

Projection of NWB financial contributions based on the BTWC

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	UN Scale of Assessments	BTWC (Prorated)	Total BTWC arrears (2001-17)	Colour codes
Afghanistan	0.006	\$67	-\$167.79	
Algeria	0.161	\$1,798		
Angola	0.010	\$112		
Antigua and Barbuda	0.002	\$22	-\$73.60	
Argentina	0.892	\$9,961	-\$7,282.86	
Austria	0.720	\$8,040		
Azerbaijan	0.060	\$670		
Bahamas	0.014	\$156	-\$114.16	
Bahrain	0.044	\$491		
Bangladesh	0.010	\$112	-\$91.61	
Belize	0.001	\$11		
Benin	0.003	\$33	-\$111.39	
Bhutan	0.001	\$11		
Bolivia	0.012	\$134	-\$417.56	
Botswana	0.014	\$156	-\$351.05	
Brazil	3.823	\$42,691	-\$298,459.07	
Brunei Darussalam	0.029	\$324		
Burkina Faso	0.004	\$44	-\$139.19	
Burundi	0.001	\$11	-\$3.80	
Cabo Verde	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80	
Cambodia	0.004	\$44		
Chad	0.005	\$55		
Chile	0.399	\$4,456		
Colombia	0.322	\$3,595		
Congo	0.006	\$67	-\$212.79	
Costa Rica	0.047	\$524		
Cote d'Ivoire	0.009	\$101		
Cuba	0.065	\$726	-\$185.38	
Cyprus	0.043	\$480		
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.008	\$90	-\$252.37	
Djibouti	0.001	\$11		
Dominican Republic	0.046	\$513	-\$2,458.49	
Ecuador	0.067	\$748		
Egypt	0.152	\$1,686		
El Salvador	0.014	\$156	-\$1,074.60	
Equatorial Guinea	0.010	\$112	-\$580.06	
Eritrea	0.001	\$11		
Ethiopia	0.010	\$112		
Fiji	0.003	\$33	-\$83.39	
Gabon	0.017	\$190	-\$1,223.80	
Gambia	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80	
Ghana	0.016	\$179	-\$447.75	
Grenada	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80	
Guatemala	0.028	\$313		
Guinea-Bissau	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80	
Guyana	0.002	\$22		
Haiti	0.003	\$33		
Holy See	0.000	\$0		
Honduras	0.008	\$90	-\$267.04	
Indonesia	0.504	\$5,629		
Iran	0.471	\$5,260	-\$3,845.36	
Iraq	0.129	\$1,440		
Ireland	0.335	\$3,741		
Jamaica	0.009	\$101	-\$732.12	
Jordan	0.020	\$223	-\$55.94	
Kazakhstan	0.191	\$2,133		
Kenya	0.018	\$201	-\$751.80	
Kiribati	0.001	\$11		
Kuwait	0.285	\$3,183		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.003	\$33		
Lebanon	0.046	\$513		
Lesotho	0.001	\$11		
Liberia	0.001	\$11	-\$27.80	
Liechtenstein	0.007	\$79	-\$57.57	
Madagascar	0.003	\$33		
Malawi	0.002	\$22	-\$38.51	
Malaysia	0.322	\$3,595		
Malta	0.016	\$179	-\$456.04	

