

# Biological and chemical weapons proliferation, country-specific sources

## Albania

### Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed

“Although it joined the CWC in 1994, Albania did not acknowledge its possession of 16 metric tons of mustard agent (as well as small quantities of lewisite and other chemicals) until 2003. The OPCW declared Albania’s destruction complete in July 2007.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

## Australia

### Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed

“Destroyed its chemical weapons stockpiles after World War II”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/australia/>

## Canada

### Biological weapons status, historical: possessed

“Tested American chemical and biological weapons during the 1960’s”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/canada/>

“The Office of Technology Assessment includes Canada in a list of countries that have admitted to having had "offensive [biological] weapon munition supplies or development programs in the historical.”

Link: [https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons\\_-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf](https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons_-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf)

### Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed

“During World War II, Canada manufactured chemical munitions and purchased both lewisite and phosgene from the U.S. Army. In 1946, following the war, Canada destroyed its chemical weapons stockpile.”

Link: [https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons\\_-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf](https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons_-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf)

## China

### **Biological weapons status, historical: allegedly pursued**

“According to the United States, China’s BW activities have been extensive, and a 1993 State Department Compliance Report alleged that activities continued after China joined the BWC.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Past reports by the U.S. departments of State and Defense have alleged that China maintained a small-scale offensive biological weapons program even after joining the BTWC, and that Chinese entities have transferred controlled biological weapons-related items to nations of proliferation concern, such as Iran. However, the most recent U.S. assessment cites no evidence of any Chinese violation of BTWC obligations, although it notes China’s potential dual-use activities.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/china-biological/>

### **Chemical weapons status, historical: pursued**

“China declared in 1997 that it had a small offensive CW program that has now been dismantled, which has been verified by over 400 inspections by the OPCW as of 2016.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“While China declared upon ratification of the CWC that it had once operated a small chemical weapons program for offensive purposes, it has consistently maintained that the program has since been dismantled. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has conducted more than 300 inspections in China to confirm Beijing’s declarations.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/china-chemical/>

## Egypt

### **Biological weapons status, historical: allegedly possessed**

“A vague statement alluding to a BW capability was reportedly made by President al-Sadat in 1970, but Egypt has not officially declared a biological weapons stockpile. [...] There have been various allegations that Egypt possesses biological weapons. Some argue that Egypt’s reluctance to ratify the BWC signals that it does possess biological weapons. The United States alleged that Egypt had developed a biological weapons stockpile by 1972.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Public claims that Egypt has an active biological warfare (BW) program have circulated since Egyptian officials made two statements about BW in 1972. After these statements,

Egypt has been regularly discussed as a likely possessor of an offensive BW capability. However, despite the regular inclusion of Egypt in lists of BW possessor nations, very little, if any, data exists that compellingly, or indeed convincingly, supports allegations of an Egyptian BW program.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/egypt-biological/>

#### **Chemical weapons status, historical: used**

“There is strong evidence that Egypt employed bombs and artillery shells filled with phosgene and mustard agents during the Yemen Civil War from (1963 – 1967)”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Deployed chemical weapons in the North Yemen Civil War from 1963-1967”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/egypt/>

## **France**

#### **Biological weapons status, historical: pursued**

“Officially possessed a biological weapons program through 1972”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/france/>

#### **Chemical weapons status, historical: used**

“Developed and used phosgene and mustard agents during World War I [...] Destroyed stockpile before 1988 and maintains that it is in ‘excellent cooperation’ with the OPCW”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/france/>

## **Germany**

#### **Biological weapons status, historical: used**

“Anthrax and glanders were used offensively by Germany during World War I in a veterinary sabotage programe.”

Link: <https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf>

#### **Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed**

“Germany's World War II stockpile of chemical weapons included phosgene, cyanide, mustard gas, sarin, and tabun.”

Link: <https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf>

## India

### **Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed**

“Announced destruction of all chemical weapons stocks in March 2009.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/india/>

## Iran

### **Biological weapons status, current: allegedly pursues**

“In the 2021 compliance report, the United States alleged that “Iran has not abandoned its intention to conduct research and development of biological agents and toxins for offensive purposes.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Although Iran has been accused by some countries of secretly developing an offensive BW program, most notably in the 1990s, more recent assessments have tended to avoid such definitive claims, instead emphasizing the dual-use capabilities inherent to Iran’s robust civil biotechnology sector. Available information indicates that Iran likely undertook some BW-related work in the past and, furthermore, that its capacity to pursue such a program has increased over time.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/iran-biological/>

### **Biological weapons status, historical: allegedly pursued**

“According to a 2004 CIA report, Iran has previously conducted offensive biological weapons agent research and development and continues to seek dual-use biotechnology.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/iranprofile>

“Even though Iran is part of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Tehran probably maintained an offensive BW program. Iran continued to seek dual-use biotechnical materials, equipment, and expertise. While such materials had legitimate uses, Iran’s biological warfare (BW) program also could have benefited from them. It is likely that Iran has capabilities to produce small quantities of BW agents, but has a limited ability to weaponize them.”

