

# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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Reaching Critical Will

# EDITORIAL: FULL-SPECTRUM CHANGE

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

At some point between the NPT Review Conference in May and the general debate of First Committee, the United States decided to rebrand its preferred “step-by-step approach” to nuclear disarmament as the “full-spectrum approach”. Like before, it contrasts this approach with the pursuit of a treaty banning nuclear weapons, which it says is neither practical nor realistic. At some point during this same period, the US also decided it should make the wild claim that any potential ban treaty would undermine international security so much that it could actually lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

In a rather shocking example of victim-blaming, the US government seems to be suggesting that if countries that do not possess or value these horrific weapons of mass destruction get together and prohibit them, the nuclear-armed states might just be so destabilised by this that they would use their nuclear weapons. And that, I guess, will be our fault. We asked for it, because we challenged their possession of these weapons—weapons that they are legally obligated to eliminate and that threaten the existence of all life on earth.

The full-spectrum approach thus sounds a lot more like full-spectrum dominance. This doesn’t just refer to the US military’s aspirations to control land, sea, air, outer space, and cyber space, as espoused in its “Joint Vision 2020” document. Its full-spectrum approach to nuclear weapons seems to mean complete dominance over discourse, law, and violence.

This power projection isn’t just about nuclear weapons. We see the same approach in the practice of bombing in other countries. Nuclear-weapon possessors France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and United States are dropping bombs in Syria and Iraq; nuclear-armed Israel routinely bombs Gaza and Lebanon; the Saudi-led coalition, armed primarily by the UK and the US, is bombing and shelling Yemen; the US and now the UK are using armed drones inside and outside of armed conflict to kill without due process or respect for international law. These countries argue that their arms transfers, their bombing and shelling, and their drone strikes are in the interest of security, stability, and even peace.

At the fourth annual humanitarian disarmament campaigns forum held this past weekend, NGO representatives heard about what it is like to live under bombing from Osama Dano, who lived in Gaza for 17 years while working for Save the Children. He spoke about a nine year old girl who could differenti-

ate between bombs dropped from helicopters and jet fighters, between the sound of an AK-47 and an M-16. He spoke of the fear, anxiety, and apathy alike that arise in populations scarred by bombings in their cities, towns, or villages.

This is the lived reality of weapons, experienced by civilians. Rhetoric about the security and deterrence provided by weapons is not only hollow, it is callous when considered in light of this lived reality.

It is this reality that must guide our actions, that must motivate progressive change in policy and practice. At first, change might only be able to take place without those who deny reality, deflect responsibility, and defer action. Change might only be possible if others come together, say enough is enough, and begin to shape policies and practices that actually address reality.

Non-nuclear-armed states can develop a treaty banning nuclear weapons. They can stigmatise nuclear weapon possession, prevent financial investments in nuclear weapon maintenance and modernisation, and end military alliance postures that include the threat of nuclear weapon use. As Ms. Richards of Jamaica said, “The time has come for us to cease considering nuclear weapons only through the narrow lens of state security and instead pay due attention to the humanitarian aspect, as a first step to filling the glaring legal gap that exists in the absence of an explicit prohibition of these weapons.”

Governments appalled by the killing and maiming of civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure from bombing in towns and cities can develop prohibitions and restrictions to end the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Austria recently hosted a meeting with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs where, as Ambassador Hajnoczi reported at First Committee, “significant support was expressed by participants ... to start working on an international political declaration to prevent civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.”

Those who are frustrated by the relentless transfer of arms to those who bomb, murder, rape, and torture can develop mechanisms to hold arms exporters and users to account, including by addressing the production of weapons. They can also work together to ensure the strictest implementation of existing tools on arms transfers and develop stronger standards and norms against the international arms trade. “The express prohibitions of the [Arms Trade Treaty] are



not suggestions,” emphasised Ms. Chan of Costa Rica. “They are obligations. Thus, irresponsible transfers to conflict zones should be stopped, and should be stopped immediately.”

Those who are concerned with the use of armed drones, which as Costa Rica warned is leading to the reinterpretation of human rights, dehumanisation of conflict, and lowering of the threshold for the use of force, can develop clear international standards and restrictions to tackle the specific problems drones pose to human rights, humanitarian law, and international peace and security.

There is much work to be done. The intransigence of the most militarily aggressive states must not prevent progress. The failure to set boundaries, implement law, and make new commitments to prevent humanitarian suffering undermines the credibility of international community to uphold shared values on protection of civilians and human rights. This is a collective responsibility.

The US and other violent states may wish to project full-spectrum dominance, but they have, in their hubris, created a false perception of reality in which war leads to peace, in which nuclear weapons bring stability, and in which profits trump people. This vision is unsustainable. It can and must be challenged by those who live in the real world.

“Neither guns nor bullets will bring about a life of dignity for all humanity,” said Ambassador Manongi of Tanzania. “Neither nuclear weapons nor other weapons of mass destruction will guarantee world peace and security. And, neither words nor declarations or resolutions will bring us closer to the goal of general and complete disarmament. Only determined actions, clear objectives and solid political will will get us there. Let us therefore summon the necessary strength and courage and commit to action.” •

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Nuclear weapons have, as in previous years, been the main subject of most statements delivered during the general debate of this year’s First Committee.

Many speakers expressed their regret at the failure of the 9th Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May this year, when the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada objected to the adoption of the outcome document because of concerns regarding the language on the zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons mass destruction in the Middle East. However, most states also stressed that the NPT still remains an important instrument of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In that same context, a number of states, including Algeria, the Arab Group, Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Italy, the Nordic states, Lebanon, Namibia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey underlined the importance of creating such a zone and called for the convening a conference to that end in order to implement the 1995 resolution as well as the 2010 decision.

The July agreement between Iran and the E3/EU+3 on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was welcomed by the majority of speakers, including Australia, Canada, European Union, Georgia, Ghana, Malaysia, the Non-Aligned Movement, Norway, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others, as a success-

ful diplomatic solution of an international challenge. However, most also stressed the need for the full and transparent implementation of the agreement and highlighted the important work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in that regard.

70 years after the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are now widely accepted and were mentioned by a great number of states. The three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna were welcomed by many. More disagreement became apparent when states discussed conclusions for the way forward in nuclear disarmament. Many, including the African Group, the Association of South East Asian States, Botswana, CELAC, Chile, Costa Rica, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Zambia called for a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons following from the Humanitarian Pledge, which is currently endorsed by 119 states.

In that connection, Costa Rica thought it was clear that states “cannot continue to leave the task of disarmament exclusively in the hands of nuclear-weapon States, as they have demonstrated that they are not interested in relinquishing them.” Kenya equally thought it was time to “move past the interests of a few nuclear weapon states and shift to a

process where a majority of interested states can work together to put in place effective prohibitions against nuclear weapons.”

On the other hand, others, including Australia and Germany, underlined the need for considering the security dimensions of nuclear weapons for nuclear-armed states and their allies. In that context, Australia thought “a treaty banning nuclear weapons will not lead to nuclear armed states giving up their arsenals.” The United States went even further, saying that “ignoring” the security dimensions could “risk creating a very unstable security environment, where misperceptions or miscalculations could escalate crises with unintended and unforeseen consequences, not excluding the possible use of a nuclear weapon.”

Some of the other nuclear-armed states, including France, India, and Russia, reiterated their preference for a gradual step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament. Pakistan believes progress is being delayed by “diverting the Conference on Disarmament’s focus” on issues like the fissile material cut-off treaty. China did not comment on the way forward.

