First Committee briefing book
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Less than a week after governments met at the UN in Geneva to try to agree on a way forward on autonomous weapon systems, the US Department of Defense announced a $2 billion investment in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. While the vast majority of countries have made it clear that they want to prevent the development of weapons that would operate outside of meaningful human control, the US military is clearly forging ahead towards such a future.

This is a classic example of one of the key problems plaguing international peace and security. The desire for domination by a tiny minority of governments imperils the rest of the world—and those governments’ own populations. The development of killer robots will not bring peace or security to the world; it will result in devastatingly costly arms races, increasing inequality within and between countries, violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and a loss of human dignity. But a handful of states are seeking their development, with billions of dollars worth of military contracts on the line—and thus are blocking international attempts to prevent the nightmare dystopia waiting for us at the end of this path.

We’ve seen the same with nuclear weapons, with guns and ammunition, with the practices of the international arms trade and of bombing towns and cities. We know where this is heading. Once again, the concept of minority rule—which current procedures in the UN system facilitates—is putting us all at risk.

On the eve of Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein’s departure as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, he lamented that “too many summits and conferences held between states are tortured affairs that lack profundity but are full of jargon and tiresome clichés that are, in a word, meaningless. What is absent,” he argued, “is a sincere will to work together, though all will claim—again, under the lights and on camera—that they are wholly committed to doing so.” He criticised the international community, “led by too many feckless politicians,” for being “too weak to privilege human lives, human dignity, tolerance—and ultimately, global security—over the price of hydrocarbons and the signing of defence contracts.”

This is something delegates to First Committee should think about ahead of the next session. Who are they coming to the UN to represent? Whose interests—and security—will they seek to protect? Are they here in New York to act on behalf of the interest of humanity? Or on behalf of those profiting from violence and conflict?

This briefing book, written by civil society activists and experts, presents both challenges and suggested solutions for a number of issues related to weapons and war. The non-governmental organisations, coalitions, and campaigns participating most actively at First Committee have argued consistently that we...
can and must advance human security and social and economic justice through disarmament and arms control. We call for an approach to disarmament that is driven by the rights of people most affected by armed violence, not by the discretion of states and organisations most responsible for it.

We believe that most delegates seek true progress and the enhancement of human security, and we seek to work with those delegations at this meeting and beyond. The hope that Zeid expresses at the end of his farewell article is that grassroots activists can coordinate with each other, and, where possible, work with those in business and other sectors to stand up to those who threaten humanity. It’s interesting, in this context, that *The Washington Post* report on the Pentagon’s AI investments notes that the move steps up not just a technological arms race with China but also an ideological conflict with tech workers inside the United States. Indeed, a “worker uprising” inside Google just a few months ago led to the company agreeing not to renew its contract with the US Department of Defense.³

One of the tech workers involved in this action attended the UN talks in Geneva on autonomous weapons. He was clear that the 4000+ workers that took their company to task over Project Maven are only the tip of the iceberg in the growing resistance to the development of unaccountable technologies. “But there is so much more work to do to make sure that machines serve the needs of human beings and not the other way around,” warned Amr Gaber, who in addition to being a Google employee is also with the Tech Workers Coalition. In this endeavour, he said, “We are tired of weak, selfish and dishonest leadership, bottomless greed and exploitation and we are tired of artificial conflict. We are tired of hearing that these issues are too hard to solve and we have to wait and we have to continue to suffer while the rich and powerful eat the world and make it harder for us to live decent lives and ensure the same for our children. We are standing up now for justice, for freedom, homes for the unhoused, food for the hungry, dignity for all work, keeping families together, and a better future for all people around the world regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, immigration status, age, or ability. Join us.”⁴

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Background
Any use of nuclear weapons would cause unacceptable humanitarian suffering and would violate international humanitarian law, environmental law, and human rights law. The humanitarian effects of the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still felt today, over 70 years later. No test of any nuclear explosive device should ever occur again.

On 7 July 2017, 122 states voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at a specially convened United Nations diplomatic conference. The TPNW is a landmark disarmament agreement that comprehensively outlaws the most destructive weapon ever devised and establishes a pathway to its total elimination. The Treaty prohibits all development, production, possession, and use of nuclear weapons. In addition, the TPNW obligates states parties to provide assistance to victims of nuclear detonations and to work towards environmental remediation of affected areas. These landmark provisions help situate the Treaty in the broader humanitarian disarmament framework, which seeks to outlaw and eliminate weapons that lead to human suffering.

The TPNW builds upon and adds to the norms established by the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the regional treaties creating nuclear weapon free zones, and the Partial and Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban treaties, as well as the biological and chemical weapons disarmament treaties and other prohibitions of weapons that cause unacceptable harm.

The TPNW opened for signature at UN Headquarters in New York on 20 September 2017. As of early September 2018, a total of 60 states have signed the TPNW, of which 14 have also ratified, and one state has acceded directly. A further 35 states must either ratify or accede to the TPNW to trigger its entry into force. The Treaty will enter into force as binding international law 90 days thereafter. A first Meeting of the States Parties must then be convened within a year of the TPNW’s entry into force.

A special ceremony is being held at the UN Headquarters in New York on 26 September, though a state may also sign, ratify, or accede to the TPNW at any time.

Current context
The nine nuclear-armed states continue to invest billions of dollars into the so-called modernisation of their nuclear arsenals and related infrastructure. Tensions between some of these states are on the rise, along with threats to use nuclear weapons.
At the same time, the TPNW has established a powerful norm against nuclear weapons and is already begun to impact on behaviour and policies even in states that have not yet adhered to it. Major financial institutions in two umbrella states, for instance, have indicated their intention to exclude nuclear weapon-producing companies from their investment portfolio and parliamentary processes are underway in several non-signatory states, while local authorities in nuclear-armed states, such as the California state Senate in the United States, have expressed support for the Treaty and called for the Federal Government to begin disarmament negotiations.

In the context of rising geopolitical tensions, which have included threats to use nuclear weapons, further demonstrating the increasing risks of a nuclear detonation, states must unequivocally reject nuclear weapons as inherently illegitimate. The TPNW is the best response states can make to put an end to “nuclear sabre-rattling”, which is a major threat to international peace and security. Each state that signs and ratifies this treaty will contribute to strengthening this instrument’s wider impact in global nuclear politics, to delegitimising the role of weapons of mass destruction in security policies, and even to influencing military practices in states that do not initially sign the Treaty.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Express support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and, for those that have not yet done so, declare their intention to become a state party to the Treaty as soon as possible;
- Highlight and condemn as illegitimate any ongoing activities that are prohibited under this Treaty, such as threats to use nuclear weapons, testing of nuclear weapons, and the development and modernisation of nuclear arsenals; and
- Call for all resolutions on nuclear weapons to include a reference to the TPNW.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Sign and ratify the TPNW and work to ensure its quick entry into force, including by encouraging other states to join it;
- Adopt national legislation and other measures to implement the Treaty, including by ending investments in nuclear weapon-producing companies and other activities that support the use, development, maintenance, or modernisation of these weapons;
- Designate a focal point within the government to assess the needs and plan implementation of victim assistance and environmental remediation efforts;
- Reject nuclear weapons as legitimate weapons and work to end any military activities related to the development and use of nuclear weapons; and
- Encourage, bilaterally and multilaterally, all states to join the broad international consensus against weapons of mass destruction and for nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear weapons in accordance with the TPNW.

Authors: Stuart Maslen and Daniel Högsta
Chemical weapons
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Background
The use of chemical weapons is universally considered to be contrary to the laws against humanity and the dictates of public conscience. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer, or use of these weapons. Twenty-one years after its entry into force, the CWC has 193 states parties and one signatory state. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is tasked with regulating treaty compliance. Russia—formerly the largest possessor of chemical weapons—is officially said to have completed the destruction of its stockpile in 2017.¹

Chemical weapons, which are inherently indiscriminate, are any toxic chemical or its precursor that can cause death, injury, temporary incapacitation or sensory irritation through its chemical action, and includes related munitions and delivery systems. Chlorine, mustard gas, and sarin are among the most used weaponised chemicals. Many of the chemicals that can be used as a weapon are dual-use.

Current context
The continued use of chemical weapons in Syria has eroded the norm against using these weapons. Over 85 confirmed chemical attacks have taken place in the country since 21 August 2013, the day of the deadliest chemical attack in Syria to date. After the OPCW’s Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) found the Syrian government responsible for the April 2017 sarin attack in Khan Sheikhoun, Russia used its veto in the UN Security Council to prevent the renewal of the JIM’s mandate, preventing the OPCW from attributing accountability.²

However, in June this year, CWC states parties’ voted by an overwhelming majority to authorise the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. This is an important move towards accountability, and towards restoring the norm against chemical weapons more broadly.³ Unprecedented use of sophisticated nerve agents in other parts of the world, specifically in Malaysia and the UK, highlight the urgent necessity to assign responsibility for those violating the prohibition against chemical weapons.

