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Reaching Critical Will is a programme of the
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IN THIS EDITION:

Editorial	3
Nuclear weapons	4
Chemical weapons	6
Biological weapons	8
Outer space	9
Cyber	9
Landmines.	11
Cluster munitions	11
Armed drones	12
Small arms and light weapons	13
International arms trade	14
Gender	15
Development.	16
Report: The ongoing humanitarian, human rights and environmental impact of UK nuclear weapons tests in Australia	17



EDITORIAL: STANDING FIRM FOR THE RULES OF LAW AND HUMANITARIAN DISARMAMENT

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

Today marks 100 years since the armistice of the First World War. A devastating conflict that, as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) said in 1915, marked a "reckless sacrifice of human life and the destruction of so much that humanity has laboured through centuries to build up."¹ Since then, the world has seen many wars and much more bloodshed, and many, many more weapons.

More than a hundred years ago the women of WILPF articulated a plan for disarmament, the development of international institutions, and women's enfranchisement, among other things, as a path for the prevention of war. Much of this project has been taken up by governments, and yet we are today faced with growing military expenditure, the dominance of foreign policy by the arms industry, and global inequalities amongst people and states. The UN's work on disarmament, after a trying five-week session of First Committee, seems fraught at best and headed towards a downward spiral at worst. The international system to regulate or control weapons and war appears to be being actively dismantled by the very states that created it.

The arms control and disarmament agreements put in place over the last century are at risk. It's not just about the United States announcing its intention to withdraw from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, or deciding to walk away from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. The rot goes further. The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty continues to face a crisis of credibility with the nuclear-armed states still refusing to eliminate their nuclear arsenals nearly fifty years after the Treaty's entry into force. The Chemical Weapons Convention is under strain as these abhorrent weapons are used in Syria and other locations while states parties to the Convention remain at odds over how to deal with ongoing impunity. Meanwhile, attempts to prevent the weaponisation of autonomous technologies and artificial intelligence, as well as of cyber space and outer space, are stymied by the most militarily advanced countries. These countries appear to seek dominance in all possible realms of warfare, regardless of the catastrophic impact this has on human life, rights, and dignity, the environment, and international security.

On the final day of the Committee's work, the Egyptian delegation noted in frustration that we seem to be going in circles on several disarmament issues. Speaking to the fight between the United States and Russia over their competing cyber resolutions, Egypt noted that progress for achieving a reliable regime establishing agreed rules and norms on this issue has been stalled for more than a

decade. Five groups of governmental experts have been convened and some have put forward valuable recommendations, yet efforts are not being made to utilise them to create binding rules. This is similar to the situation on autonomous weapons, where multiple meetings have been convened over years to discuss the best ways forward, and yet the most that those governments driven by militarism are willing to commit to is more talks. As the UN Secretary-General said last week in Lisbon, "machines that have the power and the discretion to take human lives are politically unacceptable, are morally repugnant, and should be banned by international law."² The majority of countries are ready to negotiate a new instrument, yet the road is currently blocked by a handful of countries that are, as WILPF warned, accruing private profits from the development of armaments.³

Yet in listening to the delegations whose positions are invested in militarism, one might think the rest of the world is tragically hindering them from bringing us all the much-vaunted ideal of "international strategic stability". This round of First Committee was a masterclass in victim blaming, gaslighting, and power politics, as governments possessing weapons of mass destruction engaged each other in diplomatic (or not so diplomatic) combat. Accusations, assertions, and demands amongst these countries replaced dialogue and negotiation in Conference Room 4. The only thing they came together on was their disdain for any attempts by the rest of the international community to try to sustain a rules based international order in which the use of force and the development and trade in weapons are regulated, controlled, prohibited, or abolished.

So what can the rest of the so-called international community do amidst all of this? We can return to the call of WILPF from 1915. We can return to the UN Charter. We can set out to do what those ensnared in the profits and pains of militarism refuse to do. We can build an international order that provides security for all. We can pursue disarmament, by creating or rebuilding or maintaining institutions, laws, and norms against weapons of mass destruction and other indiscriminate weapons that cause humanitarian harm; against the increasing automation of violence through killer robots and drones; against conflict, repression, and violence in cyber space and outer space; against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; against the rampant war profiteering from arms trading and illicit trafficking.

Disarmament is a crucial part of the path to prevent-

ing war. WILPF knew it in 1915 and we know it now. We have seen enough bloodshed. We know where weapons take us. We need instead to bolster the norms, tools, and techniques of peace and nonviolence. And we need to work together. As a handful of countries seek to dominate and destroy, it's up to the rest of us to build something new. "As 21st-century challenges threaten to outpace 20th-century institutions and mindsets," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the Security Council on Friday, "let us reaffirm the ideals of collective action while pursuing a new generation of approaches and architecture capable of responding."⁴ •

Notes

1. Resolution: Women and war, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, First Congress, The Hague, The Netherlands, April 1915, https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/WILPF_triennial_congress_1915.pdf.
2. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, "Machines with Power,

- Discretion to Take Human Life Politically Unacceptable, Morally Repugnant, Secretary-General Tells Lisbon 'Web Summit,'" 5 November 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19332.doc.htm>.
3. "Majority call to negotiate a new treaty," Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, 31 August 2018, <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2018/08/sixthmeeting>; Ray Acheson, "Mind the downward spiral," CCW Report Vol. 6, No. 11, 4 September 2018, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/ccw/2018/laws/ccwreport/12930-ccw-report-vol-6-no-11>.
 4. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 's remarks at Security Council Open Debate on "Strengthening Multilateralism and the Role of the United Nations," 9 November 2018, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-11-09/secretary-generals-remarks-security-council-open-debate>.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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

Whilst the last five weeks can appear like a blur of contentious debate, accusations, and denials, one thing has been clear: the international community is facing increased division and polarisation, most often aligned with geopolitical realities, on the question of nuclear disarmament. However, even this is not as straightforward as some would try to have us believe. The polarisation is not just an issue of the nuclear-armed states and their nuclear-supportive allies on one side, and non-nuclear-armed states on the other. The polarisation is also increasing between the nuclear-armed, permanent five UN Security Council members themselves, while their nuclear-supportive allies seem to be either desperately trying to accommodate them, or to remain silent amidst the fireworks.

