

First Committee briefing book



Reaching Critical Will

2013

Reaching Critical Will

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Contributing campaigns and organizations:

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (www.icanw.org)

Control Arms (www.controlarms.org)

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (www.stopkillerrobots.org)

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (www.icbl.org)

Cluster Munition Coalition (www.stopclustermunitions.org)

International Network on Explosive Weapons (www.inew.org)

Instituto Sou da Paz (www.soudapaz.org)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (www.wilpfinternational.org)

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Preparing for the 2013 session of the First Committee Reaching Critical Will

The United Nations General Assembly's First Committee is often used as a forum for member states to express stale and repeated positions on every topic related to disarmament and international security and to table resolutions that change little in substance or in result from year to year.

To most civil society actors, the month of October could be used more efficiently. Therefore, Reaching Critical Will has produced this briefing book to highlight a number of current disarmament issues and suggest ways forward.

This briefing book will give the reader a quick overview of the state of play on some of the most pressing issues that will be addressed at this year's First Committee. In addition, it will also provide recommendations for governments from some of the main civil society coalitions working on these topics.

The non-governmental groups that have contributed to this book work on many different issues and

weapon systems from a variety of perspectives, but they all share one thing in common: the desire to increase human security by reducing the impact of weapons through the development of international norms.

The UN is a place where governments of the world are supposed to come together to solve collective challenges and make progress on the pressing issues of our time. Unfortunately, UN member states often fail to achieve these goals due to outdated concepts of security. In terms of disarmament in particular, governments seem to be constrained by antiquated methods of work and traditional approaches to security issues that do not reflect the realities of the 21st century.

But people all over the world, and indeed many delegations at the UN, seek true progress and the enhancement of human security. We hope that this briefing book will provide inspiration and alternatives as we engage in the important work ahead.

Nuclear weapons

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

Background

If just one of the world's 17,000 nuclear weapons were detonated, intentionally or accidentally, it would kill thousands of people instantly and spread its long-term effects across borders and generations. And as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has concluded, first responders would be unable to provide the emergency relief so urgently needed.¹ This makes the continued existence and deployment of nuclear weapons one of the most serious humanitarian challenges of our time.

Nuclear weapons have been used twice in warfare—by the United States on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. More than 210,000 people died, while many more suffered acute injuries. In addition, over 2000 nuclear tests have been carried out, with widespread environmental and health impacts on surrounding communities. Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive

power and the threat they pose to the environment and human survival. They release vast amounts of energy in the form of blast, heat, and radiation. In addition to causing tens of millions of immediate deaths, a regional nuclear war involving around 100 Hiroshima-sized weapons would disrupt the global climate and agricultural production so severely that more than a billion people would be at risk of famine.² Despite this, no comprehensive prohibition of this weapon yet exists. Nuclear weapons are valued by a minority of states as tools of security and “deterrence”. They are discussed as tools of international politics rather than as the unacceptable source of human suffering, environmental destruction, and economic waste that they truly are.

Therefore, discussions about nuclear weapons must focus not on narrow concepts of national security, but on the effects of these weapons on human beings—our health, our societies, and the



environment on which we all depend for our lives and livelihoods. The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons must inform and motivate efforts to outlaw and eliminate these weapons.

Current context

In March 2013, the Norwegian government held a conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. This marked the first time governments have ever met to discuss this topic. The Oslo conference was influential in reframing the debate on nuclear weapons and building the argument that nuclear weapons should be banned because of their unacceptable humanitarian impacts. 128 states participated in the Oslo conference alongside international organisations and civil society, demonstrating substantial interest in addressing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The conference concluded that “it is unlikely that any state or international body could address the immediate humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation in an adequate manner and provide sufficient assistance to those affected.”³

One of the most important results of the Oslo conference was the announcement by Mexico that it would host another meeting on this topic to continue the discussions. The meeting in Mexico has the opportunity to become a significant step towards banning and eliminating nuclear weapons.