A major review conference in November will take stock of the CWC. It will offer an opportunity for states parties to further strengthen the treaty to ensure the attribution of blame for chemical attacks anywhere and anytime. It is envisioned that statements during the 2018 First Committee will take a focus on these recent and upcoming developments.
The use of chemical weapons over the last few years was referenced in nearly every intervention during the 2017 First Committee general debate. In the thematic cluster on “Other weapons of mass destruction” some states urged to refer chemical weapons use to the International Criminal Court, and around a dozen states had reiterated support for renewing the mandate of the JIM. The vast majority of these references condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria specifically, by both state and non-state actors.

The First Committee resolution on the “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction” was the final resolution to be adopted at last year’s session and required multiple paragraph voting. Traditionally this resolution is adopted without a vote but that has changed from 2014 onward, with the inclusion of references to use in Syria and elsewhere. In 2017, certain states accused the sponsor, Poland, and resolution supporters of politicising what is meant to be a “neutral” resolution. This occurred in tandem with Russia vetoing renewal of the JIM in the Security Council.

Due to continued challenges in adequately dealing with new use of chemical weapons, this year’s discussion is expected to be equally contentious and heated.

**Recommendations**

*During First Committee, delegations should:*
- Highlight and publicly condemn any ongoing activities that are prohibited under the CWC;
- Indicate support for the OPCW’s renewed mandate to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria;
- Endorse the UN Secretary-General’s recommendations on chemical weapons; and
- Report on measures taken to implement provisions from the Convention, and pledge financial support.

*Beyond First Committee, states should:*
- Review national measures and policies and make changes or implement new ones to strengthen compliance with CWC; and
- Adopt and enforce necessary legal measures to ensure effective compliance with the Convention, develop national action plans, and share national experiences, challenges and initiatives, to adopt legal measures giving effect to the Convention, and share relevant laws and regulations.

*Author: Katrin Geyer*

Biological weapons
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Background
Biological weapons, also referred to as bioweapons, are dangerous pathogens—bacteria, viruses, or toxins—that are combined with a delivery mechanism to inflict harm. Biological weapons can be disseminated through inhalation, ingestion, or skin absorption.

Biological weapons are prohibited under international law. The Geneva Protocol (1925) and the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BWC) ban any biological agents or toxins of any type or quantity that do not have protective, medical, or other peaceful purposes, and any weapons or means of delivery for such agents or toxins. The BWC does not have a verification mechanism for monitoring global sources of dangerous pathogens but it has politically binding confidence-building measures (CBMs), and a number of states parties have recently piloted peer reviews on a voluntary basis. It has 181 states parties and six signatory states.

Contemporary concerns about biological weapons do not simply involve possession of “weapons”. Instead, concerns primarily involve the degree to which states have the capacity and intent to threaten or perpetrate a biological attack, which is particularly relevant when it comes to countries’ biodefence programmes. The global network of science academics recently concluded that technological barriers to acquiring and using bioweapons have been significantly eroded over the last years.

Current context
International efforts are still to find an effective way to balance the benefits of modern biotechnology with their potential for misuse. In the UN Secretary-General’s 2018 Agenda for Disarmament he maintains that the BWC is “institutionally weak when compared to similar regimes, national implementation is uneven and it contains no operational capacity to respond to biological attacks or provisions to verify compliance with the Convention.”

At the 2017 UN General Assembly, many references to biological weapons centred on the quality of the outcome from the Eighth Review Conference of the BWC held in 2016, where division between states prevented agreement on a substantive outcome document. Some countries reflected their positions in the context of this divide during their First Committee statements, and many states parties regretted that the document was not stronger and did not make progress, despite considerable preparation in the lead-up. States spoke repeatedly about how they had accepted a watered-down outcome document at the last BWC review conference in the name of consensus.
In 2017, the First Committee resolution “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction” was adopted without a vote. Compared to the 2016 resolution, it incorporated new paragraphs to reflect decisions taken at the Eighth Review Conference, including a Meeting of States Parties in December 2017. While the Chair was not confirmed until September 2017, resulting in limited preparation time for this meeting, the December 2017 meeting managed to agree on a new work programme for the intersessional period leading up to the Ninth Review Conference in 2021. The recently concluded Meetings of Experts to the BWC in August 2018 demonstrated general agreement on the urgent need to strengthen the Convention in light of rapid biological and technological developments. Yet, divergent views on how the BWC is to be bolstered have hindered any real progress so far. Against this backdrop, it is important that BWC’s states parties collectively reinvigorate the Convention as the main forum for managing security risks of biology in the 21st century.\(^6\)

**Recommendations**

*During First Committee, delegations should:*

- Reaffirm and strengthen their commitment to the BWC;
- Report on measures taken to implement provisions from the Convention; and
- Constructively discuss the Secretary-General’s proposal to establish a core standing coordinating capacity within the UN for investigating use, and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs’ efforts to develop a framework for coordinated response.

*Beyond First Committee, states should:*

- Review national measures and policies and make changes or implement new ones to strengthen compliance with the BWC;
- Identify relevant scientific and technological developments, consider their implications, and their potential bearings on the Convention, and formulate individual and collective action to address possible challenges;
- Establish a dedicated technical body such as a technical open-ended working group under the BWC and an International Biosecurity Advisory Board; and
- Pay any outstanding assessed contributions in full, and pledge financial support for the implementation of the BWC.

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Armed drones

Article 36

Background
It has been 16 years since the first armed drone strike was carried out by the United States. Since then, drones have become a central feature of the military landscape. Best estimates suggest that twelve states have conducted military strikes with armed drones, with around 30 states in possession of this technology.

Their capacity to loiter, remain undetected, and negate the risk of physical harm to the attacker make drones a seemingly attractive asset. The UN Secretary-General observed that it is those same “unique characteristics that make them particularly susceptible to misuse.”

Over time, it has become clear that the use of armed drones by a small number of states has resulted in significant harm to communities, leaving an ever-growing trail of injury, death, destruction of property, and psychological harm and displacement of people—despite the narrative of surgical precision that surrounds them. The use of armed drones to conduct “signature strikes”—which take advantage of intelligence gathering capabilities to attack individuals apparently matching a particular profile—is a strategy of “algorithmic killing” that has resulted in misidentifications and represents an affront to human dignity.

The rise of drone use has also been characterised by an unacceptable lack of transparency, including a failure to account for casualties—which, in turn, has implications for respecting victims’ rights. Lack of public and democratic accountability in user states raises the risk that activities are being carried out which would be rejected as reprehensible if their scope and impact was revealed.

Armed drone use such as the US practice of targeting individuals outside of armed conflict has also raised legal concerns. While numerous states have acknowledged that international human rights and humanitarian law apply to the use of drones, some have offered divergent interpretations of core legal concepts in their use of drones, and many have not yet articulated a detailed position.

Current context
In 2017, seven states raised armed drones in their interventions to the First Committee (Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Ireland, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Portugal), variously raising humanitarian, human rights, legal, transparency, and accountability concerns and calling for further dialogue and regulation. There were no proposals for resolutions regarding drones.

The US-led process to develop new international political standards for the “responsible export and subsequent use of drones,” that was initiated following a 2016 political declaration is still reportedly underway. The risk remains that these standards, if developed, will be less restrictive than export control frameworks that are already
in place. As of yet, civil society has received no meaningful engagement on this issue.

The UN Secretary-General asserted in his 2018 Disarmament Agenda that armed drones “pose well-known and documented implications for humanitarian and human rights principles,” and pledged that the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) will, “support member states in exploring common standards for the transfer, holdings and use of unmanned aerial vehicles.”

UNIDIR’s 2017 report *Increasing Transparency, Oversight and Accountability of Armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles* provided analysis of the issues associated with armed drones and concluded that there is a “patchwork of measures that does not add up to an effective response to issues.”

Beyond the condemnation of current unacceptable practices, an international policy response is needed that addresses the role of drones in the use of force. Multilateral dialogue will be vital to the development of appropriate and effective international standards to address harm from drones and prevent the erosion of existing legal frameworks.

**Recommendations**

*During First Committee, delegations should:*
- Recognise the ethical, legal, and humanitarian concerns that drones bring to the use of force in the contemporary landscape, and state commitment to reducing and addressing harm and ensuring the protection of rights;
- Recognise the grave risk that international legal frameworks could be eroded through the use of armed drones, in the context of practices that challenge existing norms;
- Assert the need for transparency in the use of drones by any and all states, for the recording of casualties and the addressing of victims’ rights, and for accountability and democratic oversight; and
- Recognise the need for a broader multilateral conversation about what role drones should play in the use of force and the specific limits and standards for their use.

*Beyond First Committee, states should:*
- Raise these issues in all relevant forums international and regionally, including human rights-focused forums. Ensure that issues related to export control are pursued in relevant forums, such as the Arms Trade Treaty;
- Develop progressive, detailed policies on the use of drones that align with and strengthen international norms; and
- Explore how international standards can be pursued effectively.