The nuclear-armed states expressed deep suspicion of each other's motivations and intentions, condemning each other's nuclear weapon modernisation activities, force postures, and security doctrines. In particular, the United States and Russia accused each other of violating bilateral nuclear arms control agreements, whilst both in reality are building up their nuclear arsenals—as are all the nuclear-armed states. In the midst of all this inter-nuclear-armed hostility, these states did agree on one thing: their opposition to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

In a joint statement, the five NPT nuclear-armed states—and separately India, Israel, and Pakistan—reiterated that they will not accept any claim that the TPNW contributes to the development of customary

international law. The NPT five also repeatedly issued their complaints about the Treaty and positioned themselves to backtrack from long-held Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) agreements, claiming that the international security environment causes nuclear-armed states to maintain their arsenal for "deterrence". Most also reiterated their belief that the "step-by-step" approach is the most realistic, pragmatic, and practical approach towards nuclear disarmament. But even this commitment appears tenuous at best, with the US delegation rejecting language from previous NPT outcomes as "out of date". The increasingly hostile rhetoric of the nuclear-armed states culminated in France's observation that "nuclear disarmament cannot be decreed or targeted" states with nuclear weapons. Which leaves one to wonder, who is responsible for nuclear disarmament?

The states that negotiated the TPNW have consistently explained that they did so in accordance with their NPT obligation to negotiate effective measures for nuclear disarmament. After all, the nuclear-armed states are adamant that all states are responsible for creating an international security environment "conducive" to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Categorically and universally prohibiting these weapons of mass destruction is entirely consistent with and conducive to international peace and security. At the end of the day, of course, the nuclear-armed states are the ones who physically have to disarm. They are the ones that are at odds with peace and security, with international law, and with of morality, ethics, and humanity.

This reality can be seen not just in states' approaches to the TPNW, which is clearly demarcated in the voting result last week on draft resolution L.22. It can also be seen as events outside of this Committee spill into the building, disrupting the regularly scheduled programming. When Russia tried to submit an emergency resolution after the deadline on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, in light of the US administration's announced intention to withdraw from the Treaty, it was not allowed. This was decided on procedural grounds—Russia tabled the resolution a week after the deadline, and thus the majority of states voted against its consideration in First Committee. But it wasn't the only US action to impact debates at First Committee. The United States' withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran was another point of contention, with only Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United States itself defending this decision against the rest of the world, which continues to support the agreement. Meanwhile, the United States and Israel pulled their consensus from a long-term resolution seeking to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDFZ) in the Middle East, and voted against a new proposal requesting the UN Secretary-General to convene a conference to elaborate a legally binding treaty establishing such a zone in the region. The US and Israeli delegations said they would not support this initiative and accused the Arab states of being divisive. Once again, this seems to be the staple lash-out from nuclear-armed states whenever non-nuclear-armed states attempt some action that challenges their possession of weapons of mass destruction.

The final week of action once again heard explanations of vote on various resolutions that included rejection of the TPNW, or concern over "divisiveness" around questions of nuclear weapons. Only one final nuclear weapon-related resolution was adopted. L.66, "Fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, 2020," last adopted in 2014, elaborates on its rationale for convening a Conference among states parties and signatories of nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZs) on 4 April 2020, and invites other states as observes to the conference. PP1 is new, reflecting technical updates. PPs 8–10 encourages states in NWFZs to ratify respective treaties, that states ratify the protocols of treaties establishing NWFZs, and notes that protocols include negative security assurances for states belonging to these zones. OPs 1–4 are also new or revised, include technical updates, and now explicitly invite all states, regardless if they are parties or signatories to NWFZs to the Conference.

This year, the resolution was adopted with a vote of 171-0-6.

Algeria voted in favour as it is convinced of the importance of these zones to make an essential contribution towards nuclear disarmament efforts. But it and Cuba cautioned that the Conference should ensure the participation of all stakeholders without any exception whatsoever. Cuba explained that it did not co-sponsor the resolution this year as it had amendments that weakened it from previous resolutions. The United Kingdom (UK) on behalf of the UK, France, and the US noted that NWFZs zones can be important contributions to regional and global security provided that they are in line with UN Disarmament Commission guidelines, verified through comprehensive safeguards established by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and concluded in consultation with nuclear-armed states.

PP4 welcomes Treaties establishing NWFZs in the world, including their contributions "towards freeing the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas covered by those treaties from nuclear weapons." The France, UK, and US joint rejected this paragraph, maintaining that it is contradictory to propose that NWFZs include the high seas, because of navigational rights and freedoms provided for by the Law of the Sea.

PP7 urges states to establish NWFZ, particularly in the Middle East, in accordance with "principles adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1999." Egypt said it strongly disagreed with the counter-productive interpretation of these guidelines by some delegations, that all states of a region must agree to create a regional NWFZ. Egypt urged states to reconsider their position on this matter.

OP2 invites all UN member and observer states that are states parties or signatories to treaties that establish NWFZs to the conference. Morocco voted in favour of the resolution, noting that this is in the understanding that the resolution will only be open to UN member states, and that preparatory meetings, and the outcome document of the conference will be conducted in full respect of OP2. New Zealand also voted in favour of the resolution but noted that the paragraph's language has the unfortunate result of excluding Niue and the Cook Islands from participating in the conference, even though both are party to the Rarotonga NWFZ Treaty. It urged the resolutions' sponsors to take note of this concern.

Correction

Last week's report incorrectly noted that China voted against resolutions L.23, Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and L.62, Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-free world. China abstained on both resolutions (though vote against PP11 of L.62).

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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

Resolution L.20 “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction,” was once again a controversial resolution at First Committee, eliciting five paragraph votes and several explanations of vote. Until 2014, this resolution had been adopted without a vote. But following a re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, it began to reflect specific incidents and relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) decisions and investigation mechanisms. Certain countries have taken to accusing Poland, the resolution’s sponsor, and its supporters of politicising the resolution. Yet the voting pattern largely demonstrates that a majority of countries support the direction in which this resolution is moving.

States voted on five paragraphs: preambular paragraph (PP) 14, and operative paragraphs (OPs) 2, 3, 4, and 16, as well as the resolution as a whole.

PP14 re-emphasises “unequivocal support” for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to continue researching facts around the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and recalls relevant UNSC resolutions. It was retained with a vote of 148 in favour, 7 opposed, and 23 abstentions.

OP2 “condemns in the strongest possible terms that chemical weapons have since 2012 been used in Iraq, Malaysia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland” and lists specific reports by the OPCW’s Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the United Nations. It was retained with a vote of 128 in favour, 14 opposed, and 32 abstentions.

