

# FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

NGO Reporting on the United Nations  
General Assembly First Committee on  
Disarmament and International Security  
2 October–2 November 2017

**NO. 3**  
15 October 2017



## FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

2017 No. 3

Reaching Critical Will is a programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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***The views in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.***

Cover image: Cover of the novel *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller

Reaching Critical Will is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest women's peace organization in the world. Reaching Critical Will works on issues related to disarmament and arms control of many different weapon systems; militarism and military spending; and gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and of disarmament processes.

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- Research and analysis of critical issues related to disarmament and arms control; and
- News and information about civil society engagement on disarmament and arms control.

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Reaching Critical Will

# EDITORIAL: THE NUCLEAR CATCH-22

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

//Technology is not neutral," said Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. "Ultimately, technology is a magnifier of human intentions, aptitudes and biases." He was speaking in the context of the high-level panel on emerging technologies at First Committee on 11 October, but the sentiment is true of all weapons, from small arms to nuclear bombs. Whether it is the mass shooting in Las Vegas or the mass slaughter of civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the weaponisation of technology magnifies the worst of humanity's intentions, aptitudes, and biases. It is the material form and explicit exercise of racism, sexism, and classism; of oppressions of all shapes and sizes.

The solution is disarmament. The solution is the development of norms and laws that compel our better intentions and aptitudes to flourish. The solution is collective, collaborative engagement amongst governments and civil societies. The solution is dialogue.

The solution is understanding and promoting disarmament as security, not disarmament or security.

One of the most concerning developments over the past few years that has emerged apparently in response to the movement to ban nuclear weapons is the assertion that a) nuclear weapons are necessary for (some states') security and that therefore b) the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons undermines global security and stability.

These assertions are repeated *ad nauseam* by states that currently possess nuclear weapons and those that currently include nuclear weapons in bilateral or alliance relationships with the United States.

These assertions damage the non-proliferation regime. They depict nuclear weapons as the platinum credit card of state security, necessary for survival. The irony of it, however, is that these states do understand the insecurity that nuclear weapons create—but only in the hands of states they perceive as enemies.

The US delegation argued last week, "ban treaty proponents would have us believe that we can do away with nuclear deterrence despite—to cite just one example—the danger posed by North Korea's relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems, which stand in flagrant violation of international law."

There's a lot to unpack here. First of all, nuclear deterrence is not a material object. It is a concept, an idea

created in the minds of men determined to justify massive economic investments in a weapon of mass destruction that is designed only to incinerate entire populations of civilians and leave future generations with cancers and other devastating health issues.

There is also the "question what nuclear deterrence means for security in the first place," said the Austrian delegation. "Nothing good, as Austria and the supporters of the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons] believe."

Secondly, pitting "North Korea's relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons" as something that deterrence could prevent is empty rhetoric. If nuclear deterrence "worked," then how would North Korea have succeeded in developing nuclear weapons or delivery systems? How could they have conducted six nuclear weapon tests underground on their own territory and now be threatening to drop a hydrogen bomb on the Pacific—which has already been used in horrifically racist ways as a testing ground for other states' nuclear weapon programmes?

Third, the idea that only North Korea's nuclear weapons are in flagrant violation of international law is not just bad faith, it's blatantly lawless itself. The United States, along with the other nuclear-armed states, is obligated under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to eliminate its nuclear weapons. The International Court of Justice was clear in its 1996 advisory opinion that "good faith" meant that the NPT states parties had to successfully conclude multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Fourth, as Bangladesh's delegation pointed out, the arguments in favour of retaining nuclear weapons are made exclusively by those states that are part of "exclusive groups or initiatives that tend to prescribe the norms and standards for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation" in ways that clearly seek to maintain the prerogatives of the nuclear-armed states.

The idea that the nuclear-armed states can have their nukes and eat their non-proliferation too is a reckless fantasy. And for it to simultaneously suggest that those supporting the prohibition of nuclear weapons are *undermining* security, by trying to devalorise weapons of mass destruction, is baffling. If the United States, United Kingdom, and France want to prevent proliferation, why on earth would they try to deter states from negotiating or joining an international agreement to never acquire them or use them?

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"Progress in nuclear disarmament has always been the leading force for improving the international security environment and the levels of international cooperation," argued the Egyptian delegation last week. "Thus the stalemate in nuclear disarmament could be viewed as one of the root causes of the deteriorating security environment which is paradoxically used as a pretext for not making progress in nuclear disarmament."

This is a classic catch-22. By the narrative of the nuclear-armed, we can't eliminate nuclear weapons because they bring the security that is necessary to prevent other states from acquiring or using nuclear weapons, which would bring insecurity; and we can't make progress on disarmament because the "security environment conditions" are unstable, even though disarmament would make those conditions more stable.

This situation grows in Orwellian dimensions when you add in the stated argument that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) will not lead to the elimination of even one single nuclear weapon. Of course, it's up to the states with nuclear weapons to decide to get rid of them. It's their choice, not the Treaty's, about whether or not disarmament happens.

Furthermore, the Austrian delegation explained, by this logic, the NPT could be regarded as a failure, because it has not prevented non-members from acquiring nuclear weapons. "Certainly such an assumption is not a valid excuse for nuclear weapon possessors not to join" the TPNW, said Austria. "Suffice that any one of them actually joined and the assumption would *eo ipso* be proven wrong."

So then, according to the nuclear-armed and nuclear-supporters, what is then the way to achieve nuclear disarmament, if it is not through nuclear disarmament?

What is the best way to prevent proliferation if the staunchest "non-proliferation advocates" disavow or refuse to comply with non-proliferation agreements—whether it's the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran or the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself?

What is the best way to "deter" nuclear war if our systems are set up to encourage others to acquire nuclear weapons and threaten to use or to use them?

How can we expect North Korea to join a dialogue let alone make an agreement with the United States when it is tearing up agreements with other countries?

Samoa, noting the "scars of terror and mistrust" that comes from being used as a nuclear weapon test site, described its region's nuclear weapon free zone as "deterrent" against nuclear weapons. Is not the prohibition treaty, in this sense, also a "deterrent" against the development, acquisition, possession, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons? Should we not be putting all of our efforts into these types of *prevention* measures, rather than classically-understood "deterrence" measures that rely on the *very possibility of the occurrence of what it is trying to prevent*?

"The progress finally reached in nuclear disarmament this year represents fresh hope in a time when all too many have lost their lives and livelihoods to violence and conflict, and a time when unbridled threats can all too freely flow," said the Irish delegation last week. The threats are flowing, and we will all suffer the consequences if left unchecked. The nuclear-armed states have, as Liechtenstein eloquently said, mistaken responsibility for privilege.

Their responsibility is to disarm. Instead, they accuse those of trying to make positive change of being "divisive".