Recommendations for governments

During First Committee, governments should:

- Highlight that any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. As shown through data presented at the Oslo conference, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapon use make it imperative to prevent any use or accidental detonation of a nuclear weapon.
- Welcome the announcement by Mexico to hold a follow-up conference in February 2014, emphasize the importance of continuing the discussion on humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and declare an intention to participate in this conference.
- Acknowledge that the current deadlock of the disarmament machinery is not acceptable and state that new ways of preventing a humanitarian catastrophe must be explored.
- Reiterate that the catastrophic humanitarian impact of any use of nuclear weapons underscores the urgent need for a ban on nuclear weapons.
- Highlight the importance of outlawing and eliminating nuclear weapons now.



www.icanw.org

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- 1 International Committee of the Red Cross, “Humanitarian assistance in response to the use of nuclear weapons,” Information Note, No. 3, 19 March 2013.
 - 2 Ira Helfand, “Nuclear famine: a billion people at risk - Global Impacts of Limited Nuclear War on Agriculture, Food Supplies, and Human Nutrition”, 25 April 2012, p. 1.
 - 3 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway Espen Barth Eide “Chair’s summary Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons”, 4-5 March 2013.

The Arms Trade Treaty

Control Arms

Background

On 2 April 2013, after more than a decade of campaigning and seven years of work at the United Nations, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This first international Treaty aimed at reducing humanitarian suffering by bringing the arms trade under control sets an important basis for concrete action. It creates a new global norm against which states' practice will be measured, by other states and by international civil society.

Current context

The ATT officially opened for signature on 3 June 2013. At the time of writing, over 80 countries have signed the Treaty and four have ratified it. 50 ratifications are required to trigger entry-into-force (EIF), which will take place 90 days after the 50th country deposits its instrument of ratification. This could happen by the end of 2014. There could easily be over 100 signatories by the end of 2013, hopefully following a successful high-level treaty event that will take place on 25 September.

The coming months represent a critical next stage in the implementation of the Treaty, as signatories must now work to incorporate its provisions into their national laws and practices. Government departments will have to harmonize their work and coordinate with their legislative branches. Civil society must maintain pressure and momentum in order to universalize the Treaty, while also developing effective monitoring mechanisms that will improve transparency and hold states parties to account.

Achieving the intended goals of the ATT will require all stakeholders—including states, international civil society, and relevant defence industry members—to continue to work together so that the Treaty is effectively implemented and begins to transform the international arms trade.

Recommendations for governments

During First Committee and beyond, governments should:

- Encourage signature and swift and effective entry-into-force of the ATT. States should sign the Treaty if they have not yet done so.
- Take steps toward implementing the Treaty at the highest possible standards and in a transparent manner. In order for the Treaty to have the most impact on the ground, states parties should set the highest possible standards as they implement the treaty.



A Signature is:

A Pledge, An Endorsement, A Commitment,
An Assurance, An Obligation, An Agreement,
A Covenant, An Accord, A Bond, An Attachment,
An Understanding, A Deal, A Surety, An Undertaking,

A PROMISE

To make the World a place
for ALL of humanity.

X _____

controlarms

#TimeToSign @controlarms

- Outline their intention to undertake strong implementation of the ATT's provisions as well as provide updates and examples of such steps already being taken. A joint statement presented by Mexico, and supported by 98 member states on 2 April 2013, explained how the Treaty requires that all conventional arms transfers be evaluated against strong humanitarian and human rights criteria. Many more member states took the opportunity at the signing ceremony in June 2013 to make strong statements. First Committee is another opportunity to indicate progress in this area.
- Participate in and contribute to the substantive discussions taking place in side events and elsewhere in order to share expertise and strengthen capacity for the robust implementation of the ATT.

controlarms

www.controlarms.org

Fully autonomous weapons ("Killer Robots")

Campaign to stop killer robots

Background

The expanded use of armed drones or unmanned aerial vehicles and other technologies are already dramatically changing warfare, with a firm trend developing toward ever-greater autonomy. The prospect of robotic weapons that would choose and fire on targets on their own without any human intervention poses a fundamental challenge to the protection of civilians and to compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

Six months ago a new international civil society coalition was launched in London to tackle fully autonomous weapons. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots calls for the creation of an international treaty that would require that human beings are always meaningfully involved in decisions to select and engage targets.