*Author: Alex Holder*


8 “Joint Declaration for the Export and Subsequent Use of Armed or Strike-Enabled Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs),” US Department of State, 2016, https://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2017/274817.htm

Fully autonomous weapons (“killer robots”)
Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Background
States spurred on by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots have explored the parameters of ethical, legal, operational, proliferation, technical, and other challenges raised by permitting machines to take human life on the battlefield. The six meetings on this concern held at the United Nations in Geneva since May 2014 have seen strong convergence on the need to retain some form of human control over weapons systems and the use of force.

Current context
Yet states at the last Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems in August 2018 could not agree how to ensure this moral line is never crossed. All they could manage to propose was to continue deliberations next year, setting aside just two weeks for this purpose.

CCW states parties were tasked with making a recommendation on future work for the CCW’s annual meeting to decide on. Yet proposals to commence negotiating a legally binding instrument and other measures were rejected due to the consensus decision-making rule used by states at the CCW. Just a few or even a single state can block an agreement sought by a majority.

During the August meeting, most states proposed commencing negotiations in 2019 on a new treaty. Many of the 26 states calling for a preemptive ban on the development and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems reiterated their strong preference for that goal during the CCW meeting, including Colombia, Iraq, Pakistan, and Panama as well as a group of African states and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) group of states. Austria, Brazil, and Chile recommended a new CCW mandate “to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to ensure meaningful human control over the critical functions” of weapons systems.

Some states suggested the CCW focus on future deliberations on other measures, such as a non-legally binding political declaration proposed by France and Germany to outline principles such as the necessity of human control in the use of force and the importance of human accountability. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is concerned this declaration does not go far enough to protect humanity from these weapons. Measures that fall short of new international law will be insufficient to prevent the world from going down the dangerous path of developing fully autonomous weapons.

A handful of states said that the talks on fully autonomous weapons should continue, but
strongly opposed any work aimed at a new treaty, political declaration, or other new measures to address the dangers posed by these weapons. Disappointingly, Australia, Israel, Russia, South Korea, and the United States repeatedly expressed their desire to explore potential “advantages” or “benefits” to developing and using lethal autonomous weapons systems.

States will take their final decision on future work at the CCW’s annual meeting on 23 November 2018. The Campaign is dismayed that the only recommended action states could manage to agree on was to continue with their current mandate of exploring “options” for future work. The longer it takes states to negotiate a ban treaty, the more calls for new international law will multiply. For example, the Arms Control Association on 7 September issued its first substantive comment on the risks posed by lethal autonomous weapons systems. It found that “current policies and practices are clearly insufficient to address the dangers posed” and called on “responsible governments to act” to “promptly pursue multilateral negotiations on a legally-binding instrument to ensure meaningful human control over weapons of war and decisions to employ the lethal use of force.”

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:
• Articulate their national policy on fully autonomous weapons, including their position on the call to preemptively ban development, production, and use; and
• Elaborate their desired outcome for the CCW deliberations, including recommended mandate of work in 2019.

Beyond First Committee, states should:
• Seek agreement at the CCW’s annual meeting on 23 November on a revised mandate for to negotiate a new ban protocol on lethal autonomous weapons systems in 2019; and
• Develop formal national policies and national legislation that explicitly ban these weapons and retains meaningful human control over the use of force.

Author: Mary Wareham

Photo: Clare Conboy, August 2018
Explosive weapons in populated areas
International Network on Explosive Weapons

Background
Civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) has been highlighted as a major humanitarian priority following the increase in recent years of conflicts taking place in urban settings resulting in high levels of civilian casualties. Data shows that when explosive weapons are used in populated areas, approximately 91 per cent of those reported killed and injured are civilians.

In 2017, over 42,000 civilians were recorded killed or injured by explosive weapons, with Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen having the highest numbers of civilian deaths and injuries, and with incidents of explosive violence occurring in 59 countries.1

Beyond those killed and injured, an even greater number of civilians are affected as a result of damage to essential infrastructure and services. The bombing and bombardment of towns and cities destroys homes, leaving people without shelter. Hospital buildings are damaged, which hampers the provision and quality of medical care to civilian populations and makes it difficult to manage treatable injuries and diseases.2 Damage to sanitation systems creates additional problems around maintaining basic levels of hygiene.3 The destruction of commercial buildings and transport infrastructure impedes access to, and availability of, vital provisions including food.4 Humanitarian access can be hampered, or stopped entirely.5 Damage to electricity, energy, and power further compound such problems, and in some instances prevents the civilian population from fleeing the area, constituting a main cause of forced displacement.6

While there is a pattern of harm associated with explosive weapons in populated areas in general, the risk to civilians is most severe when the weapons have wide area effects. Wide area effects may result where an individual weapon has a large blast or fragmentation radius (e.g. heavy aircraft bombs), where multiple explosive munitions are launched at an area (e.g. multi-barrel rocket systems), where a weapon is not delivered accurately to the target (e.g. indirect fire mortars), or a combination of these factors.

Current context
The UN Secretary-General has called on states to engage constructively in efforts to develop a political declaration to address the harm caused by EWIPA.7 Discussions towards developing an international political instrument to address this humanitarian problem are on going, and already 90 states have spoken out on the issue of EWIPA.8 A political declaration would build on the basis provided by existing international law, and provide practical commitments to provide better protection to civilians from the impact of explosive weapons on civilians. A commitment to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas should be central to a declaration and would provide the best
A clear collective commitment on this vital humanitarian question is urgently needed.

**Recommendations**

**During First Committee, delegations should:**

- Acknowledge that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas frequently causes severe harm to individuals and communities and furthers suffering by damaging vital infrastructure;
- Endorse the UN Secretary-General’s and International Committee of the Red Cross’ recommendation that states should avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas; and
- Indicate support for the development of an international political instrument on explosive weapons to protect civilians.

**Beyond First Committee, states should:**

- Review and make available national policies and practices related to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and make changes that will strengthen the protection of civilians;
- Support and make publicly available data-gathering on the use and impact of explosive weapons in populated areas, including age-, sex- and disability-disaggregated recording of casualties, and information on disabilities amongst survivors; and
- Recognise the rights of survivors, families of those killed or injured, and affected communities and respond to their short- and long-term needs.

*Author: Laura Boillot*

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9. The UN Secretary General has repeatedly called on all state and non-state parties since 2009 to “avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas,” including most recently in the **Report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict** (S/2017/414). Since 2011, the International Committee of the Red Cross has stated that “due to the significant likelihood of indiscriminate effects and despite the absence of an express legal prohibition for specific types of weapons, the ICRC considers that explosive weapons with a wide impact area should be avoided in densely populated areas.” See [http://bit.ly/2uLSsJm](http://bit.ly/2uLSsJm).
Landmines
International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Background
The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (or Mine Ban Treaty) is one of the most universally adhered-to international instruments. Remarkable progress has been made towards eliminating these weapons and addressing their deadly legacy. Sustained financial and political support is needed to ensure the Mine Ban Treaty fully delivers on its promises. The Treaty covers all antipersonnel mines, including those that are “homemade” or artisanal.

Current context
States parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have adopted the target date of 2025 for the global elimination of antipersonnel mines. They will strive to universalise the Treaty, complete clearance of mine-contaminated land, destroy all stockpiles, and make assistance to victims sustainable as soon as possible, and by 2025 at the latest.

Fifty-seven states have antipersonnel landmine contamination on their territory. Some 34 states may own stockpiles of the weapon, including three states parties that have a legal obligation to destroy them. Survivors, their families, and communities must see their rights respected and their needs met. Through the 2014–2019 Maputo Action Plan, states parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have agreed on robust and realistic measures to end the suffering caused by landmines.

Thirty-five states are still outside the Mine Ban Treaty, but the vast majority abide de facto with its core provisions: they do not use, produce, or transfer antipersonnel mines. Each year, half of them vote in favour of the First Committee resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty, thus showing their support for the aim of eliminating antipersonnel mines.

Non-state armed groups in some ten countries still use antipersonnel mines. Most use improvised mines, also known as victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rather than factory-made landmines. Such devices are covered by the Mine Ban Treaty when they are designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person.

Last year, the Landmine Monitor recorded exceptionally high numbers of people killed in explosions of landmines and explosive remnants of war—in part due to ongoing acute conflicts. Almost eighty per cent of people injured or killed by landmines worldwide were civilians.

The 17th Meeting of States Parties (17MSP) will take place from 26–30 November 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Treaty leadership is made up of the following states until the 17MSP: Afghanistan (President), Algeria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Ecuador, Iraq, Mozambique, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Zambia.
**Recommendations**

*During First Committee, delegations should:*

- Report on measures taken in 2018 to implement the Maputo Action Plan or to otherwise put an end to the suffering caused by landmines;
- Pledge financial support for the implementation of Treaty obligations, including land clearance and assistance to survivors, their families, and communities;
- Reiterate that any use of landmines by any actor is unacceptable;
- Report on progress towards joining the Mine Ban Treaty;
- Engage bilaterally in discussions on the universalisation or implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty; and
- Vote in favour of the resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty and encourage others, such as regional group members, to do so as well.