India said there is a "rift between those who believe that nuclear weapons can be made to vanish by fiat and those who believe that nuclear weapons must be asserted even more vigorously." Pakistan referred to the "divisive approach that trivializes security considerations and excludes them altogether by banning nuclear weapons on humanitarian and ethical grounds." While Canada said it shares the sentiment behind the Treaty, it believes it has "contributed to a further divide in the international community."

In reality, as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) said in its statement to First Committee on 10 October, it's not the Treaty that divides us, but nuclear weapons. And while they may divide us now, our better humanity—our better aptitudes and intentions—must prevail. It's our only hope. •



# NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

During both the final days of general debate and the ensuing cluster one discussion on nuclear weapons, delegates continued to express anxiety about the unravelling of previous nuclear agreements and the rising prospect of possible nuclear war. In the midst of these concerns, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) also continued to serve as a lightning rod for diverse opinions about the best course of action on nuclear disarmament.

## Nuclear ban treaty

For the majority of states, the negotiation, adoption, and opening for signature of the TPNW is the highlight of 2017—or really of the past twenty years—in the field of nuclear disarmament. Ambassador Whyte of Costa Rica, chair of the nuclear ban treaty negotiations, said that 2017 will go down in history as a landmark to build a world free of nuclear weapons. She remarked on the “deep innovation” in how the international community deals with nuclear weapons through the development of legal norms necessary to govern the behaviour of states. The African Group hoped that all states, “including nuclear weapon states and those under their nuclear shield, would seize the opportunity to pursue the goal of a nuclear free world.”

Tensions of course remain over whether or not this Treaty was the best way forward. But however controversial some states purport the Treaty to be, its supporters are clear that it was a logical next step and that it is meant to facilitate, not prevent, future work towards the goal of ending the nuclear era. As the Irish delegation said, states always knew that the work wasn't finished with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The TPNW, while not the final piece of the puzzle either, is groundbreaking “both in its core provisions which effectively prohibit nuclear weapons, and also in its deep commitment to humanitarianism, to disarmament education, as well as its recognition of the Hibakusha and the importance of the full and effective participation of women in the future work of the Treaty.”

Most ban treaty supporters perceive the work of implementing this Treaty as just beginning. The TPNW “sends a powerful political message that nuclear weapons are categorically unacceptable,” noted the Malaysian delegation, which is what makes it a useful tool for disarmament. Most delegates speaking in favour of the Treaty emphasised its strong prohibitions and the framework it establishes for the elimination of nuclear weapons in the future.

It is this framework that the states who rejected the Treaty before it was even negotiated complain about its perceived shortcomings. The US delegation, for example, argued that the TPNW does not have a “credible verification mechanism” and that the “decision to reject the Additional Protocol represents a profound failure of judgement.” Austria, on the other hand, pointed out that in reality the details of verification are quite wisely left for when nuclear-armed states join the Treaty, and that the TPNW requires states parties “to maintain as a minimum what each of them has in place today, meaning in the majority of cases a comprehensive safeguards agreement plus an additional protocol, amounting even to a higher standard than stipulated by the NPT.”

Several mischaracterisations of the Treaty made by non-supportive countries were thoughtfully refuted by the Austrian and New Zealand delegations in cluster one statements focused on the Treaty. Their arguments, based in careful legal and political analysis of the Treaty, provide a clear picture of the positive effects this instrument can have on the global security environment.

It is with this in mind that a wide range of delegations from across the globe congratulated the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 6 October. However, it was not just TPNW-supporting governments that congratulated the campaign—others also welcomed the Nobel Committee's decision, hoping that the award will help bring visibility to the urgency of nuclear disarmament.

## Iran deal and recommitting to nuclear weapons

That urgency is only increasing, as can be seen both inside and outside of the UN building. The Trump administration's decision to not certify the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) last week was a blow to diplomacy and international relations, but in Conference Room 4 the rest of the parties involved indicated broad support for this agreement moving forward.

But the challenges facing the JCPOA are only one piece of a much bigger story, in which some states seem to be trying to amplify their commitment to nuclear weapons rather than nuclear disarmament.

The group of 29 countries that shelter under the US nuclear umbrella reiterated its oftstated view that the humanitarian and “security dimensions” of nuclear



weapons must both be addressed—which is their way of saying they believe nuclear weapons provide them with some sort of security benefits and thus they will not end their reliance on deterrence or urge nuclear weapon possessors to get rid of their nuclear arsenals.

Nuclear weapon possessors and supporters alike have increasingly indicated commitment to preserving nuclear weapons for the indefinite future. The US delegation spoke about the “crucial role that nuclear deterrence plays in preserving and protecting international peace and security,” and warned against the “potentially catastrophic consequences were deterrence’s restraining effect to be removed while it still remains necessary.” Australia, in keeping with this perspective, admitted that the key problem with the TPNW is that it “seeks to delegitimise extended deterrence.”

Given that up until the US administration changed hands in January the rhetorical goal of that country was a nuclear weapon free world, it’s important to understand the change of policy reflected in statements such as these. There seems to be a marked weakening of commitment to nuclear disarmament and a revived commitment to nuclear weapons.

First Committee resolutions have not yet been released through the Official Document System and so will be reported on next week. It will be interesting to see if and in what ways some of them reflect the renewed emphasis on the importance of nuclear weapons. Signals coming from drafts of certain resolu-

tions, including Japan’s annual text, suggest that even the only country to have ever experienced the use of nuclear weapons in a time of war may be backing away from the urgency of nuclear disarmament.

### “Building blocks”

In the meantime, First Committee delegates discussed the litany of other options for making collective progress on nuclear issues. These continue to include removing nuclear weapons from high alert status, achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, establishing a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East, advancing nuclear disarmament verification projects, and minimizing highly enriched uranium.

Foremost on this list last week seemed to be the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which has been on the agenda since the mid-1990s. The Chair of the informal group of experts convened by Canada said in her report that more work on the technical side of nuclear disarmament can benefit all work in this sector, noting that the FMCT process has been running parallel to the negotiations of the TPNW. Most delegations responding to her report indicated that they are pleased with the general direction of the discussions in this group so far, which are fairly dense, and highlighted the need for an inclusive process. Almost every state speaking last week indicated support for the negotiation of an FMCT as another intermediate step toward nuclear disarmament—including most supporters of the TPNW. •

## BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

### Chemical weapons

The use of chemical weapons over the last few years—which is believed to be the first such use in almost two decades—was the referenced in nearly every intervention during the general debate. This strongly signaled the shock and outrage of the international community over the use of these heinous weapons.

The vast majority of these references condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria specifically, by both state and non-state actors.

The Nordic Group, European Union, Mexico, Germany, Brazil, Australia, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, Argentina, Israel, Finland, India, Portugal, and Uruguay expressed support for the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the Organisation for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (OPCW) and the UN, in investigating use in Syria. Some of these countries also stated support for the related fact-finding missions. The United States, European Union, Australia, Switzerland, and Belgium expressed support for the JIM’s mandate to be renewed in the Security Council, which will expire in November 2017. Switzerland urged referring these instances of use to the International Criminal Court via the UN Security Council. Kazakhstan said that the Russian Federation’s proposal at the Conference on Disarmament to develop an international convention for suppressing acts of chemical terrorism is “relevant and timely”.

