

Research Institute Collaborated on Anti-Nerve Agent Publications

In light of recent actions by the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce and Treasury, Sayari has conducted an investigation into collaboration between designated entities and international research and academic institutions. As many of Russia's research institutes serve as multipurpose facilities, it is likely that they engage with foreign entities and individuals on research projects and publications. These seemingly innocuous engagements with foreign institutions can provide Russian scientists and institutions with valuable information that could be repurposed for the development of chemical and biological weapons.

This red flag typology briefing serves to illustrate what these engagements look like by highlighting an example involving the State Scientific Research Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biology (GosNIIOKhT) — a designated entity — and the Scientific Advisory Board of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). GosNIIOKhT was sanctioned under Executive Order 13382 for contributing to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery. Specifically, the U.S. Department of State stated that the institute has a longstanding role in researching and developing chemical weapons and has contributed to the development of Russia's Novichok chemical weapon.

Public and private-sector research institutions are exposed to this risk of incidental and intangible support to Russia's chemical and biological weapons programs and should evaluate research collaborators and their affiliations accordingly.

Recent U.S. Regulations Target Russian Scientific Research Institutes

On Mar. 2, 2021, the U.S. Secretary of State determined that the Government of Russia had used a chemical weapon in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In response, the U.S. government expanded sanctions and export restrictions on Russian scientific institutes:

- The U.S. State Department [added six Russian research institutes](#) to the CAATSA Section 231 List of Specified Persons that support the Russian defense or intelligence sectors.
- The U.S. State Department also [designated three research institutes, the FSB, the GRU, and two GRU officers](#) under Executive Order (E.O.) 13382.
- The U.S. Treasury Department [designated the Director of the FSB](#) under E.O. 13382.

- The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security [added 14 entities in Russia, Germany, and Switzerland](#) to the Entity List.

GosNIIOKhT’s International Collaboration

In the course of its investigation of GosNIIOKhT, Sayari identified five OPCW publications with a co-author from the institute between 2018 and 2019. GosNIIOKhT’s representative on each of the publications was scientist Valentin Leonidovich Rubaylo (Валентин Леонидович Рубайло). The collaborations were the result of GosNIIOKhT’s seat on the OPCW’s Scientific Advisory Board, a subsidiary body that serves to provide advice in the fields of science and technology to the state parties of the convention. Included in the author list for these publications were representatives from 31 countries spanning six continents.

GosNIIOKhT’s seat on the OPCW’s Scientific Advisory Board lends some legitimacy to it as a research institution with an international presence. Its inclusion on both the board and these publications could cause unwitting research and academic bodies to engage in knowledge and technology sharing with GosNIIOKhT-affiliated researchers without proper vetting.

Of the five publications in which Rubaylo is listed as a co-author, two pertain directly to the medical treatment of injuries stemming from nerve agent exposure. Another provides advice and guidance on investigative methodologies as they pertain to identifying instances of nerve agent attacks. Please find the full list of topics below:

- *Advice on assistance and protection provided by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons: Part 1. On medical care and treatment of injuries from nerve agents* (March 2019)
- *Advice on assistance and protection from the Scientific Advisory Board of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons: Part 2. On preventing and treating health effects from acute, prolonged, and repeated nerve agent exposure, and the identification of medical countermeasures able to reduce or eliminate the longer term health effects of nerve agents* (February 2019)
- *Advice from the Scientific Advisory Board of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on riot control agents in connection to the Chemical Weapons Convention* (December 2018)
- *Advice from the Scientific Advisory Board of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on isotopically labelled chemicals and stereoisomers in relation to the Chemical Weapons Convention* (September 2018)
- *Advice on chemical weapons sample stability and storage provided by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to increase investigative capabilities worldwide* (April 2018)