

First Committee briefing book



Reaching Critical Will

2016

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Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)

International Action Network on Small Arms (www.iansa.org)

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

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

International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (www.icbuw.org)

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

Niskanen Center (www.niskanencenter.org)

Toxic Remnants of War Network (www.toxicremnantsofwar.info)

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

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Reaching Critical Will

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Introduction

Reaching Critical Will

Over the past few years, hospitals, schools, and homes have been bombarded with explosive weapons in many countries. “A dangerous complacency is developing whereby such attacks are starting to be regarded as the norm,” warned Joanne Liu of Médecins Sans Frontières and Peter Mauer of the International Committee of the Red Cross. “They are part of the tapestry of today’s armed conflicts where civilians and civilian infrastructure are targeted, and marketplaces, schools, homes and health facilities are ‘fair game.’”¹

We have been watching this “tapestry” of war expand for years in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan,

Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, and many other places around the world. Civilian casualties are mounting; homes and lives are being destroyed; people are fleeing their cities and towns and countries. And this is only one of many unacceptable practices that delegates at First Committee must address.

Arms transfers that facilitate this kind of violence and destruction, leading to violations of human rights and international human law, are another crucial issue facing the Committee, especially two years on from the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. Continued failures in preventing the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons or in ending the



The destroyed operating room of the MSF hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, 10 October 2015. © Andrew Quilty/Oculi

production, trade, and use of prohibited weapons such as cluster munitions must be addressed. The technologies of remote warfare such as armed drones and autonomous weapons, as well as weapons causing severe humanitarian harm such as depleted uranium and incendiary weapons, need more consideration.

And of course, nuclear weapons must be banned. It is the expectation of the majority of governments and civil society groups that this session of First Committee will consider and adopt a resolution to begin negotiations of a new international legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. Such a process will provide the best opportunity we have had in decades to end the privileged status afforded to nuclear weapons and those that possess them or include them in their security doctrines against the interests of humanity, democracy, justice, and sanity.

The profits of war must end and the instruments of violence must be banned and eliminated. First Committee provides an excellent space for this work, bringing together diverse voices to discuss the challenges we all face.

This briefing book provides an overview of the state of play on some of the most pressing issues that should

be addressed at this year's First Committee. It also outlines recommendations from some of the key civil society groups working on these topics.

The civil society organisations, coalitions, and campaigns participating most actively at First Committee have argued consistently that we can and must advance human security and social and economic justice through disarmament and arms control. We call for an approach to disarmament that is driven by the rights of people most affected by armed violence, not by the discretion of states and organisations most responsible for it.

The groups that have contributed to this briefing book work on many different issues and weapon systems from a variety of perspectives, but they all share one thing in common: the desire for more effective, transparent, and inclusive diplomatic work at the United Nations. We believe that most delegates seek true progress and the enhancement of human security. We hope that this briefing book will provide inspiration and alternatives as delegates engage in the important work ahead.

1 Joanne Liu and Peter Maurer, "The airstrike on an Aleppo hospital is a wake-up call for the UN. It must act now," *The Guardian*, 29 April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/29/aleppo-hospital-airstrike-un-syria>.

Nuclear weapons

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Background

After decades of deadlock, the international community is faced with a unique opportunity to finally prohibit the most destructive and inhumane weapon ever created. Overwhelming international support for the humanitarian pledge, the fact-based humanitarian initiative developed through three international conferences, numerous joint statements, research, and other activities has developed into a political process to fill the legal gap for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

At the 2015 UN General Assembly, governments adopted a series of resolutions in support of the humanitarian initiative and the humanitarian pledge. This was followed by the adoption of a resolution to establish a second open-ended working group (OEWG) to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The aim of this working group was to make recommendations for new legal effective measures for nuclear disarmament as well as measures to reduce risk, increase transparency, and increase awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

The OEWG convened in Geneva for three sessions in 2016 and concluded with a recommendation to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

Current context

At the OEWG, governments heard presentations by experts and engaged in debate with each other and with civil society. While the scope of the working group was broad enough to contain discussions about a large number of different measures, the key focus of all participants was on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

States and civil society groups outlined elements they believe should be included in such new treaty. Generally, there was agreement among the majority of states on the following points:

- A new legal instrument should establish prohibitions on various activities related to nuclear weapons. These should include development, production, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, deployment, threat of use and use of nuclear weapons, as well as assistance, financing, encouragement, and inducement of these acts.
- Such a treaty could be negotiated now, even without the participation of nuclear-armed states, and would constitute an important initial step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.
- The treaty does not need to include complex provisions relating to the destruction of nuclear stockpiles and to verification at the outset. Such provisions could be negotiated



© ICAN

subsequently, perhaps in the form of protocols, once nuclear-armed states are willing to engage.

- More than any other proposal on the table, a prohibition treaty has the potential to break through the current logjam, fundamentally alter the political dynamics, and open up new opportunities for progress towards disarmament.

While the OEWG recommended starting negotiations in 2017 of a new treaty banning nuclear weapons, the call for a vote on the report by Australia exposed the clear divide between states without nuclear weapons and states reliant on nuclear weapons through security arrangements.

Despite making multiple commitments to nuclear disarmament throughout the years, the process to prohibit nuclear weapons puts the spotlight on just how reluctant nuclear-armed states and nuclear supportive states are to follow through on these commitments.

However, First Committee will need to follow-up on the recommendation by the OEWG, most likely through a resolution starting negotiations of a new international legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

This will likely be a contentious resolution and source of heated debate in New York. A treaty banning nuclear weapons is one of the most positive opportunities for progress on nuclear

weapons in many years. Progress is urgently needed in light of increasing tensions between nuclear-armed states, stated willingness of politicians in nuclear-armed states to use nuclear weapons, and massive investments in extending the lives of their arsenals into the indefinite future. Given the humanitarian impacts and the risks surrounding nuclear weapons, nuclear-armed states and nuclear supporters must be challenged for recklessly advocating in favour of maintaining nuclear weapons.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Call for the General Assembly to start a negotiating process for a new legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons;
- Vote in favour of a resolution that establishes such negotiations; and

- Ensure that such negotiations should be open to all states, blockable by none, and inclusive of civil society.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Engage in national, regional, and international preparatory work to examine elements and provisions of a new legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons;
- Engage with national and international civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders to ensure ongoing dialogue throughout the process to prohibit nuclear weapons;
- Stop investing in nuclear weapon modernization, including through investments in nuclear weapon producing companies; and
- Continue to challenge and take measures to end the existence, maintenance, and reliance on nuclear weapons.



**'IN THE PAST, WEAPONS HAVE BEEN
ELIMINATED AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN
OUTLAWED. WE BELIEVE THIS IS THE PATH
TO ACHIEVE A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR
WEAPONS.'** **NAYARIT CHAIR'S SUMMARY**

Armed drones

Article 36

Background

During the past fifteen years, the use of airstrikes launched from remotely controlled aircraft has dramatically increased. Almost half of the world's countries are in possession of military drone technology.¹

So far, at least seven states have used military drones for aerial attacks—in armed conflicts, but also to undertake killings outside of such contexts.² For example, over three thousand people have been killed by US airstrikes using drones in places where armed conflicts involving the US were not taking place.³ The identities of most of those killed remain unknown, even to the US.⁴ Targeting practices relying on signals intelligence and “signature” behaviour—largely practices unique to targeting with military drones—likely contribute to this lack of knowledge.⁵

The existing legal framework has not been effectively brought to bear with respect to the use of military drones. Through their use of these weapons, users have created ostensible legal ambiguities. Along with some of the technological characteristics of military drones (such as the ability to survey, gather unprecedented amounts of data, and attack across borders without risk to the attacker), this has helped to generate assumptions about how this technology can be used that support and entrench harmful practices.

One core concern regarding military drone technology is that some states are using it to facilitate the expansion of the geographical, conceptual, and legal boundaries of where lethal force, and in particular forms of force generally associated with armed conflict, can be used by possessors.

States collectively have a choice in determining what the emergence of armed drones should mean, however. If countries decide that there is a lower threshold and different boundaries for the use of force when deploying military drones—or do not act to establish standards on these issues—then an expansion of such aerial violence, with the harm to communities and instability that this generates,⁶ is what will continue to be seen across the world.

Current context

Over thirty states have made statements on drones at the First Committee, the Third Committee, and the Human Rights Council (HRC). In 2014 an HRC resolution was passed (25/22) urging states to comply with international law and ensure transparency, accountability and redress in their use of military drones. In Europe this year, the European Parliament held a hearing on the subject in June, and the European Forum on Armed Drones, a group of civil society organizations, issued a call to action from European governments.⁷



Woman giving evidence about drone strike in Waziristan © Reuters

At First Committee last year, no resolutions were put forward regarding military drones, and only nine states spoke on the subject. A resolution from Third Committee (70/148) on human rights and terrorism urged states to observe the law in “any measures taken or means employed to counter terrorism, including the use of remotely piloted aircraft.” States at First Committee raised concerns relating to the upholding of the law in the use of drones and the undermining of current legal frameworks, as well as ethical and proliferation issues.

