

STATEMENT BY THE COUNTERING WMD DISINFORMATION INITIATIVE OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP AGAINST THE SPREAD OF WEAPONS AND MATERIALS OF MASS DESTRUCTION



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On 17 June, G7 leaders affirmed their unwavering support for Ukraine in defending its freedom, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

The Countering WMD Disinformation Initiative of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP) is one of many tools developed by the G7 to help Ukraine mitigate the impacts of Russian aggression. It provides a comprehensive, coordinated, and multi-disciplinary response to state-sponsored or state-adjacent disinformation regarding weapons of mass destruction. This includes an ongoing campaign of disinformation targeting biological laboratories in Ukraine that have benefitted from the support of GP members.

As has been publicly documented for many years, international assistance to Ukrainian laboratories supports pathogen detection, microbial genomics, bioforensics, bioinformatic, diagnostics, biosafety, biosecurity, and surveillance for human and animal health. Public documentation makes clear that Ukrainian laboratories are owned and operated by the Government of Ukraine and function as public health, veterinary, diagnostic, scientific, or reference institutions.

The presence of pathogen samples in such laboratories is not unusual. Public health and veterinary laboratories around the world maintain and study pathogens in order to diagnose disease, monitor outbreaks, improve surveillance, develop treatments, and respond to health emergencies. The central question is not whether laboratories hold pathogens, but what activities are conducted, under whose authority, and for what purpose.

Allegations that Ukraine operates biological weapons programs supported by GP members—one of the justifications cited by Moscow for its full-scale invasion of Ukraine—have been actively promoted by the Russian Federation throughout its armed aggression. These allegations were examined through international mechanisms, including formal consultations under Article V of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 2022. Ukraine and GP members provided information on the relevant cooperation programs, their objectives, and their implementation. After careful review by States Parties to the BTWC, these allegations were deemed not credible. The Russian Federation also repeated these claims on multiple occasions at the United Nations Security Council yet presented no evidence to substantiate them.

These claims are part of a broader pattern of Russian biological weapons disinformation that has been documented over the past decade, including repeated attempts to portray biosurveillance and cooperative threat reduction as covert weapons work. Such narratives can complicate public understanding of legitimate biosafety and public health cooperation, create openings for misinterpretation, and distract from practical work to strengthen global biosafety and biosecurity.

The GP Countering WMD Disinformation Initiative encourages all states and institutions to support transparency, evidence-based communication, and the responsible use of international mechanisms. Cooperative threat reduction, disease surveillance, and laboratory biosafety are essential components of global health security. They should be assessed on verified facts and not presented as evidence of prohibited weapons development without clear substantiation.