UN observer state
BTWC non-state party
BTWC payment arrears

Marshall Islands	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80
Mauritania	0.002	\$22	\$16.60
Mauritius	0.012	\$134	
Mexico	1.435	\$16,025	
Mongolia	0.005	\$55	-\$39.99
Morocco	0.054	\$603	-\$441.04
Mozambique	0.004	\$44	-\$139.19
Myanmar	0.010	\$112	-\$32.97
Namibia	0.010	\$112	
Nepal	0.006	\$67	-\$167.79
New Zealand	0.268	\$2,992	
Nigeria	0.209	\$2,334	-\$10,989.66
Oman	0.113	\$1,262	-\$563.17
Palau	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80
Panama	0.034	\$379	-\$1,346.50
Papua New Guinea	0.004	\$44	-\$147.19
Paraguay	0.014	\$156	-\$582.74
Peru	0.136	\$1,519	
Philippines	0.165	\$1,843	
Qatar	0.269	\$3,003	
Republic of Moldova	0.004	\$44	-\$72.93
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.001	\$11	
Saint Lucia	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80
Samoa	0.001	\$11	
San Marino	0.003	\$33	-\$9.39
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80
Saudi Arabia	1.146	\$12,797	
Senegal	0.005	\$55	-\$96.86
Seychelles	0.001	\$11	
Sierra Leone	0.001	\$11	-\$22.80
Solomon Islands	0.001	\$11	
South Africa	0.364	\$4,064	
Sri Lanka	0.031	\$346	
State Of Palestine	0.000	\$0	
Sudan	0.010	\$112	-\$240.79
Suriname	0.006	\$67	-\$203.79
Sweden	0.956	\$10,675	-\$29.88
Switzerland	1.140	\$12,731	
Thailand	0.291	\$3,249	
Timor-Leste	0.003	\$33	
Togo	0.001	\$11	-\$3.80
Tonga	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80
Trinidad and Tobago	0.034	\$379	-\$2,067.26
Tunisia	0.028	\$313	-\$467.81
Uganda	0.009	\$101	
United Arab Emirates	0.604	\$6,745	
United Republic of Tanzania	0.010	\$112	
Uruguay	0.079	\$882	\$484.40
Vanuatu	0.001	\$11	-\$36.80
Venezuela	0.571	\$6,376	-\$34,712.19
Viet Nam	0.058	\$647	-\$3,234.18
Yemen	0.010	\$112	-\$479.48
Zimbabwe	0.004	\$44	-\$129.19

Potential contributions NWB	\$196,399	
Potential contributions debt-free states (relative to BTWC)	\$109,719	55,86%
Budget BTWC for 2017	\$1,109,500	

Ten Highest contributors

BTWC

		Total BTWC arrears (2001-17)
United States	\$245,683	
Japan	\$108,096	
China	\$88,458	-\$15.00
Germany	\$71,346	
France	\$54,260	
United Kingdom	\$49,838	
Brazil	\$42,691	-\$298,459.07
Russian Federation	\$34,484	-\$13,264.07
Spain	\$27,281	
Australia	\$26,097	
Total Top-10 contributors	\$748,234	

NWB

	(Potential)	Total BTWC arrears (2001-17)
Brazil	42,691	-\$298,459.07
Mexico	16,025	
Saudi Arabia	12,797	
Switzerland	12,731	
Sweden	10,675	-\$29.88
Argentina	9,961	-\$7,282.86
Austria	8,040	
United Arab Emirates	6,745	
Venezuela	6,376	-\$34,712.19
Indonesia	5,629	
Projected top contributions	131,670	



Pay up in the name of BW disarmament

It was a remarkable act. On 21 March the Permanent Representatives to the UN Conference of Disarmament of the three co-depositaries of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)—the Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States—[wrote to their colleagues in Geneva](#) to address the question of ‘assessed financial contributions to the Convention’. The matter is extremely urgent:

We have been informed that the funding currently available will only allow the [Implementation Support Unit – ISU] staff to have their contracts extended until end of April 2017. We, therefore, urge all States Parties to the Convention to pay their assessed contributions as soon as possible and to settle their arrears without delay. Without the prompt resolution of this issue, the structures and decisions agreed upon just a few months ago at the Eighth Review Conference will be in serious jeopardy.

But the lack of funding could spell trouble for the BTWC process too:

With respect to the Meeting of States Parties scheduled for December 2017, States Parties are kindly reminded that sufficient funds must be received in advance in order for the meeting to be organized as scheduled. The financial situation will be monitored regularly and a decision will need to be made three months prior to the meeting as to whether or not it can be held as planned.