The Russian Federation announced that it has completed destruction of its chemical weapons stockpile. Although the Russian Federation was obligated to have destroyed its chemical weapons by 2007—a



deadline later extended to 2012—it announced that it has done so three years ahead of schedule as per a deadline of 2020, that it had set for itself.

Finland explained that its experts have been training chemists from over 130 developing countries in chemical weapons verification.

Mr. Gareth Williams of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) delivered a statement as part of an interactive panel on 11 October focused heavily on the scientific side of the issue and avoiding political commentary.

### Biological weapons

References to biological weapons centered on the quality of the outcome from the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTCW) held in 2016. The Nordic Group, Brazil, Sweden, Australia, Netherlands, South Africa, France, India, Turkey, and Kazakhstan, among others regretted that the document was not stronger and did not make progress on any of the issues it was meant to have, despite excellent preparation in the lead-up to the Conference. France said that, “The minimal outcome from the Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference in November 2016 is all the more disappointing because never before had so many substantive contributions been submitted, or had, in some cases, reached such a level of maturity.”

Brazil suggested strengthening the BTCW by bringing it to the same institutional level of the Chemical Weapons Convention through establishing an Organisation for the Prohibition of Biological Weapons and resuming negotiations on a legally binding verification regime.

Iran, on the other hand, referred to the Review Conference outcome as successful and a “promising development”. During the Conference it and some other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement had

pushed for negotiating a verification protocol to the Convention as a method to keep it relevant, and were against establishing a focused intersessional meeting plan toward the same goal, which is what other states parties were advocating for.

Colombia recognised the validity of the mandate of the Panel created by the Special Conference of this Convention with a view to the elaboration of a Verification Protocol.

India will chair the Convention’s meeting of states parties in December 2017 and expressed that it looks forward to constructive engagement from all states parties toward delivering successfully on the meeting’s mandate. The BioWeapons Prevention Project pointed out that the chairpersonship was not confirmed until September 2017, however, resulting in a loss of many months that could have been allocated towards preparation for this meeting.

The BioWeapons Prevention Project outlined recommendations for states parties to make the December meeting productive. These include developing a better mechanism to assess progress in science and technology; a stronger intersessional work programme; and increasing resources available to implementing and strengthening this treaty.

Turkey welcomed Samoa’s recent accession to the BTWC and Nepal announced that it had ratified it last year.

Albania is developing a National Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction to be approved in 2018. Malaysia said that it is currently adopting a national Biological Weapons Bill, which will be part of Malaysia’s legislative framework meant to support implementation of the BTWC. Sweden said it would continue to support training and scientific cooperation for the UN Secretary General’s Investigative Mechanism, and also to be engaged in the Global Partnership and the Global Health Security Agenda. •

## ARMED DRONES

Elizabeth Minor | Article 36

Armed drones have so far received barely any attention from states at this year’s First Committee. During the general debate only two states, Lebanon and Portugal, raised this issue. During the 2016 general debate four states mentioned armed drones, with ten raising this issue during 2016’s First Committee overall.

Portugal noted that armed drones represented one of a range of new and emerging threats, on which transparency should be encouraged and new law or frameworks may be needed to serve the objective of “protecting civilians and Human Rights.” Lebanon also noted that drones raise humanitarian issues.

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The NGO statement on armed drones this year was endorsed by 46 organisations from 17 countries. The statement highlighted the humanitarian harm caused and serious legal concerns raised by some states' use of armed drones. It also raised the risk that these technologies pose to facilitating a global expansion in the use of force, through lowering political and practical impediments. These NGOs emphasised that despite their highlighting of unacceptable US practice, this issue goes broader than the activities of one state, and an international response is needed.

The NGO statement noted that a process led by the US was currently ongoing to develop political standards on the export and subsequent use of "armed or strike-enabled" 'unmanned' aerial vehicles (UAVs). However, this process has not been inclusive of all states or civil society, risks setting standards lower than current international requirements, and does not address current users or producers. (A detailed joint NGO statement on this initiative, published in the first edition of First Committee Monitor, is available here: <http://bit.ly/2gFoZYx>)

More work by states will therefore be needed towards agreement on the limits of acceptable use of armed drones, the NGOs noted. They emphasised responding to harm, accounting for casualties, upholding the rights of victims, and transparency, accountability and oversight.

Also this week, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the International Disarmament Institute at Pace University and Article 36 launched a new study on *The Humanitarian Impact of Drones*. The event also included speakers from the American Civil Liberties Union and the Foundation for Fundamental Rights, Pakistan (see the side event report in this edition). The study collects in one place key research and perspectives on different aspects of the harm caused by armed drones, from casualties and psychological impacts, through international law, human rights, ethics and morality, to peace and security and gendered perspectives. The intention of the publication is to refocus the conversation on armed drones on the people and places affected by their use, and away from technical details and deadlocked legal debates. •

## FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

Mary Wareham | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

**A**t least 17 countries and two regional groups raised lethal autonomous weapons systems in their statements to the UNGA First Committee's general debate. This includes 11 states since the last edition of the Monitor: Bangladesh, Canada, Finland, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Portugal, Slovenia, and Switzerland.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots also spoke on autonomous weapons during the general debate.

The ICRC found that discussions on this topic at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) "have shown broad agreement among States that human control must be retained over weapon systems and the use of force" and described the framework of human control as providing "a necessary baseline from which common understandings can be developed among States." The ICRC called on states to seize the opportunity presented by the first Group of Governmental Experts meeting next month "to consider in more depth where the limits on autonomy in weapon

systems must be established to ensure IHL compliance and to satisfy ethical concerns."

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots expressed dismay that the last substantive multilateral meeting to discuss concerns over autonomous weapons was in April 2016. Since then, concerns have continued to mount over these future weapons, that, once activated, would select and fire on targets without meaningful human control.

The global NGO coalition urged states to pursue a revised mandate at the CCW's annual meeting next month that continues the Group of Governmental Experts and requires that it meet for at least four weeks in 2018 to lay the groundwork necessary to negotiate a new CCW protocol on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

On 16 October, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is holding a side event briefing together with the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN. •





# EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Laura Boillot | International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)

In the second week of First Committee and during the general debate, Ireland and San Marino raised concerns over the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, alongside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW).

These speakers brought attention to the devastating impacts on civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. San Marino highlighted that civilians bear the brunt of today's conflicts, resulting in "unnecessary suffering, generating displacement and the death of many civilians." The impact on vital infrastructure and public services was also highlighted.