*Beyond First Committee, states should:*

- Adopt laws, regulations, and policies that facilitate Treaty implementation;
- Contribute to discussions on how to ensure sufficient resources and their efficient use to reach the goal of a mine-free world by 2025; and
- Participate in meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty and report on efforts made to eliminate antipersonnel mines.

*Author: Amelie Chayer*
Cluster munitions
Cluster Munition Coalition

Background
2018 marks ten years since the Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted and opened for signature. Sixty per cent of the world’s states have now formally committed to the goals of the Convention through their signature, ratification, or accession, while more than 70 per cent have demonstrated their support for its humanitarian goals through a 2017 UN General Assembly resolution. The Convention is widely acknowledged as the principal framework for the worldwide effort to eradicate cluster munitions and to prevent the suffering they cause.

The stigma against cluster munitions is strong, given the wide recognition that they are indiscriminate both at the time of use due to their vast area effect, and long after use due to the explosive duds they leave behind. The vast majority of states that are still outside the Convention abide de facto by the ban on use and production of cluster munitions.

In recent years, over 150 states condemned the use of cluster munitions in the context of the conflict in Syria. Cluster munitions have been used extensively in the current conflicts in Syria, as well as in Yemen until February 2017.

At the First Review Conference of the Convention, states parties set the objective of 130 member states by 2020. They pledged to ensure that cluster munitions “remain a stigmatised weapon.”

Current context
States parties to the Convention include former major producers, users, and possessors of the weapon, as well as affected states, and states that have never owned or been affected by the weapon. Collectively, states parties have already destroyed 99 per cent of their cluster munitions, ensuring those weapons can never claim a life or limb.

States are also taking steps to assess the needs of survivors of explosions, and to increase the participation of survivors in governmental decision-making that affects their lives. Twenty-six states are contaminated by cluster munition remnants and must ensure that they use efficient land release methodologies to address contamination.

In 2017 the UNGA resolution on the implementation of the Convention was passed with 142 votes in favour, two against, and 36 abstentions. Thirty-two non-signatories voted in favour, demonstrating their support for the humanitarian aims of the Convention.

All states should join the Convention to strengthen the international rejection of this weapon—even those that do not possess cluster munitions. By joining, each state adds one more voice in favour of the ban, thus strengthening the body of international humanitarian law and demonstrating solidarity with affected countries and victims. Cluster munitions do not meet the
criteria that a responsible government should have for the weapons in its arsenal. States that own stockpiles, and past users, should prevent further civilian suffering by renouncing cluster munitions forever.

The 8th Meeting of States Parties (8MSP) to the Convention took place from 3-5 September 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Meeting condemned any use of cluster munitions by any actor, in conformity with Article 21 of the Convention. The Convention leadership for the coming year comprises Austria, Chile, Germany, Iraq, Ireland, Lao PDR, Panama, Peru, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sri Lanka (President), Sweden, and Zambia.

**Recommendations**

*During First Committee, delegations should:*
- Report on measures taken to implement the Dubrovnik Action Plan, including “discouraging, in every way possible” the use of cluster munitions;
- Condemn recent instances of use of cluster munitions;
- Vote in favour of the resolution on cluster munitions and encourage others, such as regional group members, to do so as well;
- Report on steps taken to join the Convention; and
- Engage bilaterally in discussions on the universalization or implementation of the Convention.

*Beyond First Committee, states should:*
- Follow-up on steps taken to ratify or accede to the Convention;
- Request support on ratification or accession from the Implementation Support Unit, the Cluster Munition Coalition, UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, or the coordinators of the working group on universalization;
- Be persistent in speaking out against the use of cluster munitions; and
- Reach out to neighboring and partner states, encouraging them to join the Convention.

*Author: Amelie Chayer*

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS, DECADES</th>
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<td><strong>THE LENGTH OF TIME DEADLY UNEXPLODED SUBMUNITIONS HAVE LAID DORMANT SINCE USE, READY TO KILL OR MAIM AT ANY MOMENT</strong></td>
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- **Laos**: 50 years and counting
- **Vietnam**: 49 years and counting
- **Iraq**: 34+ years and counting
- **Lebanon**: 30+ years and counting

*www.stopclustermunitions.org*
Depleted uranium weapons
International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons

Background
Depleted uranium (DU) is a by-product of the uranium enrichment process, which contains proportionally less of the fissionable uranium isotope U235, and more of the isotope U238 than natural uranium. It is classified by the International Atomic Energy Agency as low-level radioactive waste. It is highly dense and pyrophoric, meaning that it has an incendiary effect upon impact. This effect can generate an aerosol of micron and sub-micron particles that can spread between tens and hundreds of metres from the target.

DU is used by a number of states in armour-piercing-incendiary ammunition fired by tanks, armoured fighting vehicles, and aircraft. DU weapons have been controversial since their first major use in the 1991 Gulf War. Radioactive and chemically toxic, DU use creates hotspots of persistent contamination that present a hazard to communities long after conflict ends, particularly for pregnant women, as well as children. Buildings and civilian infrastructure have regularly been targeted with DU, and its use can contaminate soils and groundwater and create vast quantities of contaminated military scrap. Effectively managing DU’s post-conflict legacy places a significant financial and technical burden on affected states.

The refusal by some states to acknowledge the civilian health risks from DU contrasts starkly with the protective measures provided to their military personnel, as well as their own domestic standards for radioactive waste management, standards that should form the basis of post-conflict DU management. It is also at odds with the shift in some DU user states towards less toxic alternatives for DU in munitions—itself a tacit acknowledgement of their growing unacceptability.¹

Current context
Discussions over the legitimacy of DU use gained media traction during 2016’s First Committee as the United States admitted that, despite previous denials, its A-10 aircraft had fired at least 5,265 PGU-14 rounds against oil trucks in Syria. In spite of the calls made in previous UNGA resolutions, no additional information has been released on the precise locations of the munitions fired that could aid the identification, clean up, and remediation of target areas and awareness-raising measures. Such efforts would also be in line with the recommendations provided by the UN Human Rights Council’s Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Hazardous Substances and Wastes in 2016.² Elsewhere, the possible use of DU in eastern Ukraine continues to be investigated by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to the Ukraine.³
Peer-reviewed studies into the health risks and environmental behaviour of DU have continued to be published. In confirming a novel radiation effect from DU, researchers at the US Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute suggested that cancer risk assessment models may have been underestimated; another study provided further recognition of DU’s genotoxicity and the means through which it can damage DNA; while an animal study indicated that DU exposure in utero and during breastfeeding could cause neurological problems by affecting brain development.

Meta analyses of contamination in the Balkans and Middle East both drew attention to the lack of data on human exposure in affected regions, while studies conducted on the corrosion rates of DU penetrators in soils in Bosnia confirmed that corrosion, and with it the potential for groundwater contamination, varies with soil chemistry. Meanwhile the US has continued to aggressively promote the findings of its longitudinal study on Gulf War veterans in spite of its statistically insignificant sample size.

The health and environmental legacy of DU use should be viewed in the context of growing concern over the polluting legacy of armed conflicts. UN Environment Assembly resolution 3/15 in 2017 specifically addressed the need to mitigate and minimise the effects of pollution on people in vulnerable situations, stressing the need for the swift identification, assessment, and remediation of conflict pollution.

Recommendations that match those promoted by international organisations for the post-conflict management of DU yet which often remain unrealised in the absence of clear obligations.

**Recommendations**

**During First Committee, delegations should:**
- Raise concerns over the potential use of DU in current operations in Syria, Iraq, and the Ukraine in regional and national statements; and
- Explain how they are implementing A/RES/71/70, *Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium*, in their national and regional statements.

**Beyond First Committee, states should:**
- Disclose targeting coordinates of any use of DU weapons to facilitate clearance and civilian exposure studies;
- Contribute technical and financial assistance to states affected by DU contamination, including public health and environmental monitoring for communities affected by the use of DU;
- Review how the lack of obligations for the postconflict management of DU contamination could be best addressed, within or beyond the United Nations;
- Help strengthen the global norm against their use by introducing domestic ban legislation as Belgium and Costa Rica have done; and
- Impose an immediate moratorium on the use of DU weapons.

*Authors: Wim Zwijnenburg and Doug Weir*
1. For example, the use of DU—or beryllium, cobalt, or nickel—in the proposed ammunition for the F35 Joint Strike Fighter was branded undesirable on the basis of its toxicity. See https://www.fbo.gov/utils/view?id=f934399b74944eb51de1ec68789bb8.