Also in 2015, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) published a study recommending that states work multilaterally with engagement from civil society to develop

transparency and confidence-building measures to decrease mutual distrust between states regarding their use of military drones.

Greater transparency over practices that have been shrouded in secrecy, to the detriment of adequate democratic scrutiny, is crucial. However, this must be accompanied by discussion of how international standards to prevent and mitigate humanitarian harm from the use of military drones can be achieved, and to make explicit the conditions under which the use of drones as a tool for the application of force may or may not be considered permissible. Without this, there is the risk that greater transparency will, through the unchallenged articulation of practice, only serve the greater codification of negative precedents.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Recognise the ethical, legal, and humanitarian concerns raised by military drones, including the patterns of harm and unacceptable practices in their current use in and outside of armed conflict, and shortcomings in transparency, accountability, and redress;
- Support the comprehensive recording of casualties of attacks using military drones, to uphold the dignity of victims and so that current use may be better understood, and also recognise the need to ensure that the rights of victims are upheld by all states; and
- Support the objective of developing an international standard to prevent and mitigate harm from military drones, articulating the principles this could address.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Raise concerns regarding military drones in all relevant forums; and
- Support work with other states, international organizations and civil society towards developing a multilateral standard to prevent and mitigate harm from military drones.

Article 36

-
- 1 “World of Drones: Military,” New America, <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/world-drones.html>.
 - 2 Drones have been used by non-military state agencies to conduct airstrikes. Given that these actions should be considered as a use of military technology and modes of force, such usage is problematic in itself—and even more so given that attacks by such agencies using drones have taken place outside of armed conflict. This conduct is included in this chapter’s discussion of military drone usage.
 - 3 “Get the data: Drone wars,” The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs>.
 - 4 “Military drones, casualty recording and US transparency,” Article 36, <http://www.article36.org/updates/drones-us-release>.
 - 5 Cora Currier and Peter Maas, “Firing Blind: Flawed Intelligence and the Limits of Drone Technology,” The Drone Papers, *The Intercept*, 15 October 2015, <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/firing-blind>.
 - 6 There are a variety of concerns that the use of military drones has raised, including: the deaths, injuries and destruction caused in communities; the psychological impact on people living under drone operations; the issue of extrajudicial killing; the lack of transparency around the use and targeting of armed drones; the lack of comprehensive and accurate casualty recording; the lack of redress or assistance for populations affected by such operations; and the implications of targeting practices for gender-based violence.
 - 7 EFAD call to action, available at: <http://www.paxvoorvrede.nl/media/files/efad-call-to-action.pdf>.

Fully autonomous weapons ("killer robots")

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Background

Three multilateral meetings on "lethal autonomous weapons systems" have been held at the United Nations to discuss concerns raised by these weapons, which, once activated, would select and fire on targets without further human intervention. The meetings have helped increase awareness and understanding of this emerging challenge, but it is time to move from learning about the problem to tackling it. States must demonstrate progress on the "killer robots" challenge by agreeing at the Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) in December to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to undertake a more substantive mandate of work in 2017 aimed at a concrete outcome.

The threat to of human dignity and the moral question of whether machines should be permitted to take a human life on or off the battlefield remain overarching concerns. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots seeks to retain meaningful human control over the selection of targets and over every individual attack or use of force by banning lethal autonomous weapons systems. The wide range of moral, legal, operational, proliferation, and international security concerns and risks demand such a ban. In a 2016 report, two UN Special Rapporteurs recommended that: "Autonomous weapons

systems that require no meaningful human control should be prohibited."¹

To date, 14 countries have expressed their support for the call to ban fully autonomous weapons.² Many more have said there should always be meaningful human control over critical combat functions. Others have proposed greater transparency and a focus on legal reviews of new weapons systems. Of the 67 states that have expressed their views to date on fully autonomous weapons, almost all have highlighted various concerns with the weapons and most have indicated their strong support for the international talks.

Current context

Representatives from 94 countries participated in the third "informal meeting of experts" on lethal autonomous weapons systems at the Convention on Conventional Weapons on 11–15 April 2016. Chaired by Germany's Ambassador Michael Biontino, the meeting reached agreement by consensus on recommendations for the CCW's Fifth Review Conference to be held on 12–16 December 2016. According to the recommendations, states "may decide to establish" an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to explore and agree on "possible recommendations on options."³ This recommendation will form



© Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

the basis for mandate language to be formally adopted by states at the Review Conference.

The specific period of time for the proposed GGE to meet in 2017 was not identified. This will be the subject of consultations by the president-designate of the CCW's Fifth Review Conference, Ambassador Tehmina Janjua of Pakistan. At the 2016 experts meeting there was wide support for a proposal that the GGE meet for a total of approximately six weeks over 2017 and 2018. The Campaign urges states to agree to at least four weeks for 2017, and then reassess the needs for 2018.

The recommendations propose that the GGE identify the “characteristics” of a lethal autonomous weapons system and elaborate a “working definition.” The recommendations contain a long list of topics for the GGE to consider, namely: compliance with applicable international humanitarian law, ethical and moral questions, effects on regional and global security and stability, effects on the threshold for armed conflicts, risk of an arms race, proliferation risks including to and by non-state actors, and related risks posed by “cyber operations.” They also affirm the “critical importance” of “views on appropriate human

involvement with regard to lethal force and the issue of delegation of its use.”

If agreed to in December, the creation of a GGE will move the CCW work to address killer robots from informal to formal status and create the expectation of a concrete outcome.⁴ However, the GGE should be aimed at producing more than just “options”. The CCW’s process on lethal autonomous weapons systems could lead to a new protocol preemptively banning these weapons and supports continued talks via a GGE, but not at any cost. A long, drawn-out process that achieves a weak or no result must be avoided. If the Fifth Review Conference fails to continue the CCW deliberations on lethal autonomous weapons systems in a substantial way, one route to conclude a ban would be to start deliberations outside the CCW in another forum.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Acknowledge the concerns raised over fully autonomous weapons and express support for the draft recommendation to establish an

open-ended Group of Governmental Experts at the Review Conference in December; and

- Articulate their national policy on fully autonomous weapons, including their position on the calls for a ban.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Agree to a mandate at the CCW Review Conference on 16 December 2016 that establishes a GGE to step-up the deliberations on lethal autonomous weapons systems in 2017 and 2018. The GGE should meet for at least four weeks in 2017 and be given an ambitious mandate to consider all aspects of this challenge, but also propose action to be taken by states at the CCW;
- Indicate their position on and express explicit support for the call to preemptively ban on fully autonomous weapons; and
- Develop formal national policies on fully autonomous weapons.



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1. “UN rapporteurs call for a ban,” Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, 9 March 2016, <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2016/03/unreport>.
 2. Algeria, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Holy See, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, State of Palestine, and Zimbabwe.
 3. See http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/ccw/2016/meeting-experts-laws/documents/DraftRecommendations_15April_final.pdf.
 4. An open-ended Group of Governmental Experts has been the established method of work for CCW deliberations over the past two decades on concerns ranging from landmines to explosive remnants of war to cluster munitions. Based on that long-standing precedent, the Group of Governmental Experts would be open to all interested states regardless of whether they have joined the framework convention and its five protocols, as well as to NGO representatives. Key documents would be translated into the official UN languages. A GGE would therefore help to enable the broadest possible participation by all states, including developing nations, as China and others have requested.

Explosive weapons in populated areas

International Network on Explosive Weapons

Background

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has been a key cause of harm to civilians in recent years, and one that requires urgent international attention. Over 33,000 civilians were reported killed or injured in 2015 by explosive weapons, according to Action on Armed Violence (AOAV). Where explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 92% of the casualties were civilian.

The bombing of towns and cities causes widespread civilian casualties, destroys vital infrastructure, and is a key driver of displacement. Conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and elsewhere also provide clear illustrations of this persistent pattern of harm.

Reflecting the urgent nature of this humanitarian problem, the UN Secretary-General and the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross last year issued an unprecedented warning, calling on states to “stop the use of heavy explosive weapons in populated areas.”

Against this background, discussions are now starting towards developing a political instrument to address this humanitarian problem.

In 2011 a group of civil society organisations set up the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) to respond to the impact of the bombing

and bombardment of populated areas. So far around 70 states have publicly expressed concern about this humanitarian issue (see www.inew.org/acknowledgements).

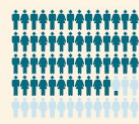
Recognition of this problem has steadily grown against the background of heavy casualties from the bombardment of populated areas in Côte d'Ivoire, Gaza, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, and elsewhere. The use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, such as rockets, heavy artillery, and large aircraft bombs, in populated areas has stood out as particularly harmful. In Syria and Iraq the use of so-called “barrel bombs” has attracted attention because of their wide-area effects. In addition, thousands of civilians have been killed and injured in towns and cities when improvised explosive devices, such as car bombs and “suicide” vests, have been detonated amongst crowds of people.