For those in Geneva closely monitoring the health of the BTWC, the issue of non-payments is not new, but acquired greater urgency throughout 2016 to the point that the 8th Review Conference last November discussed the matter several times during the three-week meeting. As stated in [the final document](#) (p. 22, §12):

The Conference notes that, under new UN financial procedures, funds must be available before meet-

ings can be held. The Conference requests States Parties to proceed with the payment of their share of the estimated costs as soon as the assessment notices have been received from the United Nations to help ensure that the meetings can be held as scheduled.

Not just the BTWC

The issue is not unique to the BTWC. Merely a few weeks before the 5th Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (the so-called Inhumane Weapons Convention or CCW) was due to take place (12–16 December 2016) people were in despair whether it could be held at all. The CCW ISU even had to organise two informal briefings chaired by the President-designate on 8 and 14 November 2016 to discuss the financial challenges. As the CCW ISU wrote in [its report covering the previous intersessional period](#):

An issue of significant importance in 2016 is the timely payment by States of their financial obligations under the framework Convention, Amended Protocol II and Protocol V to which they are High Contracting Parties, or meetings and conferences in which they participate as States not parties (observers). This has ended up being a major area of work for the ISU. The existing United Nations Financial Rules and Regulations have always required that funds are received in advance of incurring expenditures such as the organising of meetings and conferences under the CCW and the salary costs for the two ISU staff members. Recent financial accountability initiatives including the introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the introduction of the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Umoja, are bringing greater transparency as well as stricter enforcement of these rules and regulations. These initiatives will no longer allow the Secretariat to convene a meeting or renew contracts of staff members, unless the necessary cash has been received in advance and previous arrears are paid in full.

This document also detailed the resource burden the arrears place on the small ISU (2 persons) and UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA):

UNODA, the Financial Resources Management Service (FRMS) of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the ISU are working together to address the current financial situation. Letters were dispatched to States reminding them of their outstanding dues, comprising their 2016 assessed contributions and past unpaid arrears. The ISU directly contacted States, updated the website on the status of contributions and facilitated the sending of messages on behalf of the President-designate on the financial crisis concerning the Review Conference. In addition, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-Soo, has brought this matter to the attention of the UN Member States in his statement at the UNGA's First Committee and sent letters to all those States with outstanding dues.

In a [letter similar to the one addressed to BTWC states parties dated 1 March](#), the UK's Permanent Rep-

representative in his capacity of Chairperson-elect of the 2017 CCW Meeting urged states parties to meet their financial obligations:

Any outstanding arrears and the 2017 assessed contributions for the CCW must be received as soon as possible in order to ensure the continuity of the CCW Implementation Support Unit (ISU), particularly its staff members. Currently the funding available will only allow the ISU staff to have their contracts extended until the end of April 2017.

Blame it on Umoja ...

The financial troubles affecting the implementation of multilateral disarmament and arms control treaties are not new. However, it is striking how last year they almost brought the work of agreements administered by the United Nations to a screeching halt. For treaties whose implementation is overseen by bodies outside the UN system, parties had to adopt specific measures to coax states into paying their arrears. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), having faced similar challenges for several years, has adopted multi-year payment plans. It can also coerce a recalcitrant member into paying by taking away its voting rights. Or by less formal measures ... For instance, last year an ever louder suggestion circulated that the Technical Secretariat would no longer consider hiring Brazilian nationals until the country had fulfilled all its financial obligations. (On Brazil, more below.)

The United Nations adopted an organisation-wide resource planning system, which takes care of all staff and financial administration, including record-keeping, workflow and communications, as well as any activities undertaken by UN agencies. It controls the work of any UN operative even in the most far-flung places on this planet. Commonly known as Umoja—Swahili for ‘united’—it is former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s brainchild. It was rolled out in November 2015 but the inevitable growing pains became an immediate source of intense frustration among UN staff. As [UN connoisseur Colum Lynch noted in *Foreign Policy* half a year later](#), the software required several years of development work at a cost of over \$400 million. Still, he reported that because of the chaos it created people could go without pay for several months (a claim disputed by a UN spokesperson) and that the UN was struggling with outside contractors.

