA, 24 Oct and 3 Nov 2022 · Interfax, 6 Mar 2022 · TASS, 10 Mar, 23–24 and 27 Oct 2022 · RFE/RL, 24 Oct 2022 · US–France–UK joint statement, 23 Oct 2022 · US DoD briefing, 10 Mar 2022 · WHO via Reuters, 11 Mar 2022 · OPCW, Nov 2024 and Feb 2025 · full list on page 6



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METHOD

Russian claims are quoted from the UN verbatim record of 11 March 2022 (S/PV.8991), from Russia's letters and draft resolution as summarised by Security Council Report, and from Russian MoD, MFA and Kremlin statements as reported in English by Interfax, TASS and RFE/RL; mil.ru, mid.ru and kremlin.ru could not be opened from outside Russia. Words in square brackets are the Hub's; paraphrases are marked.

Each claim is checked first against the UN record — the Security Council verbatim and meeting coverage, the BWC consultative meeting report, the Council vote of 2 November 2022, the IAEA statements and the OPCW reports (Tier A) — and only then against independent reporting (Tier C). No Ukrainian official statement is used to rebut the claims; Ukraine's invitation to the IAEA is cited from the IAEA's and Security Council Report's accounts.

Positions of Council members are taken from S/PV.8991 (11 Mar 2022) and from Security Council Report's account of the vote of 2 Nov 2022; the vote itself is a matter of record (SC/15095).

Tiers: **A** — UN-mandated bodies, international courts and organisations (OHCHR/HRMMU, Commission of Inquiry, ICC, ECtHR, IAEA, OSCE, OPCW, Security Council record); **B** — Ukrainian official bodies, marked "according to Ukraine"; **C** — independent investigators and media; **RU** — Russian official statements, the position under review. Tiers are never combined in one figure.