

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

NGO Reporting on the United Nations General Assembly
First Committee on Disarmament and International Security
4 October–5 November 2021

VOL.19 NO.5

5 November 2021



- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Editorial | 30 | Cyber peace and security |
| 4 | Nuclear weapons | 31 | Autonomous weapon systems |
| 15 | Biological weapons | 32 | Science and technology |
| 17 | Chemical weapons | 35 | Disarmament machinery and compliance |
| 19 | Small arms and light weapons | 36 | Disarmament and development |
| 21 | Cluster munitions | 38 | Environment and disarmament |
| 23 | Landmines | 40 | Gender and disarmament |
| 24 | Explosive weapons in populated areas | 41 | Youth and disarmament education |
| 25 | International arms trade | 43 | Event report: Addressing nuclear harm |
| 27 | Outer space | | |



Reaching Critical Will

www.reachingcriticalwill.org



www.wilpf.org

EDITORIAL: OUT OF THE SANDBOX, INTO THE WORLD

Ray Acheson | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

In some ways, this First Committee was much more relaxed than the **last**. Instead of dueling cyber and compliance resolutions, hostile amendments, and hyperaggressive rhetoric between Russia and the United States (US), the two delegations toned things down and even jointly tabled a single cyber resolution that was adopted without a vote. Israel and the US, for the first time since the mid-2000s, joined consensus on the resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. In explaining these changes, each of the countries involved said they were acting in the spirit of flexibility and cooperation.

Yet, to say that the First Committee was not used as a battleground this year would be taking it too far. Russia tried once again—and failed once again—to **undermine** the UN Secretary-General's independent mechanism to investigate the use of biological and chemical weapons. It also **declined** to support the **UK-led initiative** for an open-ended working group on outer space norms and behaviours and changed its **vote** on the annual **cluster munitions resolution** from abstention to opposition. The US, meanwhile, once again tabled its nauseatingly hypocritical **resolution** about the importance of treaty compliance. It and Israel also continued to **reject** the process initiated in 2018 for a series of conferences aimed at establishing a weapon of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. Japan once again tabled its **attempted rewrite** of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments, while the US voted “no” on paragraphs in a **resolution** calling for a **substantive outcome** at the next NPT Review Conference and for **universalisation** of the NPT. The nuclear-armed states also voted against all paragraphs across multiple resolutions that even dared to mention the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

To top it all off, China and the US flexed some Cold War-esque muscles at each other, signalling that

the growing tensions long warned about are indeed well underway. As part of the theatrics to this end, China introduced a **new text** that seems to suggest states have the “inalienable right” to technology for development and that export controls undermine this right. It tried to posit this as the global south versus the west, but the **voting** didn't exactly break down this way and delegates on both sides of the issue made some valid as well as hypocritical remarks. Beyond the fight over this resolution, **reports** also came out about China's growing nuclear arsenal, which contradicts its repeated claims about a “minimal deterrent”. Of course, the US government criticised this, as if it didn't have a many-times-over greater arsenal that it is actively modernising. Finally, on the penultimate day of the Committee's work, China even said that it wasn't going to support a US-led resolution because the US didn't support its—and thus the feeling that the First Committee can sometimes be a schoolyard sandbox was complete.

United in violence

While some of the resolutions adopted at this year's Committee indicate majority support for new tracks of work on cyber and outer space, it's been a while since we've had a pathbreaking resolution that propels states to negotiations of a treaty or to undertaking concrete action for change. The last time that happened was 2016, with the adoption of a negotiating mandate for the TPNW. While most of the world sees this treaty as a breakthrough for nuclear disarmament, five years later, the five nuclear-armed states parties to the NPT—which failed to stop the TPNW's negotiation, adoption, or entry into force—continue to use the First Committee as a soapbox from which to rail against it. “We will not support, sign or ratify this Treaty,” they reasserted, calling—patronisingly—“on all countries that support or are considering supporting the TPNW to reflect seriously on its implications for international peace and security.”

TPNW supporters have, of course, reflected seriously on this question. Their unflappable position is that nuclear weapons are a grave and unacceptable threat to international peace and security—indeed, an existential threat to the entire planet. The prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons is the only answer to the peace and security implications of nuclear weapons.

For many years, their hatred for the TPNW has been the only thing uniting the so-called P5, the permanent five members of the UN Security Council. These states, despite all their differences, share at least one thing in common: their governments derive their sense of power and privilege from their possession of nuclear weapons and the recognition accorded to them as “nuclear weapon states” under the NPT. This hierarchal, patriarchal system of dominance and control is a stain on the United Nations’ alleged commitment to equality, justice, and well-being for all. This inequality is, in essence, the “cornerstone” of the systemic problems we face in disarmament and non-proliferation, and more broadly in the UN and the larger world (as we’re seeing right now at COP26).

Digging deeper into the sandbox

We’re soon heading into the tenth NPT Review Conference. This treaty has been placed under extreme pressure by the nuclear-armed fraternity and their pledges (i.e. NATO, Australia, Japan, and Republic of Korea). Their refusal to eliminate nuclear weapons, remove them from their doctrines and territories, and end nuclear exercises, along with their willingness to violate non-proliferation rules and norms when it suits them (i.e. US-India deal, AUKUS) means that the NPT is weighted down by lopsided implementation. While states in the global south that are accused of violating the treaty are hit with sanctions or bombs, the nuclear-armed states arrogantly flaunt their treaty abrogation while simultaneously claiming their actions are perfectly lawful and even desirable. The epic amount of gaslighting and manipulation that takes place in discussions about nuclear disarmament would be astounding if it wasn’t so normalised.

As part of this normalisation process since the last Review Conference failed in 2015, Japan has engaged in a concerted effort to rewrite, reinterpret, and water down commitments made throughout successive NPT review cycles for the past twenty years. Each year, its First Committee **resolution** digs a little deeper into the schoolyard sandbox. Japan claims to be building a bridge between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states, but in reality, is taking the entire international community down a dark hole away from international law, political commitments, and the possibility of achieving the stated objectives of the NPT: the end to an arms race and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Before and after the vote on Japan’s text this year, numerous delegations explained that they could not vote in favour of this attempted rewrite of the NPT and emphasised that this resolution must not—cannot—be used as a basis for negotiations of an outcome document at the upcoming Review Conference. This is crucial, particularly since we face a situation where we know that the P5 and their cronies will do everything they possibly can to backtrack on commitments made previously while claiming they have already done all they possibly can in the “current security environment”.

Building for all

This environment—global tensions, arms racing, etc.—is of course an environment of their own making. Like everything else made by human beings, we can recognise that this is not working, and make something else. This is what human ingenuity is all about. And as abolitionist Mariame Kaba always says, “Everything worthwhile is done with other people.” Cooperation and collaboration are key to our survival.

But this does not mean “building a bridge” towards violence. It means standing firm as a majority and not letting the bullies set the terms for our entire world. Perceiving power as resting with the capacity for massive violence has led to white supremacy, patriarchy, the climate crisis, and all the other ills of our world.

Earlier this session, **Costa Rica** called for a feminist approach that “challenges the archaic assumption that power competition is the right way to conduct foreign relations and ensure national security.” This should guide governments and others as we head into not just the NPT Review Conference but also the final **Group of Governmental Experts on autonomous weapons** and the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Review Conference** in December, where countries will need to decide whether or not to prevent automatic death by machine, among other big questions. The first session of the new **open-ended working group on cyber issues** will also kick off in December, providing an opportunity for participants to set some boundaries against the proliferation of virtual violence from which we are all increasingly—and not at all virtually—suffering. Right now, states are negotiating new climate

commitments, in which **military emissions** must be included. Demilitarisation and disarmament are crucial to mitigating climate chaos—and nuclear energy is **not part of the solution**. Next year we should also see the conclusion of the diplomatic process for a **political declaration against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas**, which must prioritise the prevention of humanitarian and environmental damage and destruction.