Current context

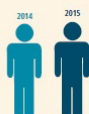
Since 2013, there has been a growing international discussion on how this humanitarian harm can be prevented.

At an international conference on the protection of civilians in Norway attended by 90 countries in May 2013, participants recommended that the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects should be avoided.

EXPLOSIVE VIOLENCE IN 2015



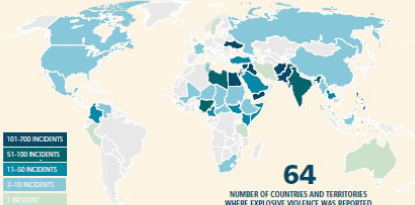
76%
CIVILIAN CASUALTIES
TOTAL REPORTED DEATHS & INJURIES: 43,786
TOTAL CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES: 33,307



+2%
INCREASE IN TOTAL CIVILIAN
DEATHS & INJURIES



30
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CIVILIAN
DEATHS PER DAY



TARGETED AREAS

POPULATED AREAS

92% CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES
IN POPULATED AREAS



1,236 ATTACKS IN POPULATED AREAS

NON-POPULATED AREAS

7% CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES
IN NON-POPULATED AREAS



934 ATTACKS IN NON-POPULATED AREAS

	TOTAL DEATHS & INJURIES	CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES	AVERAGE CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES PER ATTACK
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	5,400	93%	17
MARKETS	4,918	99%	42
PLACES OF WORSHIP	2,633	95%	44

DEADLY WEAPONS

AVERAGE CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES PER INCIDENT BY EXPLOSIVE WEAPON TYPE

25



CAR BOMBS

42



AIR-DROPPED BOMBS

16



ROCKET ARTILLERY

CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES BY WEAPON LAUNCH METHOD



DATA: AOAV, BASED ON ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA REPORTS

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

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DATA: AOAV, BASED ON ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA REPORTS

**ACTION ON
ARMED VIOLENCE**

AOAV

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has co-hosted two expert meetings with Chatham House in London (September 2013) and with Norway in Oslo (June 2014). These meetings have identified practices by armed forces that can be undertaken to reduce harm to civilians from the use of explosive weapons.

In September 2015 the government of Austria and OCHA hosted a meeting for states that have recognised this problem and are interested in working together to address it. In particular Austria invited states to discuss how an international political

commitment could be developed in response to the predictable pattern of humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The issue was also raised as a key issue at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. A meeting in October 2016 in New York hosted by Austria with other states will consider options to improve the protection of civilians from such harm and in particular focus on identifying and discussing the possible elements of a political declaration. This meeting will take the Secretary-General's call for a political commitment, and other calls for action from

states, UN agencies, the ICRC, and civil society and launch a process to develop a political declaration to address harm to civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Recommendations

During First Committee:

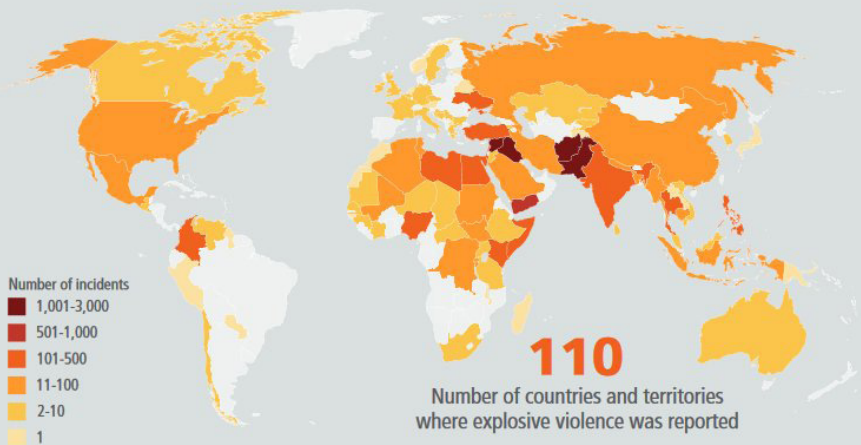
- Endorse the UN Secretary-General's recommendation that states should refrain from the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas; and
- Indicate support for the development of an international political instrument to reduce harm from the use of explosive weapons, including stopping the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effects.

Beyond First Committee:

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



Incidents of explosive violence recorded by AOAV from 2011 to 2015



© Action on Armed Violence

Landmines

International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Background

The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (or Mine Ban Treaty) is one of the most universally adhered-to international instruments. At the 2016 Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the Convention, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan hailed it as “one of the great successes of international diplomacy” and called for

“renewed dedication to ending the scourge of anti-personnel mines.”

Current context

States parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have adopted the target date of 2025 for the global elimination of antipersonnel mines. They will strive to universalize the Treaty, complete clearance of mine-contaminated land, destroy all stockpiles, and make assistance to victims sustainable—as



soon as possible and by 2025 at the latest. Chile, as President of the upcoming 15th Meeting of States Parties (15MSP), has announced that the international community has entered “the last stretch” towards full Treaty implementation. This will require sustained support.

Each year, the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor* records some 4,000 people injured or killed in explosions of landmines, cluster munition remnants, or other explosive remnants of war. Eighty percent of those are civilians. Fifty-seven states have antipersonnel landmine contamination on their territory, including 33 states parties to the Convention. Some 37 states may own stockpiles of the weapon, including six states parties that have a legal obligation to destroy them. Survivors, their families, and communities must see their rights respected and their needs met. Through the 2014–2019 Maputo Action Plan, states parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have agreed on robust and realistic measures to end the suffering caused by landmines.

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

15MSP will take place from 28 November to 2 December 2016 in Santiago, Chile. All states are welcome to participate. The Treaty leadership is made up of the following states until the 15MSP: Algeria, Belgium, Canada, Chile (President),

Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Uganda, and Zambia.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Report on measures taken in 2016 to implement the Maputo Action Plan or to otherwise put an end to the suffering caused by landmines;
- Pledge financial support for the implementation of Treaty obligations, including land clearance and assistance to survivors, their families and communities;
- Reiterate that any use of landmines by any actor is unacceptable;
- Report on progress towards joining the Mine Ban Treaty;
- Engage bilaterally in discussions on the universalization or implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty; and
- Vote in favour of the resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty and encourage others, such as regional group members, to do so as well.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

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



Cluster munitions

Cluster Munition Coalition

Background

Sixty percent of the world's states have now formally committed to the goals of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions through their signature, ratification, or accession, while more than 70% have demonstrated their support for its humanitarian goals through a 2015 UN General Assembly resolution.

The stigma against these weapons is strong, given the wide recognition that cluster munitions are indiscriminate both at the time of use due to their vast area effect and long after use due to the explosive duds they leave behind. The vast majority of states that are still outside the Convention abide de facto by the ban on use and production of the weapon. Since 2010, almost all instances of use were met by vehement denials from the user.

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

Current context

States parties to the Convention include former major producers, users, and possessors of the weapon, as well as affected states, and states that have never owned or been affected by the weapon. Collectively, states parties have already destroyed 93% of their cluster munitions, ensuring those weapons can never claim a life or limb.

States are also taking steps to assess the needs of survivors of explosions, and to increase the participation of survivors in governmental decision-making that affects their lives. Some 24 states are contaminated by cluster munition remnants—by making good use of adequate land release methodologies, the majority of them should be in a position to become cluster munition-free within five years of the start of clearance operations.

Cluster munitions have been used extensively over the past years in Syria and in Yemen, in addition to other more sporadic use in a handful of conflicts. Over 150 states have condemned the use of cluster munitions in the context of the

DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS, DECADES

THE LENGTH OF TIME DEADLY UNEXPLODED SUBMUNITIONS HAVE LAID DORMANT SINCE USE, READY TO KILL OR MAIM AT ANY MOMENT



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conflict in Syria. In light of the impact of cluster munitions on civilians in Yemen, the United States made a policy decision in 2016 to suspend any transfers of the weapon to Saudi Arabia. Following this, the last remaining US producer of cluster munitions, Textron Systems, decided to stop manufacturing the weapons.

In 2015 the first-ever UNGA resolution on the implementation of the Convention was passed with 139 votes in favour, two against, and 40 abstentions. Thirty-two non-signatories voted in favour, demonstrating their support for the humanitarian aims of the Convention.