OP3 takes note of the results of the OPCW fact-finding missions in Syria, while OP4 recalls the decision taken during a special session of states parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in June 2018 to apply attribution for the use of chemical weapons and stresses the importance of this decision’s implementation. OP3 was retained with a vote of 123 in favour, 13 opposed, and 33 abstentions. OP4 was retained with 113 in favour, 19 opposed, and 34 abstentions.

OP16 expresses “grave concern” that despite the verified destruction of 27 Syrian chemical weapons production facilities, the OPCW’s Technical Secretariat cannot fully verify that the declaration submitted by Syria on joining the CWC can be fully verified. This paragraph was retained by a vote of 112 in favour, 15 against, and 39 opposed.

The resolution as a whole was adopted with a vote of 148 in favour, 7 opposed, and 23 abstentions.

Poland presented the resolution in a general statement ahead of voting. While regretting that the resolution has lost its consensual character, Poland stated that the international community needs “strong and clear support” for the CWC’s implementation as well as for the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. In outlining the various aspects of the resolution, Poland further commented that the resolution includes only “balanced and fact-oriented language” that does not intend to pre-judge any future outcomes from other processes in The Hague.

Russia and Syria provided general statements that largely reiterated what each had said either during the thematic cluster or in rights of reply. Syria asserted that it has met all of its obligations under the CWC, despite the harsh circumstances that it faces. It additionally said that the June 2018 decision is not legitimate, as it was taken by a vote with the support of fewer than half of the CWC states parties. Russia highlighted that it completed destruction of its stockpiles in 2017 and pointed out that the “largest Western power” has yet to do the same.

In addition to general statements, both countries provided explanations of vote.

Syria said it had called for the paragraph votes and that the focus on its country in L.20 is unacceptable. It criticised the working methods of the JIM, cited in the resolution, and said its own data shows that chemical weapons have been used by other parties in the region, with the support of France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. It reiterated its cooperation with the OPCW and requested a new team be sent to evaluate the validity of its CWC declaration.

Russia clarified that it voted against all paragraphs and the resolution as a whole. It asserted that Western countries are “breaking down” the OPCW and the CWC, by granting “illegitimate attributive functions” to the Technical Secretariat. It noted that the June decision was not supported by many CWC states parties and is therefore illegitimate and devoid of substance.

Several other explanations of vote linked concerns with L.20 to the June decision while also setting out support for the CWC and concern about the use of chemical weapons more generally.

Algeria, in abstaining from the separate paragraphs, said it would have preferred a more general resolution, and noted that the draft no longer welcomes the progress made by Syria in eliminating its stockpiles. It feels that some of the issues included in the resolution, especially pertaining to Syria, are outside the mandate of the First Committee.

Venezuela said that it abstained because the resolution seeks to politically manipulate the issue and place responsibility on a member state for weapons that have been used by terrorists. Cuba noted its concerns with the text were not accommodated because of politicisation and as such, abstained from voting on L.20 and its PP4, while voting against OPs 3, 4, and 16.

Brazil said the resolution brings the controversial issues from The Hague—seat of the CWC and OPCW—to the First Committee and thus risks becoming an additional “platform of polarisation”. Brazil also raised concerns with OP15.

Kazakhstan felt it was divisive to include references to non-consensus decisions in a First Committee resolution. Malaysia is concerned that the implications of the June decision have yet to be fully considered by all CWC states parties, and that the June special session was not an appropriate venue to take a decision on matters that will affect the scope of the OPCW’s work. It urged protecting the OPCW as a “respected technical organisation.”

China said that while it supports comprehensive, objective, and impartial investigations, the result of the vote in June showed a wide divergence of views among CWC states parties. It is concerned that there was not sufficient consultation with states parties and that a vote was forced, and in relation to address a major issue of treaty compliance. China felt that its drafting proposals for L.20 were disregarded. It urged states to meet one another halfway.

Egypt said it can no longer support this resolution when its main supporters reinforce double standards by not wanting to establish a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East, and that many of them are under the “protection” of the “nuclear umbrella”. Egypt also referenced the continued politicisation of the resolution.

Indonesia voted in favour overall, but abstained on OPs 3, 4, and 16 as it believes some references in the resolution could be misinterpreted and the responsibilities of remaining possessor states is overlooked.

India stated that any use of chemical weapons is in “complete disregard of humanity,” yet because of the

nature of the June decision, voted against OP4 and abstained on OP16.

Viet Nam said it voted in favour of whole resolution but abstained on PP16 and voted against OP2 and OP3.

France spoke in defense of the resolution and the June decision. It asserted that the states using chemical weapons are also challenging multilateralism, and that states owe it to victims to take action. France reminded member states that neither the June decision or the resolution have changed the mandate of the OPCW or the CWC in any way, as both have always had the capability to provide attribution. It said that the June decision merely provides more resources and capacity to do so, and that this is not a question of creating a capacity to prosecute.

Japan said it supports establishing a permanent mechanism to identify perpetrators. Singapore supports both the resolution and the June decision.

The United States delivered a joint explanation on behalf of several, mostly European, countries in which it said that “responsible nations” are standing together under a “renewed commitment” that includes directing the OPCW’s Technical Secretariat to identify perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria, or anywhere when a state party requests it.

The First Committee always raises questions about jurisdiction and how the content of its resolutions intersect with actions undertaken by other parts of the UN or the international community more broadly. Some member states will prefer that its resolutions remain devoid of any detail or reality, in order to make it easier to agree them and move onto the next thing. Politicisation should never be encouraged, yet many issues of the First Committee are political and cannot be divorced from the realities they purport to address. By prioritising the achievement of diplomatic agreement above substantive responses to real world use of weapons, states will succeed only in calling into question the utility and relevance of this Committee. •

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Filippa Lentzos | King's College London

Resolution A/C.1/73/L.9 on the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) was adopted in the First Committee on 5 November 2018 without a vote.

As in previous years, the increase in number of states parties to the treaty is noted, but unusually, these four states, which include Palestine, are not named.

A substantial addition to the traditional BTWC resolution is that it notes with concern the financial situation of the Convention and requests the Chair of the 2018 meeting of states parties to prepare an information paper on measures to address financial predictability and sustainability for future BTWC meetings and for the Implementation Support Unit. Since the resolution was adopted, the BTWC Chair has informed states parties that the financial situation is such that the originally intended four-day meeting in December 2018 will have to be reduced to a three-day meeting. The cancelled meeting day will be used for informal consultations on the financial situation and reports of the meetings of experts. The Chair will additionally convene informal consultations on 14 November and 3 December to discuss financial and budgetary issues.