Which way these discussions and negotiations go is not inevitable. Human beings will make choices that will determine the outcomes, which will have real world impacts on our lives for generations to come. It’s time to claim power on the side of nonviolence, cooperation, justice, and peace, instead of force, dominance, inequality, and fear.

DEMILITARIZE
DECARBONIZE
DECOLONIZE

Image: CJ / WILPF Canada

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Katrin Geyer | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Looking at the 2021 First Committee, it continues to be clear that nuclear disarmament faces immense challenges, obstructed by the nuclear-armed states and their allies. Overt tension over nuclear issues was toned down in 2021 compared to last year's meeting, and some progress has been made this year, including the extension of New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and Russia, as well as slightly improved language in some of the nuclear-related resolutions. However, major obstacles continue to persist: the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) continues to be uncertain; nuclear-armed states continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals, forming new military alliances that risk escalating nuclear proliferation; states adopted a resolution that continues to backtrack on previously agreed commitments and obligations; and the prospect for a successful outcome of the upcoming nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in early 2022 appear bleak.

Amidst all this, however, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force January 2021. The overwhelming support to ban the most vicious weapon of all was also reflected in this year's support for the [TPNW resolution](#): 123 states [voted in favour](#) of the resolution, demonstrating once again that the vast majority of UN member states are committed to achieving the abolition of nuclear weapons. States should heed Indonesia's call that, amongst all else that may divide us, nuclear disarmament should be the cause uniting humanity.

Resolutions

In the fourth and fifth week of the First Committee, member states took action on all nuclear-related resolutions. Please note that most resolutions were presented in the last edition. Below, resolutions are presented that weren't available at the time of writing for the last edition. This section also reports on voting results on all nuclear-related resolutions

and on explanations of vote (EOVs). Please note that reporting on EOVs is not necessarily comprehensive.

Cross-resolution references

Encompassing all resolutions referring to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Brazil expressed concern at the pattern of vote requests. It stressed that this cannot be considered a constructive approach, nor does it contribute to building bridges. Brazil underscored that the TPNW is an "irreversible reality," reinforcing the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Ecuador also regretted non-constructive EOVs regarding the TPNW. Indonesia also reiterated its support for the TPNW in light of an otherwise stagnant environment for nuclear disarmament. It said that its position on all draft resolutions is guided by the principle of strengthening nuclear disarmament. It stressed that nuclear disarmament should be a cause uniting humanity despite differences on any other issues.

China explained its vote against all resolutions or individual paragraphs referencing the TPNW. While it claimed to understand non-nuclear-armed states' ambition for nuclear disarmament, it argued that efforts cannot be divorced from the reality of the security environment, and that nuclear disarmament processes must adhere to consensus. France and Pakistan also reiterated their opposition to the TPNW in all relevant resolutions where it is referenced. Switzerland referred to its EOVs from past sessions, noting that it votes yes on factual references to the TPNW, i.e. noting its entry into force; and abstains on those that go beyond factual recognitions, i.e. welcoming it or urging states to join it.

Pakistan made a general comment in relation to the NPT where it is referenced, underscoring that the NPT is "inherently discriminatory," legitimises the possession of nuclear weapons, and stressed that it will not be party to this Treaty.

L.1, “**Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East**,” which was introduced in the previous edition of the *Monitor*, was traditionally always adopted without a vote. However, since 2018, a vote has been requested. The resolution was **adopted** this year with a vote of 171-1-6. Israel voted against this resolution.

In an EOV, **Iran** explained its support for the resolution, emphasising respect for nuclear non-proliferation principles, recognising the importance of establishing a nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East, and urging nuclear-armed states to cooperate for the creation of such a zone. Iran called on the resolution’s sponsors to delete preambular paragraph (PP) 9 and operative paragraph (OP) 4, referring to peace negotiations in the Middle East, “since no such peace negotiations exist”. Syria voted in favour, expressing its belief in the utmost importance to establish a NWFZ in the Middle East.

Israel said it was unfortunate that the long-standing consensus on this resolution was broken by the Arab Group in 2018, when it introduced a reference to the conference for a NWFZ in the Middle East. Israel therefore saw itself forced to disassociate from this resolution.

The **United States (US)**, which abstained, said it has long supported the goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and said it will continue to build regional capacity to address WMD risks. While it supports the goals of the resolution, it could not support it due to “divergence of views” among regional states as to how to advance the goal. It stressed that the only path for such a zone is through direct and inclusive dialogue on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by all regional states, saying that this is why it “worked so hard” ahead of the 2015 NPT Review Conference (RevCon) to facilitate regional consultations on such a conference. It expressed “regret that those efforts were not successful,” without mentioning that it prevented the 2015 NPT RevCon from adopting an outcome on this or any other issue at the behest of non-state-party Israel.

L.2, “**The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East**,” was introduced in the previous *Monitor*. It was **adopted** as a whole by a vote of 148-6-27.

Separate votes were called on PP5 and PP6. PP5, retained by **116-3-9**, recalls decisions and principles of past NPT RevCons. PP6, retained by **159-3-6**, recalls the content of the final outcome document of the 2000 NPT RevCon. Israel, India, and Pakistan voted against both paragraphs. Pakistan explained its vote against due to the references to the NPT.

Iran explained its support for the resolution, arguing that peace and stability cannot be achieved in the Middle East as long as Israel continues to possess nuclear weapons. Iran expressed its support for OPs 5 and 6, calling on Israel to accede to the NPT. Syria also expressed its support for the resolution.

Israel explained its vote against the resolution, arguing it seeks to divert the First Committee’s attention to the “real proliferation challenges” in the Middle East. It said that the resolution fails to mention that four countries of the region have violated their NPT obligations and overlooks Iran’s aspirations to develop nuclear weapons. Similarly, the US opposed the resolution’s singling out of one state while ignoring security challenges in the region, criticising Iran’s uranium enrichment activities and Syria’s construction of a clandestine reactor, all of which are issues that should be addressed in this resolution.

L.4, “**Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world**,” introduced in the previous *Monitor*, was adopted as a whole with a vote of **29-37-17**. PP11, recalling the adoption and entry into force of the TPNW, was retained with a vote of **130-36-20**.

France, the United Kingdom (UK), and the US jointly expressed their opposition to this resolution, as it contains a “narrative” about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and supports the prohibition of nuclear weapons. They argued that the TPNW’s approach is “deeply flawed”.

L.7, “**Reducing nuclear danger,**” introduced in the previous *Monitor*, was adopted with a vote of 120-50-13.

Pakistan’s argued that the sponsor of this draft resolution has been increasing nuclear danger in South Asia and that its no first use policy is not credible, and therefore abstained.

L.8, “**Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction,**” introduced in the previous *Monitor*, was adopted without a vote.

L.9, “**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons,**” was introduced in the previous *Monitor*. It was adopted with a vote as a whole of 115-50-60.

Ecuador said that although it recognises that a legal prohibition on the use of nuclear weapons does not run counter to international efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, the true path forward is through the universalisation of the TPNW, which already prohibits the use and threat of use of these weapons. It therefore abstained.

L.11, “**Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,**” was introduced in the previous *Monitor*. It was adopted as a whole with a vote of 140-12-31.

Venezuela explained its support for this resolution by highlighting that the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used is by eliminating them, and that nobody could deal with the humanitarian consequences arising from nuclear weapon use.

India voted in favour, explaining that this is consistent with its shared concern about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

France, the UK, and the US jointly expressed their opposition to this resolution, which is the same EOV as to L.4.