Current context

Shortly after the campaign's launch, on 30 May, the Human Rights Council debated a report on 'lethal autonomous robotic weapons' prepared by the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. The report by Professor Christof Heyns lists numerous ethical, legal, policy, technical, and other concerns, and calls for a moratorium on fully autonomous weapons until new international law is achieved. It recommends the establishment of a high-level



The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots was launched in April 2013 in London.

MARY WAREHAM, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

panel of experts from different fields to "propose a framework to enable the international community to address effectively the legal and policy issues." Two-dozen states spoke in the debate at the Human Rights Council debate following the presentation of the UN report. All expressed interest in the challenges posed by these weapons and none opposed working on the issue. There was discussion as to the most appropriate forum for taking this issue forward, with Brazil and France suggesting the Geneva-based Convention on Conventional Weapons and others opting for the Human Rights Council, also in Geneva.

The topic of fully autonomous weapons is clearly relevant to the UN General Assembly's First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, which addresses various weapons-related concerns as well as global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community.

The UNGA First Committee can be a useful venue for states and civil society to register their concerns with specific weapons systems and propose suggestions for ways to address them. This can be done in statements, but also in side events and bilateral conversations. Past UNGA resolutions that started in First Committee have also helped states to begin looking at these issues of concern.

In her statement to the Human Rights Council debate, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane said that “the pace of technological developments continues to accelerate” and asserted that so too “must our efforts to come to grips with the implications of emerging weapon systems in the fields of international peace and security, disarmament, human rights and humanitarian affairs.” As Kane notes, delegating targeting and kill decisions to robotic machines that operate without any human supervision is a multisectoral issue, with various aspects to consider from use to proliferation to potential humanitarian impact to fundamental ethical and moral questions.

Recommendations for governments

All states participating in the 2013 session of the UNGA First Committee should add the topic of fully autonomous weapons to the list of weapons systems of concern that require urgent attention. In their statements, delegations should welcome the calls for international debate on this topic and describe how they will seek to advance discussions at the international level. The UNGA First Committee is held a month before the annual meeting of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) so it is a useful place to begin discussing a possible CCW

mandate on fully autonomous weapons as well as the preparations necessary to establish such a mandate.

In addition, all states should welcome the UN report on lethal autonomous robotics and endorse its four recommendations:

- Place a national moratorium on lethal autonomous robotics.
- Declare a commitment to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law in all activities surrounding robotic weapons and put in place and implement rigorous processes to ensure compliance at all stages of development.
- Commit to being as transparent as possible about internal weapons review processes, including metrics used to test robotic systems.
- Participate in international debate and trans-governmental dialogue on the issue of lethal autonomous robotics and exchange best practices.

The multifaceted nature of the issue of fully autonomous weapons requires that it be considered from a range of different perspectives and civil society is keen to provide its views and ideas on what can be done. The campaign's NGO founders include roboticists, scientists, and other technical experts as well as former officials, such as past UN disarmament chief Ambassador Jayathana Dhanapala, president of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. It includes Nobel peace laureates and NGOs that were centrally involved in the successful international campaigns to ban landmines and cluster munitions. All delegates are invited to a side event on fully autonomous weapons that campaign representatives will be speaking at on Monday, 21 October.



**CAMPAIGN TO STOP
KILLER ROBOTS**

www.stopkillerrobots.org



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES

Landmines

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), 1997 Nobel Peace Laureate

Background

The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (or Mine Ban Treaty) is proving to be a shining example of humanitarian disarmament, having a real, lasting impact on the ground every day in dozens of states.

More than 80% of the world's states are on board of the Mine Ban Treaty as of today. Its impact on reducing human suffering and stigmatizing landmines has been clearly felt around the world—not only in the 161 states that have joined the treaty, but also in the small number of those that have not yet joined. The stigma on these weapons holds so strong that most of those remaining outside the Treaty abide by its norms.