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

The 6th Meeting of States Parties (6MSP) to the Convention took place from 5 to 7 September 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland, under the Presidency of the Netherlands. The meeting condemned any use of cluster munitions by any actor. It selected Germany as President of the 7th Meeting of States Parties, to be held in 2017.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

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

Beyond First Committee, states should:

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



Depleted uranium weapons

International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons

Background

Depleted uranium (DU) is a by-product of the uranium enrichment process, which contains proportionally less of the fissionable uranium isotope U235, and more of the isotope U238 than natural uranium.¹ As a material it is highly dense and pyrophoric, meaning that it has an incendiary effect upon impact. This effect can generate an aerosol of micron and sub-micron particles that can spread between tens and hundreds of metres from the target. DU is used by a number of states in armour-piercing-incendiary ammunition fired by tanks, armoured fighting vehicles, and aircraft.

DU weapons have been controversial since their first major use in the 1991 Gulf War. Radioactive and chemically toxic, DU use creates hotspots of persistent contamination that present a hazard to communities long after conflict ends, particularly for pregnant women, as well as children. Buildings and civilian infrastructure have regularly been targeted with DU and its use can contaminate soils and groundwater and create vast quantities of contaminated military scrap.² Effectively managing DU's post-conflict legacy places a significant financial and technical burden on affected states.

Current context

Formerly classified advice released by the UK's Iraq War Inquiry in 2016 has served to highlight the continued absence of formal obligations

for the clearance of DU. The UK's 2003 advice observed that: "A nation which has fired DU in conflict is under no legal obligation per se to return to the region post-conflict to clear up any DU that remains. The legality of this issue has developed through custom; there are no special policies that address clearance of DU residue."³

While this advice preceded the UN General Assembly resolutions on the topic, many of which have focused on practical measures to facilitate assessment, risk reduction, and clearance, 13 years on its main observation remains unchanged. It was therefore notable that in its 2014 report to the UN Secretary-General, Iraq, the state most affected by wartime DU contamination, requested assistance from the international community.⁴ Meanwhile, advances in analytical methodologies mean that it is now possible to detect DU in humans 30 years after exposure,⁵ offering the potential to undertake biomonitoring of communities affected by historical conflicts.

Recent research by PAX has increased the number of localities in Iraq known to be contaminated with DU from 360 to more than 1200; these are distributed across the country. It has also highlighted the breadth of target types that DU has been used against, which goes far beyond tanks and armoured vehicles, including buildings, light vehicles, and unmounted troops.⁶ Early

analysis of the data suggests that 80% of the targets were non-armoured. Not only does this challenge the notion that DU is solely an anti-armour weapon but it also has clear implications for the ability to predict and mitigate DU exposure risks for civilians and demining staff.

In July 2016, EU member states were urged by the European Parliament to reach a common position in favour of the resolution—a position that better reflects the parliament's repeated call for a moratorium on the use of the weapons.⁷ European public opinion, like that of affected states and communities and the wider international community, continues to view the weapons as unacceptable. This sustained opposition is influencing the procurement choices of some of their most vociferous advocates, including the US.⁸ All states still abstaining on UNGA resolutions should reflect on why they maintain their faith in the weapons, when those states that use them appear to be losing theirs.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Vote in favour of the resolution on “Effects of Arms and Ammunitions Containing Depleted Uranium”; and
- Raise concerns over the use of DU weapons in their national and regional statements.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Disclose targeting coordinates of any use of DU weapons to facilitate clearance and civilian exposure studies;
- Contribute technical and financial assistance to states affected by DU contamination, including public health and environmental monitoring for communities affected by the use of DU;
- Consider how the lack of obligations for the post-conflict management of DU contamination could

be addressed and support studies into civilian DU exposure; and

- Impose an immediate moratorium on the use of DU weapons.



- 1 For further information on DU, and an overview of key issues, see <http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/overview>.
- 2 *Laid to Waste: Depleted uranium contaminated military scrap in Iraq*, PAX, 2014, <http://www.paxforpeace.nl/stay-informed/news/no-solution-in-sight-for-iraqs-radioactive-military-scrap>.
- 3 “Chilcot report highlights lack of obligations for depleted uranium clean-up,” ICBUW, 2016, <http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/chilcot-highlights-lack-of-du-clearance-obligation>.
- 4 “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium, Report of the Secretary-General,” A/69/151, 2014, <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/69/151>.
- 5 Arnason, J.G., et al., Depleted and enriched uranium exposure quantified in former factory workers and local residents of NL Industries, Colonie, NY: Environ. Res., 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2016.04.006>.
- 6 PAX report in press
- 7 European Parliament recommendation to the Council of 7 July 2016 on the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2F%2FEP%2F%2FTEXT%2bTA%2bP8-TA-2016-0317%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2F%2FEN&language=EN>.
- 8 “US tenders for safer penetrator materials blaming opposition to depleted uranium,” ICBUW, 2015, <http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/us-tenders-for-safer-penetrator-materials-blaming>.

Incendiary weapons

Human Rights Watch

Background

Over the past year, more states have condemned the use of incendiary weapons, but recent evidence of continued incendiary attacks in Syria shows that expressions of concern are not enough. States should take concrete action to prevent the horrific injuries and harm that these weapons cause.

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

Public revulsion at the suffering caused by napalm and other incendiary weapons during the Indochina War served as a catalyst for the adoption in 1980 of Protocol III to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). The protocol prohibits certain uses of incendiary weapons, but its restrictions have failed to stop the civilian harm seen in Syria and elsewhere.

The CCW protocol has two major loopholes. First, it prohibits the use of air-delivered incendiary weapons in “concentrations of civilians,” but has weaker regulations for ground-launched models. Second, many states parties believe the current definition does not

cover multipurpose munitions, such as white phosphorus, because the definition is based on the purpose for which they were “primarily designed,” rather than on their effects.

The CCW’s Fifth Review Conference in December 2016 provides a key opportunity for CCW states to show they can do more than simply criticise use. They should agree to review the flawed protocol and determine how to strengthen it.

Current context

Syrian government forces have used air-dropped and ground-launched incendiary weapons in Syria since 2012. Use of the weapons in that country appears to have increased since Russia began its joint operation with Syrian government forces on 30 September 2015. At one point during May and early June 2016, incendiary weapons rained down on an opposition-controlled area north of Aleppo almost daily. At the time, Syrian ground forces and their allies were seeking to drive out opposition forces with the support of Russian air power.

A YouTube video, published by Russia Today on 18 June 2016, showed a Russian Su-34 fighter-ground attack aircraft equipped with RBK-500 ZAB-2.5SM bombs at Russia’s airbase in Syria. This evidence suggests that Russia has been using incendiary weapons in Syria although

Russia has neither confirmed nor denied such use. In an earlier letter, delivered to Human Rights Watch in November 2015, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov acknowledged the "significant humanitarian damage" caused by incendiary weapons in Syria, but attributed it to their "improper use".¹

Since 2010, more than three dozen countries, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN Secretary-General, and non-governmental organisations, have publicly acknowledged the harm that incendiary weapons can cause to civilians. Most have condemned recent incendiary weapon attacks, particularly in Syria. Many have called for CCW Protocol III to be revisited and strengthened, and others have said they are prepared to discuss the adequacy of the protocol.²

At the CCW meeting in November 2015, fifteen countries addressed the issue of incendiary

weapons. Most of these countries called for closing the protocol's loopholes, while others said they wanted at least to revisit existing rules. Six countries—Bulgaria, Costa Rica, India, Montenegro, Russia, and Zambia—commented on incendiary weapons for the first time in this forum, demonstrating growing recognition of the problem.³ Yet for the fifth consecutive year the meeting's final report included a weak reference to concerns about incendiary weapon, stating that "the Meeting noted the concerns raised by a number of High Contracting Parties over the allegations of use of incendiary weapons against civilians."⁴

In 2016, countries should move beyond talk and take action. States not party to CCW Protocol III should join as soon as possible. The 113 states that are party should agree to review the protocol for the first time since its adoption more than 35 years ago. Closing the protocol's loopholes will not only create stronger



Footage showing what Human Rights Watch arms experts have identified as RBK-500 ZAB-2.5SM incendiary bombs mounted on a Russian attack aircraft at a Russian air base in Syria, 18 June 2016. © 2016 Russia Today/YouTube

international law that binds CCW states parties, but it will also increase the stigma against incendiary weapons, thus discouraging any use, even by those outside the treaty.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

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

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Agree to a mandate at the CCW Review Conference that sets aside time in 2017 to discuss the implementation and adequacy of Protocol III; and
- Report on their current practices and policies with respect to incendiary weapons and indicate their position on the call for strengthening international law governing the weapons.

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- 1 Letter from Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, to Human Rights Watch, 6 November 2015, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/rus_mfa_iwc_ltr_6nov2015-eng.pdf.
 - 2 For more information on the current context, see From Condemnation to Concrete Action: A Five-Year Review of Incendiary Weapons, Human Rights Watch and the Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic, November 2015, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/incendiaries-5_year_review-final_0.pdf.
 - 3 Bonnie Docherty, "Unrivaled Cruelty: The Horror of Incendiary Weapons and Need for Stronger Law," JURIST, 17 December 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/print/284668>.
 - 4 "Final Report," CCW/MSP/2015/9, Meeting of CCW States Parties, 27 January 2016, para. 20.