L.14, “**Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review**

Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,” was introduced in the previous *Monitor*. It was adopted with a vote as a whole of 108-44-25. A separate vote was called for PP6, which was retained by 109-4-5. It refers to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, stressing the importance of the NPT’s universality. Canada, India, Israel, and Micronesia voted against.

L.17, “**Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,**” introduced in the previous *Monitor*, was adopted with a vote of 123-42-16.

Iran expressed its support, arguing that the TPNW complements the NPT, and that its entry into force is a successful achievement for nuclear disarmament. The Philippines reiterated its call on all member states to sign and ratify the TPNW.

The P5 (China, France, Russia, UK, and US) jointly expressed their opposition to the TPNW. They argued that the best way to achieve nuclear disarmament is through a gradual process, taking into account the international security environment. The P5 asserted that the TPNW undermines the NPT, ignoring international and regional security challenges, and does “nothing to increase trust and transparency”. They stressed that they will not accede to the TPNW, and do not accept claims that it contributes to customary international law. Israel made similar remarks, noting that it did not participate in the TPNW’s negotiations, voted against the resolution in 2020, and has deep reservations based on substantive and procedural considerations. Japan voted against the resolution. While it acknowledged the TPNW as “a way out,” it argued that nuclear-armed states need to be engaged.

Switzerland and Singapore referred to their respective EOVs from past sessions, and again abstained. Sweden said that it took part in the negotiations, seeking to rectify some shortcomings without success. It explained that Sweden has decided not to accede to the Treaty in its current form but that it will participate as an observer at the first Meeting of States Parties (1MSP). Argentina abstained, and said it continues to analyse

and evaluate the text and its impacts on other instruments.

L.19, “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,” was adopted without a vote. It was introduced in the previous Monitor.

India expressed its support to the resolution, reaffirming non-nuclear armed states’ sovereign choice to establish NWFZs. In its EOv, Spain expressed its support, having close ties with countries in Africa, and devoting efforts to promoting sustainable development in all African countries. It reiterated its decision not to sign the Pelindaba Treaty and explained its reasons for doing so. It noted that while it joined consensus on the resolution, it does not consider itself to be part of consensus in OP5.

L.20, “Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes,” introduced in the previous Monitor’s article on the environment, was adopted without a vote.

China welcomed the adoption by consensus and called on Japan to respond to the international community’s calls to rescind its wrong position of putting contaminated wastewater from the Fukushima power plant into the sea.

L.23, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” introduced in the previous Monitor, was adopted with a vote of **138-34-11**. PP14 was retained with a vote of **115-37-17**. PP14 expresses concern at continued modernisation and upgrading of nuclear weapons, and nuclear-armed states’ reliance on nuclear weapons in their security doctrines.

Venezuela expressed its support for the resolution, and reiterated that 26 September, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, is an opportunity to highlight the importance of eradicating nuclear weapons.

France, UK, and the US did not support the resolution. They jointly argued that calling for a high-level conference does not address issues of

non-proliferation and the deterioration in the overall security environment. They further argued that the reference to the NPT’s Article VI is unbalanced, as the NPT as a whole is the cornerstone. They also reiterated their opposition to any reference to the TPNW.

The Netherlands, on behalf of a group of states, regretted that the resolution does not acknowledge the role of the NPT or outcomes of its review cycles, and therefore voted against. They said that the conference as proposed in the resolution does not set the mandate for the kind of negotiations that are needed.

Switzerland abstained and recalled its previous EOvs.

L.29, “Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,” introduced in the previous Monitor, was adopted with a vote of **121-0-62**. No EOvs were made.

L.34/Rev.1, “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas,” introduced in the previous Monitor, was adopted as a whole with a vote of **143-5-33**.

Separate votes were called on PP6 and OP6. PP6 welcomes the entry into force of TPNW, and reaffirms support to NWFZ. It was retained by **111-38-18**. OP6 was retained with a vote of **145-1-27**. It welcomes steps taken to conclude further NWFZ treaties, including the steps taken towards the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East.

Canada welcomed efforts to establish a NWFZ in the southern hemisphere and called on nuclear-armed states to withdraw any reservations or interpretive declarations contrary to the object and purpose of the treaties establishing NWFZ. It expressed its “serious and long-standing reservations” regarding the TPNW but shares the sentiment motivating the Treaty, “in that progress on nuclear disarmament has been too slow.” It voted in favour of the resolution but does not support PP6, referring to the TPNW.

L.39, “**Nuclear disarmament**,” was introduced in the previous edition of the *Monitor*. It was adopted as a whole with a vote of 119-41-23.

Calls for votes were also made for PP32, and OP16. PP32, retained by 110-39-17, welcomes the entry into force of the TPNW. OP16, retained by 162-1-9, calls for negotiations on a fissile-material cut-off treaty. Pakistan voted against OP16.

In an EOV, India said it shares the resolution’s main objective for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons but explained its abstention due to references to the NPT and the TPNW.

L.40, “**Nuclear disarmament verification**,” introduced in the previous edition of the *Monitor*. It was adopted with a vote as a whole of 178-1-4. Spain voted against the resolution, which is likely due to a technical error; Iran, Niger, Syria, and South Sudan abstained, with Iran arguing that the resolution takes a selective approach.

L.42, “**Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World**,” was introduced in the previous edition of the *Monitor*. The resolution was adopted as a whole with a vote of 133-24-25.

Separate votes were held on PP8 and PP10. PP8, retained by a vote of 118-27-24, notes the entry into force of the TPNW. PP10, retained by a vote of 135-2-32, refers to the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda.

Syria voted in favour, as it appreciates Kazakhstan’s efforts, but abstained on PP9, referencing the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda, including an accusation against Syria.

The New Agenda Coalition resolution L.44, “**Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments**,” focuses on calls for the nuclear-armed states to implement their nuclear disarmament obligations. It contains a few technical updates and substantive changes:

- PP3, PP4, and PP5 from last year have all been deleted this year. They referred to the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in PP3, calling this a “historic opportunity” to reaffirm that nuclear weapons need to be eliminated in PP4, and recalling the 50th anniversary of the NPT in PP5.
- PP10 now welcomes the entry into force of the TPNW.
- PP11, referring to the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, was moved. It was placed ahead of the PP on the TPNW in the 2020 resolution.
- PP16, referring to the CTBT, recalls its 25th anniversary this year.
- PP21 contains changes to reflect the fact that the first Conference for a NWFZ in the Middle East has been held.
- PP26 welcomes the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between Russia and the US.
- PP25 emphasises the importance for a substantive outcome of the next NPT RevCon, and is updated to reflect the postponement of the 10th RevCon due to COVID-19.
- PP27 is new, welcoming the recent reaffirmation by Russia and the US that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”
- OP16, referring to the situation on the Korean Peninsula, has a few language changes. It urges the DPRK to fulfil its commitments and welcomes diplomatic efforts to encourage continued dialogue for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. Last year, the resolution welcomed the dialogue between the DPRK, the US and the Republic of Korea (ROK), which was dropped this year.

- OP24 welcomes the entry into force of the TPNW.

The resolution was adopted as a whole with a vote of **135-34-15**. Votes were called on various PPs and OPs:

- PP3, welcoming the UNSG's disarmament agenda, was retained with a vote of **138-2-31**. Russia and the US voted against it.
- PP10 was retained with a vote of **111-36-18**. It welcomes the entry into force of the TPNW.
- PP25 was retained with a vote of **152-4-13**. It emphasises the importance for a substantive outcome of the next NPT RevCon. The US, Pakistan, Israel, and India voted against this PP.
- OP15, retained with a vote of **160-4-8**, calls for the NPT's universalisation. Pakistan, Israel, India, and the US voted against.
- OP24, retained with a vote of **114-36-17**, welcomes the entry into force of the TPNW.