Many hundreds of square kilometers of contaminated land have been cleared of mines; 24 countries have reported that they are now mine-free; and more than 46 million stockpiled landmines in 87 countries have been destroyed. The number of new casualties caused by landmines and explosive remnants of war each year has dropped dramatically to fewer than 5,000 recorded cases, in comparison to an estimated 15,000–20,000 at the beginning of the 1990s.

Current context

But despite this remarkable progress, over 60 states and areas are still contaminated with landmines, and every day some 12 people are killed or maimed by landmines or explosive remnants of war. This demonstrates that states need to work even harder to

clear the land of these dangers and to assist survivors and their communities. Furthermore, a tiny number of governments outside of the Treaty are still using antipersonnel landmines, including Myanmar and Syria in 2011–2012¹, and some very serious allegations of use by states parties (Sudan, Turkey, and Yemen) are still unresolved.

What is needed now?

- An immediate halt to any use of antipersonnel landmines, anywhere;
- That the 36 states that remain outside the Mine Ban Treaty to join without delay;
- For states parties to increase their efforts to comply with all Treaty obligations, especially to clear their land of mines and assist victims; and
- For all states to provide the necessary resources to achieve the Treaty's goals quickly.

Recommendations for governments

During the UN General Assembly high-level debate and First Committee, governments should:

- Heed the Secretary-General's call to advance the universal application of the framework of internationally agreed-upon norms and standards, and accede to the Mine Ban Treaty at the annual UN Treaty Event in September 2013.
- Emphasize that the Mine Ban Treaty is one of the most impactful and most universally accepted disarmament treaties.
- Condemn any use of antipersonnel mines, call on public investigation of allegations of use by states parties, and publicize their contribution to the implementation and universalization of the treaty.

- Report on progress made towards accession and may want to stress their support for the humanitarian objectives of the Treaty, as many of them do each year.
- Vote in favour of the resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty, which provides an important opportunity for all states to reaffirm their support for the ban on antipersonnel mines. Each year, a large number of states that have not yet joined the Treaty vote in favour of the resolution, in order to demonstrate their support for the Treaty's humanitarian objectives.



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES

Beyond First Committee, all states should:

- Attend the 13th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty in Geneva, Switzerland, 2–5 December 2013. They should come prepared with the most recent information on their progress in joining the Treaty or in fulfilling their Treaty obligations.
- Attend the Third Review Conference of the treaty in Maputo, Mozambique, 30 June–4 July 2014. This conference will give all states the opportunity to commit to complete the job of ridding the world of landmines.



www.icbl.org

¹ However in July 2012 the Foreign Minister of Myanmar U Wunna Maung Lwin said that government forces are no longer using landmines.

Cluster munitions

The Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC)

Background

Cluster munitions have a devastating impact on the lives of civilians, both at the time of use and long afterwards. Their wide area footprint of destruction causes massive harm when deployed, with no way of distinguishing between civilian and military targets. In addition, all types of cluster munitions will contain duds, which mean unexploded submunitions remain on the ground after use and threaten lives long after a conflict has ended. Not only have cluster munitions killed and injured thousands of civilians during their history of use, but their presence over large areas of fertile land or urban areas has continued to pose a threat to the safety and livelihood of communities over the long term.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted in 2008 as a comprehensive and effective solution to this problem. It completely bans the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions; requires destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years and clearance of contaminated land within ten years; protects the rights of victims of these weapons; and entitles affected states to international assistance to meet their legal obligations.

Current context

As there remain considerable stockpiles of cluster munitions around the world, the convention is largely aimed at preventing the potential consequences of future use. But it also seeks to redress the impact of past use. And it is already making clear progress

towards these goals. Today 112 countries have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, of which 83 are states parties. As a result of the Convention's clear and time-bound legal requirements, states parties are already working hard to destroy their stockpiles, clear their land, and assist cluster munition victims. Almost 122 million submunitions have already been destroyed by 19 states parties.

In addition, the Convention's wide membership and even wider support from the international community has created a powerful stigma against cluster munitions. Use of cluster munitions has



While collecting scrap metal from UXO in Savannakhet Province (Lao PDR), Laskamy lost his right eye, right hand, and 3 fingers when he unknowingly picked up a live submunition.