2. The Special Rapporteur called for “…an effective remedy for hazardous remnants of conflict and other military activities, including funding for full remediation, comprehensive medical treatment and compensation for individuals experiencing the effects of exposure to these materials”. See Report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, A/HRC/33/41, 2016, https://undocs.org/A/HRC/33/41.


Incendiary weapons
Human Rights Watch

Background
Incendiary weapons, which produce heat and fire through the chemical reaction of a flammable substance, cause excruciating burns that are difficult to treat and lead to long-term physical and psychological injury. The weapons also start fires that can destroy civilian objects and infrastructure.

Protocol III to the CCW, adopted in 1980, prohibits certain uses of incendiary weapons, but its restrictions have failed to stop the civilian harm seen in Syria and elsewhere. The CCW protocol has two major loopholes. First, it prohibits the use of air-delivered incendiary weapons in “concentrations of civilians,” but has weaker regulations for ground-launched models. Second, many states parties believe the current definition does not cover multipurpose munitions, such as white phosphorus, because the definition is based on the purpose for which they were “primarily designed” rather than on their effects. Closing these loopholes, which would be legally if not politically straightforward, would create stronger rules for states parties and increase the stigma against incendiary weapons, influencing even actors outside the treaty.

Current context
Countries had the most robust discussions on incendiary weapons in almost four decades at the 2017 Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). The more detailed exchange was a welcome step for efforts to reduce the suffering inflicted by these exceptionally cruel weapons. But reports that new use of incendiary weapons killed or injured more than 260 civilians in Syria in 2018 show that further action is needed.¹

Human Rights Watch has documented 26 uses of incendiary weapons in Syria from January to August 2018. The attacks took place in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Idlib, and Damascus Countryside governorates.

The majority of the incendiary weapons used in these incidents were unguided 122mm Grad rockets, notorious for their inaccuracy, each containing 180 incendiary capsules. In at least four cases, air-dropped ZAB incendiary submunitions were used. Syrian government forces have used air-dropped and ground-launched incendiary weapons in Syria since 2012.²

Syria Civil Defense, also known as the White Helmets, reported that on 16 March 2018, air-dropped incendiary munitions were used on the Eastern Ghouta town of Kafr Batna, killing at least 61 and wounding more than 200. It said that most victims were women and children who were burned alive.¹ Photographs and video
provided to Human Rights Watch by doctors, and publicly available, show at least 15 bodies with serious burns.4

Photographs reported by the Syria Civil Defence to have been taken immediately after the attack show multiple small fires burning brightly, indicating the possible use of ZAB sub-munitions which are delivered by Soviet or Russian-made RBK-500 bombs.5 A YouTube video, published by Russia Today in June 2016, showed a Russian aircraft with incendiary bombs at Russia’s airbase in Syria, suggesting that Russia has also been using incendiary weapons in Syria.6 Russia has neither confirmed nor denied such use. Russia is a state party to Protocol III, and Syria is not.

Since 2010, more than three dozen countries, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN Secretary-General, and non-governmental organisations, have called attention to the harm that incendiary weapons can cause to civilians, and many have called for revisiting CCW Protocol III.7

At the CCW’s annual meeting in November 2017, incendiary weapons were a separate agenda item for the first time since 1980. Most countries stressed the need for stronger law and/or called for revisiting Protocol III. At the end of the meeting, states parties agreed to continue discussions in November 2018. They adopted a final report that notes the concerns of a number of states parties about the use of incendiary weapons against civilians and that “condemn[s] any use of incendiary weapons against civilians or civilian objects, and any other use incompatible with relevant rules of international humanitarian law, including provisions of Protocol III where applicable”.8

Governments should increase the intensity of their work and agree to review Protocol III and close its loopholes. They can advance this goal at CCW meetings, First Committee, and elsewhere by highlighting the urgency of strengthening international law on incendiary weapons.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Call for a formal review of Protocol III and amendments to address the negative humanitarian impacts of incendiary weapons; and
- Publicly condemn incendiary weapons use in Syria and urge the Syrian government to accede to the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its Protocol III.

Beyond First Committee:

- At their annual meeting, CCW states parties should take advantage of the dedicated agenda time to condemn incendiary weapon use and call for reviewing and strengthening Protocol III. They should also set aside time, such as in an informal meeting of experts, for discussion of the implementation and adequacy of Protocol III in 2019.

Author: Bonnie Docherty
Incendiary weapons were used in Eastern Ghouta, Syria, in March 2018, causing more than 260 civilian casualties. © 2018 Syria Civil Defense, with permission to Human Rights Watch for use.
Small arms and light weapons

International Action Network on Small Arms

Background
Small arms and light weapons (SALW) persist as the weapons of choice in many acts of armed violence. According to the Small Arms Survey—in 2016, the most recent year for which data are available—560,000 people died as the result of armed violence. Of these deaths, an estimated 18 per cent were the direct result of conflict. In order to develop a comprehensive approach to reducing deaths caused by SALW, states need to focus on armed violence as a whole, rather than limiting their efforts to addressing only conflict violence.

Key instruments that address the trade in and misuse of SALW include the UN Programme of Action to Reduce, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UNPoA, 2001) and its accompanying International Tracing Instrument (2005); the UN Firearms Protocol (entry into force, 2005), which supplements the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (entry into force, 2003); and the Arms Trade Treaty (entry into force, 2014).

Current context
In June 2018, the United Nations held a two-week Review Conference on the UNPoA (RevCon3). The outcome document from RevCon3, which is a negotiated final report, included numerous provisions that civil society organisations promoted and is a way to improve and expand on the original commitments of the UNPoA. Putting the outcome document’s provisions into practice could significantly improve implementation of the UNPoA.

One unusual development strengthened both the substance and process of implementing the UNPoA. At the end of RevCon3, states voted on three substantive paragraphs of the final report, rather than accepting weaker language in order to achieve consensus. In the UN context, consensus is often interpreted as unanimity, and enables a single state to block action against a majority position. Two of the paragraphs dealt with ammunition, and the third dealt with links between the UNPoA and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the new paragraphs on ammunition focused on increasing attention to and analysis of surplus ammunition stockpiles. The other ammunition paragraph focused on states’ capacity to strengthen the application of the UNPoA to both small arms and ammunition, by applying lessons learned from implementing other instruments. The third paragraph stresses the need to fully implement the UNPoA and its International Tracing Instrument in order to achieve SDG 16, while also making a strong statement about the overall relationship between sustainable development and peace and security. After the three paragraphs were adopted, states
voted unanimously (with no abstentions) to adopt the final report.

**Recommendations**

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Work to implement RevCon3 outcomes;
- Prepare proposals to encourage states to exchange good practices on preventing, combatting, and eradicating the illicit trade in SALW and ammunition;
- Emphasise the importance of addressing pervasive SALW violence and crime, recognizing that the vast majority of deaths and injuries with SALW do not take place in situations of armed conflict;
- Focus on gender-based action to curb SALW proliferation and violence, and work to ensure women’s full participation and representation in arms control programmes and diplomatic processes; and
- Strengthen the focus on achieving SDG 16 and respecting human rights law governing the use of force.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Develop and take advantage of synergies among the UNPoA, the Firearms Protocol, and the ATT, to enhance implementation of all of these instruments;
- Utilise UNPoA provisions on recordkeeping, end-user certification, prevention of diversion, and provision for destruction of surplus and weapons and weapons that remain when conflicts end, to strengthen the implementation of other instruments;
- Apply the criteria, guidelines, and prohibitions in the ATT to help bring more of the international trade in conventional weapons into compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law;
- Include civil society as full partners in the work to reduce the human costs of armed violence, including NGO representatives on national delegations; and
- Implement SDGs in addition to SDG 16 that are related to arms control issues; e.g. pursuing SDG 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,” through the UNPoA and ATT. This will affect the substance of states’ deliberations, as well as the membership and staffing of relevant agencies, national commissions, and delegations to international meetings and negotiations.

**Author: Natalie Goldring**

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2  For additional detail and recommendations on these issues, see: “Small Arms, Big Harms: A Call to Action by Civil Society on Gender and Small Arms Control,” IANSA, June 2018, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/bb4a5b_8c8bd0e981b54b6b801da205c10d4a3.pdf and “Gaps in Women’s Participation and Representation in the Small Arms and Light Weapons Process,” IANSA, June 2017, https://tinyurl.com/y9pcfaeq.

3  See “Six key issues for the 2018 Review Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons,” IANSA, June 2018, for additional detail and recommendations on these issues: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/bb4a5b_a25b5d5bd3b242208d0d20b9153ba5a8.pdf.
Background

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was created to stop irresponsible and unregulated arms transfers fueling conflicts, poverty and human rights abuses across regions. Effective implementation, universalisation, and timely, public, and comprehensive reporting are crucial to achieving the Treaty’s main goal of reducing human suffering.