The DPRK voted against this resolution, saying it distorts the situation on the Korean Peninsula. It argued that the US' hostile position towards the DPRK is the root cause of the issue and said that to address the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, it is imperative for the US to withdraw its hostile policies and end its offensive military exercises.

India voted against the resolution as a whole, and its OPs and PPs, because of calls to states to join the NPT.

France, US, and UK jointly reiterated their opposition to OP24, asserting that the TPNW will take us "further away from nuclear disarmament". They argued that "nuclear deterrence" remains critical as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, and that cuts in nuclear arsenals require stringent verification measures, two elements that the TPNW overlooks.

L.49, "**Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty**," introduced in the previous *Monitor*, was adopted as a whole without a vote—though India said it had intended to call for a vote on the resolution as a whole and abstain from it, but did not do so due to a technical error, and therefore put on record its abstention to the resolution.

A separate vote was called for PP7, which was retained by **170-0-6**. The paragraph recalls conclusions and recommendations from the 2010 NPT RevCon in relation to the CTBT.

The DPRK said it was alarmed by some countries' support for this resolution, asserting that it has shut down its nuclear test site and has a moratorium in place. It called the resolution politically motivated and biased.

Pakistan explained that since it is not bound by provisions and decisions of NPT RevCons, it abstained from PP7. India also said it abstained.

Iran regretted that the resolution does not include references to nuclear-armed states' modernising and upgrading of their nuclear weapons, thereby undermining the object and purpose of the CTBT.

L.51, "**Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices**," tabled by Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands, was a draft decision in 2020 and 2019. Compared to 2018, there are various updates to the resolution:

- PP3 has now additional language "expressing concern at the years of stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, regretting that negotiations" on fissile material have not been pursued, and then continues with the same language of 2018, looking forward to the CD fulfilling its mandate.
- This year's resolution has dropped PPs recalling CD members' 1995 agreement to negotiate

an FMCT and reaffirming the importance of ensuring continued commitment to making progress on nuclear disarmament, respectively.

- It also dropped PP5 from the 2018 resolution referring to the consensus report of the CD's subsidiary body 2, focusing, inter alia, on a ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.
- PP8, referring to the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the topic, has been significantly condensed in this year's version, now merely noting it with appreciation.
- PP13 and PP14 from the 2018 resolution were also dropped. They welcomed participation of states in informal consultative meetings of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, and called for the group's report to be taken into account in future negotiations of an FMCT.
- PP10, referring to women's equal participation, reads slightly differently than in the 2018 version. While in 2018, the resolution recognised "the importance of concerted efforts to ensure that both women and men can participate equally, fully and effectively in the negotiation process of a future treaty," it now is condensed to "Reaffirming the need to ensure the equal, full and meaningful participation of women in the negotiation process of a future treaty."
- PP11 is new, reaffirming the desire to achieve progress in nuclear disarmament and in achieving an FMCT.
- Compared to 2018, where the resolutions had 7 OPs, this year's resolution has only 3 OPs.
- While the others from 2018 are dropped, OP2 is new, calling on "states to make innovative contributions" in formal and informal forums, including at the NPT RevCon, to make progress for negotiations for an FMCT.

The resolution as a whole was adopted by a vote of **177-1-6**. PP3 was retained with a vote of **162-1-11**.

Pakistan was the only state to vote against this resolution as a whole, as well as against PP3. It said that PP3, portraying FMCT as being able to break the current deadlock is "an arbitrary portrayal". Pakistan argued that since its inception, the resolution is flawed in its approach, including due to its emphasis on a future ban of fissile producing while refusing to address already existing stocks. Voting against the resolution, it argued that an FMCT will be possible when the draft resolution includes past, present, and future production of fissile materials.

Iran explained its abstention. It said that the resolution doesn't advocate for an instrument capable of addressing all conditions required for a nuclear disarmament instrument, "and instead advocates the commencement of negotiations on such a Treaty based on a limited mandate contained in an old document which is no longer relevant to today's realities."

Syria abstained, arguing that the CD is the only forum to negotiate an FMCT through a balanced programme.

Israel questioned the ability of a FMCT to address current proliferation challenges and abstained.

The P5 expressed their support for the resolution and recalled the substantive work already achieved, forming a "solid basis" for further work towards an FMCT. India voted in favour of the resolution, but noted that references to the NPT are not applicable to India as a non-state party. Indonesia voted in favour of the resolution as a whole as it shares the view for the need to advance on a FMCT.

L.56, "Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials," was adopted without a vote. At the Agency's 30th anniversary this year, Brazil and Argentina underscored its unprecedented contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

India said it supports the sovereign choice to establish bilateral agreements but noted that arrangements such as ABAAC may not be applicable to other regions.

The European Union, along with an additional group of states, expressed their support for the resolution, describing ABAAC as historic success for “regional cooperation, nuclear safeguards and confidence building”. They encouraged the parties to ABACC to adopt the highest safeguards standard, which consists of a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement combined with an Additional Protocol. Similarly, Switzerland voted in favour, but underlined that it considers a comprehensive safeguard agreement with the Additional Protocol to be the standard, and supported universalisation of this standard.

Indonesia joined consensus on this resolution, as it values efforts to promote non-proliferation and underlined that any agreement related to control of nuclear material should align with other agreements, including IAEA agreements.

L.57, “Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty),” was adopted without a vote.

In an EOv, Malaysia said that the Treaty’s protocol has to be signed by nuclear-armed states and urged the resolution of all outstanding issues in line with the Bangkok Treaty’s object and purpose. It proposed that as a way forward, member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) should begin an open and constructive dialogue to bridge concerns and reservations.

The P5 expressed their commitment to the goals of the NWFZ in South East Asia.

China welcomed the resolution’s adoption by consensus but registered its serious concern over AUKUS, a nuclear military alliance between Australia, the UK, and the US, which is a clear violation of the NPT, as it poses a serious proliferation risk. It called on the relevant states to heed calls to revoke the submarine agreements.

L.58, “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons,” introduced in the previous edition of the Monitor, was adopted as a whole with a vote of **131-33-17**.

Separate votes were called on PP9, PP17, and OP2.

PP9, referencing the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda, was retained with a vote of **138-2-90**. The US and Russia voted against this paragraph.

PP17, welcoming the TPNW’s entry into force, was retained by **110-36-19**.

OP2 calls for immediate engagement in negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, including under the TPNW. It was retained by **111-36-17**.

In EOvs after the vote, Pakistan and India explained their abstentions. Pakistan said it voted in favour of L.58 as a whole, but abstained on PP17 and OP2, which reference a “divisive and non-universal initiative”: the TPNW. India says it co-sponsored L.58 in the past but was disappointed that in 2017 references to a nuclear weapons convention were dropped. It no longer co-sponsors this resolution, and abstained on voting.

L.59, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons,” was adopted as a whole with a vote of **152-4-30**. Russia, DPRK, China, and Syria voted against the resolution.

Separate votes were called on many paragraphs.

PP2, reaffirming the NPT as the “cornerstone” of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, was retained by a vote of **150-2-15**.

PP7 stresses that nuclear disarmament and the enhancement of international security should be pursued in a mutually reinforcing manner. It was retained with a vote of **141-0-28**.

PP8 was retained with a vote of 153-1-15. It reaffirms that further strengthening of the international regime for nuclear non-proliferation is essential to international peace and security. Haiti voted against this PP.

PP10 was retained with a vote of 163-1-7. It recognises the importance of decisions and resolutions on the Middle East at various NPT Review Conferences. Israel voted against this PP.

PP11 was retained with a vote of 154-2-16. Pakistan and China voted against this PP. It stresses the importance for an early commencement of negotiations for an FMCT.