TRACIE WILLIAMS / CMC



Cluster munition survivors play a key role in advocating for all states to join and fully implement the convention. Lao campaigner Chanthava Podbouly interviewed by Lao TV.

HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

only occurred in a few states in recent years, most recently in Syria. Each incident of use has been followed by strong international condemnation and often denial or contrition by the state in question.

What is needed now:

- An immediate halt to any use of cluster munitions, anywhere;
 - All states to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions;
 - States parties to the Convention to increase their efforts to comply with all obligations, especially to clear their land of cluster munitions, rapidly destroy their stocks, and provide assistance to cluster munition victims; and
 - All countries to provide the necessary resources to achieve the Convention's goals quickly.
- Emphasize that universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions is essential to preventing any further harm from their use.
 - Condemn any use of cluster munitions, including the widespread use by Syria over the past year. They should also report on their contribution to the implementation and universalization of the convention.
 - Report on progress made towards joining and may want to stress their support for the humanitarian objectives of the convention, as many of them do each year.
 - Express positive views on the Convention on Cluster Munitions and announce any progress made towards full implementation.

Recommendations for governments

During the UN General Assembly high-level debate and First Committee, governments should:

- Heed the UN Secretary-General's call to advance the universal application of the



www.stopclustermunitions.org

Explosive weapons in populated areas

International Network on Explosive Weapons

Background

Explosive weapons use blast and fragmentation to kill and injure people in the area where they detonate, as well as to damage objects, buildings and infrastructure. When used in populated areas they tend to cause high levels of harm to individuals and communities. Destruction of infrastructure vital to the civilian population, including water and sanitation, housing, schools and hospitals, results in a pattern of wider, long-term suffering. Victims and survivors of explosive weapons can face long-term challenges of disability, psychological harm, and social and economic exclusion.

In 2012, more than 27,000 civilians were reported as killed or injured by explosive weapons according to Action on Armed Violence, a founding member of the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW). AOAV found that where explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 91% of the casualties were civilians.¹

Current context

Over the past few years the use of explosive weapons in populated areas has attracted increasing concern within the international community. Two types of explosive weapons—

antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions—have been prohibited outright due to their devastating impact on civilian populations, but the broader problem of humanitarian harm from explosive weapons used in populated areas must also be addressed as a priority for the protection of civilians.

In 2011 a group of NGOs set up the International Network on Explosive Weapons to respond to this problem. So far around 30 countries have expressed concern about this issue, mostly in the context of the UN Security Council debates on protection of civilians. The UN Secretary-General and the International Committee of the Red Cross have called on states to avoid the use in densely populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effects.

This acknowledgement has taken place against the background of heavy casualties from the bombardment of populated areas in Côte d'Ivoire, Gaza, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria. The use of certain types of explosive weapons causing wide-area effects such as mortars, rockets, artillery, and large aircraft bombs in such populated areas have stood out as particularly harmful in these contexts. In addition, civilians have been killed and injured