The ICRC also drew attention to this, saying that from its work on the frontline it observes "disastrous effects of heavy explosive weapons on civilians, and their highly disruptive impacts on services essential to their survival—be it health care or water and electricity supply." INEW stated that the "bombing and shelling of towns and cities and the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continues to be a major cause of harm to civilians living in conflict situations around the world." The ICRC highlighted challenges from wars in cities, urging "civilian protection demands that parties to armed conflicts reassess their choice of means and methods of warfare, in particular the use of explosive weapons, in populated areas." The ICRC reminded states that it calls on "parties to armed conflicts to avoid using wide-impact explosive weapons in densely populated areas due to the significant likelihood of indiscriminate effects." INEW echoed these concerns and calls to action.

INEW also highlighted that "there is evidence that militaries can, and have, refrained from the use of

certain weapons in populated areas, and in doing so have strengthened civilian protection." Examples can be drawn from policies limiting the use of artillery and other indirect fire weapons in populated areas, such as the African Union Mission. In Afghanistan, the government approved a national policy that recognizes the impact of heavy weapons in populated areas and is working on guidance for its forces to reduce civilian harm from such weapons.

Ireland expressed its support for the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General for States "to engage constructively in efforts to develop a Political Declaration to address the humanitarian impact of the use of EWIPA." The ICRC stated that it welcomes "all efforts to address this urgent humanitarian issue, including the Austrian-led initiative to develop a non-binding political declaration identifying good practices."

INEW laid out concretely how a political declaration could be used as a tool to address harm including:

- it could set an important political and operational direction for parties to armed conflict to avoid using explosive weapons in populated areas.
- it could provide a framework for states to develop national measures and guidance, and a forum to discuss results and assess effectiveness of such measures.
- it could contribute to assisting communities and addressing civilian harm from the effects of explosive weapons.

Afghanistan expressed concern over the harm being caused from improvised explosive devices. Slovenia spoke on the dangers presented to civilians from explosive remnants of war. •



## STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS FROM THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

### Briefing event and launch of the *OCHA Compilation of Military Policy and Practice*

Wednesday 18 October 2017, 13.15 – 14.45  
CR-A  
United Nations, New York

# LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

The reports of civilian casualties from recent landmine use on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border are “truly horrifying,” said Ireland as the general debate came to a close. The delegation of Bangladesh expressed concern about the “serious threat” posed by landmines to people fleeing, and called upon Myanmar to control this threat.

All the other delegations that spoke about the weapon also called for its global elimination or explained the national steps they are taking to reach this goal.

Cameroon, Portugal, Slovenia, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) encouraged all states to come on board the Mine Ban Treaty.

Canada noted that collective action benefitted the work towards a mine-free world. Cameroon, the Holy See, Portugal, Tajikistan, and the ICBL called for the full implementation of the Treaty. In particular, Tajikistan, a country affected by antipersonnel mines, said it attached great importance to the efficient implementation of the Treaty, and called for a Central Asia free of mines. It also called for strengthened cooperation for mine clearance. Slovenia explained how it

supports mine action through the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security. It shared data on achievements in the region and beyond, highlighting the central role of victim assistance.

The ICBL explained that any device that is designed to explode due to the presence, proximity or contact of a person is an antipersonnel mine, even when it is made from improvised materials. Such devices fall under the scope of the Mine Ban Treaty. San Marino said the increasing use of improvised mines was unfortunate. Afghanistan, an affected state, described how improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explosive remnants of war and landmines “pose a severe threat to humankind”.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty, the ICRC recalled that 20 years ago, antipersonnel landmines were still being employed or stockpiled by most states. Since then, said the ICRC, the Treaty has shown that “the determined leadership of States ... can successfully respond to a humanitarian catastrophe caused by an unacceptable weapon, by comprehensively prohibiting and eliminating the weapon on the basis of IHL.” •

# CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

As the general debate came to a close, eight delegations from three regions mentioned cluster munitions.

Costa Rica, Ireland, Slovenia, and the Cluster Munition Coalition expressed concern with the use of cluster munitions or condemned such use. The Republic of Congo stated the importance of ridding the world of these weapons. The Holy See recalled the need to ensure that “civilians everywhere are protected from these weapons which have catastrophic humanitarian impact and consequences.”

Costa Rica, Cameroon, Slovenia, and the Cluster Munition Coalition called for further universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, while the Holy See encouraged its full implementation. Canada noted the progress made towards the elimination of cluster munitions.

Slovenia mentioned in particular its concern about the rising number of cluster munition victims and its attachment to victim assistance as a central commitment made by states under the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It called for the “full participation [of victims] in all spheres of the society on an equal basis and in a sustainable way.” Slovenia further explained the support it offers to victims through the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security.

Ireland shared its assessment that the Convention on Cluster Munitions, along with other international instruments, “represent the best of what can be achieved when the international community and civil society work together to establish ... powerful norms.” •



# SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Rose Welsch | International Action Network on Small Arms

In the final two days of the general debate statements at First Committee, member states continued to express concern about the humanitarian and developmental impacts caused by small arms, and stated their commitment to implementing the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA). Many also highlighted the 2018 Third Review Conference of the UNPoA (RevCon3) as a chance to strengthen the Programme and pledged to participate in it constructively.

Despite numerous expressions of support for the UNPoA, RevCon3 and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the bulk of statements focused primarily on nuclear weapons, and some countries made no mention of SALW at all, prompting Turkey to assert that the threat posed by the proliferation of illicit conventional weapons is no less important than that of weapons of mass destruction. Uruguay stated that SALW are very much weapons of mass destruction, and pointed out that 74% of the total volume of weapons exports between 2011–2014 were by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

While a number of states made references to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their statements about SALW, Nepal and Afghanistan specifically highlighted SDG 16 and its Target 4, which aims to significantly reduce illicit arms and financial flows by 2030. Nepal called on the international community to work collectively to strengthen mechanisms to prevent pervasive abuses by criminal elements as a way to directly contribute to the implementation of SDG 16(4). Afghanistan said SALW has caused its citizens tremendous suffering for decades, and said that SDG 16 helps raise awareness of the nexus of illicit weapons, drug trafficking, and money laundering that funds the purchase of weapons by non-state actors.

Several states spoke about regional instruments and initiatives, or additional action on SALW they are undertaking in their own countries. The Central African Republic noted that it is surrounded by Boko

Haram flash points, and called on other countries in the region to ratify the Kinshasha Convention. Cameroon also welcomed the Kinshasha Convention, and joined in concern about Boko Haram. Cameroon also called for “Silencing the Guns by 2020,” referencing an African Union goal to end conflict on the African continent.

Albania said that this year it approved the establishment of a SALW Commission that will coordinate and monitor SALW control activities, as well as compile a national strategy on SALW. In this regard, it said, a process of cooperation and mutual support among countries—especially at the regional and sub-regional level, like the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)—is of utmost importance.

After states spoke, NGOs gave statements on disarmament, and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) focused on the following five key areas for RevCon3:

- Explicit inclusion of ammunition in the PoA;
- Greater gender-based action to curb the proliferation of small arms;
- Synergies between the UNPoA and the ATT as well as other instruments;
- Addressing pervasive armed violence in crime as well as in conflict; and
- The link between the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the UNPoA.