Small arms and light weapons

International Action Network on Small Arms

Background

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) continue to be the weapons of choice in conflicts around the world, and in acts of armed violence in general. According to the *Small Arms Survey*, more than 500,000 people die each year as the result of armed violence. It also estimates that 70,000 of the deaths from armed violence—less than 15 percent—are the direct result of conflict.¹ This means that a comprehensive approach to reducing deaths caused by SALW will require states to focus on armed violence rather than only conflict violence.

Key instruments that address the trade in and misuse of SALW include the UN Programme of Action to Reduce, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UNPoA, 2001) and its accompanying International Tracing Instrument (2005), as well as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which entered into force in December 2014.

Current context

The sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6) on the UNPoA provided the basis for more substantive efforts to control SALW. The outcome document from the conference included welcome attention to key areas of potential synergy among the UNPoA, other activities at the UN, and other instruments dealing with arms transfers.

The outcome document was particularly strong on issues related to gender, another indication of the development of this issue over the 15 years since the adoption of the UNPoA. The issue of gender was so controversial in the original negotiation of the UNPoA that the word was not even used in the document. The BMS6 outcome document seeks synergy among various efforts by linking a recommendation on ensuring that women participate in all phases of UNPoA implementation to relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. It also refers to seeking gender equality and the need for disaggregated data on gender and the illicit trade in SALW.

Another positive aspect of the outcome document was attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recognising the intrinsic connections between sustainable development and peace and security. In particular, states recognized the importance of SDG target 16.4, which includes a call for significantly reducing illicit arms flows by 2030.

The outcome document also covers the full weapons life cycle, including destruction. As states recognized in this document, destruction is the only way to ensure that weapons that are no longer needed are removed from circulation and cannot be reused.

Arguably, the biggest failing of BMS6 was that it did not deal directly with the issue of ammunition. After protracted debate, the conference adopted ambiguous language that did not use the word ammunition, but mentioned that some states may choose to apply the UNPoA's provisions to items in addition to the list of SALW contained in the International Tracing Instrument. BMS6 also did not deal sufficiently with the Arms Trade Treaty, which has important points of synergy with the UNPoA. Another failing of BMS6 was that although non-governmental organisations provide significant substantive expertise, NGOs were still largely excluded from many sessions.

Continued implementation challenges with the UNPoA include uneven commitment to the instrument, resource constraints, and lack of infrastructure for implementation. Consensus decision-making also remains a weak link of the process.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Highlight synergies between the UNPoA and the ATT;
- Put forward proposals to address transfers of ammunition within the UNPoA; and
- Focus discussions on establishing a far-reaching agenda for the 2018 UNPoA Review Conference.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Extend UNPoA provisions on recordkeeping, end-user certification, prevention of diversion, and provision for destruction of surplus weapons and weapons that remain when conflicts end to the implementation of other instruments;
- Take advantage of synergies among the instruments; e.g. states that supply weapons but have not yet joined the ATT could still apply the criteria, guidelines, and prohibitions in the Treaty to help bring more of the international trade in weapons into compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law;
- Include NGOs as full partners in the work to reduce the human costs of armed violence, include NGO representatives on national delegations, and commit to keeping negotiation sessions open at multilateral meetings so that NGOs are able to contribute more fully; and
- Focus on implementing SDGs in addition to SDG 16.4 that are related to arms control issues; e.g. pursuing SDG 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,” through the UNPoA and ATT. This would affect the substance of states’ deliberations, as well as the membership and staffing of relevant agencies, national commissions, and delegations to international meetings and negotiations.



¹ Armed violence statistics from the *Small Arms Survey* are available at <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-violence.html> and <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-violence/non-conflict-armed-violence.html>. The *2015 Global Burden of Armed Violence* has additional information at <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence/global-burden-of-armed-violence-2015.html>.

Arms Trade Treaty

Control Arms

Background

On 24 December 2014, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force, following its opening for signature on 3 June 2013. This followed more than a decade of campaigning and seven years of work at the United Nations. The ATT is the first treaty aimed at reducing humanitarian suffering by bringing the conventional arms trade under control. If implemented effectively, it will reduce prevent the transfers of arms where there is a risk of violations of the Treaty. At the time of writing, there are 87 states parties and a further 47 signatories.

Current context

The second Conference of States Parties (CSP) took place from 22–26 August in Geneva, Switzerland under the Presidency of Ambassador Emmanuel Imohe. With most procedural matters settled at CSP1 last year, there were hopes that the second CSP would be a space for greater substantive discussion. Unfortunately, this was not the case. States parties avoided addressing real concerns about the Treaty's implementation or any discussion of actual arms transfers, and instead chose to focus on safer procedural and administrative subjects. Specifically, there was no response to the concerns raised by civil society with regard to on-going transfers of arms by some states parties and signatories to Saudi Arabia, despite the clear risk of their use against civilians in Yemen. No states parties, signatories, or observers, with the sole exception

of Zambia, spoke on the subject of problematic arms transfers.

The issue of reporting was a major topic at the CSP. Following failed efforts to agree on reporting templates during the first CSP, states parties were expected to adopt templates to standardise reporting formats, which would make it easier to draw comparisons and monitor compliance. Another aspect of debate was whether or not it would be mandatory for reports to be public. This could have been achieved through the removal of the “make this report public or private” tick box on the draft templates of both the initial and annual report. Public reporting is a key way to increase transparency in the arms trade. There was not, however, a lot of commentary from states on the content of the templates. Instead, states chose only to discuss the status, rather than the content, of reporting templates, and the only major decisions taken by the Conference on reporting were to “endorse” both the initial and annual reporting templates, and to recommend their use by states parties. The tick box remains, meaning that states parties can opt out of making their report public. While these templates can be amended in the future, the lack of agreement on the essential area of transparency falls far short of pre-Conference expectations.

By 31 May 2016, 63 states parties should have submitted their first annual report. Of these,

47 (75 per cent) did so, with 45 making them publicly accessible. Each year, on 31 May, all states parties are required to submit an annual report on their transfer activities. A template for this report has not yet been agreed either. Of the 63 reports expected, 32 were submitted on time (50 per cent), of which 30 were publicly accessible, and two were marked “secret”. This early rate has fallen short of the findings from the Control Arms ATT Monitor Report 2015, which found that 82 per cent of countries had previously submitted some form of public report on arms transfers between 2009 and 2013.

There was however positive progress made in other areas of Treaty implementation. There appears to be a significant amount of time and resources being put into national implementation, as described by states parties in their statements during the week as well as updates on efforts to accede to or ratify the ATT. The Conference established a Voluntary Trust Fund for ATT implementation, as well as three working groups to allow work to continue between CSPs, on transparency and reporting; implementation; and universalisation.

Other key outcomes include the confirmation of Dumisani Dladla as the Permanent Head of the ATT Secretariat, and Australia, Guatemala, Bulgaria, and Sierra Leone as the new Vice Presidents. As the ATT will not enter into force for Guatemala until 10 October, Costa Rica agreed to continue serving as Vice President until 9 October.

The third CSP will be held at the CICG Conference Centre, Geneva from 11-15 September 2017, under the Presidency of Ambassador Korhonen of Finland.

The last year has seen continued emphasis on increasing understanding about implementation issues. The Control Arms Coalition and other civil society groups, regional organisations, and states have continued to organise and participate in multiple seminars, workshops, and trainings have taken place around the world to support ATT universalisation and implementation. There was also good progress in broadening the membership of the Treaty in its first year as international law. Between 31 May 2015 and 31 May 2016, 14 countries ratified it and two acceded. Most of these were from Africa.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Highlight and challenge arms transfers that appear to be in violation of the Treaty;
- Encourage continued universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty;
- 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; and
- Support an ATT resolution that calls for strong and effective Treaty implementation.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Implement the ATT robustly and in a transparent manner—in order for the ATT to have the most impact on the ground, strong international norms must be established;
- Ensure timely and comprehensive reporting, and make their reports public;
- Share best practices and provide implementation support, through information exchange and resources; and
- Support the newly established Voluntary Trust Fund.

Outer space

Project Ploughshares

Background

From search-and-rescue operations to weather forecasting, from banking to arms control treaty verification, the world has become increasingly reliant on space applications. The key challenge is to maintain a sustainable outer space domain so that the social and economic benefits derived from it can continue to be enjoyed by present and future generations. In this context, the primary consideration is not the interests of particular national or commercial entities, but the security and sustainability of outer space as an environment that can be used safely and responsibly by all.

The threat posed by space debris to spacecraft of all nations continues to be a critical challenge to the security and sustainability of outer space. There is a growing risk that space assets may collide with one another or with a piece of orbital debris. As outer space becomes more congested, the likelihood of such events increases, making all spacecraft vulnerable, regardless of the nation or entity to which they belong. Awareness of the space debris problem has grown considerably, and efforts to mitigate the production of new debris through compliance with national and international guidelines have become highly important.