PP16 was retained with a vote of 164-0-6. It recognises “the value of cooperative work across the existing multilateral disarmament machinery to support work towards disarmament objectives.”

PP17, recalling relevant UN Security Council resolutions regarding the DPRK’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, calling for denuclearisation, was retained with a vote of 155-1-14. The DPRK voted against it.

PP18 was retained with a vote of 159-2-8. Russia and Hungary voted against PP18. It notes “that efforts to encompass different generations, areas of the world and genders in disarmament and non-proliferation education underscore efforts and create momentum towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons.”

PP19 was retained with a vote of 157-0-14. It recognises the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

PP20, welcoming the visits of leaders, youth, and others to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was retained with a vote of 160-2-9. Russia and China voted against it.

OP1 was retained with a vote of 135-10-26. It reaffirms NPT states parties’ commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons, including through implementation of the NPT’s article 6.

OP3(b), encouraging all states to take nuclear risk reduction measures, was retained with a vote of 130-0-39.

OP3(c) was retained with a vote of 155-2-17. China and Pakistan voted against this OP. It calls for a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and for the commencement of FMCT negotiations in the CD.

OP3(d) was retained with a vote of 138-1-29, calling for ratification by all states of the CTBT, and for moratoria of nuclear test explosions. India voted against this OP.

OP3(e), calling on states for practical nuclear disarmament verification measures, was retained with a vote of 150-1-22. Russia voted against it.

OP3(f), encouraging states to ensure nuclear disarmament education and youth engagement through various avenues, was retained with a vote of 158-2-10. China and Russia voted against it.

OP5 was retained with a vote of 154-0-19. It reaffirms states’ commitments to strengthening the non-proliferation regime in various ways.

OP6 was retained with a vote of 147-3-19. China, Russia, and the DPRK voted against. It “reaffirms the commitment to achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, as well as of all other existing weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges” of the DPRK.

In introducing the resolution, Japan said it was meant to show a “realistic path” towards a world free of nuclear weapons, and that it seeks to bridge differences.

Explanations of vote on the resolution as a whole

In an EOY, the DPRK, voting against, argued that Japan was not entitled to find fault with the DPRK’s nuclear capabilities in light of Japan’s negative

impacts on the Korean people, and its militarisation over the past century. It argued that Japan poses a threat to regional peace and security. It voted against the resolution.

China, voting against, opposed Japan's "distorted narrative" about World War II.

Malaysia, abstaining, said the resolution encompasses many important issues but expressed various criticisms with specific paragraphs.

Austria welcomed improvements in the resolution in some areas but was not able to vote in favour of the resolution as a whole, and instead voted on the merit of each paragraph. It expressed deep worry at attempts to replace established consensus language, backtracking on past agreements or adding new commitments. Ireland and South Africa offered similar reasons for abstaining and voting against the resolution, respectively.

Colombia shared the concerns but voted in favour as it supports the general motivation of this resolution.

Mexico abstained, recognising the efforts to improve the resolution's language compared to last year, but reiterating its concern about language reinterpreting, weakening, or backtracking on agreements contracted by NPT states parties, especially those contained in Article VI. Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, and New Zealand abstained for similar reasons. Mexico also stressed that the resolution's adoption does not set a precedent or change commitments for nuclear-armed states.

Ireland argued that the resolution does not advance efforts to find common ground for the NPT RevCon. Brazil made similar remarks. South Africa also worried that the content of this resolution may negatively impact the NPT's integrity.

Ecuador regretted the lack of a reference to the TPNW in the resolution.

Liechtenstein acknowledged efforts of the sponsor but said the text has not improved, and therefore

abstained. New Zealand, abstaining, was pleased that the resolution addresses significant concerns expressed in 2020 but it still has concerns.

Iran abstained as a whole and on the separate paragraphs, as the resolution's phrasing is contrary to the unequivocal undertaking of nuclear-armed states to eliminate their arsenals.

The Philippines explained its support, as it places high value on dialogue but it stressed that all nuclear disarmament commitments are urgent and critical, and should not be contingent on subjective assessments of the state of the global security environment.

France voted in favour, expressing appreciation for efforts to build bridges between various stakeholders. ROK also said it supports the overall goal of this resolution, but regretted that it continues to describe only certain atomic bombing survivors. It should take into account all survivors, regardless of their nationality, as it otherwise overlooks the fact that there are thousands of survivors from other parts of the world. It therefore abstained from the resolution as a whole.

Explanations of vote on paragraphs

PP4: Although no vote was called for this paragraph, Malaysia acknowledged the addition of "implementation" in PP4 to honour past commitments. Egypt also welcomed language in PP4 and expressed hope that other paragraphs would also include agreed language in the future.

PP2: Malaysia argued that the universal understanding of the NPT as the cornerstone should be better reflected. Austria said that the paragraph focuses only on nuclear non-proliferation, and not on nuclear disarmament, and it therefore voted abstention. Iran voted in favour as it affirms the universality of the NPT.

PP7: Austria stressed that disarmament measures are particularly needed when tensions are high, and therefore could not support this paragraph.

Liechtenstein could also not support this paragraph, taking states further away from Article VI obligations, and therefore abstained.

PP8: Egypt, abstaining, cautioned against language implicitly or explicitly changing the voluntary nature of the additional protocols.

PP10: Iran, abstaining, said that the wording “on the basis of arrangements” is unclear and does not appear in the 1995 resolution. Egypt, voting yes, welcomed new language on a NWFZ in the Middle East but regretted that it does not include reference to the 2019 conference and its outcomes on the matter. Jordan echoed this.

PP16: New Zealand voted in support but argued that the paragraph reflects more a promise than reality of the multilateral disarmament machinery, and language could have been more candid.

PP18: Iran, abstaining, said that this paragraph should use agreed language from the 2010 NPT RevCon.

PP19: China, abstaining, argued that it is not opposed to visiting nuclear test sites per se, as expressed in PP19, but that it was better to “learn from history,” rather than “hyping up” Japan’s victimhood. Austria supported this paragraph as it reflects the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Iran voted in favour for similar reasons.

OP1: Malaysia, abstaining, did not support the paragraph’s element of conditionality, implying that the goal of nuclear disarmament is predicated on the easing of international tension. Brazil and South Africa voted against for similar reasons. Austria and New Zealand also could not support the backtracking of agreed language. Liechtenstein also opposed the introduction of a qualification to the obligations for nuclear-armed states under Article VI and voted against.

OP3(b): Malaysia, abstaining, said that there are only three categories of states under the NPT, nuclear-armed states, non-nuclear-armed states, and

non-state parties that should join the NPT as non-nuclear-armed states. Egypt, abstaining, also said that the term “states possessing nuclear weapons” does not observe the established NPT categorisation of nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-armed states, and cautioned against consequences of the use of such terminology. Austria would have preferred a clarification that risk reduction measures cannot be a substitute for nuclear disarmament, and this paragraph leaves out dealing. It therefore abstained.

OP3(c): India said that while it supports commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the CD, it does not support a moratorium, and therefore abstained from this paragraph.

OP3(d): Malaysia, abstaining, said it was unfortunate the paragraph shies away from calling on Annex II states to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. While Austria said the paragraph was improved, it wished for clearer language on this issue, and therefore abstained. Ireland made similar remarks, regretting that the paragraph stops short of urging for Annex II states to ratify the CTBT. Mexico and Liechtenstein could also not support existing language on the CTBT. Ireland stressed that the CTBT’s entry into force are key priorities. New Zealand said that while language has improved, it still falls short of that in OP1 of L.49 on the CTBT, and therefore abstained. Brazil abstained for similar reasons.