Meanwhile the US and Russia had an on-going exchange over the US missile defence activities in Europe, compliance with the INF Treaty, and US nuclear sharing. •

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## DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Elizabeth Minor | Article 36

Most of the general debate statements drawing attention to the links between disarmament and development noted the recent agreement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several governments also linked the implementation and achievement of the SDGs to different aspects of disarmament, as well as to the work of the UN disarmament machinery. Bangladesh, Ireland, and Zambia’s remarks on disarmament and development, for example, stated the general connection between disarmament and the achievement of the SDGs. Mexico drew a contrast between the dynamism of the SDG process and the First Committee, noting that the SDG process showed what can be achieved when there is political will.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ghana, Jamaica, Maldives, Nepal, and Tanzania all highlighted military expenditure as a barrier to development, and called for resources currently spent on weapons to be diverted to economic and social development and addressing poverty. A number of these delegations noted that current global military expenditure is estimated to be \$1.7 trillion, whilst significant funds are needed to achieve the new SDGs. Peru also called for the diversion of resources to development, alongside disarmament and arms control.

The New Agenda Coalition (NAC), Botswana, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Lebanon, Madagascar, the Philippines, and Tunisia highlighted the particular impact

of nuclear weapons on development. Most noted the vast resources spent on the upkeep and modernisation of nuclear weapons, calling for these resources to be diverted to development. Kenya also highlighted the particular difficulties countries with fewer resources would face in dealing with a nuclear detonation.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Botswana, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Serbia, Tanzania, Turkey, and Uganda drew attention to how the accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons undermines economic and social development and the provision of essential services, with national budgets having to be diverted from development to addressing these weapons’ effects. Ireland, Kenya, and Serbia welcomed the SDG target 16.4 on reducing arms flows. Afghanistan noted the impact of mines and improvised explosive devices on infrastructure projects and development, and Lao PDR raised the impact of unexploded ordnance, particularly on agricultural development.

Regarding other related concerns, Kenya stated that the militarisation of outer space was inimical to the promotion of economic development. China highlighted peaceful development as a general priority. Costa Rica called for states to move beyond strictly military conceptions of security, towards human security and sustainable development. •

upcoming side event 23/10/15

# PROGRESSIVE APPROACHES TO DISARMAMENT



Photo: Istock

## UNGA First Committee

Conference Room 8, UN Headquarters, NY  
23 October 2015 (1:15 - 2:30 pm)



Photo: Flickr/ Basma/Foreign and Commonwealth Office

## About the Event

This side event will illuminate and discuss some of the negative practices preventing the development of progressive policies on disarmament, the trade and use of arms, and preventing humanitarian harm. It will look at recent events related to international arms transfers, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, condemnation of cluster munition use, and nuclear disarmament initiatives in the context of government commitments to promoting development and human rights and reducing inequality and human suffering.

It will also highlight critical challenges to progressive policies including those related to participation and representation in international discussions and negotiations on these key issues. And it will provide some positive solutions for governments and other actors in overcoming these challenges in the pursuit of a safer, more equitable, and just world for all.

## Speakers

- **Ambassador Courtenay Rattray**, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UN,  
Event Moderator
- **Ms. Ray Acheson**,  
Programme Director Reaching Critical Will of WILPF,  
*Rhetoric vs reality: a critique of government priorities and practice on disarmament and human security*
- **Ms. Elizabeth Minor**,  
Researcher for Article 36, *Process and participation: an overview of the representation of developing countries and women in international disarmament discussions and negotiations*
- **Mr. Thomas Nash**,  
Director Article 36, *Deny, deflect, defer: common tactics to prevent progressive policies on disarmament and protection of civilians*

## ORGANISERS



# Article36

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# EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Thomas Nash | Article 36

The First Committee's general debate heard strong calls for action to prevent harm to civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Austria reported back on the meeting on this topic that it hosted in September with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Ambassador Hajnoczi explained that "significant support was expressed by participants ... to start working on an international political declaration to prevent civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas."

Members of the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) participated in the Vienna meeting, presenting research on the global problem posed by bombing and shelling in towns and cities, as well specific recent studies on Yemen and Ukraine and survivor testimony. As states discussed the potential elements of a future political declaration, INEW called for the declaration to contain a commitment to end the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in its statement to First Committee, laid out a similar position, calling for states to avoid the use of explosive weapons that have a wide impact area in densely populated areas. In a strong statement that led with the problem of explosive weapons in populated areas, the ICRC outlined the immediate and longer-term reverberating effects of bombing and shelling in towns and cities and called on states to lay out their existing policy and practice in this area.

The next steps in the process towards a political declaration will be to build up a group of states committed to action on this humanitarian priority. Statements from Costa Rica, Ireland, and Norway suggested that work is now well underway.

Costa Rica rejected the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and called upon all states "to develop stricter standards and commitments to prohibit and restrict their use." Costa Rica endorsed the Secretary General's recommendation that parties to conflict should refrain from the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effect and recognised that such use is a humanitarian problem that must be addressed.

Ireland noted that today's conflicts "are seeing an increasing number of casualties and harm being caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide area impact in populated areas." Referring to "escalating civilian casualty rates, and destruction of civilian infrastructure," Ireland called on the international community to address this issue.

For Norway, this "is one of the pressing humanitarian issues of our time." Norway strongly supported the call by the UN Secretary-General for all parties to conflict to refrain from using explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas.

In its statement to the general debate, INEW noted that it is the use of explosive weapons in populated areas that is killing civilians in conflicts today and called on states to make concrete commitments to prevent harm to civilians from the bombing and shelling in towns and cities. "The everyday reality of this humanitarian impact requires an immediate response," the Network's statement said. "The decisions we take to address this now will testify to the strength of our collective humanity." •

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## LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Mine Ban Treaty) is one of the world's most widely endorsed treaties. Statements during the general debate of First Committee emphasised the need to make sure the Treaty continues to deliver on its promises in the years to come. A large number of speakers referred to the importance of cooperation and assistance in this respect.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced progress made in the establishment of its Regional Mine Action Center. Canada, Estonia, and Italy encouraged all states to join the Mine Ban Treaty, and committed to continue to fund mine action. Estonia, in particular, noted that "supporting mine clearance ... remains essential for the stabilisation processes of post-conflict states and the safe return of refugees." The Netherlands recalled the political commitment to clear all landmine contamination before



2025, agreed to at the Third Review Conference in 2014, noting, “We will now have to work together to assist countries [to] live up to this commitment.” Similarly, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) stressed the importance of “cooperation for humanitarian demining and assistance to victims.”

Armenia, a state not party, echoed the UN Secretary-General’s call for states to “stay committed to the cause of mine action through financial contributions and political support.” China, a state not party, spoke about the support it provides to mine clearance. The Nordic countries noted the “near-universal adherence to the norm” established by the Treaty, and emphasised the stigma associated with landmine use. Portugal said that antipersonnel mine use should be met with “firm criticism”. Cameroon, Chile, Ireland, Norway, Poland, and Thailand reiterated their strong support for the Treaty or explained how they contribute to its universalisation and implementation. Armenia and Viet Nam, two states not party, expressed

support for the principles or humanitarian goals of the Treaty.

Afghanistan shared its concern that funding cuts threatened its goal of completing clearance by 2023. Belarus spoke about the steps it is taking to destroy its stockpiles of antipersonnel mines. Iraq explained the complex nature of its mine problem and the devastating impact of mines on access to basic services and the return of displaced persons. Ukraine stressed that “despite current significant challenges in the security field ... Ukraine fully complies with its obligations under [the Convention on Conventional Weapons and Mine Ban Treaty].”

Poland, Norway, and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines congratulated Mozambique for completing mine clearance in 2015—showing that other heavily affected states can also address their contamination problem with strong political will and the use of adequate methodologies. •

## CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

The First Review Conference of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions is just behind us (held in September 2015 in Dubrovnik, Croatia) and many states taking the floor during the First Committee general debate strongly supported the outcomes of the Conference.