Ninety-seven states, just over half of the UN membership, are now party to the ATT while 38 are signatories. Five states joined the ATT in the past year: Kazakhstan and the State of Palestine acceded in December 2017, while Chile, Cameroon, and Brazil ratified in 2018.

Almost four years since the Treaty’s entry-into-force, discussions around its implementation are slowly shifting from process to substance, particularly as they relate to diversion. However, significant challenges remain unaddressed. Arms transfers furthering conflicts and armed violence across regions have continued unabated. The devastating attack on the Yemeni port of Hodeidah in June and the strike on a school bus in August 2018 add to the mounting evidence of serious breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Yet impassive silence surrounds the issue of problematic arms transfers and states parties’ full compliance with the Treaty’s provisions.

Current context

In 2018, two sets of informal preparatory meetings and working group meetings convened before the Fourth Conference of States Parties (CSP4). The Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation appointed facilitators to lead discussions on three priority sub-topics: general implementation, prohibitions and risk assessment, and diversion. These discussions highlighted that states parties are at different baselines regarding their engagement within the arms trade, as well as at different stages in developing necessary structures and mandates to implement these obligations.

States parties in the Group were less forthcoming in sharing their concrete experiences or discussing challenges to the implementation of Articles 6 and 7, focusing instead on the development of guidance documents. Norway, Finland, Germany, and the Walloon regional authority of Belgium took positive steps this year, announcing tightened controls on arms transfers in the context of the conflict in Yemen. But other states parties—particularly the United Kingdom and France—are still in direct violation of legally binding Treaty obligations by continuing to supply arms to the Saudi-led coalition.

Public, comprehensive, and timely reporting on exports and imports by states parties
can increase accountability and confidence-building. The Working Group on Transparency and Reporting proposed solutions to reporting challenges, including guidance documents; developing a roster of reporting experts; and creating an IT platform for information exchange. Similarly, the Working Group on Treaty Universalisation outlined recommendations for advancing Treaty membership, including through engagement with parliamentarians, utilising regional events, and targeting specific regions.

CSP4, held 20–24 August 2018 in Tokyo, Japan, offered more substantive discussions on the Treaty’s implementation compared to previous years. However, states parties missed another key opportunity to discuss problematic arms transfers and violations of the Treaty, focusing instead on developing a clear programme of work for the upcoming year.

Both states and civil society expressed concern over worrying trends in compliance with ATT reporting obligations. For example, as of 31 May 2018, only 67 of 92 Initial Reports due to be submitted were received (73 percent), and 11 were kept confidential, and only 36 of 89 Annual Reports were submitted by the deadline. Two states have kept their annual reports private.

Ambassador Jānis Kārklinš of Latvia was appointed as the President of Fifth Conference of States Parties, which will be held in Geneva from 26–30 August 2019.

Latvia is expected to introduce a resolution on the ATT during this First Committee. The annual resolutions tend to welcome the Treaty, encourage universalisation, and sometimes endorse decisions taken at CSPs. The ATT is often referenced in other resolutions pertaining to small arms and light weapons, and regional disarmament measures.

**Recommendations**

**During First Committee, delegations should:**
- Highlight and challenge arms transfers that appear to be in violation of the Treaty;
- Encourage continued universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty;
- Contribute to substantive discussions taking place in side events and elsewhere in order to share expertise and strengthen capacity for the robust implementation of the ATT; and
- Support an ATT resolution that calls for strong and effective Treaty implementation.

**Beyond First Committee, states should:**
- Highlight and challenge arms transfers appearing to be in violation of the Treaty;
- Adopt the highest norms and establish rigorous structures to ensure effective implementation and compliance with the ATT;
- Robustly implement ATT obligations that seek to address diversion;
- Commit to timely, comprehensive, and public reporting;
- Engage in the ATT process by actively participating in the Working Groups and preparatory meetings as well as in the CSPs; and
- Share best practices and provide implementation support, through information exchange and resources.

*Author: Raluca Muresan*
Background
Currently free of weapons, outer space is unique. With over 1,800 operational satellites and counting, the relative stability and security of this environment has enabled a profusion of space-based applications, from communications, transportation, and banking, to search-and-rescue operations, weather forecasting, and arms control verification. The world is now dependent on outer space to support everyday life and security on Earth, but such use cannot be taken for granted.

Maintaining a sustainable outer space domain requires a focus on the security and sustainability of outer space as an environment that can be used safely and responsibly by all. Two key threats stand out, and are related: the generation of space debris, and the view by some that outer space is a domain of warfare.

Space debris—which is generated by all space missions—continues to be a critical challenge to the safety of all spacecraft. As the space environment is more heavily used, there is a growing risk that space assets may collide with a piece of orbital debris or even with one another. Awareness of the space debris problem has grown considerably, and efforts to mitigate the production of new debris through compliance with national and international guidelines have become highly important.

At the same time, there is an emerging perspective among some space actors that outer space is a legitimate domain of warfare. Alongside this shift, development and demonstration of capabilities to use force and disrupt the use of outer space has increased. Deliberate jamming of satellite signals is common; ground-based anti-satellite weapons (ASATs) have been tested; missile defence systems have been demonstrated to have ASAT uses; and dual-use precursor technologies that would allow space-to-space offensive capabilities have been developed. Not only does warfare and the use of force in outer space threaten the security and stability of the outer space, but it also threatens peaceful uses through the potential to generate debris and other harmful effects on the environment. A conflict in space would lead to devastating consequences for daily life on earth and damage the long-term sustainability and peaceful use of space; yet efforts to prevent this have not kept pace.

Current context
There is still broad consensus for the need to maintain outer space as a peaceful, global domain, reflected in continuing wide support for First Committee resolutions, including the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities (TCBM), and International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. But the
international community has been unable to reach consensus on how to preserve and enhance this security.

The Conference on Disarmament, which has the primary responsibility for negotiations related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), has been deadlocked and unable to conduct substantive discussions for years. While the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is emerging as an alternate forum to address safety and sustainability in space, its mandate precludes discussion of issues related to arms control and the use of force. Specific proposals for both legally binding treaties, such as the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT), and politically-binding norms including the proposed International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, have stalled, as support for these different approaches is deeply divided.

Two new mechanisms are intended to facilitate advancement of these issues: the inclusion of outer space as an agenda item at the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and the creation of a UN Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. While there is hope for progress, it will require circumventing existing divides and ameliorating an atmosphere is mistrust.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:
- Pledge not to use any space- or ground-based capabilities, whether exclusively military or multi-use in nature, to deliberately damage or destroy space assets;
- Highlight the importance of preventing the weaponisation of outer space to preserve peace and security and benefit all humankind;
- Condemn any anti-satellite tests and the development of weapons to be placed in orbit or any system to be used to target space-based assets;
- Indicate support for the negotiation of a treaty preventing an arms race in outer space and for interim transparency and confidence-building measures toward that end; and
- Seek to find common ground between legal and political or rules-based approaches to enhancing the security of outer space.

Beyond First Committee, states should:
- Refrain from testing and deploying space-based weapons or weapons that target space-based assets, including antisatellite technologies;
- Work to enhance synergies and cooperation between First Committee and other relevant UN bodies working on outer space security issues, including COPUOS and the UNDC;
- Provide greater transparency on national uses of space, including military uses and technology demonstrations; and
- Ratify and implement the existing collection of outer space treaties.

Author: Jessica West
Cyber

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Background
The word “cyber” has come to represent an ever-widening spectrum of activities and concerns encompassing espionage, surveillance, privacy intrusions, denial-of-service attacks, and ransomware or malware operations. Many of these activities have the ability to negatively impact, disable, or destroy vital physical infrastructure or national or human security as well as constitute criminal activity. Cyber operations have become an effective tool for states seeking to disrupt or exercise power. Digital tools have also added new means by which states can control or repress their citizens while the “dark web” enables illicit arms trafficking. The cyber realm also potentially intersects with issues of militarism and war in relation to surveillance, intelligence, and the operation of specific weapon systems.

Since the first instances of malicious cyber operations between states were uncovered, there has been a growing pre-supposition of cyber space as a militarised one. This is a dangerous path for states to continue down, given the civilian and dual-use nature of cyberspace and digital networks. Such militarisation is evidenced in the increasingly formalised role of digital operations in military doctrine and strategy, as well as in the language used to depict activity in this arena, such as “cyber weapon,” “cyber war,” or “cyber bomb”. By treating this primarily as a military and security issue, states and other actors risk institutionalising and taking for granted the broad idea of cyber conflict. In the on-going discussions about norms of responsible behaviour in cyberspace, it’s essential that such norms are viewed as obligatory commitments and that space is also given to articulating a vision of cyber peace.