Link: [https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons\\_-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf](https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons_-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf)

### **Chemical weapons status, current: allegedly pursues**

“The United States accused Iran in 2021 of non-compliance with the CWC for an incomplete stockpile and facilities declaration and alleged concern that Iran may be pursuing pharmaceutical-based agents for a military purpose.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

#### **Chemical weapons status, historical: allegedly possessed**

“Pre-2003 U.S. intelligence assessments alleged that Iran had a stockpile of CW. This stockpile is thought to have included blister, blood, and choking agents and probably nerve agents.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Rejects U.S. claims that Iran supplied Libya with chemical munitions in 1980's”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/iran/>

“Iran likely has already stockpiled blister, blood, choking, and probably nerve agents—and the bombs and artillery shells to deliver them—which it previously had manufactured”

Link: <https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf>

## **Iraq**

#### **Biological weapons status, historical: possessed**

“Iraq admitted to testing and stockpiling BW in the mid-1990s. These stockpiles appear to have been destroyed prior to the 2003 invasion. There have been no declarations about BW after 2003.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Produced large quantities of botulinum toxin, anthrax, and aflatoxin during the 1980's and early 1990's [...] Iraq Survey Group confirmed that Iraq abandoned its bioweapons program in 1991”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/iraq/>

#### **Chemical weapons status, historical: used**

“Iraq delivered chemical agents against Iranian forces during the Iran-Iraq War using aerial bombs, artillery, rocket launchers, tactical rockets, and helicoptermounted sprayers and it also used chemical weapons against its Kurdish population in 1988. [...] Destruction activities were delayed due to an unstable security situation, but began in 2017. On March 13, 2018, the OPCW announced that all of Iraq's chemical weapons had been destroyed.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Used mustard gas and tabun against Iranian and Kurdish populations during Iran-Iraq War”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/iraq/>

## Israel

### Biological weapons status, historical: allegedly pursued

“There is belief that Israel has had an offensive BW program in the past. It is unclear if this is still the case.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“While Israel maintains advanced R&D biodefense, and even possibly BW agent production capabilities, most analysts do not believe Israel maintains active production or stockpiles.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/israel-biological/>

“It has not made public pronouncements on its biological weapons policy nor signed the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which is widely interpreted as an indication that Israel has some offensive capabilities.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/israelprofile>

### Chemical weapons status, historical: pursued

“Evidence suggests development of an extensive chemical weapons program in the 1950s. Likely possesses capability to produce nerve agents, including binary agents”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/israel/>

“Although the status of its formerly extensive offensive weapons program and stockpile is unknown, Israel is active in defensive research and believed to maintain advanced scientific-technical chemical weapons research and development infrastructure.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/israelprofile>

“Analysts believe that Israel initiated a chemical warfare (CW) program at some point in its history probably in the mid-1950s. 1 Intelligence sources have also suggested that Israel has previously developed, tested, produced, and possibly even deployed CW munitions.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/israel-chemical/>

## Italy

### Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed

“The Italian chemical weapons inventory during World War II included mustard gas and phosgene.”

Link: [https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons -Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf](https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf)

## Japan

### **Biological weapons status, historical: used**

“Extensive use of biological weapons during WWII, including widespread attacks on civilians and crops”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/japan/>

### **Chemical weapons status, historical: used**

“Used chemical weapons against Chinese troops and civilians during WWII”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/japan/>

## Libya

### **Biological weapons status, historical: pursued**

“Libya announced in December 2003 that it would eliminate its BW program.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Attempted to procure international assistance for a biological weapons program in the 1990s”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/libya/>

### **Chemical weapons status, historical: used**

“In 2003, Libya announced it would be abandoning its CW program and in 2004 it declared possession of chemical agents and facilities. Libya declared 24.7 metric tons of mustard agent in bulk containers. [...] In January 2018, the OPCW declared that Libya's entire chemical weapons arsenal had been destroyed.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Possessed a moderate chemical weapons arsenal until 2004. Deployed chemical weapons in a conflict against Chad in 1987”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/libya/>

## North Korea

### **Biological weapons status, current: allegedly pursues**

“In a 2012 Ministry of National Defense White Paper, South Korea asserted that “North Korea likely has the capability to produce[...] anthrax, smallpox, pest, francisella tularensis, and hemorrhagic fever viruses.” The United States assessed North Korea to be in noncompliance with the BWC in its 2021 compliance report.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Accused by U.S. and South Korea of pursuing biological weapons despite treaty commitments. Presumed capability to produce anthrax, smallpox and plague”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/north-korea/>

“The DPRK is suspected of maintaining an ongoing biological weapons (BW) program in violation of its international commitments, but there is no definitive information about the program’s status.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/north-korea-biological/>

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“In its 2006 Defense White Paper, the South Korean Ministry of Defense stated with respect to North Korea’s chemical and biological weapons programs, “It is assessed that North Korea has been producing poison gas and biological weapons since the 1980s. It is believed that 2,500 to 5,000 tons of a variety of agents including nerve agents remain stored in a number of facilities...and that North Korea is able to produce biological weapons such as the bacteria of anthrax, smallpox, and cholera.””