Costa Rica, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, Montenegro, The Netherlands, New Zealand, the Nordic countries, Norway, and Spain expressed great satisfaction with the Dubrovnik Action Plan and Dubrovnik Declaration. Italy noted that it “highly valued” those documents that would guide states towards the full implementation of the Convention, while Mexico emphasised in particular the commitments made on victim assistance at the Dubrovnik Conference.

Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Hungary, Ireland, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Mexico, Montenegro, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Senegal stressed the importance of further universalising the Convention. The Netherlands, New Zealand, and Norway also spoke about the need to further strengthen the norm against use that is being established through the Convention.

Lao PDR, the most heavily affected state, “encourage[d] friendly countries and international organizations to continue to provide funding and

technical assistance” for the clearance of cluster munition remnants.

Chile, Costa Rica, Hungary, Ireland, Lebanon, Guatemala, The Netherlands, the Nordic countries, and Portugal expressed concern with recent or ongoing use of cluster munitions. Chile said there could never be a good reason for using the weapon, and that military necessity could never justify it. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and Guatemala emphasised that the use of cluster munitions is a violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The Nordic countries called upon all conflict actors to refrain from such use and to fully observe the principles of IHL. Norway noted that reports of use of cluster munitions had resulted in swift and widespread condemnation, also by states not party.

Using its right of reply to states expressing concern with recent use of cluster munitions on its territory, Libya denied having possessed cluster munitions.

Thailand and Viet Nam, states not party to the Convention, expressed support for its humanitarian aims, while Myanmar explained the conditions that could make accession possible. •





# GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Sofia Tuvestad | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Swedish section

The second week of this year's session of the First Committee took place parallel to the 15 year anniversary and high-level review of UN Security Council resolution 1325. The anniversary events included a High-level debate at the Security Council, the adoption of a new resolution on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 2242), and the launch of the Global Study on resolution 1325, "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace," led by Radhika Coomaraswamy. The timing of these events provided an opportunity to highlight the (lack of) gender perspectives and women's effective participation in disarmament.

The negative impacts on our society of patriarchy and male privilege are perhaps nowhere more pervasive and pernicious than in the field of weapons, war and militarism, said Ray Acheson of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom addressing the theme of gender and disarmament during Friday's civil society segment. She argued that much of the discussion on disarmament perpetuates the highly problematic gender constructions of men who are violent and powerful and women that are vulnerable and need to be protected, which exacerbates violent masculinities and undermines women's participation and perspectives in authoritative social and political roles.

Indeed, in 70 years, First Committee has only had one female chair. And recent research has shown that at any given intergovernmental meeting on disarmament, only about one quarter of participants are likely to be women, less than a fifth of statements are likely to be given by women, and almost half of all delegations are likely to be composed entirely of men.

First Committee should also be addressing the gendered impacts of weapons. The analysis and recommendations put forward in the Global Study on resolution 1325 reflect the growing recognition of arms proliferation and militarisation as gendered practices with gendered consequences. The Study calls for a shift towards stronger efforts to prevent and address the root causes of armed violence and war, and notes amongst other things that the access to small arms and light weapons (SALW) "intersects directly with and impacts the forms and intensity of women's experiences of gendered violence within and outside of conflict."

You might have thought that the parallel high-level meeting on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) would have reminded states to address gender in the room next door as well. But the First Committee general

debate was a painful reminder that much more work is needed to ensure that the calls, commitments, and promises of the WPS agenda, including on mainstreaming gender in disarmament and arms control, are not dealt with as an isolated issue.

That said, there were a few states that highlighted gender as a central factor to understanding and addressing challenges relating to disarmament and arms control.

Botswana expressed "deep concern" about the illegal transfer, manufacture, and circulation of SALW, referring to the lasting consequences that the uncontrolled spread of these weapons have on women and girls. The European Union highlighted the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as a landmark instrument with its inclusion of gender-based violence as a factor to take into account when making export assessments. It is critical that this insight is duly reflected in EU member states' national and regional regulations and practices on export control, given that a number of EU member states are big arms exporters and currently sell weapons to states where serious acts of gender-based violence are widespread and systematic. We look forward to following all EU member states implementing the ATT gender provisions in the strictest way possible, also as a way of expressing that the EU is "committed to the full implementation of resolution 1325" as held out in its statement.

Acknowledging the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the EU also addressed the need to enhance the role of women in disarmament and non-proliferation by promoting gender consciousness and by the equal participation of women and men. This seems like a critical point to make especially this week, as the participation of women from civil society during the high-level anniversary of UNSCR 1325 was severely compromised when the date for the high-level debate was moved with short notice from the originally planned date of 22 October to 13 October to accommodate the calendar of Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

The statement by the Nordic countries highlighted the ATT gender provisions as well, as they identified article 7 (4) on preventing armed gender-based violence a "landmark feature". They also stressed that the equal participation of men and women in "disarmament analyses, delegations, discussions and decisions would increase the legitimacy, quality and effectiveness of disarmament agreements," adding that while there are not many low hanging fruits in disarmament and non-proliferation, this surely is one.

In acknowledging the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, Lebanon said that gender issues “should be broadly mainstreamed in all aspects of the work of this Committee,” highlighting the gender provisions in the ATT as an achievement in this regard. Italy also highlighted the ATT provisions on the prevention of gender-based violence, adding that “the Treaty has, for the first time, included a gender perspective and the concept of human security in the broader context of global security.” While it could be argued that a gender perspective was introduced with the start of the WPS agenda, the ATT gender provisions were cer-

tainly first in explicitly introducing binding obligations on preventing gender-based violence—which is much broader than violence against women and includes, for example, violence targeting LGBTQI people—into the area of peace and security. Whether or not the ATT will indeed be an instrument for promoting human security remains to be seen, as this it depends on how the Treaty is implemented. Italy also said that it is “keenly aware of the importance of including gender-based approaches in disarmament processes,” including the equal participation of women and men. •

## FEATURE: REFLECTIONS ON THE OPEN DEBATE ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AND THE GLOBAL STUDY ON UNSCR 1325

Ghazal Rahmanpanah | PeaceWomen of WILPF

**1** 5 years ago this month, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (2000), a ground-breaking text that resulted in the first formal recognition of the gendered impact of conflict and the inception of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Last week, the 15th anniversary was marked by an open debate, hosted by the Spanish presidency, and the official launch of the Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. While the week’s events highlighted some progress within the realm of peace and security, it is clear that much more is needed to truly mitigate the impact of armed violence on women and girls and to increase inclusive participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

### *Empty anniversaries and systematic exclusion*

The open debate, which focused on reviewing progress and challenges surrounding the implementation of UNSCR 1325, was laudable on many accounts. A record breaking 110 statements were made from member states, some of which included commitments for moving the Agenda forward. Following two extraordinarily effective statements by the president of the Organization of Women’s Freedom in Iraq, Yanar Mohammed, and by the head of Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral, Julienne Lusenge, the Council unanimously adopted UNSCR 2242, which was co-sponsored by over 75 states.

On paper, UNSCR 2242 is formidable. Much of the language directly echoes civil society calls to action and recommendations, such as the Roadmap and Open Letter submitted to the Council by the NGO Working Group on WPS. It expresses the intention to integrate WPS concerns across all country-specific situations and to increase engagement with civil society. However, the continued and systematic exclusion of women’s participation in peace and security issues at many lev-

els glaringly highlights the gaps between rhetoric and reality, and impedes our efforts to prevent and end armed conflict and armed violence.

While the WPS Agenda has been successful in changing the political discourse, it continues to be undermined by the suffocation of civil society space; attacks on human rights defenders; and lack of accountability of governments that do not ensure women’s full and effective participation. As Norwegian Secretary of State, Tone Skogen, stated during the Global Study launch, “it’s no longer about counting the women, but making the women count.”