Current context
The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (GGE on ICTs) is the most immediately relevant UN forum covering cyber issues for First Committee delegates. The first GGE on ICT was established in 2004 and included experts from 15 nations, with a general purpose of examining existing and potential threats in cyberspace and possible cooperative measures to address them. Subsequent groups expanded the membership and worked to develop behavioural norms for actions in cyberspace. Following the fourth Group’s adoption of what was generally regarded as a “groundbreaking” report in 2015, expectations were high for the fifth Group, but it was unable to agree to a consensus report. Major points of contention were the applicability of international humanitarian law and Article
51 of the UN Charter to the ICT environment, over which the majority of participating Western states had views different to that of China, Russia, and Cuba.

The inability of the fifth GGE to agree on a report meant that there was also not sufficient agreement among states at the 2017 First Committee to adopt a mandate for a new Group to continue work on this issue. Governmental and expert statements in 2017 expressed frustration over the “collapse” of the GGE, reaffirmed commitments to abide by the norms established by past GGEs, or set out ideas for how best to pursue this subject in future. UNGA resolution A/72/404, “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security,” was a procedural resolution introduced by Russia and adopted in 2017 by a vote of 185-0-1. It ensured that the issue remains on the agenda in 2018.

While formal work in the context of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has stalled over the last year, some states have continued to push ahead in search of solutions for the stalemate. Germany, Switzerland, and Mexico have produced a non-paper titled that outlines various proposals that have been suggested. The non-paper ultimately proposes the establishment of a subsidiary body of the UNGA mandated to “build common understanding and provide guidance on how existing international law, non-binding norms of responsible State behavior, confidence-building and capacity-building measures can be implemented.” The proposal is for the 15-member body to begin work in 2019 for a two-year period, consult with the wider UN membership, and report back to the General Assembly. It is expected that non-paper’s proposal will be put forward as a resolution.

Pine Gap in Northern Territory, Australia. Run by the CIA and NSA, the facility is part of the Five Eyes surveillance network
© Kristian Laemmle-Ruff
It is also expected that Russia will introduce its annual resolution on ICTs, but with a recommendation to reconstitute the GGE. The draft resolution will also include language from Russia’s draft International Code of Conduct for Information Security, meant as a basis for discussion in the new GGE. The draft Code was first introduced in 2011 and then updated in 2015 but has never gained significant political traction. The US will table a resolution calling for a new GGE, to base its discussions agreements reached by the most recent Group.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:
• Speak out against hostile and provocative actions in, and the militarisation of, cyberspace;
• Work cooperatively to identify and establish an inclusive and transparent mechanism by which to continue work on behavioural norms in cyber space and to promote a cyber peace approach; and
• Express concern about unlawful surveillance and digital censorship activities that violate human rights.

Beyond First Committee, states should:
• Uphold the behavioural norms that already enjoy broad support;
• Support technical capacity building initiatives;
• Ensure information sharing between different international processes that address cyber issues, both within and outside of the UN system; and
• Refrain from undertaking or facilitating any repression of human rights or freedoms through digital means.

Author: Allison Pytlak

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Gender and disarmament
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Background
Employing a gender perspective means investigating and analysing the ways in which weapons and war are coded with gender norms. The framing of war and violence as “strong” and “masculine” is often coupled with a framing of peace and disarmament as “weak” and “feminine”.

Changing these norms can be aided by increasing gender diversity in disarmament. There is a stark disparity in the level and volume of participation of women, men, and others in disarmament and arms control discussions, negotiations, and processes. Recent research has shown that at any given intergovernmental meeting on disarmament, only about one quarter of participants are likely to be women and almost half of all delegations are likely to be composed entirely of men.

Yet women often suffer disproportionate or differential harm from the development, use, and trade of weapons. Men tend to make up the majority of direct victims of armed violence. Sometimes, they are targeted just for being men. Women, however, can face differential impacts from the use of weapons such as social and political inequalities and pressures from the increase in female-headed households; inequalities in access to survivor assistance; and higher risk of sexual violence, especially when they are displaced from their homes.

The negative impacts on our society of patriarchy are perhaps nowhere more pervasive and pernicious than in the field of weapons, war, and militarism. By consequence, the dominant discourse on these subjects tends to perpetuate the highly problematic gender constructions of men who are violent and powerful and women that are vulnerable and need to be protected. Gender perspectives in disarmament must be about exposing and challenging war and violence, not about including more women in the existing systems of structural inequalities and violent masculinities.

Current context
Recently, some disarmament forums have taken forward this charge. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in July 2017, recognises “that the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men is an essential factor for the promotion and attainment of sustainable peace and security, and committed to supporting and strengthening the effective participation of women in nuclear disarmament.” The Chair’s summary of the 2017 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee, reflects that NPT states parties “were encouraged, in accordance
with their commitments under United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, actively to support participation of female delegates in their own NPT delegations and through support for sponsorship programs.”

The final report of the Third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (SALW) recognises the importance of eradicating the illicit trade in SALW for combating gender-based violence, and the need for states to mainstream gender dimensions in their implementation of the Programme of Action, among other things. A growing number of organisations are developing guidance to aid states in assessing the risk of gender-based violence when considering arms transfers, in line with commitments under the Arms Trade Treaty. At the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), the government of Canada hosted a side event with several civil society groups to provide an intersectional feminist analysis of autonomous weapon systems.

These developments are very welcome and should be continued and further developed in as many disarmament forums as possible. However, a more robust reflection of the relationship between weapons and gender-based violence, and other gendered aspects of armed conflict and armed violence, are crucial to addressing the challenges associated with the proliferation and use of weapons in and out of conflict.

Recommendations

During the First Committee, delegations should:

- Welcome the gender perspectives included in recent forums and commit to advancing the goals contained therein;

- Collaborate to make First Committee resolutions more gender-sensitive;

- Welcome the inclusion of the provision on gender-based violence in the Arms Trade Treaty and highlight the need for implementation of this aspect of the Treaty;

- Highlight the need to ensure gender diversity in disarmament discussions and negotiations; and

- Share their experiences with ensuring gender perspectives in disarmament policies and initiatives.

Beyond First Committee, states and others should:

- Avoid gender essentialisms, victimisation of women, and reinforcement of violent masculinities in resolutions and action plans on disarmament and arms control;

- Effectively implement the ATT provision against GBV by training export licence officials and updating their risk assessment procedures accordingly;

- Seek to ensure gender diversity in discussions, negotiations, and peace processes;

- Continue to research and assess the specific impact that weapons and armed conflict have on diverse populations;

- Promote practical linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, and arms control and disarmament initiatives; and

- Invest in gender equality and other human rights and sustainable development goals instead of militarism.

Author: Ray Acheson
1 Gender is not about sex (i.e. men, women, trans, intersex) but about the socially constructed norms and expectations about how we are supposed to perform based on our embodied sex.


3 Women and multilateral forums: Pattern of underrepresentation, Article 36, October 2015.

4 Sex and drone strikes: gender and identity in targeting and casualty analysis, Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and Article 36, October 2014.

5 Women and explosive weapons, Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, February 2014.


8 This means looking at the cross-sections of identity and privilege, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, etc. These factors should be taken into account when looking at increasing the diversity of participation and the impacts of weapons and conflict.
Disarmament and development

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Background
There are many direct and indirect links between military expenditure, the arms trade, violent conflict, and the reduction of available resources for social and economic development. Governments that spend excessive financial, technological, and human resources on their militaries divert resources from economic, social, and environmental programmes. National military-industrial complexes absorb vast amounts of funding that could otherwise be spent on human security, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The manufacture and use of weapons also prevents sustainable ecological development and preservation, creating unequal access to resources and further impeding poverty reduction initiatives.

Article 26 of the UN Charter tasks the UN Security Council to create a plan for the regulation of armaments and reducing military expenditure—a task it has not just neglected but vigorously undermined with its permanent member’s excessive military spending, rampant arms trading, and facilitation of conflicts worldwide. The UN General Assembly has tried to grapple with the connections between disarmament and development for the past four decades. The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development in 1987 adopted an action plan that included commitments to allocate resources released by disarmament to development and consider reducing military expenditure. This followed an in-depth study by the UN in 1982 that set out the negative impacts of a large military sector on long-term economic growth and the structural changes required for economic development. A Group of Governmental Experts released a reappraisal of the relationship between disarmament and development in 2004.

Current context
Total world military expenditure rose to $1739 billion in 2017. China made the largest absolute increase in spending ($12 billion) in 2017, and the US continues to have the world’s largest military budget, spending more than the next seven highest-spending countries combined—and this is set to rise significantly in 2018 to support increases in military personnel and the modernisation of conventional and nuclear weapons.

Since the adoption of the SDGs there has been an increased interest from the disarmament community in development and how reducing
armed violence and related insecurity can be a catalyst for achieving the goals and their targets. Target 16.4 seeks to reduce “significantly” illicit arms flows, which could be accomplished via robust implement of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapon (UNPoA) or the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The reporting mechanisms for both instruments and related data could be utilised for measuring the indicator set for Target 16.4. As well, fulfilling obligations relating to women, gender, sexual violence, or gender-based violence that are included in weapons treaties such as the ATT or the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons also moves us closer to achieving SDG 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The UN General Assembly needs to take more active responsibility on this issue. It could consider commissioning a new study on military spending, following a similar approach to the 1982 study that could provide recommendations for additional work on reducing military expenditure and arms production and development. First Committee could also consider adopting practices or policies related to increasing the participation of developing countries in disarmament forums.