Additionally, corruption, support for survivors of gun violence, and working toward a culture of peace are important areas of focus, said IANSA. IANSA said that as the official coordinator of civil society participation in the UN small arms process, it is fervently hoping that RevCon3 will break its pattern of substantive stagnation and result in actually making people around the world safer. IANSA called on states to work not only with one another, but also with civil society to achieve this. •

## OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

The Outer Space Treaty (OST) marked its 50th year on 10 October 2017, which coincided with the civil society statement on outer space prepared by Project Ploughshares. Drawing attention to the persistent lack of progress on the United Nations General Assembly

resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), the statement urged action, noting that “the international community has the unique possibility to act proactively before outer space becomes weaponized.”

*continued on next page*

This sentiment was echoed in opening statements for the special joint panel on challenges to space security and sustainability held by the First Committee and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) to mark the OST anniversary and contribute to transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBM). The Deputy High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Thomas Markram, noted that concerns relating to the use of conventional weapons in space remain an urgent priority. The Director for the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo, highlighted the role of her Office in maintaining the UN Register of Space Objects as an indication of its mandate and willingness to support additional transparency and confidence in outer space through “robust information exchange and notification procedures.”

A panel discussion with civil society and private sector representatives included Ms. Charity Weeden (Satellite Industry Association), Ms. Laura Grego (Union of Concerned Scientists), Ms. Daniela Genta (Airbus), and Ms. Jessica West (Space Security Index, Project Ploughshares). Weeden highlighted contributions to space security by the satellite industry and its engagement in outer space governance through government interactions while Genta demonstrated industry efforts to implement global programs such as the Sustainable Development Goals. Presentations also emphasised technological constraints to the use of weapons in space and academic efforts to clarify existing legal constraints through the MILAMOS project (Grego) as

well as the effects that the ongoing inability to address the threat of warfare in outer space have on the safety and sustainability components of space security (West).

Delegation statements following the panel pointed to appreciation for greater coordination among United Nations bodies. Broad support for the process of developing voluntary guidelines for long-term sustainability of the space environment within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was also expressed; however Russia noted competing preferences for activities at the national and international level. On ways forward, the United States pointed to the growing success of TCBMs, while Canada called on all members sign on to the Outer Space Treaty and to submit national reports to the GGE. Continued discord between preferences for legal and voluntary approaches were evident, with China indicating support for TCBMs but a concern that they not substitute for formal negotiations.

These divisions were echoed in statements during general debate, which nonetheless expressed unanimous concern for the potential use of weapons in outer space. Canada’s Ambassador Rosemary McCarney indicated a preference for voluntary measures on TCBMs to build the trust necessary for legally-binding measures. Similarly, India’s Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill called on sates to “bridge the growing divide on disarmament through dialogue and a renewed commitment to multilateralism.” •

## CYBER

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Statements about cyber were limited among national statements during the remainder of the general debate, but the subject of new technology—including cyber—came up frequently in side events and a high level panel discussion.

Estonia, a country that suffered from one of the first known inter-state cyber attacks in 2008, said that, “All in all, the [Group of Governmental Experts] GGE has been a productive format of work. Over the years, the GGEs have reached consensus on a number of recommendations, which the General Assembly has repeatedly endorsed.” Estonia reiterated its support for establishing a strategic framework for conflict prevention and stability in cyberspace that is based on “international law, in particular the UN Charter, the development and implementation of universal norms of responsible state behaviour and regional confidence-building measures.”

Myanmar noted that cyber security warrants serious consideration while Pakistan said that it is committed to starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on cyber weapons. Palestine said that cyberspace must remain a “safe and secure” space, dedicated to research, development, and human advancement.

Preserving cyber peace was the focus of an NGO joint statement delivered by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. The statement highlighted the importance of better transparency and inclusivity in any future UN body debating cyber issues, particularly for non-governmental experts including the private sector, and developing countries. The statement also registered concern about the abuse of cyber technologies by certain governments to repress and curtail the freedoms of their people.



It was also an important component of the statement from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that reinforced its belief that international humanitarian law (IHL) “applies to and restricts the use of cyber capabilities as means and methods of warfare during armed conflicts.” The ICRC made an important distinction however to say that by arguing for the applicability of IHL—which only applies in situations of conflict—it is not condoning the use of force in, or militarisation of, cyber space.

During a panel discussion on 11 October about the implications of emerging technological developments on disarmament and non-proliferation, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs warned delegates that the potentially destabilizing effects of cyber attacks should be of “paramount” concern. She regretted the inability of the most recent GGE on information and communications technology did not adopt a report and thereby outline a path forward for work

in this area under UN auspices, but felt that earlier reports lay a foundation for a non-binding framework to “prevent and mitigate” effects of cyber operations.

In the same panel, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva referenced “heightened risks of cyber-attacks on nuclear facilities.”

The UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) convened its annual conference on cyber stability over a half day. Expert presentations focused on essentially two things: perspectives on the applicability of international law to cyber space, and potential avenues and formats for continuing deliberations on security-related aspects of cyber within the UN. Other themes that emerged included the differing cyber priorities that developing or middle-size countries have, in comparison with larger nations; and the possible merits of breaking down cyber into smaller sub-issues for debate and advancement in the UN. •

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## DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Kathryn Balitsos | Pace University

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Several states last week mentioned the relationship between disarmament and development. The connection of the two topics was often in relation to small arms and light weapons (SALW), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), military expenditure, and nuclear weapons.

The delegations of Afghanistan, Bulgaria, the Holy See, Myanmar, Portugal, San Marino, and Control Arms mentioned the impact of SALW on development and the achievement of the SDGs. San Marino and Portugal said that SALW proliferation contributes to destabilisation, which in turn undermines development.

SDG16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. This goal was specifically mentioned by Afghanistan, Fiji, and Control Arms. SDG16 represents an aspect of development that is hindered by illicit trafficking in arms and SALW for Afghanistan and has caused extreme suffering for decades. The delegate from Afghanistan explained that the illicit trade of SALW in Afghanistan gives terrorists and organized criminals easy access to weapons.

The civil society network Control Arms described the link between the SDGs and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), noting that it goes much further than only being connected via SDG16. Control Arms welcomed the inclusion of a thematic panel during third Conference

of States Parties that helped articulate these linkages in very clear ways.

The delegations of Myanmar and Uruguay talked about the vast amount of money spent globally on armaments. Myanmar said, “While development is consistently underfunded, an incredible amount of resources is spent annually on the modernisation of nuclear weapons and accumulation of different armaments.” It suggested that if this money were to be “diverted to social, economic and humanitarian causes, even a few percentage points of these resources could help achieve many of the transformative SDGs, including eradication of poverty and hunger, well before 2030.”