### *Militarism and WPS*

The war economy and culture of militarism are the main obstacles to realising gender equality, human security, and sustainable peace. With a global budget of \$1.7 trillion for militarism and a system in which power is divided among men with guns while women and other peace leaders are sidelined, there are strong political incentives for militarisation. Women peace leaders from the Middle East and North Africa region, in consultations for the 2015 UNSCR 1325 global review, concluded that violent extremism in their region is fuelled by the proliferation of small arms and increased militarization. This influx of weapons to the region is coupled with use of weapons in civilian areas or directly against civilians. Yet it is typically men with guns, not women peacemakers, who are invited to negotiate peace.

The role of women in countering violent extremism and terrorism has become a growing trend in the Council and played a major part in many commitments put forward by states such as Australia and the United Arab Emirates. For members of civil society, there are concerns that this growing agenda will result

in further blurring of lines between militaries and civilians, all in the name of the WPS Agenda.

If member states and the international community are keen on countering violent extremism and terrorism, it is imperative to first address pre-existing discrimination, often embedded in laws and social norms. They must engage with women and women's organisations and address, from a gender perspective, ideological root causes and power dynamics. The foundation of growing extremism is closely linked to the understanding of peacetime gender relations.

In the end, however, the ultimate takeaway remains that the greatest path towards conflict prevention and sustainable peace and security is through demilitarisation and a decrease in military spending.

### Conclusion

During this monumental week, the international community—via various countries and multilateral organ-

isations—pledged their support to the WPS Agenda and praised themselves for their contributions and achievements. Some made new commitments, and of course, national financial or legislative commitments to the WPS Agenda are always welcome. However, it is time to mobilise these commitments into action.

The time is now for governments to embrace a truly feminist foreign policy; to radically shift perspectives, policies, and priorities away from militarism and towards sustainable peace; to support an integrated approach to human security and human rights; to do more than just pay lip service to the women fighting for their seat at the table. As Vice Minister Renée Jones-Bos stated in her statement on behalf of The Netherlands during the Open debate, “to quote the late Elvis Presley, Mr. President, the time has come for ‘a little less conversation and a little more action, please’.” •

## AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Mary Wareham | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

At the opening of the 2015 session of First Committee, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was first to raise a number of ethical, legal, moral, and technical, as well as international peace and security related questions, on autonomous weapons systems.

This is not surprising because since 2013, several NAM members, including Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, and Pakistan, have expressed their support for the call to preemptively ban these weapons that would select and attack targets without further human intervention. NAM member Sri Lanka is also responsible for securing consensus on the question of continuing international talks on the topic in 2016.

Previous Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) chairs France and Poland also used First Committee meetings in 2013 and 2014 respectively to promote the CCW process, which is aimed at discussing questions relating to the emerging technology of “lethal autonomous weapons systems.”

States must decide whether to continue and expand their autonomous weapons talks at the next annual meeting of the CCW in Geneva on 13 November. Most of the states that spoke on autonomous weapons at First Committee have recommended that CCW deliberations continue ahead of the CCW's Fifth Review Conference in December 2016.

Austria proposed that CCW states agree to establish a formal Group of Governmental Experts or “GGE” to deepen and intensify ongoing international debate. The Netherlands also called for a GGE to further deliberations and “deepen our understanding of what we exactly mean by ‘meaningful human control’ when we talk about these weapon systems.” The NAM expressed support for continued CCW deliberations “on the basis of an agreed mandate,” which indicates flexibility on the GGE question.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in its statement called on states to establish a more ambitious mandate and supported the calls to establish a GGE to step-up the deliberations in 2016. Open-ended GGEs have been the established method of work for CCW deliberations over the past two decades and based on that long-standing precedent, the GGE would be open to all interested states as well as to NGO representatives, while key documents would be translated into the official UN languages. A GGE would therefore help to enable the broadest possible participation by all states.

The campaign also observed that the CCW is not the only multilateral venue where autonomous weapons can be addressed and noted the role of the Human Rights Council, where states first debated the topic in May 2013. •

upcoming side event 22/10/15

## ATT, UNPOA, & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

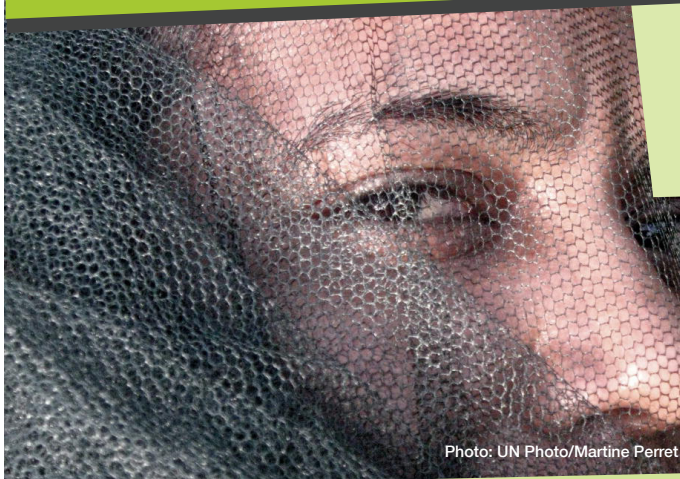


Photo: UN Photo/Martine Perret

### UNGA First Committee

Room E, UN Headquarters, New York

22 October 2015 (1:15 - 2:30 pm)

Light refreshments will be served



Photo: US Navy/MC2 Joseph M. Buliavac

### About the Event

This panel discussion will discuss the prevention of gender-based violence through restrictions on the arms trade. It will look at the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, and other relevant instruments to highlight synergies and ways forward to more effective protection of human rights and prevention of armed violence.

To provide a country-specific context, we will also explore the possible impact of disarmament and demobilisation efforts on women in post-conflict Colombia.

### Speakers

- **Ambassador Susanne Rumohr Hækkerup of Denmark**, Event Moderator
- **Ms. Ray Acheson**, Programme Director Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, *Synergies between the ATT and UNPoA, risk assessments and gender-based violence*
- **Ms. Katherine Ronderos**, WILPF Colombia Director, *Case study: Colombia*.

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# SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Joanne Mulligan | International Action Network on Small Arms

During general debate, a significant number of delegations highlighted concerns with the unregulated circulation and spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW). They argued that the illicit transfer of SALW deeply affects stability, exacerbates violence and insecurity, and undermines respect of international law, causing a large number of civilian casualties and absorbing sizeable resources that could be used for development. In this regard, Ghana, Ireland, Republic of Korea, San Marino, and Thailand stated that SALW are the “real weapons of mass destruction.” The proliferation of SALW, according to Republic of Korea, has cross-cutting ramifications for three key pillars of the UN, namely peace and security, development, and human rights.

To confront this challenge, most states underscored the importance of the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) as a focal point for curbing the illicit trafficking of SALW and reinforced their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the instrument. Some acknowledged the need for continued international cooperation and assistance and an increase in multilateralism and confidence-building measures.

The illicit transfer of SALW to non-state actors was an area of concern for delegations. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) called on all states, in particular major arms producing states, to ensure that the supply of SALW is limited only to governments or to entities duly authorized by them. Many states underlined the significance of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), with Benin and Paraguay stressing

the need for a renewed focus on marking and tracing of weapons.

A few delegations addressed the issue of ammunition. Finland, on behalf of the Nordic Countries, observed that tackling SALW and ammunition are paramount to securing conditions for development and stressed that full implementation of all instruments aiming to control these weapons is necessary, especially regarding ammunition, because “without ammunition, weapons are inoperable.”

UN Security Council resolution 2220 (2015), containing provisions relating to strengthening UN coordination and action in the area of conventional arms, was welcomed by certain delegations. Supportive states argued that this resolution paves the way for the enhanced role of the Security Council in tackling the challenges SALW creates for global security.