Also, as usual, the BTWC resolution welcomes the reaffirmation made in the context of review conferences, that “under all circumstances the use of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention.” Syria has been undermining this strong norm, however. It has signed but not ratified the BTWC, made repeated insinuations and unsupported allegations throughout First Committee that the United States is sponsoring secret laboratories that are developing biological weapons, and it particularly singled out the Tbilisi Richard Lugar Health Research Center in Georgia. In responding to the allegations, Georgia said, “The laboratory is designed to promote public and animal health through infectious disease detection, epidemiological surveillance, and research

for the benefits of Georgia, the region and the global community. The Centre is functioning as an integral part of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.” Georgia also emphasised its commitment to transparency, highlighting the international peer review exercise it is hosting on 14-15 November 2018 with the participation of experts from 20 countries. In a right of reply, Russia rejected Georgia’s transparency efforts, saying “there are no guarantees...that experts can really see for themselves that the experiments going on there are not for military purposes.” Russia has been invited to participate in the exercise, but has declined because it views the exercise as politically biased and aimed at creating an illusion of legitimacy and transparency. Further exchanges will undoubtedly continue at the upcoming meeting of states parties in December 2018.

The biennial Resolution A/C.1/73/L.17 on measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol was agreed by 178 states with two regular abstentions: Israel and the United States. No one voted against. The Geneva Protocol prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons, and the resolution renews its previous call to all states “to observe strictly the principles and objectives of the Protocol”. Universal adherence to the Geneva Protocol by all states, including by all states parties to the BTWC, has been an agreed politically binding commitment within the framework of the BTWC since 1980. However, the number of BTWC states parties which are not parties to the Geneva Protocol has increased since 1980. Moreover, a number of states still formally maintain reservations to the Protocol, and the resolution calls upon those states to withdraw these reservations. While some states may regard their BTWC obligations as having effectively superseded their Geneva Protocol reservations in so far as biological and toxin weapons are concerned, and may regard their reservations as obsolete, the matter must be put beyond doubt by formally withdrawing those reservations. •

OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

A growing standoff between Russia and the United States (US) on measures to maintain security in outer space—where there are no agreed restrictions on conventional weapons or the use of force—has solidified, erasing previously hard-found avenues of consensus.

For the first time since 2008, the US and Israel voted against the resolution L.3, “Prevention of an arms race in outer space,” (PAROS) that urges work on this topic within the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Likewise both states—along with Cameroon and Palau—cast negative votes on resolution L.68, “Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space” (TCBM) linked to implementation of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) recommendations on TCBMs, which the US had previously co-sponsored with Russia and China since its inception in 2012.

The US asserted that these negative votes “in no way detract” from longstanding support for voluntary TCBMs, but that they make an “unacceptable linkage” with “fundamentally flawed arms control proposals.” Both resolutions acknowledge the draft treaty proposed by Russia and China in 2008 and 2014 within preamble statements, indicating a hardening of the US position against mere mention of legally-binding arms control constraints.

This toughened stance has a wide embrace. Resolution L.50, “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space,” which welcomes work initiated by a new GGE on elements for a legally binding instrument on PAROS and seeks to include this item in the provisional agenda for the CD, received 49 abstentions from predominantly Western states, in addition to three negative votes (Israel, Ukraine, United States). This is de-

spite the fact that many such states are participating in the GGE process, including the US, to inform and expand the options under discussion.

Russia pointed to a growing number of states supporting resolution L.51, “No first placement of weapons in outer space,” which reached 129 yes votes, but is matched by increased opposition, with no votes expanding from four to 12 and 40 abstentions. Concerns with this resolution—which does not define what counts as a space weapon—are well known. But the outcome appears part of a wider pattern of political confrontation between the US and the Russia, illustrated by earlier remarks concerning possible Russian weapons programmes as reason not to support Russian-sponsored resolutions.

This hostility is two-sided and a similar accusation of US plans for space-based weapons was again leveled by Russia as well as Cuba this week. The difference is that Russia—along with China—continues to pursue governance mechanisms, with the two states sponsoring all four of the resolutions tabled this year alongside Algeria, Bolivia, Cuba, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Myanmar, Syria, and Venezuela. Russia has thus declared itself the “most firm and consistent proponent of preventing arms race in outer space.” Others may disagree, but if so, they are not bringing forth other options to address what the US acknowledged as real threats. European Union states referenced once again the desire for a voluntary code of conduct, and indeed there is overwhelming support for TCBMs, but there is otherwise little evidence of alternative leadership and consensus building. This standoff does not bode well for the principle of peaceful uses in outer space. •

CYBER

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

In a First Committee marked with unprecedented levels of discord and political grandstanding, it is perhaps not surprising that the issue of cyber security became another pawn in the game. The extreme degree to which this issue became polarised, however, was unexpected, and has resulted in a procedurally conflicted and potentially counterproductive two-track approach to one of the most ubiquitous—and rapidly evolving—security threats facing the international community today.

Two resolutions on the subject were presented for adoption by Russia and the United States, the first time that this has occurred. Earlier First Committee Monitor articles

on this topic have described the content of those resolutions; however, Russia had since revised its L.27, “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security.” It replaced the largely problematic language in former operative paragraph (OP) 1 with various elements of consensus reports agreed by previous groups of governmental experts (GGEs). It also replaced its proposal for another, more consultative GGE with an open-ended working group (OEWG). The United States’ resolution L.37, “Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security,” remained unchanged in its proposal of a new GGE.

Both were put forward for voting on the final day of First Committee and both resolutions were adopted: the Russian resolution passed by a vote of 109 in favour, 45 against, and 16 abstentions. The US resolution passed with 139 in favour, 11 against, and 18 abstentions. The outcome is that there will be both a working group and an expert group convened in 2019, with varying mandates as outlined in the resolutions.

Ahead of voting, Russia provided a general statement to introduce its resolution, in which it emphasised heavily the openness and inclusivity for which an OEWG allows, and criticised the GGE format as allowing only a narrow grouping of states to take decisions. In a later explanation of vote, it urged states to decide for themselves what their national interests are and not follow the blind orders of others.

Bangladesh provided a general statement that stressed the importance of continuing to build norms as based on past GGE work in an inclusive manner that gives space to the voices of developing countries. Cuba's general statement indicated its preference for L.27/Rev.1, and also for a process to adopt international legally-binding to close the "significant legal vacuums" in cyber security.