In 2012, explosive violence was reported in **58 countries and territories.**

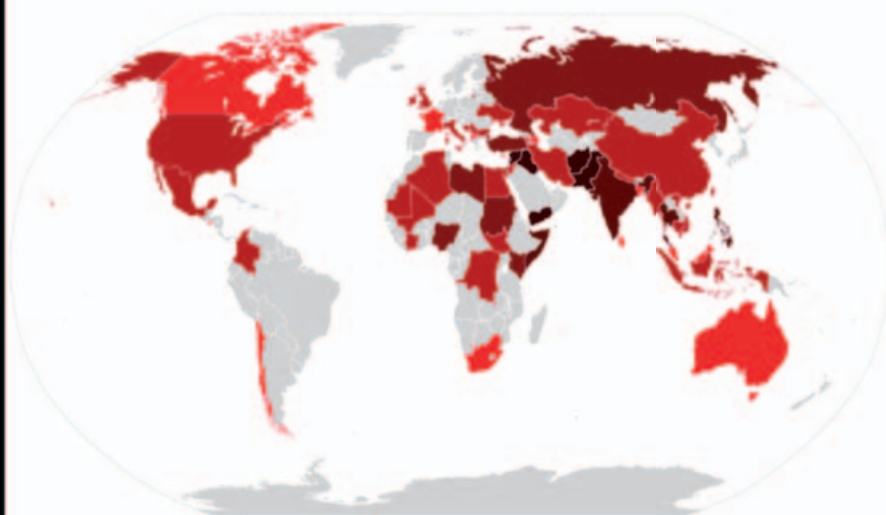
100-600 INCIDENTS

50-100 INCIDENTS

15-50 INCIDENTS

2-15 INCIDENTS

1 INCIDENT



Data based on English-language media reports

**AOAV WORKS TO REDUCE THE
WORLDWIDE HARM OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

aoav.org.uk

ACTION ON
ARMED VIOLENCE

AOAV

1 'An explosive situation: monitoring explosive violence in 2012', Action on Armed Violence, London, March 2013, p. 3.

from the regular bombings in towns and cities in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, where car bombs and suicide bombs have been detonated amongst crowds of people in public places.

Over the course of 2013 international efforts have been stepping-up on explosive weapons. At a conference in Oslo attended by 90 countries in May, the Co-Chairs' Summary stated that: "the use of explosive force in military operations in densely populated areas has devastating humanitarian consequences for civilians. In particular, the use of explosive weapons with a wide area effect should be avoided."

In July, on her return from a trip to Syria and the refugee camps in neighbouring countries, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict said that "all parties must stop the shelling and use of explosive weapons in populated areas."

On 23-24 September, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Chatham House will host an experts meeting on the use of explosive weapons, bringing together individuals that have built up specific expertise on the issue from their work within government departments, the armed forces, and humanitarian and other relevant organisations.

Further such discussions are expected next year with a view to developing stronger standards to protect civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Recommendations for governments

During the First Committee, governments should:

- Set out national policies on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including in response to the letter sent by INEW to all states, via their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York.
- Endorse the statement from the UN Secretary-General that the use in densely populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effects should be avoided. This can be done during the UN Security Council open debates on the protection of civilians, or any other relevant forum.
- Work with states, international organisations, and civil society to identify concrete measures that can be taken to prevent humanitarian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.