Development of technologies dedicated to military purposes has also increased. In the past decade alone, ground-based anti-satellite

weapons (ASATs) have been tested; several communications satellites have been deliberately jammed; missile defense systems have been used as ASATs; and precursor technologies that would allow space-to-space offensive capabilities have been developed. This makes it more important than ever to protect space against weaponisation and irresponsible behaviour. A conflict in space would lead to devastating consequences for our daily life on earth and also affect the overall long-term sustainability and peaceful use of space.

Current context

International space actors have been unable to reach consensus on the exact nature of a space security regime, despite having specific alternatives on the table for consideration. Proposals include both legally-binding treaties, such as the proposed Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT); and politically-binding norms of behaviour, such as the proposed International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.

Initiatives like the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs) for space, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) Working Group on Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space, and the proposed International Code of Conduct for Outer Space

Activities are undoubtedly valuable efforts and represent essential steps toward building norms for responsible behaviour in space. However, the reality is that several stakeholders remain concerned that a narrow focus on the development of such norms has resulted in a retreat from policy discussions and legal instruments specifically related to the need for arms control in outer space.

Efforts to address the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) have unfortunately been relegated to a diplomatic limbo. The Conference on Disarmament, which has the primary responsibility for negotiations related to PAROS, has been deadlocked and unable to conduct any substantive negotiations for years. At the UN General Assembly, the annual PAROS resolution has not once been supported by the most advanced spacefaring nation in history—the United States. And while COPUOS might be an alternate forum to address arms control in space, any efforts to discuss such issues at COPUOS are routinely dismissed as falling outside the jurisdiction of this body.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Pledge not to use any space- or ground-based capabilities, whether exclusively military or multi-use in nature, to deliberately damage or destroy space assets;
- Highlight the importance of preventing the weaponisation of outer space to preserve international peace and security and benefit all humankind;
- Acknowledge the fact that the year 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty (OST) and call for the convening of the first-ever OST conference of states parties to mark this anniversary;
- Condemn any anti-satellite tests and the development of weapons to be placed in orbit or any system to be used to target space-based assets; and
- Indicate support for the negotiation of a treaty preventing an arms race in outer space and for interim transparency and confidence-building measures toward that end.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Refrain from developing and deploying space-based weapons or weapons that target space-based assets, including antisatellite technologies; and
- Work to enhance synergies and cooperation between First Committee and other relevant UN bodies working on outer space security issues.



Cyber

Niskanen Center and Article 36

Background

“Cyber security” constitutes a broad spectrum of activity and concerns that may hinder individuals, private industry, society, and governments. The aspects most relevant to the First Committee are likely that of cyber conflict or cyber-attacks, concepts which include mass espionage and surveillance, privacy intrusions, denial-of-service attacks, and malware operations with the potential to disable or destroy infrastructure vital to the general population. It is worth noting that there is no universal agreement on what these terms mean, however, particularly at a political level. Potential impacts from such activities include impairment of government administration, damage to critical infrastructure, and the undermining of human rights. In approaching these issues, it is important to be wary of responses that overinflate the threat, and in doing so promote militarisation and facilitate escalation.

If normative progress is to be made in this area, states will need to go beyond a reiteration of existing, general rules and recognise that cyberspace needs to be addressed on its own terms, with consideration of its specific characteristics. The Internet is essentially civilian infrastructure as such it should not be made the target of or the medium for attacks because of the inability of the attacker to keep the effects directed on specific targets. States

should establish the strongest norms against such attacks and not drift into an acceptance or legitimization of problematic emerging practice. To this end, we see merit in the negotiation of new principles, procedures, rules, and norms.

Agreement that existing international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, applies to activities in cyberspace provides a shared baseline, but this should not be taken to mean that the existing legal framework is sufficient. There is a lack of clarity regarding which legal framework should have primacy in relation to certain actions, and challenges to the application of legal frameworks, including in terms of accountability. Furthermore, these existing frameworks may not adequately reflect a wider social interest in developing and preserving the public space of the Internet as a shared, non-militarised resource.

Current context

Over the last year, the public imagination has continued to be seized with the concept of cyber conflict and this is increasingly reflected in policy discussions at multiple levels and in multiple fora. In the context of the United Nations, cyber security has been addressed primarily in the context of the Group of Governmental Experts on Internet Communications Technologies (GGE on ICTs). The Group of 20 experts met four times

between 2013 and 2015 and agreed a substantive consensus report last year.¹ The report is said to break new ground in three areas: by explicitly referencing the possible applicability of the international legal principles of humanity, necessity, proportionality, and distinction; by noting that states should substantiate public accusations of state-sponsored cyber activity; and by recommending that states “should respond to appropriate requests for assistance by another state whose critical infrastructure is subject to malicious ICT acts.”

Across the three aspects there are nuances worth noting.² In the first, it’s not clear if the group has endorsed the application of these principles to state activity in cyberspace, or merely take note of their existence. There are wide differences of opinion on this, notably between the United States and China. Further, as noted above, there remains great uncertainty about the parameters

for applying IHL or IHLR frameworks, and these existing legal frameworks may still be permissive of behaviours that there is a wider social benefit to preventing in the context of the shared cyber medium. The reference to assistance perhaps the most significant development in the report because at present, coordination between national computer emergency response teams (CERTs)—which act as focal points to coordinate national and international responses to cyber incidents—is slow and ineffective, hampering adequate response.

On 23 December 2015, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 70/237, which welcomed the outcome of the 2014/2015 GGE and requested the UN Secretary-General to establish a new GGE that would report to the General Assembly in 2017. It held its first meeting in New York in August 2016, which constituted an exchange of views



that was reportedly more substantive than in past years. During last year's First Committee, there were calls from government and civil society to make further work by the GGE more inclusive, including more participation from developing countries, as some also noted that developing countries might benefit from technology transfer and capacity-building measures.

At national levels, there continues to be a growth in the articulation of cyber doctrines and the establishment of relevant bodies, units, or departments. In some instances these relate to potential cyber conflict and in others they are established to manage issues of cyber crime or espionage. For example, the United States, United Kingdom, and Russia all articulate doctrines noting the importance of cyber security and delineating this space as a zone of conflict, with NATO also recently taking this stance. This is juxtaposed with Brazil's notable instance that the internet should be the domain of research and education, not warfare. The EU primarily frames cyber security in the domain of crime rather than national security.

It is important to be mindful that the realities of so-called cyber war are far more restrained and less "war-like" than one might think, given the profile sometimes given to this issue. It is true that some cyber-attacks can have impacts similar to those of kinetic attacks, but these modes of conflict are as yet purely speculative. In practice, the majority of attacks have had information security implications (privacy, access, espionage, information technology transfers) without having direct physical effects. For example, espionage conducted using various cyber or online technologies constitutes the vast majority of aggressive cyber interactions between states, often with a view to learning more about a

nation's industrial or commercial assets. Treating cyber primarily as a military and security issue risks institutionalising the broad idea of cyber conflict without a thorough examination of its real impact and full dimensions. It can also lead to responses that can unnecessarily escalate incidents, including misunderstandings, into armed conflict. A recent example is how the term "cyber bombs" is being used increasingly despite a lack of understanding about what is being referred to and how such engagements might be used against insurgent targets in a low technology environment. Inflammatory rhetoric such as this can be effective in media headlines but is misleading in the policy world, as it tends to overlook that the vast majority of malicious cyber activities revolve around crime or espionage and not necessarily war.³

Where there has been an increase in negative use of cyber technology by state actors is in the repression of human rights, notably the right to freedom of expression, and cracking down on the ability of civilians to communicate electronically or access email, news, or social media platforms.⁴ It is a human rights imperative to protect privacy and respect for Internet freedoms. This part of the agenda is rightly being pursued in other forums, including in the Third Committee, but should not be completely divorced from how delegates in First Committee approach this subject.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Express concern about the risk of cyber attacks and the militarisation of cyberspace and promote a vision of the Internet as a shared public space that should not be the target of or medium for attacks;

- Promote a fact-based discussion, avoiding language that over-inflates the threat and tacitly promotes militarisation;
 - Advocate for common understandings within the international community around key terms, in order to facilitate common approaches; and
 - Indicate support for the current GGE to develop concrete recommendations on preventing the development, deployment, and use of cyber weapons, cyber attacks or other intrusions of interference.
- Beyond First Committee, states should:*
- Seek to establish new avenues for wider discussions on these issues open to all states
- and inclusive of civil society and other relevant actors, noting that including the voices of states from all regions, including low and middle income countries, will be crucial in this process;
 - Seek to support one another in addressing cyber threats and communicate between CERTs and interested public parties;
 - Refrain from any repression of human rights or freedoms through digital means; and
 - Work towards adopting an effective international legal framework that will prevent cyber attacks, intrusions, or interference and protect the networked infrastructure upon which societies rely for their wellbeing.