Twenty-two delegations provided explanations of vote (EOVs). The European Union (EU) regretted Russia's course of action and outlined the problems it has with L.27/Rev.1, including that the assertion that cyber space is ungoverned, and that it undermines the EU's view that international law applies in cyber space. Its member states will participate in the OEWG and the EU encourages a coordinated process between the two bodies. This view was also generally supported by the explanations of vote given by Australia, as well as Canada on behalf of Australia, Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom. This joint statement further spoke to the "selected and incomplete excerpts from the 2013 and 2015 GGE reports" found in L.27/Rev.1. Similarly the United States described the flaws in L.27/Rev.1, including that it imposes a list of norms that were

"cherry-picked" from former GGE reports, conflates language, and will lead to a duplication of work. It reiterated that its own resolution is based on past consensus resolutions yet takes steps toward greater inclusivity.

Egypt stated it supports L.27/Rev.1 over L.37 and emphasised that it is time to make real progress in the UN on this issue. While past GGEs have put forward valuable recommendations, these have not been codified and Egypt views the Russian proposal as being more action-oriented. Armenia, Iran, Cuba, Russia, Syria, and Belarus also used their EOVs to indicate their preference for L.27/Rev.1, and against L.37. Their statements tended to indicate mistrust of the United States as a leader on this issue, interest in agreeing binding rules and standards, as well as the importance of inclusivity. Algeria voted for L.27/Rev.1, but abstained on L.37.

Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines stressed the importance of the two processes working collaboratively and coherently together, and hopefully leading to complementary outcomes. These states voted for both resolutions. Japan and Switzerland, supporters of L.37, emphasised a similar message. India voted in favour of L.27/Rev.1 and against L.37, but registered concern with some elements of the resolution, including inconsistencies in terminology and the importance of keeping an open mandate. Venezuela and China explained that they supported the Russian resolution and voted against L.37 because of concerns about openness and inclusion.

The division over cyber security is bound up in that of the other issues of the First Committee, and the world outside its doors. It's frustrating to see progress on such an urgent problem being held hostage by ego and power politics, and concerning that two of the largest cyber bullies are at the helm. This does present an opportunity for other states however to step up and play constructive roles in bridging differences and brokering solutions. It is hoped that this potential will be maximized over the year ahead. •



Photo: Pexels Photo

LANDMINES

Amelie Chayer | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

The Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) is a solid instrument with a remarkable compliance record. Debates at First Committee in 2018 showed that a broad diversity of states strongly support the aim of ending the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines, through adherence to the global norm against use, and through demining and assistance to victims.

Throughout the session, at least 35 delegations including five regional groups called for sustained cooperation and assistance for mine action or for Treaty implementation, or explained what support they provide. This included the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the European Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Nordic Countries, Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lao PDR, Netherlands, Pakistan, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam. It is broadly understood that mine action includes clearance of landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive remnants of war, as well as other activities such as comprehensive assistance to victims.

Resolution L.53 encourages the full universalisation and implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty. It was adopted with a vote of 154-0-17. While the number of abstentions and votes against is consistent with previous years, the number of votes in favor is slightly lower than in the past. Based on past experience, this can likely be explained by the absence of some delegations, mostly represent-

ing smaller states, that may be present instead for the General Assembly vote in December.

The following states not party to the Treaty voted in favor of the resolution, thus demonstrating their support for the aim of ending the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Libya, Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates.

Eight states explained their abstention. As in previous years, Cuba, Iran, Myanmar, and Republic of Korea stated the reasons why they are not ready to renounce antipersonnel mines, mostly referring to security concerns and self-defense. Egypt shared its view that the MBT was inappropriately agreed outside the UN framework. India and Pakistan feel satisfied that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II, which regulates but does not ban antipersonnel mines, adequately addresses the issue. Cuba, Libya, India, Iran, Myanmar, and the Republic of Korea expressed some form of support for the aim of eliminating landmines or recognised the disproportionate harm these weapons cause to civilians and on the long term.

The 17th Meeting of States Parties to the MBT will take place in Geneva from 26 to 30 November 2018, under a new format showcasing the dynamism of the mine ban community with one informal day fully dedicated to bilateral meetings and side events. States not party to the Treaty are also welcome to participate. •

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Amelie Chayer | Cluster Munition Coalition

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is widely acknowledged as the principal framework for the worldwide effort to eradicate cluster munitions and thereby prevent further suffering from these weapons. The CCM turns 10 this year, and 60 per cent of the world's states have agreed to be bound by its provisions through their signature, ratification, or accession.

This year's First Committee debate on the issue was marked by condemnations of use of the weapon and calls for further universalisation of the Convention. The following delegations expressed concern with the use of cluster munitions, condemned such use, or otherwise stated that use is unacceptable: Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands, New

Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, as well as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Nordic Countries, and the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC).

Burkina Faso, Canada, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the CMC encouraged all states to join the Convention, or explained how they contribute to universalisation efforts. Numerous delegations emphasised the importance of cooperation and assistance on mine action, as summarised in the entry on landmines of this issue of *First Committee Monitor*.

Now that Russia has changed from voting no to abstaining on the resolution on cluster munitions, only one state remains that voted against: Zimbabwe. Resolution L. 39 on the CCM was adopted with a vote of 139-1-39 this year, while last year's First Committee result was 134-2-36 and General Assembly was 142-2-36. Surprisingly, Cyprus and Uganda continued to abstain despite being signatories to the Convention. Thirty non-signatories to the CCM voted in favor of the resolution, thus demonstrating their support for the humanitarian aims of the Convention.

Thirteen states explained their abstention. Argentina, Brazil, and Egypt stated flaws in the text of the Convention. Cyprus and the Republic of Korea referred to their security situation. Iran said it didn't want to legitimise

instruments concluded outside the UN disarmament machinery. Poland, speaking on behalf of Estonia, Finland, Greece, and Romania, said that it supported the humanitarian goal of the CCM but that the Convention on Conventional Weapons is the best forum to tackle cluster munitions. Pakistan said cluster munitions are a "legitimate weapon." The United States provided a lengthy explanation defending cluster munitions for their military utility, in which it referred to the Martens Clause, stating that it is "not a rule that prohibits any particular weapon" such as cluster munitions.

With this unexpected lecture on the dictates of public conscience, this year's First Committee discussions on cluster munitions came to a close. •

ARMED DRONES

Elizabeth Minor | Article 36

At First Committee this year, states paid considerably more attention to the issue of armed drones than in previous years. Sixteen countries raised drones in their statements (some multiple times), compared to seven in 2017. A joint civil society statement on drones to First Committee also saw a significantly greater number of endorsements from organisations in more countries than in past, with 54 organisations from 20 countries signing on. No resolutions mentioning drones were tabled this year.