Some delegations commended the inclusion in the recently-adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Goal 16.4, which calls for the significant reduction of illicit SALW trafficking by 2030.

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), addressing First Committee during the NGO segment on Friday, urged member states to reduce the production of SALW while increasing destruction programs; to increase international cooperation and assistance to support the vital activities of governments and civil society; and to support the disarmament indicators for Goal 16 of the SDGs. •

# OUTER SPACE

Matilda Wölkert | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

A number of states raised the issue of security in outer space during the general debate. There was a strong consensus on the need for increased cooperation and transparency in outer space operations, and also a shared concern from many regarding the current lack of a multilateral agreement on preventing an arms race in outer space. States recognised the increasing importance of outer space for human development and life and expressed a sense of urgency regarding the need to keep up with the technological developments.

An overwhelming majority highlighted the need to keep outer space for peaceful purposes. The Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN), the Non-Alignment Movement, and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) stressed that the preservation of outer space for the benefit for all humankind includes all peoples “irrespective of the degree of their social, economic or scientific development.” Kenya further emphasised the impor-

tance of outer space for the developing world in its contribution to communication, trade, and science. A few states, including the Nordic countries, Australia, France, and Singapore, also raised problems related to the increasing amount of space debris in the orbit.

Multiple speakers called for further cooperation on outer space. References were made both to efforts on the International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities (ICCOS) and the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Object (PPWT), which was put forward jointly by Russia and China in 2008 and updated in 2014. Additionally, some states made a reference to the upcoming joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on Thursday, 22 October 2015, and called for participation by states in furthering the discussions on security in outer space. •

# ARMS TRADE TREATY

Raluca Muresan | Control Arms

The 70th session of First Committee has had a positive start for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Two countries—Central African Republic and Togo—joined the Treaty in advance of this meeting, bringing African states parties to 15, and overall states parties to 77. Furthermore, during the general debate 12 states announced plans to ratify or accede to the ATT. Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Maldives are preparing to sign and Honduras, the Philippines, Singapore, Peru, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, Madagascar, and Zambia are in the process of ratifying the Treaty.

Overall, delegations participating in general debate were largely welcoming of the ATT. The general debate opened with a statement from Mr. Kim Won-soo, the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who referred to the ATT as a positive example of UN achievements. 62 states made references to the ATT in their general statements, with most welcoming its entry into force and the success of the First Conference of States Parties (CSP1). Many states also mentioned their satisfaction with the procedural and financial decisions made at CSP1 in Cancun.

Over 30 delegations, along with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Nordic countries, the African Group, and the European Union, called for the Treaty's robust implementation. Some states raised concerns with irresponsible arms transfers that are continuing despite the Treaty's entry into force. Costa Rica emphasised that "the express prohibitions of the Treaty are not suggestions. They are obligations."

Some states highlighted transparency and reporting as key to implementation. Hungary and Finland

argued that robust reporting will ensure transparency. Estonia highlighted the importance submission of annual reports. Switzerland, which will host the ATT Secretariat, noted that reports need consolidation.

Connections were made by many delegations to cross-cutting issues. The European Union, the Nordic countries, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), along with Italy and Portugal, highlighted the importance of the gender-based violence (GBV) criterion, which seeks to prevent arms transfers when there is a risk they will be used to facilitate acts of GBV. Highlighting the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals only two weeks ago, Kenya, Germany, Portugal, and Serbia welcomed the link between the ATT and Goal 16.4, which seeks to significantly reduce arms flows. As Portugal aptly stated, the ATT aims "to regulate the legal conventional arms trade in direct benefit of global security, regional stability and protection of civilians" will also be "contributing at the same time to advance Human Rights and the 2030 Development Agenda." Russia, a non-state party, conceded that "despite shortcomings which prevented it from joining the ATT," it believes that with proper implementation, the ATT can help prevent the black market arms trade.

Mexico, which served as the ATT Provisional Secretariat in the lead up to CSP1, thanked states for their trust and support, which ensured the success of the first CSP. The Mexican delegation also reminded states of the need for greater synergies between the Treaty and other international tools in order to strengthen their implementation. This call was supported by Afghanistan, Tanzania, Kenya, and Niger. •

## ARMED DRONES

Elizabeth Minor | Article 36

Only a small number of states and one NGO addressed armed drones in their statements during the general debate of First Committee. The Netherlands, Costa Rica, and Venezuela expressed concern regarding the upholding of existing law in relation to the use of armed drones, with Portugal and the civil society organisation PAX also noting legal concerns. Ireland and PAX also noted human rights concerns.

Venezuela condemned the use of drones for extrajudicial killing. The Netherlands stated that existing law should be adequate to regulate armed drones, but suggested that clarification and dialogue is needed

regarding certain issues in the use of force and deployment of weapons. Costa Rica drew attention to the danger of governments reinterpreting key legal principles regarding the right to life and the protection of civilians in their use of drones, noting particular concern with the use of armed drones outside of conflict zones. PAX observed that the fact that specific legal justifications had to be developed for drones indicated their problematic nature.

Beyond legal concerns, Costa Rica stated that armed drones also contribute to the dehumanisation of conflict and the terrorising of populations. Costa Rica

and PAX also noted that drones serve to reduce the threshold for the use of force, with PAX also drawing attention to wider military and political implications of drones as well as proliferation. Ireland and Portugal also noted moral and humanitarian concerns with the use of armed drones.

On moving the issue forward, Costa Rica highlighted the need for more action to address armed drones, calling on the UN through its disarmament bodies to lead on measures for greater transparency and accountability. The Netherlands and Portugal also promoted discussions on transparency and upholding the law, with Portugal calling for the establishment of regulatory frameworks if necessary, and PAX suggest-

ing the development a clear international standard to tackle the problems drones pose as well as transparency and accountability.

Burkina Faso called on states to exercise political will and flexibility in addressing a number of new disarmament challenges, including those posed by armed drones. Ireland called for more consideration by the international community of the issues of use and proliferation of armed drones. Pakistan stated that there is an urgent need to check the development of armed drones, and that new international regulations are needed. Venezuela also called for legal regulations, in particular on the speed of production of drones. •

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## CYBER

Richard Moyes | Article 36

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Some 23 statements in First Committee made reference to cyber issues, generally under the rubric of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs).

The Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament framed this issue within a wider recognition that technological development can outpace the development of norms and rules to govern technology and to mitigate risks. He reflected the UN Secretary-General's concerns on the possible impact of cyber attacks on the financial system, key urban infrastructure, or even weapon systems, and urged the First Committee to strengthen its work towards global cyber norms, rules, and principles.

Many statements welcomed the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Information and Communications Technologies in the Context of International Security (GGE) and urged that it continue its work, with some commending it for building consensus that existing international law applies to cyberspace. However, issues of geographic representation and transparency were raised in the context of the composition and work of GGEs by the NAM. The Netherlands noted the range of initiatives, outside of the GGE, that are working to build confidence and stability in the cyber domain.

Many statements emphasized that ICTs should be used only in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The statements by the NAM and the Arab Group also specifically highlighted concerns regarding violations of sovereignty or interference in the internal affairs of other

states - a point emphasized by Cuba, which last year highlighted the ZunZuneo programme as an example for such concerns.

Some statements suggested a need to strengthen the normative framework on ICTs, or to clarify international law and how it applies. Others, however, focused on the need for adherence to the law, put emphasis on the role of International Humanitarian Law and noted voluntary, non-binding norms could be useful.