Costa Rica, Ireland, Nepal, and South Africa discussed the development impacts of investments in nuclear weapons. South Africa said that the continued production of nuclear arms is harmful socioeconomically and hurts development in South Africa. Costa Rica said it is unacceptable for those states which, despite signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty and agreeing to eliminate their arsenals, are instead spending billions on the development of nuclear weapons. Costa Rica also added that it is imperative that there is a halt in the investment into nuclear arsenals. Nepal also critiqued the amount of financing for the modernisation of nuclear weapons, and suggested that these funds should instead be directed towards socioeconomic development. •



## GENDER

Madison Goodliffe | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

The second week of the First Committee meetings brought to light many gender issues that continue to be not only noticed, but also felt across the world. Some of the main topics spoken about were the unique impacts that small arms and light weapons (SALW) and nuclear weapons have on women, as well as the imminent need for the international community to step up the participation of women in disarmament and non-proliferation discussions.

San Marino, Portugal, and Canada emphasised the effects of SALW on women and girls. San Marino touched on the topic of gender-based violence in regards to SALW fostering rape and violence. Portugal reiterated the need to eradicate SALW from a gender-based perspective, highlighting "the need for implementation of the ATT provisions on gender-based violence, as part of the broader effort to consider a gender perspective in disarmament discussions." Canada explained the need to take gender into account when stating the effects of conventional weapons.

Ireland and Sweden stressed the disproportionate impact nuclear weapons have on women from a biological standpoint. Both countries explained the

uneven effects of ionizing radiation between men and women, and that the scientific findings concerning the gender impact of this need to be brought to the forefront of discussions in the First Committee and other nuclear weapon discussions.

Ireland, Sweden, Fiji, and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs underscored the need to increase the participation of women in disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and processes. The lack of representation of women in disarmament forums needs to change. Fiji explained that the inclusion of women in this setting is necessary as they are often the victims of conflicts. Ireland expressed its concern that women are "vastly unrepresented in nuclear disarmament forums, far more than in any comparable international body," urging states to improve the situation. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, expressed the need for an increased number of women in Groups of Governmental Experts (GGE) as the percentage of women in this forum is currently at a mere 20%. She explained her regret to find that there continues to be all-male expert groups in recent years. •



*ICAN campaigners visit the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*



# SIDE EVENT: THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF ARMED DRONES

Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

A new book *The Humanitarian Impact of Drones* was launched on 13 October in an event featuring many of its contributors and editors. The book emphasises the humanitarian, human rights, psychological, gender, and legal implications of armed drones along with moral and ethical dimensions of drone use. It has been published by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) with support from Article 36 and the International Disarmament Institute at Pace University.

Matthew Bolton of Pace University, an editor, explained that the book offers in-depth chapters tackling a range of related issues as outlined above. It further offers national and regional case studies from Djibouti, Pakistan, Yemen, Asia, Latin America, the United States, and Europe and draws on a diversity of expertise—including legal, policy, research, academic, and personal experience.

Shahzad Akbar of the Foundation for Fundamental Rights spoke from his chapter about human rights and the impact of armed drones in Pakistan. His chapter illustrates the direct impact on communities, where in Pakistan around 4,000 people have been killed as a result of 426 strikes over a time period of 13 years, around one quarter of which are civilians, including children. He stressed that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) leads these operations, which means there is no transparency, accountability, or victim recognition. This, in turn, fosters resentment and facilitates recruitment into extremist groups.

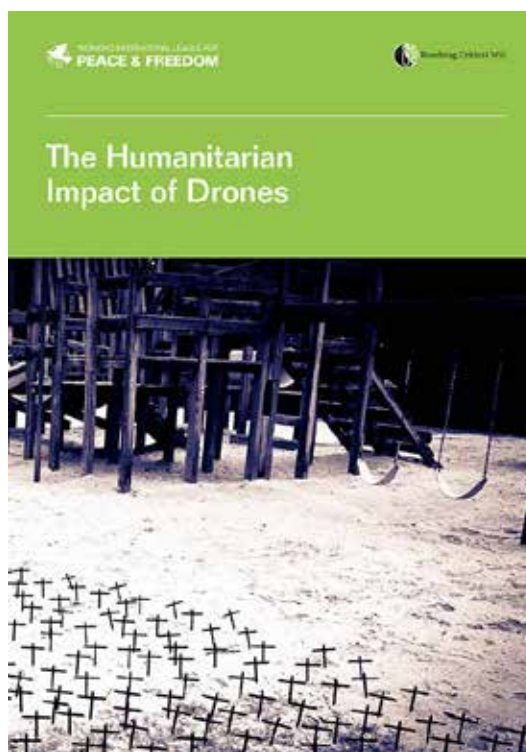
Picking up on these themes, Anna Diakun of the American Civil Liberties Union spoke from her chapter, which is about secrecy and lack of transparency. She described the origins of the US drone programme, and the discrepancy between civilian casualty numbers released by the government versus those uncovered by independent researchers. "Blanket justifications given to the drone programme impede democratic accountability in the United States and the ability of citizens to assess its legality," stated Ms Diakun.

Ray Acheson of WILPF presented her chapter that illustrates the link between gender and drone use, which draws on academic writing and theory about gender and technology in order to bring its depth into the diplomatic and UN community. Ms. Acheson touched on three specific gender links: first, that drones technology and practices of use may reinforce problematic gendered norms such as violent masculinities; second, that the remote nature of drone warfare

may have gendered impacts on male operators who are not seen as warriors in the way those who enter direct combat are; and third, drone strikes perpetuate gender-based violence by using "maleness" as an identifier for militants in strike targeting and casualty recording.

In the discussion, a question was raised concerning Hollywood portrayals of drones and if they are helpful in bringing some of these issues to the public domain. Ms. Diakun expressed that when watching such films, it's good to ask about whom the films paint as victims and create empathy for. Others asked about where the future of drone use is going, particularly in the context of the US programme and the intention under President Trump to relax certain policy checks related to targeting and the deployment and drone. Mr. Akbar noted that US action has set a precedent that is leading other countries to want to acquire armed drones, such as India and Pakistan. He further shared that his experience in public education and advocacy in Pakistan to protest American drones has led to policy change so it is important to pursue these activities.

*The Humanitarian Impact of Armed Drones* is available online at [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org) and in hard-copy at the First Committee via WILPF. •



## SIDE EVENT: POSITIVE OBLIGATIONS IN THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Alexander Holder | Article 36

On 12 October, the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, Mines Action Canada, Article 36, Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic, Pace University's International Disarmament Institute, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung organised a side event to discuss the implementation of victim assistance and environmental remediation in the context of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). These two aspects of the Treaty are described as its "positive obligations" to be undertaken by states parties. Their inclusion reflects the humanitarian aims and focus that are at the centre of the TPNW.

Ambassador Pernelle Beckles of Trinidad and Tobago opened the discussion by expressing her pleasure at having worked alongside civil society groups in recent months as the TPNW was developed and adopted, thanking such groups for their "years of fervent advocacy". Beckles also praised Guyana for having already ratified the Treaty and noted that Trinidad and Tobago's domestic processes for ratification are underway.