The countries that highlighted armed drones in their statements to the debates were: Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ireland, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Thailand, and Trinidad and Tobago. Several of these states had not referred to drones in their statements to First Committee before (Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Nepal, Thailand, and Trinidad and Tobago).

An international initiative, led by the United States, to develop stand-alone politically binding standards on the export of armed drones is currently ongoing, and was referenced by the Netherlands and Ireland in their statements. Ireland also noted that drones are under discussion within the context of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). It highlighted the ongoing efforts of states, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and civil society to promote continued international discussions on drones and their use.

A 24 October side event hosted by Germany and the Netherlands, with UNIDIR, the Stimson Center, and PAX, considered the expanding development, transfer and use of drones. Rachel Stohl from the Stimson Center emphasised that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) provides a

legal framework for drones transfers (which civil society organisations also emphasised in their joint First Committee statement). Germany, meanwhile, noted that the process of developing a policy approach to drones might have similarities to developing initiatives on autonomous weapons and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Many statements situated drones in the context of the need to address the ethical, legal, and other challenges of various emerging technologies and concerns, such as autonomous weapons, cyber, and outer space. Several also highlighted the continued need for drones to be used in accordance with the law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. Some countries highlighted different aspects of the harm to communities and humanitarian impacts caused by the use of drones, including loss of life and psychological damage. These aspects were also emphasised by civil society. A couple of states raised the threats posed by non-state armed groups acquiring drones. For a full breakdown of references each week see reports in earlier editions of the *First Committee Monitor*.

To respond to the issues raised by armed drones and their use in particular, several states called for regulations that specifically addressed drones, or international discussions that resulted in additional common understandings. Mexico highlighted the general importance of open, transparent, inclusive discussions on the limits of the use of force, which should result in the regulation of armed drones. In addition, export control standards and the need for transparency and accountability were raised. Civil society in its statement emphasised that states must also move beyond issues of trade to actively



decide what role—if any—drone technologies should play in the use of force, and articulate what the specific limits and standards for their use are. The statement called for a progressive, inclusive, international process

to be developed on this issue—and welcomed the UN Secretary-General's recent commitment in his Agenda for Disarmament that UN institutions would support states to undertake such a process. •

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Rose Welsch and Shaune Hickson | International Action Network on Small Arms and Nonviolence International-NY

In the weeks leading up to the adoption of resolutions in the UN First Committee, South Africa held several informal consultations for member states on draft text proposed for resolution A/C.1/73/L.63, "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects." Along with Colombia and Japan, South Africa presents an updated omnibus resolution on this issue every year with the hope that its adoption by consensus will be maintained. It is the primary resolution on the issue, although small arms are also referenced in other resolutions. After those consultations, the draft resolution included important new text on gender dimensions—including recognition of the need for strengthened participation of women in decision-making and implementation processes of the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms (UNPoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI). The new paragraph also reaffirmed the need for states to mainstream gender dimensions in their implementation efforts.

There were other new elements added to L.63. It welcomed the UN Secretary-General's initiative to establish a trust facility within a new Peacebuilding Fund focused on eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) in settings of both conflict and pervasive crime. It references the establishment of a fellowship training programme on SALW to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise related to the implementation of the UNPoA and the ITI (particularly in developing countries); and it includes a request that the Secretary-General's report at next year's General Assembly take into account the views of member states on recent developments in SALW manufacturing, technology and design—in particular polymer and modular weapons. While these revisions were accepted by member states and L.63 was eventually adopted as a whole without a vote, for the first time in the resolution's history two of its paragraphs had to be voted on. Both dealt with the outcome of the Third Review Conference (RevCon3) on the UNPoA that was held in June of 2018. Preambular paragraph (PP) 7 welcomed the successful conclusion of RevCon3, and operating paragraph (OP) 6 endorsed the outcome of RevCon3. One hundred and seventy-three member states voted in favour of PP7 and 174 voted in favour of OP6, but the United States (US) and Israel

voted against both. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the only country to abstain from both votes. In explaining its vote, the US noted that the RevCon3 outcome document includes mention of ammunition, and asserted that the issue of ammunition falls outside the scope of the UNPoA—a position it has held since 2001. Israel also said it cannot support language that welcomes the RevCon3 outcome document, stating that the UNPoA is not the right venue to address the issue of ammunition and that it should be addressed by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that will be convened in 2020 on the subject. France, who presided over RevCon3, noted that the final report of the Conference contained negative votes on three paragraphs only, but still reflected the positions of all the participating states. "There is no sense voting against paragraphs on L.63, and it makes less sense when the RevCon3 outcome document was adopted unanimously," France countered.

The growing momentum amongst states toward addressing problems related to ammunition is clearly evident and from the point of view of saving lives and livelihoods, is a positive step forward. In this year's First Committee, there was wide support for the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the UNPoA, and many states had welcomed its inclusion in the RevCon3 outcome document—though a number of states also noted that a more comprehensive approach to the issue is needed.

Another positive outcome of First Committee statements on SALW is the strong support that many states expressed for the inclusion of gender dimensions in the UNPoA, and for the linkage between SALW and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—issues that began to show signs of breakthrough at the sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6) in 2016 and later featured prominently at RevCon3. In addition, some states expressed support for synergies among the UNPoA, ITI, Arms Trade Treaty, and Firearms Protocol, which is also promising. And while SALW discussions at the UN have tended to focus disproportionately on conflict settings, the statements at this year's First Committee reflected growing attention to armed violence in non-conflict settings—which is where most SALW related deaths occur globally. Finally, it was encouraging that numerous states

reported on efforts they are undertaking in their own countries to address SALW issues—including the strengthening of national legislation on firearms, destroying illicit guns, improving registration and record-keeping of guns and ammunition, and working with neighbouring countries to counter the illicit trafficking of SALW.

However, discussions fell short on some issues at the 2018 First Committee—namely addressing the exces-

sive accumulation and production of SALW; addressing the issue of civilian possession of SALW; and providing support for survivors of gun violence. In the lead-up to the seventh Biennial Meeting of States (BMS7) in 2020, member states should actively promote proposals for consideration to address these issues. They should also consider a “Food for thought” paper by UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) that proposes the idea of each country setting its own concrete national targets for implementing the UNPoA. •

INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Aaron Lainé | Control Arms

During the final week of First Committee states took action on several resolutions that referenced the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Resolution L.8, entitled “Arms Trade Treaty”, welcomes decisions taken by the fourth Conference of States Parties (CSP) earlier this year, particularly the progress made by the Treaty’s standing working groups on effective treaty implementation, transparency and reporting, and universalisation, in advancing the object and purpose of the Treaty. The resolution, introduced by Latvia as the President of the fifth CSP also includes stronger language on the gendered impact of arms. Seeking to further consolidate the Treaty’s institutional framework, L.8 calls upon ATT states parties that have not done so already, to address their financial obligations under the ATT as well as to provide technical and/or financial assistance to requesting states in order to promote the implementation and universalisation of the Treaty.