Estonia, more directly, considered it elementary that countries abstain from attacking national critical infrastructure. It emphasised the need to build on the work of GGE with norms that promote unrestricted access to the internet and protection of human rights and freedoms alongside improved cyber security. Issues of protecting human rights and freedom of expression were raised by others, with Brazil also noting the right to privacy. A statement by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean (CELAC) heads of state specifically condemned acts of espionage and massive global monitoring.

China called again for the conclusion of an international code of conduct on cyberspace. It sees a vacuum of international rules or norms in this area and others, and sees characteristics of cyberspace that make it challenging to the tradition norms of international relations. China provided a five point framework for a code of conduct and called on the GGE to direct its future work towards the elaboration of such an instrument. •

# FEATURE: FOUR LESSONS FOR CYBER ARMS CONTROL

Allison Pytlak | Control Arms

Visit any news website and there's no shortage of stories about cyber security. Whether about stealing defence or corporate secrets, hacking government email accounts, or surveillance scandals, it's clear that this is a problem of growing importance and prevalence. It's also one that the international community is struggling to address – but for which there are many meaningful lessons to be drawn from the arms control world.

The 'cyber' issue is so multi-faceted that it doesn't fit neatly into one basket. It includes Internet freedom and citizen surveillance; corporate cyber security challenges; and 'attacks' between states, which themselves can range from espionage, including of sensitive information, up to highly sophisticated attacks like Stuxnet. Not surprisingly, there are equally a range of fora where responses to these threats are being discussed, such as the London Process, the Global Cyberspace Cooperation Summits, the Group of Governmental Experts on ICTS, and regional and bilateral agreements. All of these initiatives are largely positive, but as they involve different players and have different mandates and agendas, it's hard to know where the action is.

At a cyber-security summit in New York last month, there was much discussion about 'cyber arms control' and what lessons can be learned from the nuclear realm. However, there are also parallels to different aspects of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) process, particularly in the discussions around advocating cyber norms and regulating inter-governmental behaviour in cyber space. While there are of course some significant differences between the trade in arms and cyber conflict, there are also some lessons for First Committee delegates to bear in mind:

1. Bring in the pros. Designing guidelines or establishing norms that are actually relevant means talking to those with technical knowledge and practical experience. Experts from civil society, and the arms industry, played an active role throughout the ATT negotiations to help policy-makers understand how the arms trade operates, while international lawyers showed what the loopholes were in existing regulations.
2. Size doesn't matter. The ATT process included all member states, both large and small. It will be important to not exclude less developed nations, or those with less technological capacity right now in any discussions about cyber norms, as their societies are rapidly getting online and many are

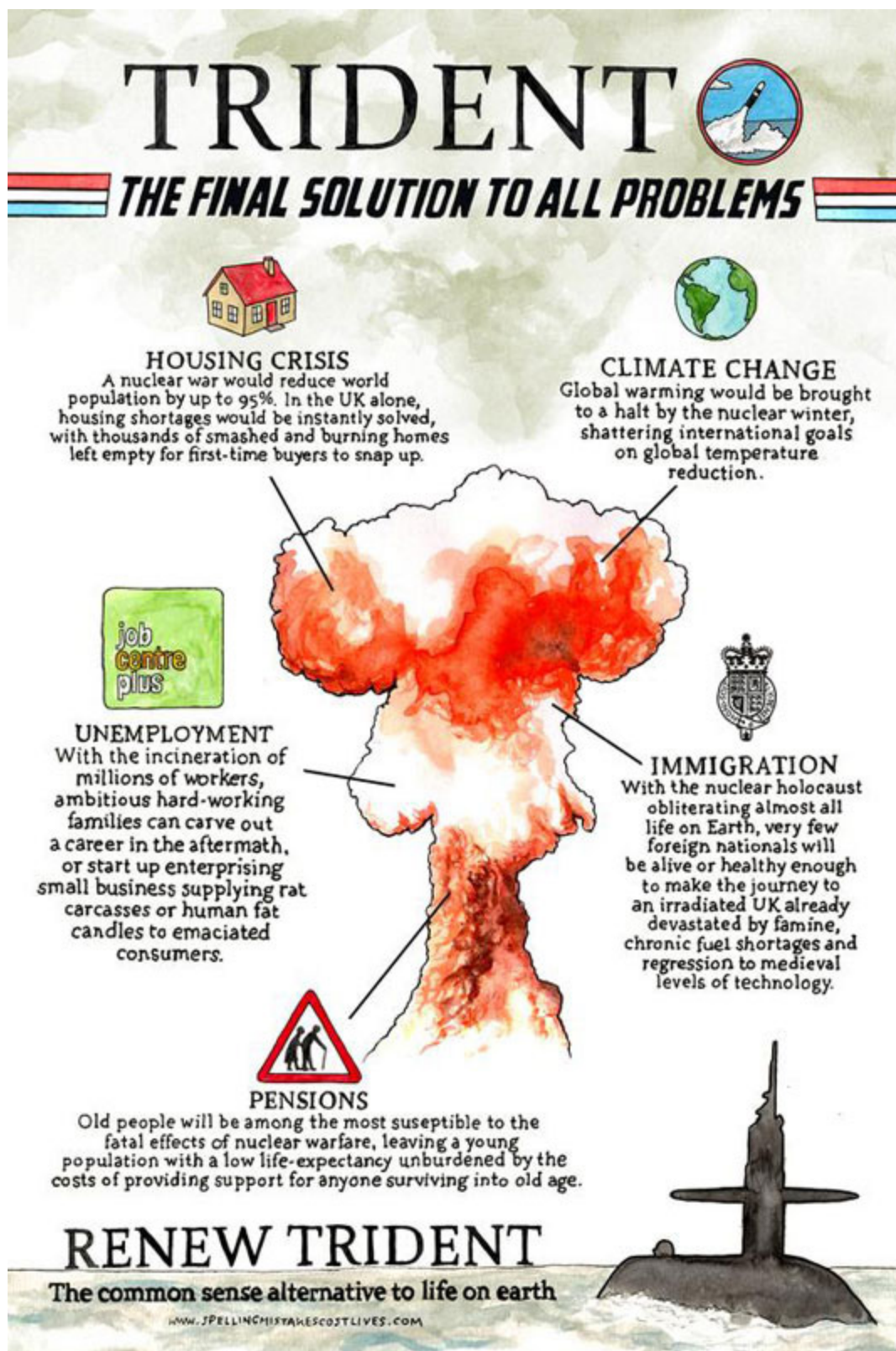
host to the factories of major software producers making them important stakeholders in any security conversation.

3. Take time to get it right. Part of the ATT process involved working out, through Groups of Governmental Experts and other methods, if a global treaty was even necessary or if other instruments would be more appropriate. Discussion at the Summit indicates that the cyber community is grappling with these questions exploring options that vary from codes of conduct to a standing forum. Having an understanding of the real nature of cyber conflict – how and when it occurs, for what objectives, and who are the biggest perpetrators – will be key to developing controls that are the right fit for the problems at hand.
4. Show some vision. The ATT - and many other arms control agreements - are landmark because governments put humanitarian concerns ahead of business as usual. Admittedly it's more difficult to articulate what constitutes 'unacceptable harm' in cyber space than in the kinetic world but in these relatively early days there is great potential to develop rules of the road that will keep the digital domain a peaceful one.

From the opposite perspective, those working to implement the ATT should stay on top of developments in cyber technology, particularly the dual-use technologies that can be considered cyber weapons. Concerns are being raised, but not loudly enough, about how governments are violating the human right to freedom of expression through domestic surveillance programmes and intrusive software targeting activists and journalists, among others. There is no meaningful regulation to prevent the companies manufacturing these products from selling them, just as there is very little in the way of international law to prevent governments from developing and deploying sophisticated computer programs that could invade or 'attack' other sovereign nations.