Bonnie Docherty of the Harvard Law School's International Law Clinic explained the role of the positive obligations that are included in the Treaty. In particular she highlighted the significance of the Treaty's inclusion of the words "without discrimination," which takes precedent from human rights law and will set a normative standard to protect vulnerable groups. Erin Hunt of Mines Action Canada explained that the TPNW in many ways follows the precedent set by earlier humanitarian disarmament treaties such as the

Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. She celebrated the inclusion of the positive obligations clauses in the Treaty as a way to acknowledge and seek to compensate the disproportionate impact that nuclear weapons testing have had on indigenous people.

Matthew Bolton from the International Disarmament Institute at Pace University spoke about the necessity of conducting needs assessments in affected states in order to satisfy the "crucial need for understanding what's happening" in such countries. He stressed that it is necessary for these analyses to assimilate both technical and non-technical approaches to environmental and humanitarian impacts in order to produce an "integrated consideration of all spheres of activity". A question that was asked more than once during the discussion was why Article 6 of the Treaty places the primary obligation for victim assistance and environmental aid upon affected rather than user (nuclear-armed) states. This was a hotly contested issue during the Treaty negotiations and the speakers deemed it important to express why this is the most effective approach. As Bonnie Docherty made clear, the Treaty by no means lets nuclear-armed states "off the hook" because of the reference in Article 7 to the "collective responsibility" of all states to provide victim assistance and environmental remediation. She also noted that, practically, affected states are in the best position to provide victim assistance and environmental remediation because they are likely to have a better understanding of localised influencing factors and can better communicate with local populations. •

## SIDE EVENT: MINE ACTION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Madison Goodliffe | Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

This side event highlighted the need for continued action, support, and financing of mine action. The Permanent Mission of Switzerland hosted this event and the panel featured Andrea Romussi from the Permanent Mission of Italy, Stefano Toscano of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Maythong Thammavongsa from Permanent Mission of Lao PDR, and Nik Sekhran from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Andrea Romussi began by presenting a slogan that is used often in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "leaving no one behind". He explained that it is necessary to continue the support and awareness for mine action in post-conflict areas in order to break the cycle of war and prevent economic and social decline. Development has been seen to improve greatly with increased mine action, he acknowl-





edged, but also stated that this global issue needs more attention from the international community. He emphasised the need for funding and mainstreaming mine action. Mr. Romussi concluded by stating that the SDG 2030 agenda introduces a new paradigm for development policies and presents a “powerful appeal for mine action”.

Stefano Toscano explained that landmines continue to be a pressing issue for the international community. There needs to be durable recovery to sustain lasting peace in post-conflict areas. The GICHD, alongside UNDP, has worked together in a study linking demining with the SDGs. Mr. Toscano stated that the key findings of the study include: SDG 16 is the most direct entry point for mine action activities within the 2030 Agenda; policy coherence and support from all sectors is necessary; nationalising mine action is important to spread awareness; and the inclusion and participation of affected communities is needed for successful clearance operations.

Maythong Thammavongsa gave a brief illustration of the impact that the Indo-China war had on Lao PDR. Over 270 million cluster sub-munitions failed to explode—which was 30 per cent of the total amount dropped—leaving 15 provinces affected. He explained that the removal of unexploded ordnance is a time-consuming and costly process requiring help

from the international community. The removal of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) is especially necessary in poor regions because they are currently preventing these communities from developing and moving forward.

Nik Sekhran looked at the humanitarian effects of landmines and explained that the reason some individuals or communities are overlooked by clearance operations post-conflict is simply because of geography. He said that after a conflict ends it is common to see individuals that were relocated unable to return to their homes because the area is still contaminated with unexploded ordnance. The importance of increasing funding to mine action was underscored, as Mr. Sekhran explained that we will not achieve the SDGs in mine-affected countries without sufficient resources for clearance.

During the discussion the subject of gender diversity in demining initiatives was raised—somewhat ironic in an all-male panel. Mr. Thammavongsa said his country has employed all-female demining teams in order for women to participate actively in this field while Mr. Toscano said that in some places, gender diversity in teams is necessary for finding the contaminated areas because of the knowledge held by women as a result of their societal roles and activities. •

## SIDE EVENT: VERIFYING NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Dorin Khoiee-Abbasi | Pace University

In December 2016 the General Assembly passed Resolution 71/67 to establish a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. This was deemed especially important due to the fact that currently there is no verification or monitoring process in either nuclear warhead dismantlement. The Permanent Missions of Chile, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom held a side event on 13 October to discuss the potential role and focus of the GGE and progress to date.

Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior of Switzerland began her remarks by noting that 27 reports have been submitted by member states outlining their views and suggestions for what the future GGE could cover. She said that some of these reports emphasise the importance of universality and transparency in the verification process. Some note there must be respective roles for both nuclear-armed states and non-proliferation states. Ambassador Dallafior articulated that every

state has a role to play in the identification and credibility measures of the verification process.

UK Ambassador Matthew Rycroft stated that while these reports contain a range of views, verification assurance and confidence building were frequently referenced, but also referenced interchangeably, which is concerning. Precision language needs to be examined at the GGE, he said. Ambassador Rycroft also raised some questions that he feels states should consider, such as: do existing safeguards suffice to monitor verification? Who will verify them? Do existing measures need to be strengthened or do new measures need to be taken?

Ambassador Claudio Rojas Rachel of Chile to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana stressed the importance of nuclear verification in today’s “complex and polarised” environment. He called for a mechanism or measure to provide assurance and help bridge the gap between nuclear- and non-nuclear-armed states. The

verification process must build confidence, facilitate trust, and increase transparency, he stressed.

The Permanent Representative of Norway, Tore Hattram, spoke about the experience that member states already have from other GGEs, stating, “We are not operating in a vacuum. We have experiences from the fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We are not going in blind”.

Mr. Andrew Bieniawski, Vice-President for Material Security and Minimization of the Nuclear Threat Initiative spoke on the behalf of International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). IPNDV focuses on the problems of nuclear disarmament verification and potential procedures and technologies to address them. Mr. Bieniawski described the two phases of IPNDV that have been implemented so far. The first has focused on verification and monitoring activities linked to the dismantlement of nuclear weapons. There are three working groups in this

phase: (1) monitoring and verification objectives, co-chaired by The Netherlands and the United States; (2) on-site inspections, co-chaired by Australia and Poland, and (3) technical challenges and solutions, co-chaired by Sweden and the United States. The outcomes of the working groups will be presented at a Buenos Aires meeting in November 2017. After that, Phase II will be launched which is meant to assess the procedures and technologies found in Phase I as well as focus on addressing verification issues on a broad scale of the nuclear disarmament process.

All of the speakers agreed that one of the most important factors for the GGE is synergy and open-ended discussions between governmental experts, non-governmental experts, member states, civil society, scientists, and others.