L.8 was adopted with 151 votes in favour, 0 votes against, and 30 abstentions, while championing a record 100 co-sponsors—an encouraging sign of approval by UN member states. Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau, Suriname, St. Vincent, Seychelles, and Turkey all co-sponsored the resolution for the first time while Fiji changed their vote from an abstention last year to a yes vote. Disappointingly, 12 ATT states parties did not co-sponsor the resolution this year. Angola, Colombia, Mali, and Sierra Leone reversed their position from last year’s co-sponsorship.

Of the 30 abstentions, which include ATT signatories Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and the United States, Armenia cited reservations regarding the preamble and principles sections of the Treaty, and noted that the ATT should have been adopted by consensus. Iran and Syria criticised the ATT in stating that the instrument prioritis-

es the political and commercial interests of some states, and fails to prohibit arms transfers to countries committing acts of aggression.

Three paragraph votes were also requested for L.8 on:

- Preambular paragraph 8 which takes note of the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda (153 votes in favor, 0 against and 18 abstentions);
- Operative paragraph 4 which encourages the universalisation of the ATT (138 in favour, 0 against and 35 abstentions);
- Operative paragraph 9 which acknowledges outcomes from the Third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (UNPoA) as well as synergies between it and the ATT (136 in favour, 35 abstentions, 2 against).

In explaining why it abstained on operative paragraph 9, Cuba expressed concerns about establishing artificial synergies between the ATT and other instruments that are universally accepted, a sentiment shared with Brazil. Owing to the reference to ammunition in the UNPoA outcome document, the US and Israel voted against this paragraph.

Five other resolutions adopted at the First Committee include references to the ATT. Trinidad and Tobago’s biennial resolution on “Women, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation” was adopted with 149 votes in favour and 23 abstentions, with a vote called for preambular paragraph 10 that refers to the gender-based violence (GBV) criteria in the ATT.

Identical to last year’s version, Resolution L.63, entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, welcomes the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the ATT.

New resolution L.35, “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures”, includes an encouragement to ATT States Parties to financially contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), if in a position to do so. Under the leadership of Peru, L.56, “UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, encourages the Regional Centre to “further develop activities in all countries of the region in the important areas of peace, disarmament

and development and to provide, upon request and in accordance with its mandate, support to member states of the region in the national implementation of relevant instruments, inter alia... the Arms Trade Treaty.” Finally, L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific” mentioned a technical and legal assistance project aimed to assist the Philippines to build capacity towards ATT ratification. •

GENDER

Katrin Geyer | Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

It would not be an exaggeration to say that this year’s First Committee has yielded considerable progress with respect to gender and disarmament. The need for gender perspectives and equal representation in disarmament processes has been a recurring topic in a vast number of delegations’ statements, at many side events, and in almost 20 resolutions.

This year, 17 resolutions have been adopted that include language on women’s equal representation, the gendered impact of different types of weapons, or the need for gender considerations more broadly. This is 25 per cent of all First Committee resolutions in 2018. Six resolutions (L.6; L.8/Rev1; L.38; L.58; L.63; L.67) include language on gender for the first time ever, whilst three resolutions (L.39; L.53; L.60) have made their language on gender stronger. For comparison, in 2017, 15 per cent of resolutions made gender references. This figure was 13 per cent in 2016 and 12 per cent in 2015.

The number of delegations speaking about gender and disarmament also continued to increase this year. As reported on in previous Monitors, Canada, Namibia on behalf of 56 states, as well as Trinidad and Tobago dedicated whole statements to this topic. Delegations approached the recognition of gender in disarmament from various angles. Many emphasised the vital contribution of women’s perspective to disarmament fora and therefore the need to ensure women’s equal participation. Other stressed the gendered impact of different types of weapons, such as the link between the conventional arms trade and the risk of gender-based violence; the impact of small arms and light weapons (SALW) on women and girls, the differential impact of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), or the disproportionate impact of a nuclear weapon detonation on women.

Some resolutions, such as L.39 on cluster munitions or L.60 on improvised explosive devices, also recognised the importance of providing adequate gender-sensitive victim assistance and responses to these threats. In addition, some states underscored the need to comprehensively apply gender analysis to conflict prevention and response, and to disarmament efforts, so as to challenge underlying assumptions how gender shapes disarmament efforts and discourse. This is an area still need much more attention, as is breaking down the idea that gender is about women, or only a binary concept related to men and women.

A further welcome development was the Latvian delegation’s announcement that will seek to examine gender-based violence as a priority theme in 2019 as president of the next conference of states parties of the Arms Trade Treaty.

During the final week, resolution L.21, “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control,” was adopted as a whole without a vote. An additional vote was called on PP10, which was retained with a vote of 149-0-23. PP10 encourages states parties to the Arms Trade Treaty to implement the Treaty’s provisions, including the provisions on serious acts of gender-based violence. Most states that abstained from this paragraph did so because they are not a signatory or party to the Treaty. Iran and the United States (US) issued explanations of vote. Iran explained that the resolution is acceptable to it inasmuch as it aligns with Iran’s constitution, laws, regulations, and administrative procedures. The US delegation took the floor to clarify its position towards PP5 that reaffirms the link between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the resolution. The US stated that the Agenda 2030 is non-binding and does not create any further rights or obligations under international law. •

DEVELOPMENT

Ariana Smith | Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

Throughout the First Committee this year, member states regularly referenced the inter-connectedness of disarmament and development issues. States most commonly mentioned reallocating rapidly-growing military budgets to social and economic development programmes, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through effective disarmament, and bridging the gap between developing and developed countries.