Link: [https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons -Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf](https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf)

“According to North Korean defectors and assessments by the U.S. and South Korean governments, North Korea began acquiring a biological weapons capability as early as the 1960s under the orders of Kim Il-sung.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/north-korea-biological/>

### **Chemical weapons status, current: allegedly recently used**

“In February 2017, North Korean agents used VX, a nerve agent, to assassinate Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of Kim Jong Un in Malaysia.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“North Korea rejected claims that it was behind the assassination, instead citing the attack as a conspiracy between Malaysia and South Korea.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/north-korea-chemical/>



“While assessing CW stockpiles and capabilities are difficult, the DPRK is thought to be among the world’s largest possessors of chemical weapons, ranking third after the United States and Russia.”

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“North Korea is widely believed to possess a large chemical stockpile including nerve, blister, choking, and blood agents. The 2012 unclassified intelligence assessment provided to Congress states that North Korea has a "long standing CW program" and "possesses a large stockpile of agents."

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

## **Russia**

#### **Biological weapons status, current: allegedly pursues**

“The 2017 report states that “Russia’s annual BWC CBM submissions since 1992 have not satisfactorily documented whether the BW items under these programs were destroyed or diverted to peaceful purposes, as required by Article II of the BWC.” In its 2021 compliance report, the United States concluded that “the Russian Federation maintains an offensive BW program and is in violation of its obligations under Articles I and II of the BWC.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

#### **Biological weapons status, historical: possessed**

“In January 1992, Boris Yeltsin acknowledged that the Soviet Union had pursued an extensive and offensive BW program throughout the 1970s and 1980s. However, since joining the BWC in 1992, Russia has repeatedly expressed its commitment to the destruction of its biological weapons.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

#### **Chemical weapons status, current: allegedly recently used**

“The UK accused Russia of assassinating a former Russian spy, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter Yulia, in the UK using the chemical agent Novichok on March 4, 2018. In a 2021 State Department report on compliance with the CWC, the United States accused Russia of noncompliance with the CWC for its alleged use of Novichok.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Accused of developing a new class of nerve agents (Novichok) and using them in the 2018 attempted assassination of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in the UK”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/russia/>

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“Accused of developing a new class of nerve agents (Novichok) and using them in the 2018 attempted assassination of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in the UK”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/russia/>

“Russia possessed the world’s largest chemical weapons stockpile: approximately 40,000 metric tons of chemical agent, including VX, sarin, soman, mustard, lewisite, mustard-lewisite mixtures, and phosgene. [...] On September 27, 2017, the OPCW announced that Russia completed destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Possessed world's largest chemical weapons arsenal during Cold War”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/russia/>

“From the early 1920s through the early 1990s, the Soviet Union developed, produced, stockpiled and deployed chemical weapons (CW).”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/russia-chemical/>

## **Serbia**

#### **Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed**

“Produced a wide variety of chemical weapons and delivery systems prior to its breakup in 1991 [...] All remaining production equipment and materials destroyed under the supervision of the OPCW in 2003”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/former-yugoslavia/>

“Human Rights Watch reports [in 1998] FRY possession of sarin, sulfur mustard, BZ, CS, CN, LSD-25, chloropicrin, cyanogen chloride, soman, tabun, and VX.”

Link: [https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons -Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf](https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2008-Chemical-and-Biological-Weapons-Possession-and-Programs-Past-and-Present.pdf)

## South Africa

### **Biological weapons status, historical: used**

“Utilized anthrax and botulinum toxin to target perceived enemies of the apartheid regime”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/south-africa/>

“In August 1989, Dr. Basson reportedly instructed RRL’s Dr. Immelman to provide 22 bottles of *V. cholerae* to Dr. R. J. Botha, at that time a medical coordinator of the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), a covert Special Forces assassination unit. CCB deputy chief Joe Verster then gave four of those bottles to regional CCB commander Pieter Botes, who testified that he directed his subordinates, Charlie Krause and José Daniels, to dump the contents of two bottles into the water supply at the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) refugee camp outside Windhoek in Namibia. Chlorine was being used to purify this water supply, which reportedly resulted in the failure to poison the reservoir. 20 Evidence of other offensive BW use by South Africa has not come to light.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/south-africa-biological/>