OP5: Egypt, abstaining, cautioned against language implicitly or explicitly changing the voluntary nature of the additional protocols. Brazil was concerned about attempts to impose non-proliferation obligations on non-nuclear-armed states while nuclear disarmament is lagging behind, accentuating the imbalance between the three NPT pillars. It therefore abstained. Argentina said the paragraph is “confused in its goal and scope,” and abstained.



**DON'T NUKE
THE CLIMATE**

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Filippa Lentzos | King's College London

The Russia-led resolution L.54, “**Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons**” (UNSGM) was overwhelmingly **rejected** for a second time in the First Committee on 3 November 2021. There were 31 votes in favour, 64 votes against, and 77 abstentions—figures very similar to last year’s vote. Two individual paragraphs were also voted on, which were both rejected by even greater margins (**36-58-68** on operative paragraph 3 and **25-88-68** on operative paragraph 4).

Explanations of vote before the vote were made by the **European Union+** (delivered by Slovenia), the **United States**, Switzerland, and the **Philippines**. Their statements all urged states to vote against the draft resolution.

The United States noted that on the face of it, the revised resolution “might appear less contentious, but it would still undermine the UNSGM’s integrity, independence, and impartial character.” Of greatest concern to the United States were elements of the resolution that would launch a formal process for UN member states to critique the mechanism’s guidelines and procedures without a compelling reason and without regard for existing review provisions. The United States said: “It is clear that Russia does not intend to stop with this first step of critiquing the UNSGM’s technical procedures and guidelines. Russia will continue pressing to steadily strip away the UN Secretary-General’s prerogative to lead any technical review and update process in an objective manner.”

The statement by European Union member states plus Albania, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Republic of North Macedonia, Ukraine, and United Kingdom was equally critical of Russia’s motives. It said: “The ulterior motive behind this supposed need to review the SGM guidelines and procedures is to subordinate the SGM, and more specifically

the Secretary General’s decisional power as to whether to launch an investigation into alleged use of biological weapons, to the UN Security Council.” The European Union+ statement also highlighted the resolution’s proposed review of the SGM guidelines and procedures as its key concern. It noted that a review and update of the SGM guidelines and procedures had in fact already taken place in 2007, which the resolution fails to mention, and that they had “worked adequately in a real-world situation in 2013,” when the SGM was launched to investigate allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria.

Switzerland similarly made the point that the mechanism is functional and proved its value in Syria in 2013. Placing the resolution in the larger context of the erosion of key arms control instruments in recent years, Switzerland emphasised that the foundational principle of the UNSGM, namely its independence, is undermined by the draft resolution, as is the authority of the UN Secretary-General—both of which “must be protected and not diminished.”

An explanation of vote before the vote was also delivered by Iran, which urged states to vote for the resolution. India, Mexico, and Argentina provided explanations of their abstentions after the vote. India recognised the efforts of Russia in tabling this resolution but said it “still falls short of expectations”. It said alleged use of biological and chemical weapons should be dealt with through the provisions of the BWC and CWC, noting the CWC already has a verification regime. India has called for the negotiation of a legally binding protocol to the BWC to create a verification mechanism and regrets the reference to such a protocol has been deleted from this year’s version of L.54.

Mexico noted that while it is grateful to Russia for the consultations on this resolution and the changes made to the text from last year, the scope of the proposal remains unclear. Mexico has doubts about the implications of this resolution for the work of the

OPCW and the CWC and believes discussions on this issue would have benefited from talks in The Hague and Geneva.

Argentina said the operation of the UNSGM must proceed in accordance with guidelines and procedures endorsed in 1990 by UNGA and updated in 2007. It argued that the UNSGM is vital for investigating use of chemical weapons in a state that is not party to the CWC, and is fundamental for taking action if there is an alleged use of biological weapons, since the BWC does not have its own verification mechanism. Argentina suggested waiting for the BWC Review Conference in order to avoid duplication of discussions and argued that the updates to the UNSGM in 2007 make it unnecessary to carry out a new update now.

The annual resolution on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) was adopted in the First Committee without a vote on 1 November 2021. L.35, **“Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction,”** only contained very minor technical updates.

India used the opportunity to express grievances about the BWC Working Capital Fund. The fund is a stop-gap measures to ensure financial predictability and sustainability of BWC meetings and ISU staff contracts. Established by the 2018 Meeting of States Parties in the wake of unpaid state contributions and meeting cancellations, the fund is wholly financed by voluntary contributions. India said the Working Capital Fund should operate on the basis of assessed contributions by states parties, not through voluntary contributions, and highlighted the Organisation for

the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) working capital fund as a model. India also argued that “the budget of the BWC must be supported through contributions by states parties and not by non-state entities.” As of **30 September 2021**, the Working Capital Fund had amassed just over \$600,000, eight per cent of which had come from a non-state entity (Nuclear Threat Initiative), the rest from ten donating states, including India. BWC expenditures continue to lag behind payments received, with the three largest debtors being Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina.

The Philippines used the opportunity to focus on aligning agendas on disarmament and sustainable development. Heeding the UN Secretary-General’s 2018 call for “a re-imagining of our efforts in WMD disarmament in the context of development,” the Philippines agreed “there is space for taking further steps to unlock the synergies between the disarmament paradigm and the sustainable development agenda.” It said the upcoming BWC Review Conference can “establish a more developed BWC institutional machinery that meets the challenges of the 21st century” and that it hoped a successful Review Conference outcome would provide a basis for substantively updating the BWC resolution at the 77th session of the First Committee.

The Philippines also joined calls for the resumption of multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol and highlighted the importance of initiatives to enhance international cooperation and assistance, particularly with respect to Article X and Article VII. The clear signal coming from the First Committee this year is that these two aspects—verification and cooperation and assistance—will form the fundamental sticking points at the 2022 BWC Review Conference.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Allison Pytlak | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

As in recent years, the annual First Committee resolution on chemical weapons provoked strong reactions that reflect the growing global divide over recent instances of use of this weapon. **L.10, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction,"** was adopted on 27 October by a vote of **147-8-25**. As in 2020, paragraph votes were conducted on preambular paragraphs (PP) 6 and operative paragraphs (OPs) 2, 3, 4, 5, and 17.

The 2021 resolution does not contain many significant updates from the **2020 version**. There are two technical updates contained in the PPs and the inclusion of a new PP, "Noting the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and all efforts to ensure its effectiveness."

OP3 now includes a new sub-paragraph (d). It references the second report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) of 12 April 2021, "which concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that a military helicopter of the Syrian Arab Air Force carried out a chemical weapons attack on Saraqib on 4 February 2018." The preceding sub-paragraphs refer to the two reports of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the first report of the IIT, and the chapeau condemns the use of chemical weapons in Iraq, Malaysia, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United Kingdom. It was retained by a vote of **110-11-38**.

OP4, which is also about instances of use in Syria and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission, was retained by a vote of **105-9-43**.

OP5 has been reformatted so that the references to decisions of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (C-SS-4/DEC.3) and the

Executive Council (EC-94/DEC.2) are listed in separate sub-paragraphs rather than combined into a single paragraph. OP5(c) is new and refers to Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) states parties' decision C-25/DEC.9 of April 2021 regarding the possession and use of chemical weapons by Syria. OP5 was retained by a vote of **100-12-45**.

OP17 is also about Syria. It specifically refers to the inability of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to verify Syria's declaration of having destroyed all its chemical weapons, and the decisions described above. It was retained by a vote of **106-9-44**.