Umoja also places full administrative responsibility with the individual, irrespective of the person’s job description. There is little room for delegation or functional specialisation. Data input for the simplest of tasks, e.g. registering a travel mission, requires several pages of input. Organising a seminar halfway across the world against a tight deadline can be even more challenging, particularly if mandatory minimal bureaucratic timelines cannot be met. The slightest mistake blocks the whole process; a software glitch that fails, for example, to connect administration with finance to release the required funds can take many hours, if not days to locate people not just in the building where one works, but also at one’s destination. And when things seem to get arranged in Geneva, somebody in New York can still override the whole process, and without notification or explanation make different and unasked arrangements that suit nobody and end up costing a lot more. Of course, by the time such an intervention is nullified, original arrangements have been cancelled.

Umoja indeed concentrates a lot of bureaucratic power in New York, but has made administrative responsibility diffuse. Today people claim that Umoja works much more smoothly than in 2016. One may wonder whether this is the case, or whether UN staff is falling prey to some bureaucratic variant of the Stockholm syndrome.

But let us not digress too far. The core point concerning the rigidity imposed by Umoja is that even the smallest expense must have a specific budget line. Insufficient budgetary provision automatically entails that no money can be expended. Given the interconnectedness of all elements in Umoja's process flow, the organisation of a meeting will therefore be automatically blocked.

... but it is really an individual responsibility of states parties

US\$ 379,556.66. That is the deficit the BTWC was facing on 28 February. The budgeted expenditure for 2017 amounts to \$1,109,500. Over one third of the money due has not yet been paid into the accounts. As [the tables prepared by UNODA](#) show, the nature of the deficit is even more hallucinating. Some arrears go as far back as 2001, year of the 5th Review Conference!

For the current year the deficit appears less dramatic at first sight: just under \$27,000. In reality, however, the UN received only \$759,796 in contributions. The remaining \$322,767 comprises overpayments from states parties, money that in principle the UN ought to refund at the end of the year (i.e. 2016).

Thirteen out of 178 states parties owe UNODA money in excess of \$10,000 (See Table 1). An additional 32 states are between 1,000 and \$10,000 in arrears. The majority—107 states parties—have negative balances of less than \$1000, of which 51 owe less than \$100.

Table 1: Outstanding contributions in excess of US\$ 10,000

	Deficit	Prorated % contributions (2017)	Assessed contributions (2017)
Brazil	298,459	3.848	42,691
Japan	79,026	9.743	108,096
China	39,477	7.972	88,458
Venezuela	34,712	0.575	6,376
Argentina	31,123	0.989	9,961
Germany	17,169	5.430	71,346
Russian Federation	13,264	3.108	34,484
Singapore	12,499	0.450	4,991
France	12,261	4.890	54,260
Tibva	11 770	0 126	1 396

Libya	11,713	0.120	1,330
Mexico	11,713	1.444	16,025
United Kingdom	11,058	4.492	49,838
Nigeria	10,990	0.210	2,334

Twenty-six countries have paid a combined \$322,767 in excess of what is due. In all but 8 cases the overpayment amounts to less than \$1,000 and in many instances to less than \$100. The overpayment by two countries stand out: the USA (\$249,491 or 77.3%) and Saudi Arabia (\$57,711 or 17.88%).

Table 2 shows that in seven cases the outstanding money is for 2017 only. A quick glance at the comprehensive table prepared by UNODA indicates this is also the case for many other countries.