### **Chemical weapons status, historical: allegedly used**

“Basson, however, tacitly acknowledged that early on South Africa may have considered deploying CW agents as offensive battlefield weapons when he stated that all research on lethal CBW agents intended for conventional weapons delivery concluded by 1986 or 1987. 21 The SADF may have tripped the defensive to offensive line in January 1992 when it bombed Front for the Liberation of Mozambique troops from a pilotless observer aircraft near Ngungwe, killing at least five and injuring several more in a field test of an unspecified CW agent. 22 Basson led an SAMS team to investigate the incident, but the SADF sought to blame the ANC for sponsoring this CW attack, and a top secret 1992 National Intelligence Service report attributed the attack to the SADF. 23 Shortly thereafter, the U.S. and British governments issued a diplomatic protest to South Africa, alluding to a similar conclusion of SADF culpability. 24 Despite allegations that the SADF carried out other CW attacks against enemy troops in neighboring states,

definitive evidence that South Africa used chemical weapons in an offensive capacity has not surfaced.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/south-africa-chemical/>

## South Korea

### **Chemical weapons status, historical: possessed**

“South Korea declared a chemical weapons stockpile of unspecified agents when it joined the CWC in 1997 and completed destruction of its declared arsenal on July 10, 2008.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

## Syria

### **Biological weapons status, historical: possessed**

“In July 2012, a spokesman for the Syrian Foreign Ministry confirmed that the country possesses biological warfare materials, but little is known about the extent of the arsenal. On July 14, 2014, Syria declared the existence of production facilities and stockpiles of purified ricin, although little is known about the continued existence of such facilities in 2017.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Declared ricin production facility and stockpiles of purified ricin to OPCW in 2014. Very limited open source information regarding current biological warfare capabilities”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/syria/>

“Open sources provide no indications that Syria currently possesses an offensive BW capability. [...] While the subject of great uncertainty, the future prospect, or perhaps the current extent, of a Syrian biological weapons program is most likely limited amid the violence and unrest of the ongoing civil war.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/syria-biological/>

### **Chemical weapons status, current: recently used**

“Several UNOPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) reports have found that the Syrian government was responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria, including in April 2014, March 2015, March 2016, and April 2017 and that the Islamic State was responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria in August 2015 and September 2016.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Conducted major chemical weapon attacks after 2013 declaration, including Khan Sheikhoun (2017) and Douma (2018)”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/syria/>

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“Press and U.S. government sources indicate that Syria first obtained chemical weapons from Egypt on the eve of its attack on Israel in October 1973. [...] Notably, although Syrian forces suffered severe defeat, at no point did they deploy chemical weapons. [...] By 1997, both U.S. and Israeli sources claimed that Syria’s CW program included production facilities in Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo and could produce sarin, mustard, and potentially VX.”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/syria-chemical/>

“The OPCW announced that the entirety of Syria’s declared stockpile of 1,308 metric tons of sulfur mustard agent and precursor chemicals had been destroyed in January 2016. However, reports continue to surface of chemical weapon use in Syria, raising questions about the accuracy of its initial declaration.”

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Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/syria/>

## **United Kingdom**

#### **Biological weapons status, historical: possessed**

“Weaponized and experimented with pathogens from 1934 to 1956”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/united-kingdom/>

**Chemical weapons status, historical: used**

“Widespread use in World War I. Stockpiled phosgene, mustard gas, and lewisite during World War II. Renounced and destroyed its chemical weapon program, beginning in 1958”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/united-kingdom/>

## United States

**Biological weapons status, current: allegedly pursues**

“According to a compliance report published by the Russian government in August 2010, the United States is undertaking research on Smallpox which is prohibited by the World Health Organization.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

**Biological weapons status, historical: possessed**

“The destruction of all offensive BW agents occurred between 1971 and 1973.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“Maintained bioweapons program from 1943-1973; weaponized anthrax, tularemia, VEE, Botulinum Toxin, and staphylococcal enterotoxin B (SEB). Renounced biological weapons in 1969; destroyed entire BW stockpile by 1973”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/united-states/>

**Chemical weapons status, current: possesses**

“The United States declared a large chemical arsenal of 27,770 metric tons to the OPCW after the CWC came into force in 1997. [...] The United States has destroyed all of Category 2 and Category 3 weapons and is projected to complete destruction of its Category 1 weapons by September 2023.”

Link: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif>

“On track to complete the destruction of its chemical stockpiles by September 2023”

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/united-states/>

**Chemical weapons status, historical: used**

“Manufactured, stockpiled, and used mustard gas and phosgene during WWI

Link: <https://www.nti.org/countries/united-states/>