Poland, the sole sponsor of the resolution, introduced it by invoking points similar to those it delivered during the thematic debate. The international community, Poland argued, must convey an unambiguous message of support for the CWC and offer full support for the OPCW at a time when the Convention's role is being fundamentally challenged. Poland described that the resolution refers to "critical issues" such as the CWC's universality, destruction, national implementation, and verification; the risks posed by non-state actor acquisition; and international cooperation. However, the resolution must not be silent on key challenges facing the CWC such as instances of recent use and those posed by COVID-19. In updating this resolution, Poland said it has used the language of other documents from within the OPCW framework to capture the developments of the last 12 months. Poland acknowledged that the historically consensual character of the resolution has been undermined "due to polarization on the implementation methods of CWC."

Iran, **Syria**, Russia, Algeria, Cuba, Egypt, and Malaysia delivered explanations of vote (EOVs) before the vote. The United States (US) on behalf of a group, Turkey, Syria, Belarus, Israel, India, and the Philippines gave EOVs after voting. All affirmed support for the CWC and most condemned the use of chemical weapons.

The US group statement was explicit in describing the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime in Syria and argued that Syria has failed to take any measures to comply with OPCW investigations. The group statement also said that Russia still has not provided a full account of the Navalny incident and isn't cooperating with the OPCW, which is why CWC states parties are taking action in the context of the Convention. Turkey also referenced use in Syria and welcomed updates to L.10 that refers to the second IIT report and to the recent OPCW states parties' decision. Israel focused its EOV on recent instances of use in Syria and its support for actions and investigations being undertaken by the OPCW.

Shortly after Turkey's EOV, however, Syria took the floor for a point of order asking the Chair to ensure that a "diplomatic atmosphere" be upheld and that appropriate terms be used in the UN General Assembly. The Chair reinforced the request for diplomatic language; Turkey replied by saying that it deplores when the practice of points of order is abused, and then reiterated its concerns about Syria and stated that L.10 could have gone further in urging Syria to cooperate with the OPCW. The Chair then urged member states again to be respectful and not challenge one other's status.

Iran, Syria, Russia, Algeria, Cuba, Egypt, and Belarus expressed concerns that L.10 contributes to polarisation. Iran said it has been drafted in a manner to align with the specific political views held by a group of CWC states parties and is being used for political ends. Syria specifically criticised the references in L.10 to the JIM and the IIT as well as to the "unjust resolution" adopted by CWC states parties, points that were echoed by Cuba. Russia described the "once eminent" OPCW as facing a difficult situation, in which a number of states "have effectively reformatted it to advance their own parochial political agendas." Russia further criticised the decision taken by CWC states parties to give attribution abilities to the OPCW and said it will focus its efforts in the future on rekindling the role of international law and normalising the work of the OPCW. The US on behalf of a group of states said that the vast majority of countries comply with

the CWC and that calling out those violating it is not politicisation.

Algeria indicated that it sees the resolution as contributing to politicisation and said that some of its paragraphs or references address incidents or the work of OPCW in an unbalanced way. India regretted that the resolution no longer receives consensus because of the inclusion of "contentious issues".

Malaysia said it takes note of the 2018 attribution decision but reiterated the need to protect the OPCW from extraneous influences in the conduct of its work. It supports the OPCW as the sole organisation mandated to undertake investigations on chemical weapon use.

Egypt explained its abstention on similar grounds as in recent years—it noted the resolution's main proponents do not support any efforts towards nuclear disarmament, including the establishment of a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. Egypt observed that if there had been serious efforts made in regard to the relevant 1995 decision of states parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on such a zone, the region could have been saved from the horrors of recent chemical weapons use.

Syria defended its actions, claiming it has met its obligations under the CWC and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, while also destroying its stockpiles in an unprecedented timeframe. Syria said it would have hoped that the Syrian experience could be looked at as a success in getting rid of a chemical weapons programme. Iran said that condemning a CWC states party that has extended unprecedented cooperation with the OPCW is unacceptable. Cuba noted that the resolution ignores Syria's cooperation with the OPCW and asked that pending questions be resolved using established mechanisms without a discriminatory approach.

Russia rebutted OP2 as "pure fantasy". This paragraph condemns the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon against Alexei Navalny and takes note of the OPCW Technical Secretariat's 2020 note on this

matter. The US group statement said that Russia still has not provided a full account of the incident and doesn't cooperate meaningfully with the OPCW.

A few states were critical of how Poland managed the process of consulting on the draft resolution. Iran noted its views were not taken on board; Syria said that Poland maintained the version of the draft that was presented before consultations and did not make any amendments. It would have hoped for

acknowledgement that terrorist groups are using chemical weapons.

Algeria regretted that no substantive consultations had been held to work on more consensual language despite repeated calls to do so. Russia observed that the resolution lacks any specific call on the United States to complete destruction of its own chemical weapons stockpile.

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

amelie namuroy | International Action Network on Small Arms

Throughout this year's First Committee, member states reiterated their concerns about the threats posed by small arms and light weapons (SALW) to international security and sustainable development. During the course of the general and thematic debates, many states recognised how vital the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) and its International Tracing Instrument (ITI) are, and reiterated the importance of international cooperation and multilateralism to implement these instruments.

As the First Committee draws to an end, several states remained divided over what constitutes legitimate arms control treaties. Some states (Syria, Cuba, and Nicaragua) even disassociated themselves from any references to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in resolutions on conventional weapons. Several of these member states pointed out that the ATT is not universally adhered to or supported, and was not adopted by consensus. The position taken by these member states impacted the votes on resolutions related to SALW, as states held separate votes on paragraphs containing references to the ATT.

Action on cluster 4 resolutions: conventional weapons

L.43, "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects," is the omnibus resolution

on SALW tabled annually by Colombia, South Africa, and Japan. L.43 was adopted without a vote. However, states voted on one of its paragraphs, preambular paragraph (PP) 22, which welcomes the inclusion of SALW in the scope of ATT. 152 states **voted** in favour of PP22, and 17 abstained. Colombia thanked South Africa for introducing the resolution and reiterated its support for it. Colombia underlined that SALW and its ammunition are a threat to peace, security, and sustainable development because of its impact on human lives and the economy and the nexus of violence and crimes it induces. Colombia also stated the need to strengthen the UNPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the role of civil society organisations and the effective participation of women.

Before the vote on resolution L.43 took place, the **United States (US)**, **Iran**, and Syria explained their vote. The US declared it joined on L.43 but still remains concerned with its substance, explaining that for the last 20 years, the US has been reiterating that ammunition is outside the scope of the UNPoA. The US opposed the inclusion of language on ammunition in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects (RevCon3) and the last three resolutions on SALW. The US expressed its belief that the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the

Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus (GGE on ammunition) is the appropriate forum to discuss ammunition. The US stated its disappointment that programme budget implications have been requested, emphasising that they would have expected information on expenditures to be provided in a more timely manner.

Iran stated that the goals pursued by the UNPoA cannot be achieved without strong political will and inherent means of implementation. Iran also underlined its disagreement with operative paragraph (OP) 8, recalling that earlier in the debates Iran suggested using language more conducive to consensus. Iran stressed that existing controversial elements remain in the resolution, including an endorsement of the outcome of BMS7.

Syria joined the consensus on resolution L.43 because of the need to fight SALW illicit trafficking. However, Syria dissociated itself from OP13, which encourages states to consider recent developments in SALW manufacturing, technology, and design, in particular polymer and modular weapons, in the implementation of the UNPoA. Syria abstained from voting on PP22 stating that its position on the ATT is well-known.

After the vote on L.43, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cuba, and Nicaragua shared their explanation of votes with the Committee. Cuba dissociated itself from OP13, stating that there is a lack of consensus on the issue of polymer and modular weapons and that the creation of an annex in the BMS7 outcome document hindered the work of member states at the time. Cuba emphasised the need to reflect on such developments since it creates a more significant financial burden for countries, especially regarding marking and tracing activities. Cuba abstained from voting on PP22 as such, reaffirming their position on the ATT. Cuba declared its support to the BMS7 outcome document but regretted the omission of a reference to the right of states to self-defense.