	2001-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Brazil	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Japan									x
China									x
Venezuela					x	x	x	x	x
Argentina								x	x
Germany									x
Russian Federation									x
Singapore								x	x
France									x
Libya	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mexico									x
United Kingdom									x
Nigeria	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x

However, the responsibility of one country for the financial crisis is overwhelming: **Brazil owns 78.6% of the total deficit of the BTWC.** With the exception of 2011 it has defaulted on its financial obligations or paid its dues only partially since 2001. While it is true that 16 other states also owe UNODA money from before 2015, their combined outstanding balance amounts to \$75,678. (As Table 2 demonstrates, three of those countries are also listed among the states parties owing more than \$10,000 and are responsible for \$57,472 of that debt).

Urgent response needed

While one can easily envisage Umoja provoking computer screens to fly across offices, it still remains the responsibility of individual states parties to meet their commitments under international treaties. In fact, it is because of Umoja that the scale of the disarmament deficit could be laid out in detail. And the management tool is discretely being deployed to diplomatically name and shame recalcitrant payers.

In October 2016, a mere two weeks before the start of the 8th Review Conference, the ISU prepared [the first information document](#) on the status of assessed contributions to the BTWC from 2001 up to 21 October 2016. The total outstanding balance was then \$196,964. Comparison with the table issued in February shows that many states parties promptly responded, leading to a different pattern in overdue balances. The overall sum due increased by over \$80,000, but as indicated earlier, many states still have to transfer their contribution for 2017.

At first sight, the situation may not appear as dramatic as suggested in the letter by the co-depositories. However, this is where Umoja raises its head again. Received funds have to be spread over different budget lines. Some of these budget lines will not be used until a specific event takes place (e.g., document printing or interpretation for a meeting); other ones cover regular expenditure (e.g., salaries). Umoja is all but inflexible about money transfers from one budget post to another (even temporarily). So, if the budget line for salaries is not replenished in time, then the ISU staff goes without remuneration, even if money were available for documents or interpretation to bridge a temporary gap. Alternatively, even with salary cost fully funded for some months, if insufficient money is available to organise an event, such as a meeting of states parties, then that event is in jeopardy. This explains the urgency in the call for contributions. The ISU cannot draw on a working capital fund like the OPCW, which it used to cover temporary financial shortcomings, or reserves. And while the ISU is placed under UNODA, it does not belong to the core UN units. As a consequence, it cannot draw on central UN reserves or spare resources in case of a temporary shortfall. (The same goes when an ISU staff member is on sick or maternity leave: because the absentee continues to receive remuneration, no other person can be hired on the same budget line and the ISU cannot draw on a central pool of UN staff resources.)

Looking at how the OPCW addresses unpaid dues by states parties, it is clear that Umoja imposes bureaucratic rigidity and limits human initiative. Yet, in all likelihood adaptation of the way in which the BTWC is administered will alleviate, if not resolve the current financial anxieties. Still, this does not absolve the responsibility of individual states parties to pay their dues in time.

Brazil bears an overwhelming responsibility for the current crisis: it owns more than three-quarters of the overall deficit of the BTWC. Its arrears go back a decade and a half. This is not the consequence of a single incident or forgetfulness. The period in question covers moments of more than average GDP growth as well as the recession of the past two years. The problem manifests itself in different disarmament and arms control forums, including the OPCW. Last summer Brazilian officials indicated publicly and privately that money was being made available to address this deficit of the BTWC. However, comparing the UNODA tables presented in October 2016 and February 2017 reveals no reduction in the outstanding balance. Quite on the contrary.

It will be up to the BTWC states parties and the highest political level in the United Nations to bear pressure on Brazil to resolve this matter urgently.

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About JP Zanders

Jean Pascal Zanders (Belgium) has worked on questions of chemical and biological weapon (CBW) armament and disarmament since 1986. He was CBW Project Leader at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Director of the BioWeapons Prevention Project and Senior Research Fellow responsible for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation questions at the European Union Institute for Security Studies. He now owns and runs The Trench.

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