Through the various points they illustrated, speakers all seemed to also agree on the need for research and development to go beyond verification, because the work doesn’t end there. Verification lays the groundwork for the future, including for future treaties. •

## SIDE EVENT: VERIFIED DECLARATIONS OF FISSILE MATERIAL STOCKS

Kathryn Balitsos | Pace University

This side event on 9 October was convened by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in the context of its research project on approaches to transparency and verification in nuclear security and disarmament. The all male panel consisted of Pavel Podvig (UNIDIR Senior Fellow), Joseph Rodgers (Princeton University), Alexander Glaser (Princeton University), and was facilitated by Jarmo Sareva (UNIDIR Director).

Jarmo Sareva introduced the event and panelists, and described the goal of the project—which is to identify the new approaches to transparency and the protocols to nuclear disarmament. Mr. Sareva also mentioned that regardless of the disagreements states have on nuclear disarmament they agree about the importance and essentiality of verification to this process.

Pavel Podvig presented about deferred verification. His presentation covered the scope of the problem, as well as how member states view a fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT), and how declaring stockpiles can serve as a trust and confidence building measure. Mr. Podvig presented some of the challenges to verification, which can include limited accuracy due to lost or incomplete records; a lack of access to materials in

active use; deployed warheads; and reserved material. Joseph Rodgers presented a deferred verification project that is being piloted in Russia and the United States. As he explained, there are five steps that comprise a verification process. He further gave examples of how a state would undergo this process. The pilot project will not be a replacement for full-deferred verification, he said, but includes steps that are politically viable and could be implemented today to bolster confidence.

Alexander Glaser discussed both fissile material stockpile declarations and cooperative nuclear archaeology. His presentation argued that while every state knows how much fissile material they have they are probably unsure to why they have that exact amount. He argued that it must also be a joint effort to come up with methods of verification. Dr. Glaser further explained that nuclear archaeology can be used as a tool because public history documents would be extremely useful in reconstructing production histories. “The time for nuclear archaeology is dwindling as the shut-down of enrichment plants and production reactors are being decommissioned or demolished,” Mr. Glaser stated. “This process must occur so knowledge can be obtained before things are destroyed.” •





**Join Peace Boat and the Permanent Mission  
of Austria to the United Nations at:**

## **Hibakusha's Testimony and Call urging all UN member states towards early signature and ratification of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty**

A Side-event to the United Nations First Committee  
on Disarmament and International Security

**Monday October 16, 2017 1:15 - 2:30pm  
United Nations Headquarters Conference Room A**

In light of the recently agreed upon Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Peace Boat and the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations are holding this forum to urge all UN member states towards early signature and ratification of the treaty. The event will feature a personal testimony from a Hibakusha, Nagasaki atomic bomb survivor, who is currently traveling with the Peace Boat's 95<sup>th</sup> Global Voyage for peace, who will present the realities and the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. A high profile Japanese actress from Hiroshima Ms. Azuma Chizuru will speak to the importance of the treaty. Following last week's announcement of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Peace Boat's Mr. Kawasaki Akira, ICAN International Steering Group Member, will reflect on the significance of the award at this critical time in history.

### **Speakers:**

- KIMURA Tokuko, Nagasaki Atomic bomb survivor (exposed to a-bomb at age 10), born June 25, 1935
- URATA Shion, Youth Communicator for a Nuclear-Free World, Peace Boat Hibakusha Project
- AZUMA Chizuru, Actress, Board Chair, Get in touch Inc.
- Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN
- Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN, Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Rolando Castro

Moderated by KAWASAKI Akira, Executive Committee, Peace Boat, International Steering Group Member, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)



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\*A United Nations Grounds Pass is required for this event

# SIDE EVENT: THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAGUE CODE OF CONDUCT

Dorin Khoiee-Abbasi | Pace University

The Permanent Mission of Poland hosted a side event to mark the 15th Anniversary of the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) and its importance for nuclear disarmament, as the only multilateral instrument concerning the spread of ballistic missiles.

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, remarked that there are more and more countries continuing to acquire and develop ballistic missiles capabilities. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is actively working on their missiles capabilities while other states are enhancing their missiles' range, stealth, and speed. Not only are missiles an international threat, but a regional one as well.

Mr. Alexander Houdayer, the Secretary General of the Foundation for Strategic Research, noted there are two situations that prompted the creation of the Code. The first was a missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and second, the revival of missile technology by the United States. Realising that no norms existed against these actions led to the developing the Code.

Mr. Didier Lenoir, European Union Permanent Representative to the United Nations, stressed the importance for states to have free access to space and land

for the positive use of nuclear energy. The universality of the HCoC creates confidence towards this. He explained that although there are states that have not signed it, every region of the world has at least one state that does and some regions are more represented than others.

Polish Ambassador Marek Szczygiel stated that the Code is a good example of how soft instruments can play a role in international security. He feels that there are three priorities for the Code, going forward. First, it should become universal and inclusive of all states. There are presently 10 member states that possess missile technology and do not endorse the Code. Second, the Ambassador said that General Assembly Resolution 71/33 ("The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation") requires more work because its formal obligations are too limited. Third, there needs to be more public awareness and education about the Code.

All the panelists recognised that this multilateral Code of Conduct is an important measure taken against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery. As the threat of missile proliferation and related consequences are clearly visible, the HCoC remains significant and important. •



**CAMPAIGN TO STOP  
KILLER ROBOTS**

United Nations General Assembly  
First Committee on Disarmament & International Security

## **SIDE EVENT BRIEFING**

### **Pathways to Banning Fully Autonomous Weapons**

**Monday, 16 October 2017**

13:15-14:45

**Conference Room VIII**

United Nations  
New York

#### *Introduction*

- Ambassador Juan Sandoval Mendiola, **Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations**

#### *Speakers*

- Prof. Noel Sharkey, **International Committee for Robot Arms Control**
- Ms. Bonnie Docherty, **Human Rights Watch**
- Mr. Camilo Serna, **Seguridad Humana en Latinoamerica y el Caribe (SEHLAC)**

#### *Moderator*

- Ms. Mary Wareham, **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots**

The **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots** is a global coalition of more than 65 non-governmental organizations working to preemptively ban weapons systems that would select targets and use force without meaningful human control. This side event will consider the rationale for prohibiting lethal autonomous weapons systems, also known as fully autonomous weapons, and pathways to concluding a new international treaty.

For more information see [www.stopkillerrobots.org](http://www.stopkillerrobots.org) or contact:

- Mary Wareham, Tel. +1-646-203-8292 (mobile), [wareham@hrw.org](mailto:wareham@hrw.org)

# 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, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

*Contributing organisations and campaigns to this edition:*

Article 36

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Cluster Munition Coalition

International Action Network on Small Arms

International Campaign to Ban Landmines

International Network on Explosive Weapons

Pace University

Project Ploughshares

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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Reaching Critical Will