Of course, there are many other issues and questions for those in the cyber community to consider that are unique. But if the approach being taken is one that uses the language of arms control, then there are many gems of information to guide the way. •





As part of the Stop the Arms Fair actions in London in September 2015, artists from Banksy's theme park Dismaland put up posters around town satirising the international arms trade and nuclear weapon possession.

# BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

During the general debate a number of states addressed biological or chemical weapons. Most, including Chile, Cuba, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Nordic states, Norway, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, and Venezuela, stressed the importance of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). Some highlighted the upcoming Review Conference of the Convention and reiterated the need for its universalisation. In that context, Brazil supported the resumption of negotiations on an effective and legally binding verification regime. Hungary highlighted its annual resolution on the BTWC.

Similarly, the majority of those that spoke on chemical weapons, such as Chile, Cuba, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Madagascar, Myanmar, the Non-Aligned Movement, Poland, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Serbia, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Venezuela, underlined the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and stressed the need for its universality.

Many states, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, European Union, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Madagascar, the Nordic states, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Turkey, and United Kingdom, expressed concern at the continued reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. In that context, a number of states also expressed support for the Fact-Finding Mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism. They also called for the continued implementations of UN Security Council resolutions 2118 and 2235.

Georgia, Montenegro, and Morocco highlighted their efforts to prevent the diversion of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials. To that end, Georgia, Morocco, and the Philippines initiated the UN Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance in early October 2015. •

## FEATURE: SOUTH AFRICA TABLES RESOLUTION ON THE ETHICAL IMPERATIVES TO PROHIBIT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Beatrice Fihn | International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Last week, South Africa circulated a new draft resolution for this year's UN General Assembly called "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear weapons free world". If the humanitarian impact discussions highlight the unacceptability of any use of nuclear weapons and the risk they pose, the ethical imperatives tabled by South Africa crush any arguments for possessing and relying on nuclear weapons.

The text contains a strong rejection of nuclear weapons, based on ethical and moral principles. The resolution builds on the legacy of Nelson Mandela and the recent moral argument against nuclear weapons by Pope Francis. As a country that has unilaterally disarmed its nuclear arsenal, South Africa has moral leadership on this issue. At the closing of the failed 2015 NPT Review Conference, South Africa argued that there was a lack of moral courage on nuclear disarmament, and expressed a sense that the NPT had degenerated into minority rule—as in apartheid-era South Africa—where the will of a few reigned supreme over the majority.

This resolution highlights that leadership can and

should come from non-nuclear weapon states, and sets the stage for commencing negotiations of new legally-binding instruments. It in particular highlights that all states have a responsibility to protect its people from a nuclear detonation and an ethical responsibility to act urgently to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

All governments serious about nuclear disarmament must be upfront about what nuclear weapons are. They are indiscriminate, immoral, and unacceptable weapons of mass destruction. Governments should therefore support this resolution, in addition to the humanitarian pledge, and make it the basis for moving forward to develop a new legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. •



Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations

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*is pleased to invite you to a Discussion with*

**Professor Treasa Dunworth**

Faculty of Law, University of Auckland

*author of*

### **Strengthening the NPT: International Law and Effective Measures for Nuclear Disarmament**

A Discussion Paper

**Thursday 22 October**

**1.15-2.30**

**CR 6**

Commentators:

**H.E. Ms Dell Higgie (Chair)**

New Zealand Ambassador for Disarmament

**Ms Kathleen Lawand**

Head, Arms Unit, ICRC

*commenting on "Nuclear Weapons under IHL"*

**Mr Michiel Combrink**

Dep. Dir, Disarmament & Non-Prol, South Africa

*commenting on "NAC Proposals for Article VI's  
Effective Measures"*

**All are welcome to attend**

## SIDE EVENT: CYBER WEAPONS AND AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Allison Pytlak | Control Arms

Among the emerging security threats we face, autonomous weapons and cyber security are receiving increased attention from policymakers and general public. Yet they are discussed very separately from one another. These dividing lines were helpfully blurred during a side event hosted by UNIDIR on 9 October. UNIDIR's objective in this event was to tease out the ways in which the two intersect practically and technologically and what the policy implications of that may be. This was explored through three expert presentations that examined different aspects of each subject.

Ken Anderson mapped out the status of each subject, in terms of what is meant by an autonomous and a cyber weapon, and how they interact. As he explained, autonomous weapons have some kind of cognitive ability to select and engage a target, which leads to many conceptual questions about broader decisions about military strategy and the human role as envisioned by the designers of these weapons and their systems. Cyber weapons do not have a single definition, but as Anderson pointed out, might involve an autonomous component or have some kind of learning capacity. They could also just be a simple virus. The example he provided of how they interact is that of a remotely piloted drone system controlled in real time by an operator in an air force base. The cyber element would be the communications network employed by the system, which could be vulnerable to hacking. His presentation ended with a series of key questions for policy makers to consider, urging them to consider how they approach regulating today's technology based on a fear of what might happen in the future.

Patrick Lin focused on the development of cyber norms, which he framed as a "missing link" in the autonomous weapons debate. He identified the norms that are applicable to use of either type of weapon, as well as conceptual, legal, and ethical challenges. One of the most glaring disconnects between the two, however, is in the area of meaningful human control, which is absent in cyber discourse because cyber weapons are not inherently lethal, only indirectly so. There are special challenges unique to cyber weapons, he explained, such as attribution for an attack and discrimination.

A final presentation was delivered via Skype from Heather Roff, who focused on the critical intersections between autonomous and cyber weapons. She explained what each type of weapon is and how they might be defined or understood. In describing the risks related to autonomy within a weapon system, she distinguished between the "known unknowns" that can be somewhat predicted and "unknown unknowns" that system designers cannot conceive of or control for.

Taken together the three presentations provided substantive content for diplomats and civil society to consider at this First Committee and going forward. While it's not likely that these subjects will converge completely in how they are addressed, identifying the overlaps and understanding their relationship will benefit future discussions. •

## SIDE EVENT REPORT: HARNESSING TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Federica Dall'Arche | PeaceWomen of WILPF

On Wednesday, 14 October 2015, the United States State Department, in cooperation with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), hosted a side event to present to the First Committee the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), introducing its key goals, assessing the progress made, and defining further plans of action of the partnership.

Frank Rose, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, presented the partnership as a new tool to understand and solve monitoring and verification challenges

across the nuclear weapons lifecycle: from material production, material control, warhead assembly, and deployment, to storage, dismantlement, and disposition. He suggested the partnership should build international capacity and provide international leadership among nuclear weapons states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS), by facilitating technical progress towards meeting the challenges of nuclear arms control.

Andrew Bieniawski, Vice President for Material Security and Minimization of the NTI, presented a bibliography of articles, studies, and reports on past



research, experiments, and agreements compiled by NTI. The bibliography, called “Monitoring and Verification Resource Collection,” is meant to serve as a set of lessons learned from the past.

Jørn Osmundsen, Senior Adviser for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introduced the three IPNDV working groups established to address the challenges states will confront when constructing future inspection and monitoring regime. The first working group will focus on Monitoring and Verification Objectives, chaired by the Netherlands and Italy. The second working group will focus on On-site Inspections, chaired by Poland and Australia. The third working group will focus on Technical Challenges and Solutions, chaired by the United States and Sweden.

Mr. Osmundsen also announced how the second Oslo Plenary meeting, on 15-16 November 2015, will be an opportunity to discuss and build consensus on the core priorities and activities of each working group.