NISKANEN C E N T E R

Article 36

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Gender and disarmament

Reaching Critical Will

Background

The negative impacts on our society of patriarchy and male privilege are perhaps nowhere more pervasive and pernicious than in the field of weapons, war, and militarism. By consequence, much of the discussion on disarmament perpetuates the highly problematic gender constructions of men who are violent and powerful and women that are vulnerable and need to be protected. Gender perspectives in disarmament, peace, and security must be about exposing and challenging this state of affairs, not about including more women in the existing systems of structural inequalities and violent masculinities.

Gender issues intersect with weapons issues in at least three ways:

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

the majority of victims of gender-based violence, which is directed at a person because of their sex. However, gender-based violence is also directed at a person because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, or perceived transgressions of gender norms.

Gender diversity in disarmament. There is a stark disparity in the level and volume of participation of women, men, and others in disarmament and arms control discussions, negotiations, and processes. Recent research has shown that at any given intergovernmental meeting on disarmament, only about one quarter of participants are likely to be women and almost half of all delegations are likely to be composed entirely of men. This underrepresentation is fueled in part by the tendency to treat women as vulnerable victims, usually grouped together with children and the elderly—this framing reinforces persistent constructions of women as the “weaker sex” in need of protection by “powerful” men and enable women’s continued exclusion from authoritative social and political roles. Meanwhile, the framing of all military-aged men as “potential” or actual militants entrenches a tendency to support “violent masculinities”—a social construction in which masculinity is linked with preparedness to use military action and to wield weapons.

Gendered perspectives on disarmament and arms control. The framing of women as weak



and vulnerable is also often used to construct “a feminized and devalued notion of peace as unattainable, unrealistic, passive, and (it might be said) undesirable.” This devaluation, coupled with the equation of masculinity with violence, gives war positive value as a show of masculine power. This means that even if women do participate in negotiations or discussions on matters related to peace and security, their positions or ideas are often forced to conform to the dominant perspective in order to be taken seriously. This is not to say that women bring one perspective to a conversation and men bring another. It rather highlights the gendered understandings of war and peace, disarmament and armament, strength and weakness, which dictate what is considered “acceptable” by the dominant perspective in such conversations.

Current context

UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its follow-up resolutions provide

a political framework recognising that men and women experience wars differently. It requires these differences be taken into account and recognises that women’s full and equal participation in all aspects and stages of peace processes is essential to building sustainable peace. In 2010, the General Assembly began to consider the specific implications of 1325 for disarmament with the adoption of resolution 65/69 on “Women, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation”. In 2014, the UNGA adopted a fourth resolution on this subject, which 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 in the field of disarmament.

While important, promoting women’s participation does not fully address the need for incorporating a gender perspective into the

implementation weapons-related instruments. A more robust reflection of the relationship between weapons and gender-based violence, differential impacts of the use of weapons or of the arms trade on the sexes, and gendered aspects of armed conflict and armed violence are crucial to addressing the challenges associated with the proliferation and use of weapons in and out of conflict. The inclusion in the Arms Trade Treaty of a legally-binding provision on preventing armed gender-based violence is a good example of such efforts, but much more is needed.

Recommendations

During the First Committee, delegations should:

- Welcome the inclusion of the provision on gender-based violence in the ATT and highlight the need for implementation of this criterion;
 - Highlight the need to ensure gender diversity in disarmament discussions and negotiations and gender and sexual diversity in their delegations;
 - Share their experiences with ensuring gender perspectives in disarmament policies and initiatives; and
- Submit reports to the Secretary-General on their implementation of the UNGA resolution on women and disarmament.

Beyond First Committee, states and other actors should:

- Avoid gender essentialisms, victimisation of women, and reinforcement of violent masculinities in resolutions and action plans on disarmament and arms control;
- Effectively implement the ATT provision against GBV by training export licence officials and updating their risk assessment procedures accordingly;
- Seek to ensure gender diversity in discussions, negotiations, and peace processes;
- Continue to research and assess the specific impact that weapons and armed conflict have on people of different sexes in order to ensure a gender perspective in all policies on weapons and disarmament initiatives; and
- Invest in gender equality and other human rights and sustainable development goals instead of militarism.



Reaching Critical Will

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 - 2 *Women and explosive weapons*, Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, February 2014.
 - 3 *Women and multilateral forums: Pattern of underrepresentation*, Article 36, October 2015.
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Disarmament and development

Article 36

Background

Over the past four decades, the links between disarmament and issues of development or global inequality have been the subject of General Assembly resolutions, UN reports, and occasionally more intensive consideration by states. This agenda originated in concern at the impact of the global arms race on social and economic development during the Cold War.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development in 1987 adopted an action plan that included commitments to allocate resources released by disarmament to development and consider reducing military expenditure.¹ This followed an in-depth study by the UN in 1982 that set out the negative impacts of a large military sector on long-term economic growth and the structural changes required for economic development.²

More recently, a reappraisal of the relationship between disarmament and development by a Group of Governmental Experts was released in 2004.³ Reaffirming the core concerns and evidence regarding military expenditure and economic development, the report also elaborated on other threats to safety, stability, and development objectives that can result from

the trade and use of certain weapons (such as landmines and small arms).

Every year, a resolution is introduced to the First Committee on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on the relationship between disarmament and development, requiring the UN Secretary-General to report on this issue.

Current context

Recent research on participation data of meetings between 2010 and 2014 of thirteen forums addressing disarmament and weapons issues shows the serious underrepresentation of developing countries in discussions. Lower-income countries are less likely to attend, speak at, or hold formal roles in multilateral meetings on disarmament and weapons issues. Where they do attend, they field smaller delegations than richer countries. These countries are also less likely to be members of treaties or forums on weapons and disarmament, or to meet their reporting obligations under these instruments.⁴

Disarmament and weapons issues are of global concern – with developing countries also often more negatively affected by the use and trade of weapons, and less likely to be major arms producers. A diverse range of interests must be fully represented at international forums

for any attempt to construct an equitable international legal order that reflects the concerns of populations worldwide. Research also suggests that diverse multilateral forums are more productive.⁵ Developing countries and their civil society are currently relatively marginalised from agenda setting and decision-making in disarmament through their structural underrepresentation. This must be addressed.

At First Committee in 2015, thirty-nine states made statements linking disarmament and development, on: the opportunity costs (particularly for developing countries) of global military spending; how the trade and use of certain weapons creates barriers to or directly undermines economic and social development; and the ways in which certain disarmament processes (such as on biological and chemical weapons) can directly support economic and technical development activities.⁶

Sixteen of the fifty-seven resolutions adopted at the First Committee in 2015 reflected one or more of these themes. A resolution on

disarmament and development was adopted, with explanations of vote from the US noting that it considers disarmament and development two separate issues, and the UK and France questioning the negative relationship between development and military spending.

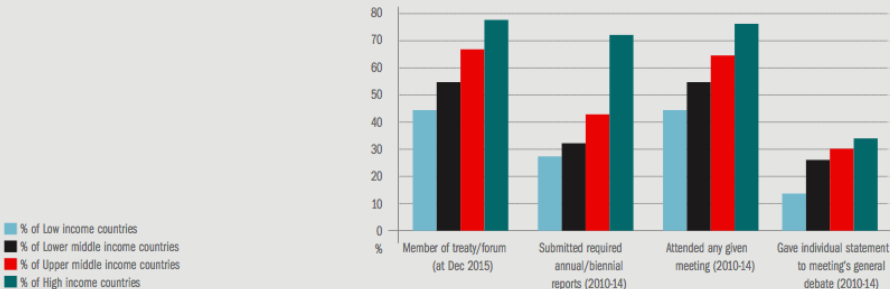
Several states made reference to how disarmament initiatives could support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs themselves contain almost no reference to disarmament and weapons issues – though a wider goal on violence and conflict was, significantly, achieved. Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies includes a target for the significant reduction by 2030 of “illicit financial and arms flows”.⁷

Recommendations

During the First Committee, delegations should:

- Recognise the contribution that disarmament, the restriction of certain weapons, and reduction of military spending can make to development, or to removing barriers to development; and

**Participation of countries in
13 disarmament/weapons forums:
averages within income groups for
all processes and meetings**



- In recognition of this, as well as of the greater negative impact of armed violence on developing countries, recognise the need to address the issue of the underrepresentation of lower-income countries and certain regions in multilateral disarmament forums, and suggest practical measures. The integration of gender and humanitarian perspectives, and ensuring gender diversity and the meaningful participation of those who have been most affected by the issues under consideration, should also be recognised as crucial.
 - Support and resource programmes of sponsorship, training, capacity building, and preparation, and promote the consideration of other practical measures in the organisation of forums that could maximise participation (e.g. regarding length of meetings, location etc.);
 - Contribute to the wider framing of disarmament and weapons issues to address a broader range of concerns, for example through making links with humanitarian and development agendas, in order to facilitate broader inclusion; and
 - Raise the visibility of marginalisation by supporting the consistent collection, monitoring, and analysis of participation data, to improve awareness and measure progress.
- Beyond First Committee, states should:*
- Reduce military budgets and redirect funds to social and economic development within their countries and through development aid;

Article 36

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Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts

Toxic Remnants of War Network

Background

Since 2009, there has been renewed international interest in strengthening the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts (PERAC), with states,¹ UN Environment Programme (UNEP),² the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC),³ and the International Law Commission (ILC)⁴ all contributing to the developing discourse. At issue is the inadequacy of the legal framework protecting the environment during conflicts, as well as the current ad hoc system of environmental assistance that follows in their wake. At stake: the protection of civilians and their environment, opportunities for sustainable peacebuilding, and recovery and the delivery of the environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The health, lives, and livelihoods of civilians are inextricably linked to the quality of their environment and as such, efforts to enhance protection must consider both the natural and human environment. Armed conflict can have direct and derived consequences for both. Physical damage or degradation of ecosystems and natural resources, pollution, and the disruption of essential services and the collapse

of environmental governance are all common features of contemporary conflicts.