**Recommendations**

**During the First Committee, delegations should:**
- Recognise and reinforce the specific ways in which disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control can advance development, including the SDGs;
- Address the issue of the underrepresentation of lower-income countries and regions in multilateral disarmament forums, and suggest practical measures to correct this; and
- Suggest new ways for the UN General Assembly to effectively engage in this issue.

**Beyond First Committee, states should:**
- Reduce military budgets and redirect funds to social and economic development;
- Support programmes of sponsorship, training, and capacity building;
- Contribute to the wider framing of disarmament and weapons issues to address a broader range of concerns, for example through making links with humanitarian and development agendas, in order to facilitate broader inclusion;
- Raise the visibility of marginalisation by supporting the consistent collection, monitoring, and analysis of participation data, to improve awareness and measure progress;
- Identify how current practices in disarmament and arms control can facilitate progress toward fulfilling certain of the SDGs and build on those practices; and
- Consider how security sector reform resources and initiatives can support the SDGs to achieve mutual objectives.

Authors: Allison Pytlak and Ray Acheson

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Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts

Toxic Remnants of War Network

Background

Environmental protection is a vital component of the protection of civilians during and after armed conflicts, yet it is a goal that continues to receive insufficient attention. The wars in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and Ukraine have seen serious environmental damage, and with it health risks for civilian populations, while belligerent concern for the environmental consequences of their actions has been largely absent. Oil fires, damage to hazardous industrial sites, and attacks on critical environmental infrastructure have occurred at a time when state capacity for minimising environmental harm has been at its weakest.1

The use of explosive weapons in urban areas in the conflicts in Syria and Yemen continues, with damage to essential civilian infrastructure, industrial sites, and residential areas creating a range of environmental health risks. For water-stressed Yemen in particular, damage to water and sanitation infrastructure has had a particularly severe impact and contributed to an ongoing cholera outbreak that by July 2018 had affected more than one million people.2 The legacy of the intensive use of explosive force in Iraqi cities will take years to address. It is estimated that eight million tonnes of debris were generated in Mosul alone,3 and in addition to its immediate health risks, its unsustainable disposal could have serious consequences for the environment. Efforts to determine the volume of debris in cities in Libya such as Sirte are at an early stage,4 but with a fragmented and insecure state, appropriate management approaches are unlikely to be implemented. It expected that the volume of debris in Syria will eclipse both Iraq and Libya. In the heavily industrialised areas along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine, the use of heavy weapons has damaged and disrupted water facilities,5 and carries with it the threat of a severe industrial disaster that could affect tens of thousands of people, rivers, and groundwater supplies.6

Current context

During the last decade, efforts have been made to address the environment across the cycle of conflicts. The UN Security Council is debating calls to integrate environmental risks in conflict prevention.7 The International Committee of the Red Cross is revising its environmental guidelines for militaries during conflicts;8 while UN agencies and humanitarian actors are developing a range of initiatives to encourage
environmental considerations in early response and post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding.  

Conflict and the environment has been high on the agenda of the second and third meetings of the UN Environment Assembly, with the body passing the first ever UN resolution on conflict pollution in 2017. The Human Rights Council has been considering the impact of conflict and military pollutants on civilians and military personnel, meanwhile an ongoing study by the International Law Commission has now proposed 20 draft principles intended to clarify the legal framework protecting the environment before, during and after conflict.

While welcome, the progress being made elsewhere in the UN system is highlighting the ongoing failure of First Committee to meaningfully address weapons and the environment. The UN Secretary-General’s Securing our Common Future report did seek to link disarmament, the environment, and the Sustainable Development Goals. But by historically focusing only on the environmental aspects of disarmament itself, the First Committee and the UN’s disarmament architecture has neglected the environmental consequences of the use of weapons, and their immediate and reverberating impacts on civilians and ecosystems.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’ obligations for environmental remediation demonstrated that environmental perspectives can strengthen global disarmament efforts. Whether it is small arms diversion facilitating poaching and wildlife crime, or new technologies such as drones being utilised to sabotage environmentally hazardous targets, ensuring that these perspectives are documented and articulated is vital for understanding and minimising the environmental and humanitarian consequences of armed violence. Similarly, there is also a need to better utilise the research and standards adopted by militaries under increasingly stringent peacetime environmental regulations and apply them to reducing civilian and environmental harm in the context of conflicts.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:
- Acknowledge the link between conflicts, military activities, environmental pollution, and health; and
- Make greater use of the annual resolution Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control in articulating concerns over the lifecycle environmental impacts of weapons.

Beyond First Committee, states should:
- Engage with the International Law Commission’s study on the Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts in the Sixth Committee, and by submitting examples of state practice to its Special Rapporteur, upon request;
- Ensure that environmental protection standards are prioritised in policies on the production, testing, use, management, and disposal of weapons;
- Support studies into the health and environmental risks from weapons throughout their lifecycle; and
- As donors, promote robust environmental criteria in weapons clearance programmes.

Authors: Doug Weir and Wim Zwijnenburg


Disarmament education
International Disarmament Institute, Pace University

Background
There is broad international consensus that pursuing disarmament requires an educational dimension. Educational efforts transmit information about the impact of weapons on people to decision-makers and can build political will for disarmament. The Final Document of the UN General Assembly’s (UNGA) 1978 First Special Session on Disarmament conceived of disarmament education as the mobilisation of the public to end the arms race and seek “general and complete disarmament.”¹ The 1980 UNESCO World Congress on Disarmament Education declared that “dissemination of data” or even “hopes and ideals” was not enough. This drove the UN’s World Disarmament Campaign, launched at the 1982 UNGA Second Special Session on Disarmament.

This animating spirit can also be found in the book *Action for Disarmament: 10 Things You Can Do!* published by UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in 2014.² However, since 1982 disarmament education has mostly swung in a more technocratic direction. The World Disarmament Campaign was renamed the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme in 1992.³ A 2002 report by the UN Secretary-General on “disarmament and nonproliferation education” similarly focused on best practices and programmatic approaches rather than a political strategy for mobilizing the public.⁴ In adding “non-proliferation”, it also follows the trend of states prioritising the control of others’ access to weapons, rather than getting rid of their own.

The Secretary-General has reported on implementation of the 2002 report’s recommendations every two years and the General Assembly has passed resolutions calling for ongoing implementation, changing little in substance from year to year. Neither the reports nor the resolutions mention the relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) nor the 2015 Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security that calls for “quality education for peace.”⁵ Lack of attention to political dimensions means disarmament and non-proliferation education receives little attention from states. Few states submit reports to the UN Secretary-General as requested by successive resolutions and there is scant funding available for substantive programming. It was this “anemic vision of disarmament education” that prompted a civil society statement to the 71st First Committee Session in October 2016 that affirmed the potential of disarmament education to “empower the greater participation of youth, women, survivors of violence, and people from the Global South in peace and security policymaking.”
**Current Context**

The successful negotiation of the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has provided new political and legal impetus for disarmament education. The preamble specifically recognises “the importance of peace and disarmament education in all its aspects and of raising awareness of the risks and consequences of nuclear weapons for current and future generations, and committed to the dissemination of the principles and norms” of the TPNW. It also stress the role of multiple stakeholders in pressing for nuclear disarmament. This framing represents a welcome turn toward a more vigorous approach to disarmament and non-proliferation education. First Committee will likely pass a disarmament education resolution this year, and the TPNW and UNODA’s Occasional Papers offer opportunities to educate governments on their responsibilities to support disarmament education, as well as build political will.

**Recommendations**

**During First Committee, delegations should:**

- Support the disarmament and non-proliferation education resolution and seek to strengthen it by reinvigorating efforts to promote peace and disarmament education, and amplifying the voices of survivors;
- Ensure that a commitment to support disarmament education as integral to treaty universalisation is included in any resolution(s) regarding the TPNW;
- Welcome the Secretary-General’s 2016 report in their interventions and express the ongoing relevance of the 2002 Study, UNSCR 2250, the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the contributions of civil society and educational institutions in providing disarmament and non-proliferation education; and
- Report in their interventions on their government’s disarmament education initiatives and call on states, international organisations, civil society, and educational institutions to make submissions to UNODA for the 2020 report.

**Beyond First Committee, states should:**

- Provide funding and institutional support to international organisations, civil society, and educational institutions providing disarmament and nonproliferation education;
- Seek synergies between disarmament and non-proliferation education and the implementation of the SDGs and UNSCR 2250; and
- Implement disarmament and non-proliferation education in ways that is sensitive to marginalisation and differential access.

*Author: Matthew Bolton*
The 2018 session of the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security will meet from 8 October–9 November 2018.

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