All the panelists took turns describing the initiative not merely as a building blocks approach towards nuclear disarmament but as a way for NWS and NNWS to work together and combine expertise with the aim of reaching the shared goal of nuclear disarmament. After the interventions of the panelists, there was an opportunity for debate where topics such as the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), the Nuclear Weapons Convention, and the inclusion of potential cross-regional groups of states into the partnership were raised. •

## SIDE EVENT REPORT: GENERATION OF CHANGE—ENCOURAGING YOUTH ACTION FOR NUCLEAR ABOLITION

Mia Gandenberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On Friday, 16 October, the Steering Group of the International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition, together with the UN Mission of Japan, held an event to present the work and outcome of the Summit that took place in August this year. Thirty youth leaders from twenty-three different countries had come together for three days to build and enhance the network of the younger generation of leaders in the field of nuclear abolition and to create opportunities for future collaborations transcending strategic differences.

A short video gave an impression of how participants engaged in a two-day working session, consisting of activities such as the tour of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Park, dialogue with hibakusha, and strategic discussions on themes related to the present and future of the nuclear abolition movement. The youth leaders also developed a Youth Pledge for Nuclear Abolition and a one-year action plan, with the awareness that the Summit is just a starting point for their future action. The final day of the Summit was a public forum, where over 250 participants deepened their understanding of the issue and discussed what actions they can take in their own capacities.

To start off the discussion, Director and Deputy to the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Thomas Markram, highlighted the important role that youth can play at a time where traditional disarmament forums are in disagreement on the way forward. New initiatives such as the humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons offer alternatives for engage-

ment and wider participation. More creative ways of communicating allow for wider education, combating apathy and ignorance. In closing Mr. Markram highlighted the various publications the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs has produced on disarmament education and initiatives to involve younger people in disarmament work.

Mr. Vugar Allahverdiev of the UN Youth Envoy's Office gave an overview of the Envoy's work and the manifold initiatives of young people around the world to engage with international policy. He especially highlighted the calls for a global policy framework that resulted from the Global Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security held in Amman, Jordan, in August 2015.

Ms. Erin Hunt of Mines Action Canada offered some insights on her organisation's long experience with youth engagement for disarmament activism. A combination of introductory briefings at conferences and long-term mentorship has resulted in continued engagement in various disarmament campaigns of those trained. She highlighted the need for nuclear disarmament to adapt to the changed realities since the Cold War and stressed that the humanitarian initiative has offered a less intimidating entry point than traditional forums and offered more opportunities to engage and participate.

As the final speaker, Mr. Matt De Vlieger of United for Peace and Justice looked back at the Summit and highlighted some common themes he came across working as a young person for various causes for peace, such as a feeling of frustration of not be-

ing able to meaningfully engage and participate, struggles to be taken seriously, and the contradiction of some young people being used as fighters, yet not being a part of the policy making of change.

Similar themes arose during the question and answer session following the panel discussion, chaired by Ms. Anna Ikeda of Soka Gakkai International. Participants highlighted the use of unpaid labor by many international organisations and non-governmental groups

and difficulties of accessing existing forums. Youth are included various international policy debates on for example human rights or climate change, while it is absent from most security debates. However, as one participant highlighted, that part of the problem might lie in the current structures and while youth should seek to engage with these structures, it should also aim to create new structures more fit to address the challenges of this century. •

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## SIDE EVENT REPORT: HIGH-LEVEL BRIEFING ON THE US NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW

Greg Mello | Los Alamos Study Group

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**O**n Friday 16 October, the US delegation hosted a side event on the US nuclear posture chaired by Undersecretary of State Rose Gottemoeller, with senior Department of Defense nuclear planner Greg Weaver as the main speaker.

The event was narrowly focused on the question of whether further de-alerting of US nuclear forces would decrease the risk of nuclear war. The answer provided was no, it would not. While de-alerting is a perennial topic, this event took particular aim at a substantial report issued by Global Zero earlier this year advocating further de-alerting.

Weaver and Gottemoeller expounded on the results of classified Pentagon studies showing that further de-alerting measures, beyond those taken at the end of the Cold War, would decrease crisis stability by setting the stage for an unpredictable, hard-to-read “re-alerting race” in the event of a nuclear crisis.

The current risk of accidental or unauthorized launch is nil, it was claimed. Because of this, and because the risk of a nuclear first strike is judged to be extremely low under the present conditions given the survivability and retaliatory capacity of US forces in their present alert posture, de-alerting measures would provide no benefit under present conditions. Instead, de-alerting would increase nuclear risk just when it should not be increased, i.e. in a crisis.

All this was explained in the most general terms, the details being classified. So there was no discussion or rebuttal of any specific de-alerting proposal. The nature of the de-alerting proposals studied in depth at the beginning of the Obama administration was not revealed.

There is no possibility of any cyberattack leading to unauthorized or accidental nuclear launch, either from within the government or from outside, it was claimed. Remarkably, it was also claimed that no military personnel can authorize the launch of nuclear weapons, though it was not stated that it was physically impossible for military personnel to launch a nuclear strike.

Listeners were told that the whereabouts of all potential successors to the presidency are constantly tracked by STRATCOM, which apparently would provide hard-copy launch authentication codes as needed—codes which are not resident in any computer—to the next individual in this long line of possibilities. Apparently, STRATCOM manages the process.

Answers to the many troubling questions that could be raised about these bland conclusions are of course classified. Leaving aside all the pesky details affecting the survival of humanity, then, the main conclusion on offer was that for the US, only intentional nuclear attacks are possible. •

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

When	What	Where	Who
Monday, 19 October 13:15-14:30	Explosive weapons in populated areas	Conference Room E	Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN
Monday, 19 October 13:15-14:30	Control Arms' "ATT Monitor" Launch	Conference Room 6	Permanent Missions of Australia, Netherlands, Ireland, and Trinidad and Tobago and Control Arms
Monday, 19 October 13:15-14:30	Panel discussion and screening of documentary "Chemical Weapons: An Insidious War"	Conference Room 7	Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN and Green Cross International
Tuesday, 20 October 13:15-14:30	Addressing concerns over autonomous weapons	Conference Room A	Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
Tuesday, 20 October 13:15-14:30	ATT: Outcomes of CSP 2015 and planning for CSP 2016	Conference Room 6	Permanent Missions of Mexico and Nigeria and Control Arms
Wednesday, 21 October 13:15-14:30	Perspectives on security and disarmament: panel with Dr. Hans Bilx and others	Conference Room 4	Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN
Wednesday, 21 October 13:15-14:30	From Space Debris to Space Governance: Space Security Index 2015	Conference Room 7	Space Security Index
Wednesday, 21 October 15:00-18:00	Rethinking general and complete disarmament in the 21st century	Conference Room 8	Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN and the Centre for International Studies & Diplomacy at SOAS, University of London
Thursday, 22 October 13:15-14:30	Arms trade, small arms, and gender-based violence	Conference Room E	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN and Reaching Critical Will of WILPF
Thursday, 22 October 13:15-14:30	Strengthening the NPT: International law and effective measures for nuclear disarmament	TBA	Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the UN
Thursday, 22 October 18:15-22:00	Security through Safety in Space: Links between Space Security and Initiatives for Space Sustainability at the United Nations	TBA	UN Institute for Disarmament Research, Secure World Foundation
Friday, 23 October 13:15-14:30	Progressive approaches to disarmament	Conference Room 8	Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the UN, Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, and Article 36
Friday, 23 October 13:15-14:30	Discussing drones: engaging the international community on unmanned systems	Conference Room A	Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN and PAX

# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

The *First Committee Monitor* is a collaborative NGO effort undertaken to make the work of the First Committee more transparent and accessible. The *Monitor* is compiled, edited, and coordinated by **Reaching Critical Will** of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

*Contributing organizations and programmes to this edition:*

Article 36  
Campaign to Stop Killer Robots  
Cluster Munition Coalition  
Control Arms  
International Action Network on Small Arms  
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons  
International Campaign to Ban Landmines  
Los Alamos Study Group  
PeaceWomen of WILPF  
Reaching Critical Will of WILPF  
WILPF Sweden

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Reaching Critical Will