Resolution L.11 “Relationship between disarmament and development”, introduced by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), was adopted in the final week without a vote. The resolution urges the international community to allocate resources made available by disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. Not all member states, however, agreed that disarmament and development are inextricably linked. The United States argued in its explanation of vote that the two are distinct issues, not inherently connected. Additionally, while France and the United Kingdom (UK) joined in support of the adoption of L.11, they questioned the legitimacy of the resolution’s reference to the “symbiotic relationship” between disarmament and development. The UK further challenged calls to divert military spending to sustainable development, asserting that this proposition should be more nuanced, as military spending also functions to protect civilians through peacekeeping and protection from natural disasters. Nonetheless, France and the UK recognised the connection between development, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR), and small arms and light weapons (SALW). Armenia also offered an explanation of vote on L.11. It had joined in the consensus but expressed reservations about the inclusion of the final document of the 18th ministerial meeting of the NAM, because of its “biased approach” to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Several other resolutions also included disarmament and development issues, including Resolution L.56, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” submitted by Peru. Both L.56 and L.47, “Maintenance of international security—good-neighbourliness, stability, and development in South-Eastern Europe” were adopted without a vote. L.39, “Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions”—adopted with 139 votes in favour, 1 against, and 39 abstentions—and L.63 “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”—adopted without a vote—recognise that cluster munitions and illicit small arms flows, respectively, obstruct economic and social development. Resolution L.65/Rev.1, “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament,” was also adopted without a vote. Egypt, Iran, and Pakistan each commented on the value of science and technology in enabling states to pursue sustainable development in addition to security.

Additionally, Resolution L.8 highlights the link between the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and 2030 Agenda, specifically Goal 16 and target 16.4, which aims to dramatically reduce unlawful arms flows by 2030. L.8 was adopted with 151 votes in favour, 0 opposed, and 30 abstentions. L.13, “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control,” calls upon states to enact disarmament measures without “detriment to the environment” or hindrance to sustainable development programmes. The resolution was adopted without a vote, however the United States offered an explanation of vote to state its belief that there is no direct connection between environmental standards and multilateral arms control.

Member states of the First Committee largely held to their positions of previous years on the relationship between disarmament and development, generally submitting the same resolutions and explanations of vote.



REPORT: THE ONGOING HUMANITARIAN, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF UK NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS IN AUSTRALIA

Dimity Hawkins | Swinburne University

The UK government carried out 12 atmospheric nuclear weapon tests on Australian territories from 1952 to 1957. Further radiological and toxic experiments continued until 1963. A new report published by the International Disarmament Institute shows how the nuclear weapons tests displaced Aboriginal communities, contaminated land and had long-lasting impacts on the health of veterans, civilians and the environment.

On 3 October 1952, the British exploded their first nuclear weapon off the Monte Bello islands, approximately 8.5 feet below the waterline within the Royal Navy frigate HMS Plym. The bomb yield was 25 kilotons, and the resulting cloud rose to around 10,000 feet within four minutes. Monitoring teams reported that most material was deposited to the West and North-West of Ground Zero. However, a 1985 Royal Commission investigation found that fallout reached the mainland following the Hurricane test around 30 hours after the blast.

The total yield of the bombs detonated across the Monte Bello Islands, Emu Field and Maralinga testing grounds between 1952 and 1957 is estimated at 181 kilotons. British nuclear tests in Australia raised concerns of sovereignty and democratic processes as well as an abhorrent neglect for the safety of civilian and military personnel.

In addition to the twelve major atmospheric nuclear tests, the British conducted over 600 'minor trials' between 1953 and 1963. These subcritical tests burned or exploded toxic and radioactive materials, including

around 24 kg of Plutonium.

Crippling official secrecy stymied both transparency and accountability for the impacts of nuclear tests, both in the major tests and the 'minor trials', for generations. The Royal Commission documented the negative humanitarian and human rights impact of the nuclear tests on nuclear test veterans and Aboriginal communities.

"For all of us our land is the basis of our culture. It is our supermarket for our food, our pharmacy for our medicine, our school and our church," said Aunty Sue Coleman-Haseldine, a Kokatha-Mula woman who was a small child when the nuclear tests took place in South Australia, in a speech to the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna in 2014. She later recalled, "We weren't on ground zero, but the dust didn't stay in one place. The winds brought the poison to us and many others."

The 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) obligates assistance to victims and remediation of contaminated environments. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its advocacy for the TPNW, was founded in Melbourne, Australia, in 2007. Despite significant pressure from Australian civil society, Australia boycotted the negotiations. To honor nuclear weapons survivors in Australia, throughout the Pacific and beyond, Australia should sign and ratify the Treaty. •



Aunty Sue Coleman-Haseldine with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons' 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, Canberra, September 2018. Photo: Martin Ollman.

2018 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW

SIDE EVENT BRIEFING

Humanitarian Disarmament at the CCW: Examining Incendiary Weapons and Landmines through a Humanitarian Lens

Tuesday, 20 November 2018

13:15-14:45

ROOM XXII

United Nations
Geneva

Sandwiches & refreshments will be provided.

Speakers

- Roos Boer, Program Lead-Humanitarian Disarmament, PAX
- Bonnie Docherty, Senior Researcher, Human Rights Watch
- Hector Guerra, Director, ICBL-CMC

Humanitarian disarmament seeks to prevent and remediate arms-inflicted human suffering through the establishment of norms. While the approach has been used in many contexts, this side event will focus on its application to two weapons addressed by the Convention on Conventional Weapons: incendiary weapons and landmines. Speakers will examine, through a humanitarian disarmament lens, the use of these weapons and the adequacy of international law and implementation.

For more information, contact:
Bonnie Docherty, docherb@hrw.org



Reaching Critical Will



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

2018 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW

SIDE EVENT BRIEFING

European views on a new treaty on fully autonomous weapons

Wednesday, 21 November 2018

13:15-14:45

ROOM XXII

United Nations

Geneva

Sandwiches & refreshments will be provided.

Introductory Remarks

- Ambassador Dr. Peter C. Matt (TBC), **Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein**

Speakers

- Dr. Matjaz Gams, **Slovenian Artificial Intelligence Society**
- Ms. Anne-Sophie Simpère, **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots - France**
- Mr. Daan Kayser, **PAX**

Moderator

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

The **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots** is a coalition of 86 non-governmental organizations in 49 countries working to preemptively ban weapons systems that would select targets and use force without meaningful human control. This side event briefing will consider challenges raised by fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems, and recent efforts to address them at the national and regional level in Europe.

For more information see www.stopkillerrobots.org or contact:
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FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

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

Contributing organisations and campaigns to this edition:

Article 36
Cluster Munition Coalition
Control Arms
International Action Network on Small Arms
International Campaign to Ban Landmines
King's College London
Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy
Mines Action Canada
Nonviolence International-NY
Project Ploughshares
Swinburne University
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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Reaching Critical Will