www.inew.org

Small arms and light weapons

Instituto Sou da Paz



Legally-binding international controls of ammunition is urgently needed

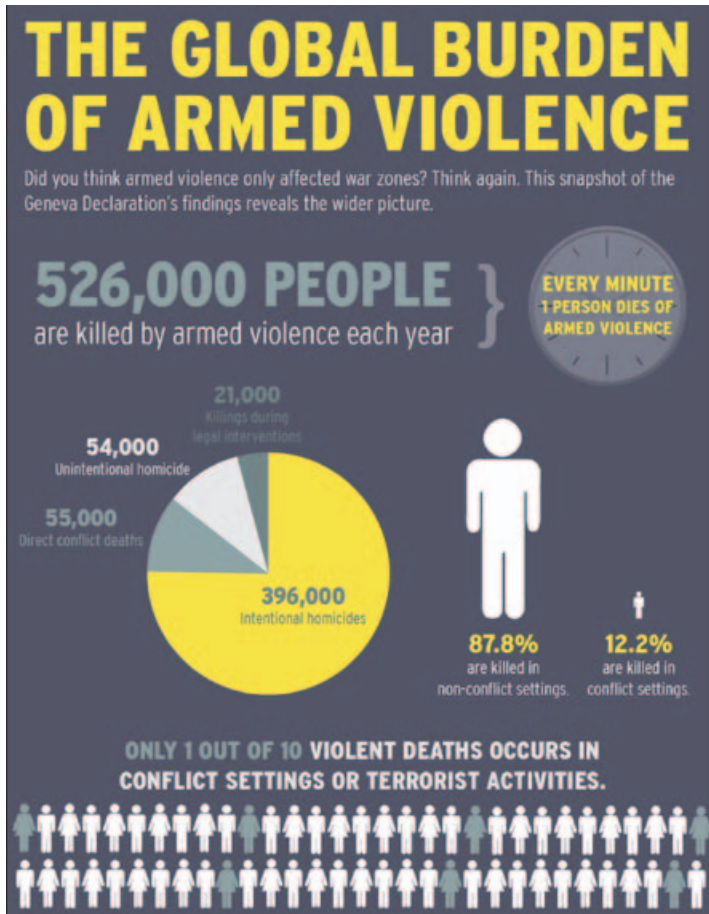
ESKINDER DEBEBE / UN PHOTO

Background

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) kill and injure more people on a daily basis worldwide than any other type of technology developed by humans to harm other humans. The numbers are so high and so known that many have become desensitized. Yet the commitment of governments to address SALW issues at the UN has seemingly decreased, and civil society has suffered a similar malaise. A key challenge is that the resolutions on SALW at First Committee are virtually unchanged from year to year, giving a sense that the issue is stale and lacks urgency.

The inclusion of SALW in the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty is worthy of celebration—especially considering some of the unfortunate exclusions under the Treaty's scope. It also proves that, with appropriate levels of political will, breakthroughs are possible in multilateral arms control diplomacy.

Such breakthroughs are certainly necessary in other aspects of SALW control. On paper, the UN Programme of Action to combat the illicit trade in SALW (UNPoA) is an excellent framework to achieve SALW control. It has been used as such in many countries with proper implementation and reporting.



However, twelve years after its agreement as a global instrument, how much does the UNPoA have to show in terms of impact in the real world? Other than expensive meetings and tons of paper, what has been produced? How many lives has the UNPoA saved?

Current context

There are two ways to regain momentum on SALW issues at the UN: (1) taking the UNPoA seriously;

and/or (2) creating new resolutions, processes, or instruments to tackle the most urgent issues missing in letter or practice from the UNPoA.

An essential aspect of “taking the UNPoA seriously” is collectively deciding to invest the needed political capital into its review and implementation process. The last Review Conference in 2012 was not underwhelming because breakthroughs were not possible—they simply were not wanted enough.

A Programme of Action needs less “recalling” and “emphasizing” and more “decides” and “establishes”. Operating under General Assembly rules, governments truly committed to decreasing armed violence should have pushed for a more ambitious document, and a vote if necessary.

Presently, breakthroughs in SALW control cannot be achieved at the UN operating under an unduly strict interpretation of, and misguided deference to, consensus. Likewise, resolutions that can be adopted without a vote—as were both SALW resolutions tabled at the last First Committee—are unlikely to have any real impact. Things that matter must shake the *status quo*.

If the UNPoA is deemed to be stalled beyond possible revival, committed governments could propose new resolutions to strengthen areas that desperately need progress. In particular, a proposal on a way forward towards legally-binding international controls of ammunition—not only of its trade, but from production to destruction—is urgently needed. In addition, robust and obligatory stockpile management standards, arguably the best way to preclude guns being diverted to the illicit market, could receive specific attention. And since excessive levels of arms production are usually a topic of complaint at First Committee, an attempt to restrain or limit production would certainly be in order, even if at first support came from only a handful of countries.

There is also a need to discuss proposals on emerging technologies that will undeniably demand some form of international standards, such as so-called “smart guns” and those produced through 3D printing

At worst, such initiatives would be politically symbolic; at best they could eventually result in decisions to strengthen the UNPoA.

When contemplating these options (strengthened

UNPoA or alternative proposals), governments should give honest consideration to a “third way”: an analysis as to **whether** First Committee can be realistically expected to deliver results on SALW control in the medium-term. Can the UN provide the drastic changes to the *status quo* needed to truly make a difference on the ground? Is First Committee a productive forum to tackle global gun violence? If not, what are the alternatives?

Regardless of the option chosen, a way forward must be found for further international regulations on SALW and its ammunition.

