



MISSING EVIDENCE AND A REVERSED LOGIC

Russia requested a formal consultative meeting under BWC Article V on 29 June 2022 to present its case that the United States and Ukraine are in breach of the convention. On the basis of Russian evidence presented so far, neither the United Nations, independent media nor independent experts have concluded that there is any indication that Ukraine’s biological activities and its public health labs support anything other than peaceful purposes. Ukraine, unlike Russia, makes its annual Confidence Building Measure submissions to the BWC publicly available.

Consultation procedures under Article V are generally viewed as a way to discuss issues at a lower level before escalating to the UN Security Council. Russia has reversed this logic and, having failed to gain any substantive support in the UN Security Council or the UN General Assembly for its allegations, appears intent on airing its allegations formally within the BWC.



TIMELINE

7 OCT 2021

The Foreign Ministers of Russia and China release a joint statement on the margins of the UN General Assembly expressing “serious concerns” about US overseas military biological activities and allege that over 200 “opaque and non-transparent” American labs are deployed outside the United States.

JANUARY 2022

The United States issues several fact sheets and youtube videos providing facts and figures about its biological threat reduction programme.

24 FEBRUARY 2022

Russia starts a full-scale attack on Ukraine. The hashtag #USBiolabs starts trending on Twitter.

11 MARCH 2022

The UN Security Council meets to discuss Russia’s allegations of military biological activities in Ukraine. The High Representative of Disarmament Affairs asserts that the UN is not aware of any bioweapons programmes.

22 NOV 2021

Russia and China make statements to the BWC Meeting of States Parties raising concerns about US and NATO allies’ “military biomedical activities,” “especially in countries near to us.” The United States response calls the claims “truly appalling distortions of fact.” The US also publishes a working paper to the meeting on its biological threat reduction programme.

4 FEBRUARY 2022

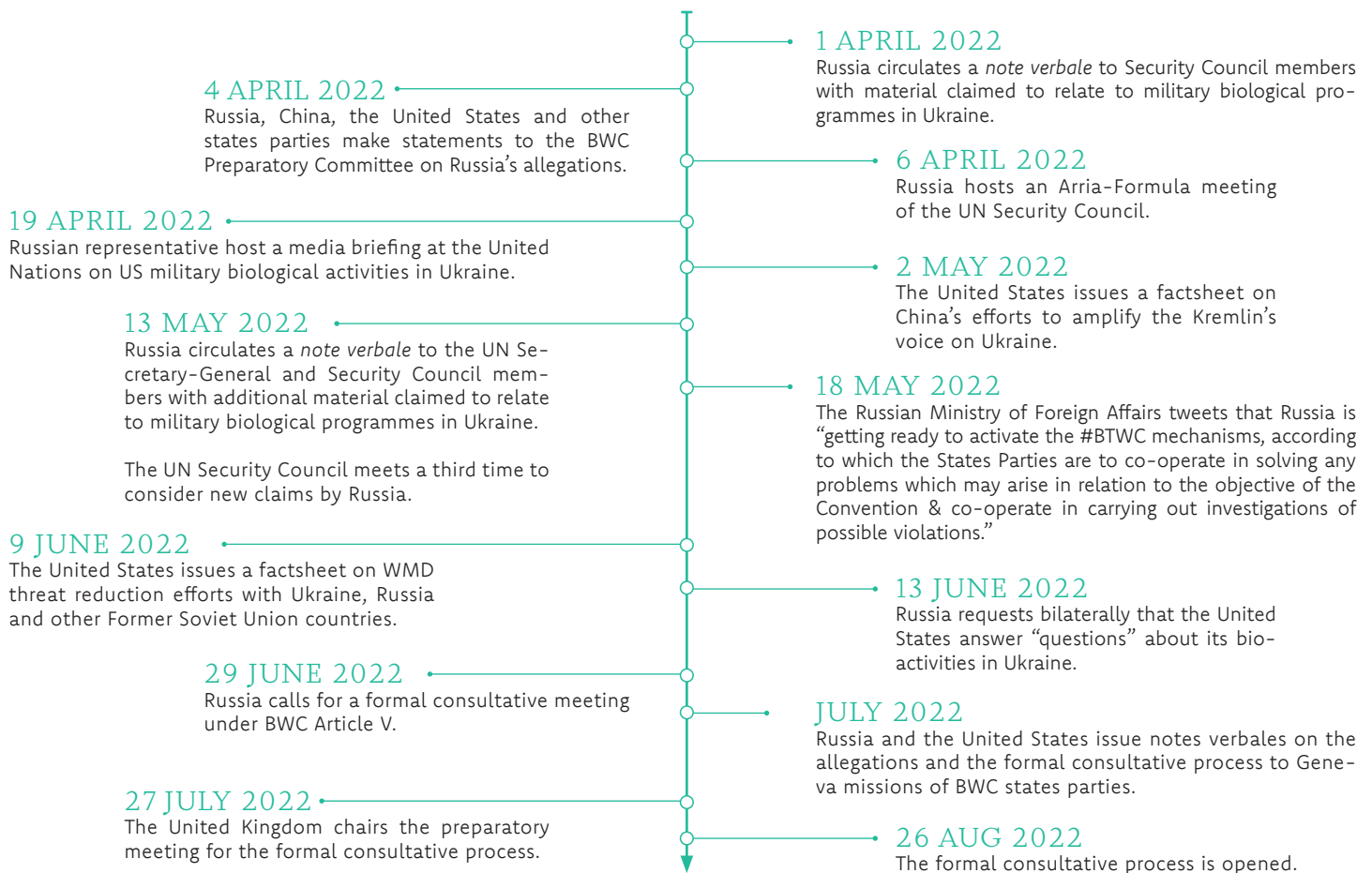
The Presidents of China and Russia release a joint statement on the margins of the Olympic Winter Games, expressing concern about US non-compliance with the BWC.

10 MARCH 2022

The United States issues a youtube video on its biological threat reduction programme.

18 MARCH 2022

The UN Security Council meets a second time to discuss Russia’s allegations of military biological activities in Ukraine.



KEY MESSAGES

- Triggering Article V is an attempt by the Kremlin to distract attention away from Russia's unprovoked military invasion and its continuing war against Ukraine.
- The potential consequences of Russia's allegations are significant. They may erode confidence in essential public and animal health infrastructure, and significantly undermine global biosafety and biosecurity efforts.
- If Russia is effective at framing US development assistance as a form of non-compliance with the BWC, the Article V process could seriously undermine development aid and cooperation efforts on peaceful biological research under BWC Article X.

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DISINFORMATION MONITOR HERE:



READ MORE

- Lentzos, F & Littlewood, J, 'Russia finds another stage for the Ukraine biolabs disinformation show,' *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 8 July 2022.
- Jakob, U et al, 'Russian allegations of biological weapons activities in Ukraine,' *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) Blog*, 22 March 2022.