Naturally the choice of weapons and how and where they are used, tested, or disposed of has implications for environmental protection and with it the protection of civilians and ecosystems. So, while the discourse on enhancing protection of the environment in relation to armed conflict (PERAC) is concurrently taking place in the Sixth Committee and UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), one element of it of particular relevance for the First Committee will inevitably be the environmental and derived humanitarian consequences of the methods and means of warfare.

Current context

The environmental footprint of the use and disposal of weapons is a global problem. Across the Pacific region, abandoned and submerged WWII munitions continue to leach heavy metals, explosives, and propellants into fragile environments.⁵ In Afghanistan⁶ and Libya, the safe disposal of abandoned SCUD missile fuel has proved technically challenging; whereas in Yemen, stockpiles have been deliberately bombed.⁷ In Albania and the DRC,⁸

unplanned stockpile explosions have left soils and water sources contaminated with metals and explosives. While the toxicity of common munitions constituents is widely acknowledged, data on contaminant levels in areas subject to their intense use during conflicts is almost wholly absent. Together with damage to water and sewage systems, and the collapse in environmental services, such contamination is just one of many environmental risks created by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. In its PERAC project, which is reviewing the law applicable to environmental protection before, during, and after armed conflicts, the ILC has opted to exclude consideration of the environmental impact of the use of weapons, arguing that the principles of IHL are sufficient to determine their legality⁹—although the norms relating to the management of explosive remnants of war and marine remnants of war are considered in its latest report.¹⁰ This gap is one that First Committee could help fill.

Each year, First Committee considers a range of disarmament and security topics. Although the resolution on observance of environmental

norms¹¹ seeks to capture some experiences and practice, it is clear that there is significant potential to go further. From dumped or abandoned chemical weapons, to unplanned stockpile explosions, to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, there is a pressing need to better understand and document the environmental and derived humanitarian consequences of these issues. By initiating research and encouraging greater awareness of the environment in these traditional and emerging security and disarmament topics, First Committee could make a valuable contribution to the understanding of the topics themselves, as well as to the wider PERAC discourse.

In May 2016, UNEA adopted, by consensus, the most significant UN resolution on conflict and the environment since 1992.¹² The resolution called for increased compliance with IHL's environmental provisions and for states to implement and consent to be bound by the international law related to the protection of the environment in situations of armed conflict. In inviting all member states to cooperate on preventing, minimising, and mitigating the impact of conflicts on the environment, and



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in calling on them to support the development and implementation of policies aimed at preventing or reducing harm, the resolution should encourage states to better address the environment across a range of thematic areas—including on the environmental and health impact of weapons throughout their lifecycle.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Make reference to the environmental and derived humanitarian impact of weapons during statements; and
- Encourage the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs to undertake a review of the environmental impact of weapons throughout their lifecycle, state

practice in minimising and mitigating harm, and current policy and knowledge gaps that should be addressed.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Engage with the PERAC discussion during 2016's Sixth Committee debate on the annual work of the International Law Commission;
- Ensure that environmental protection standards are prioritised in policies on the production, testing, use, management, and disposal of weapons;
- Support studies into the health and environmental risks from weapons throughout their lifecycle; and
- Work with donors to promote robust environmental criteria in weapons clearance programmes.

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Disarmament education

Reaching Critical Will

Background

There is broad international consensus that pursuing disarmament requires an educational dimension. But in multilateral discussions some have framed “disarmament education” primarily in technocratic terms, while others wish it to support political progress on disarmament. Early articulations favoured a more technical approach. For instance, in 1968 the UN General Assembly called upon “national and international scientific institutions and organizations to co-operate” with the UN in “research on disarmament” (A/RES/24/54).

Frustration with the Cold War arms race and the emergence of the academic field of peace studies contributed to a more comprehensive vision. The Final Document of the UN General Assembly (UNGA)’s 1978 First Special Session on Disarmament conceived of disarmament education as the mobilisation of the public to end the arms race and seek “general and complete disarmament”. Similarly, the 1980 UNESCO World Congress on Disarmament Education declared that to be “effective,” disarmament education must “be related to the lives and concerns of the learners” and analyse “the political realities within which disarmament is sought.” This approach drove the UN’s World Disarmament Campaign, launched at the 1982 UNGA Second Special Session on Disarmament.

Since then, the pendulum has swung in a more technocratic direction. The World Disarmament

Campaign was renamed the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme in 1992 (A/RES/47/53D). A 2002 report by the UN Secretary-General on “disarmament and nonproliferation education” (in response to 2000 General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/33E) similarly focused on best practices and programmatic approaches rather than a political strategy for mobilising the public. By adding “non-proliferation,” it also follows the trend of states prioritising the control of others’ access to weapons rather than getting rid of their own.

Current Context

Disarmament education today suffers from being seen as a politically nonthreatening, consensus-building proposal. While this means UNGA resolutions pass without opposition, they do not generate much interest from member states, civil society, or international organisations. Few governments submit the requested reports on their activities; this year only five states’ disarmament and non-proliferation education efforts are included in the Secretary-General’s report (A/71/124). There is little substance in terms of programming and few sources of funds. Even though the 2014 resolution frames it in terms of “enhancing sustainable economic and social development” there is nothing in the conclusions in this year’s report on integrating disarmament and non-proliferation education with the Sustainable Development Goals. Nor does the report mention the groundbreaking 2015 Security Council Resolution 2250 on

Youth, Peace and Security that calls for “quality education for peace”.

The lack of attention to political dimensions means there is little recognition of unequal access to disarmament and non-proliferation education and the role this plays in unequal access to representation in multilateral deliberations. Moreover, there is a danger that disarmament and non-proliferation education is being used by powerful states to distract from the lack of progress on disarmament. During the 2015 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference and this year’s Open Ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament, states in nuclear alliances sometimes framed disarmament education as an alternative to more politically-charged proposals like the nuclear weapon ban treaty. This anemic vision of disarmament education is at best irrelevant and, at worst, a figleaf.

As a result, there is a need for a more coherent approach to disarmament education that is relevant to global policymaking priorities.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:

- Welcome the Secretary-General’s 2016 report in their interventions and express the ongoing relevance of the 2002 Study, as well as the contributions of civil society and educational institutions in providing disarmament and non-proliferation education;
- Report in their interventions on their government’s disarmament and non-proliferation education initiatives and call on states, international organisations, civil society, and educational institutions to make submissions to UNODA for the 2018 report;
- Vote in favour of a resolution calling for ongoing implementation of the 2002 study’s recommendations;
- Seek language in the resolution calling on states, international organisations, civil society, and educational institutions to increase funding and institutional support for disarmament education; and
- Seek language in the resolution that requests the Secretary-General to report on: the contribution of disarmament and non-proliferation education to the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly Goal 4 on education and Goal 16 on peace and justice) and vice versa; the contribution of disarmament and non-proliferation education to implementation of UNSCR 2250 and vice versa; and efforts to overcome differential access to disarmament and non-proliferation education and its relationship to inequality.

Beyond First Committee, states should:

- Provide funding and institutional support to international organisations, civil society, and educational institutions providing disarmament and nonproliferation education;
- Seek synergies between disarmament and non-proliferation education and the implementation of the SDGs and UNSCR 2250;
- Make a submission to UNODA for the 2018 report on their support for disarmament and non-proliferation education;
- Implement disarmament and non-proliferation education in ways that is sensitive to marginalisation and differential access, for example, mainstreaming promotion of gender equality across all programs and building capacity of poorly-represented peoples and groups; and
- Avoid using “disarmament and nonproliferation education” as a figleaf for political inaction on pressing disarmament issues.



Reaching Critical Will

The 2016 session of the UN General Assembly
First Committee on Disarmament
and International Security
will meet from 3 October–2 November 2016.

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