Recommendations for governments

During First Committee, governments should:

- Call for the establishment an independent mechanism to assess UNPoA implementation.
- Propose that the UNPoA, and its International Tracing Instrument, become legally-binding.
- Propose a concrete way forward—whether through the UNPoA resolution or a new draft—towards legally-binding international controls of SALW ammunition—not only of its trade, but from production to destruction.
- Introduce new resolutions to remedy some of the UNPoA’s most damaging substantive gaps, whether in letter or implementation—including universal binding norms regarding production, stockpile management, and emerging technologies in the field of SALW.



INSTITUTO
SOU DA PAZ

www.soudapaz.org

Gender and disarmament

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Background

Gender refers to socially constructed ideas that attribute meaning to and differentiate between the sexes. Ideas about gender affect the way people and societies view weapons, war, and militarism. Considering gender can help in developing deeper understandings of “gun cultures,” nuclear or conventional armament policies, or obstacles to disarmament and arms control. It can also help determine appropriate policy or budgetary responses to particular challenges.

While gender refers to social constructions of masculinity, femininity, etc., the concept of a “gender perspective” on disarmament also includes looking at whether and how men and women are affected differently by weapons and armed conflict. The possession, use, and trade in weapons affect men and women in different ways. The gender perspective has largely been absent from disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation processes, though some efforts have been made recently in UN resolutions and treaties to address this.

Current context

UN Security Council resolution 1325 and its follow-up resolutions provide a political framework recognizing that men and women experience wars differently. It requires these differences be taken into account and recognizes that women's full and

equal participation in all aspects and stages of peace processes is essential to building sustainable peace.

While 1325 brought the concept of “gender mainstreaming” to bear on UN offices and programmes dealing with disarmament and arms control issues, it was not until 2010 that the General Assembly began to consider its specific implications for disarmament with the adoption of resolution 65/69 on “Women, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation”.

In 2012, the UN General Assembly resolution adopted a second resolution on this subject, 67/48, which recognizes “the valuable contribution of women to practical disarmament measures carried out at the local, national, regional and subregional levels in the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict, and in promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.” This resolution urges member states and other relevant actors to promote equal opportunities for women in disarmament decision-making processes and to support and strengthen the effective participation of women, including through capacity-building efforts, in the field of disarmament.

Aside from this UNGA resolution, the importance of a gender perspective in arms control was also recognized in the recently adopted Arms Trade

Treaty (ATT). During negotiations, civil society organizations and like-minded governments worked together to ensure that the treaty included a legally-binding provision on preventing armed gender-based violence (GBV).¹ GBV is violence perpetrated against a person based on gender conceptions and can include rape and sexual violence, forced prostitution, trafficking, domestic violence, and forced marriage. Irresponsible transfers of weapons across borders have resulted in acts of GBV perpetrated by both state and non-state actors.

The ATT is the first treaty that recognises the link between GBV and the international arms trade, and was a step towards more comprehensive recognition of the relationship between weapons and gender.

However, much more is needed. It is crucial for the General Assembly and all its member states to continue to highlight the specific impact that weapons and armed conflict have on women in order to ensure a gender perspective in all policies on weapons and disarmament initiatives. It is also important for states, international organisations, and civil society to explore and understand how gender constructions affect armament and disarmament policies and budgets.

Recommendations for governments

During the First Committee, governments should:

- Welcome the inclusion of a specific provision on gender-based violence in the Arms Trade Treaty and highlight the need for implementation of this criterion.
- Recognize the particular impact that explosive weapons in populated areas have on women, and recognize the need to end the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas.
- Highlight the outcome of the 2012 Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, which expressed concern about the negative impact of the illicit trade of SALW on women and underscored the need for further integration of the role of women into efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms.
- Submit reports to the Secretary-General on their implementation of the UNGA resolution on women and disarmament.
- Identify and discuss ways of strengthening and improving the biannual resolution on “Women, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation”, including strengthening language on incorporating a gender perspective in disarmament-related programmes and policies.



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¹ Ray Acheson, Maria Butler, and Sofia Tuvestad, “Preventing armed gender-based violence: a binding requirement in the new draft ATT text,” Arms Trade Treaty Monitor Vol. 6, No. 9, 28 March 2013, p. 9.

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