Nicaragua joined consensus on the resolution as a whole, while it regretted that concerns and comments of many states had not been taken into

account, including their own, during consultations. Nicaragua dissociated with consensus on OP13. Nicaragua stated that the UNPoA is still valid as an “international reference point”. Nicaragua abstained from voting on PP22 and concluded by saying that to tackle the deeply rooted causes of the trade of SALW, genuine cooperation is needed at the international level, as well as solidarity between states with a commitment to assistance.

L.47, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus,” was adopted by **vote** with 167 member states voting in favour, zero voting against, and nine abstaining. Iran abstained from voting as it felt that the suggestion to establish an Open-Ended Working Group without the appropriate consideration of earlier Group of Governmental Experts’ recommendations on the matter is hasty. Equatorial Guinea also abstained from voting on L.47 and underlined that Africa is the continent that suffers the most from stockpiles of SALW, pondering why small countries like Equatorial Guinea are considered to have excessive stockpiles while other states do not recognise their excessive nuclear stockpiles as such.

L.15, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them,” was adopted without a vote. Member states voted on one of its paragraphs, PP16, which welcomes the inclusion of SALW in the scope of the ATT, and the inclusion of international assistance in its provisions. 150 states **voted** in favour, while 19 abstained. Mali introduced L.15 on behalf of the 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Mali underlined the technical updates that were made in this year’s resolution and emphasised that in its substance L.15 builds on the stability in the West African region by strengthening regional initiatives and efforts to reduce illicit trafficking in SALW. The draft resolution also called on the international community to provide financial and technical support to build the capacity of civil society organisations in the fight against the illicit trafficking of small arms.

Action on cluster 6 resolutions: regional disarmament and security

L.31, “**Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels**,” which recognises the crucial role of conventional arms control in promoting regional and international peace and security, was **adopted** as a whole with 179 states in favour, one against (India) and 19 abstaining. Voting on PP7, which posits that “militarily significant states and states with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security”, and OP2, which “requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control, and looks forward to a report of the Conference on this subject” also occurred. 167 states **voted** in favour of PP7, two (India and the Russian Federation) voted against it, and four states abstained. Regarding OP2, 116 **voted** in its favour, India voted against, and 55 abstained.

L.30, “**Regional Disarmament**,” and L.32, “**Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context**,” were both adopted without a vote. L.30 stresses that sustained efforts are needed to make progress on the entire range of disarmament issues, and L.32 emphasises that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help strengthen international peace and security. The resolution also encourages the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures to avoid conflict.

Regional centres

All the resolutions on the regional disarmament centres were adopted without a vote: L.18, “**United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific**,” L.21, “**United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa**,” L.38, “**United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**,” and L.28, “**United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament**”.

Throughout this year’s First Committee, states reiterated the importance of multilateralism and cooperation and underlined the fact that excessive military expenditures are not the way to create international security. Disagreements between states on the legitimacy of arms control treaties remained, as shown by the dissenting votes on specific paragraphs of resolutions on SALW that mentioned the ATT. Moreover, the inclusion of ammunition also continues to be problematic. With the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the UNPoA (BMS8) scheduled to start on 27 June 2022, considerations on these issues will undoubtedly prevail.

Similar to what happened during BMS7, civil society organisations were barred from accessing UN Headquarters throughout First Committee, due to COVID-19 safety restrictions. Full cooperation and true engagement must also mean including all voices in upcoming meetings, at all levels of participation.

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Aaron Lainé | Cluster Munition Coalition

Draft resolution L.41, “**Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**,” was adopted with a vote of **140-1-39**, constituting a slight change from last year’s vote of **137-0-39**.

Before the vote, the Philippines delivered a statement welcoming the successful outcome of

the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), including the adoption of the Lausanne Action Plan and the endorsement of the outcome document on *Ways Forward on Universalization*. The Philippines underlined that it believes that, along with other conventional arms control and disarmament instruments, universalising

the CCM “means more than encouraging more states to sign or ratify these treaties. Universalization also means upholding without ambiguity, in all circumstances, the norms against the use of weapons that these treaties prohibit.”

The **Russian Federation** changed its vote from abstention to “no”, criticising the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) for being negotiated and concluded outside of the framework of the UN, and for harboring “discriminatory restrictions” that run against its “national defence” interests.

Several of the 39 states that abstained shared similar sentiments about the CCM in their explanations of vote, such as Brazil, Egypt, **Iran**, and Pakistan. Each disapproved of the elaboration of the Treaty outside of UN disarmament machinery, which they claim disregards the security concerns of many states. These states generally were of the view that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is the appropriate forum to develop such a Treaty, because the CCW, in the words of Pakistan, strikes a balance between limiting human suffering without limiting legitimate security interests of states. States highlighted in particular Amended Protocol II and Protocol V of the CCW as appropriate alternative fora.

Egypt suggested that the CCM lacks a clear and equitable definition of cluster munitions, claiming that the Convention is designed to fit the production requirements of a particular group of states.

The Republic of Korea insisted that it shares the concerns over the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, but due to the “unique security situation in the peninsula,” it is not party to the CCM and has thus abstained.

Brazil and Russia both criticised Article 21 of the CCM, better known as the “interoperability clause,” which allows a state party to engage in joint military operations with states that are not party to the Convention, even if those states reserve the right to use cluster munitions.

The Cluster Munition Coalition reiterates to those states that believe that the CCM’s Article 21 contravenes the spirit of the Convention to join this instrument and defend its interpretation as other state parties have done so far. In this way, the norm against the use of cluster munitions under any circumstances will be reinforced.

The CMC also reiterates that the Convention on Cluster Munitions is the only international instrument dedicated to ending the suffering that these weapons cause.

No less than 33 states not party to the Convention—one more than in 2020—supported the resolution. This includes Armenia, Eritrea, Jordan, Malaysia, Sudan, Tuvalu, and Yemen. State not party Singapore expressed support for initiatives against the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions and highlighted its 2008 moratorium on cluster munitions, but thought that a blanket ban is not the right approach, due to its concern over the legitimate right to defence.

Encouragingly, China and Niger changed their votes from “abstain” to “yes”. This is the first time that China has voted in favor of the CCM resolution.

Other changes include Sweden (absent to yes), Vanuatu (absent to yes), Serbia (absent to abstain), Somalia (absent to abstain), Haiti (abstain to absent), and Djibouti (yes to abstain).



LANDMINES

Aaron Lainé | International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Draft resolution L.5, “**Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,**” was adopted with a vote of **162-0-20**, in comparison to last year’s tally of **163-0-17**. The increase in abstentions can be attributed to Serbia and Somalia, who were absent last year and abstained this year, and Uzbekistan who changed its “yes” vote to “abstain”.

Ahead of the vote, the Philippines reiterated the importance of universalisation of the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT), asserting, “We must condemn any use of improvised explosive devices, landmines and cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstances.”

Of the twenty delegations that abstained, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan, and Republic of Korea (ROK) explained their reasoning.

Cuba emphasised that the United States’ policy of continuous hostility and aggression against Cuba, imposed more than 60 years ago, persists. Consequently, Cuba insisted it cannot renounce the use of antipersonnel mines, for the preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in correspondence with the right of self-defence, recognised in the Charter of the United Nations.

Iran claimed that the MBT focuses mainly on humanitarian concerns and does not take into account the requirements of many countries, particularly those with long land borders, for legitimate use to defend territories. Egypt, India, and Pakistan likewise referenced border defence as reasons for not supporting the MBT.

Cuba, India, and Pakistan referenced the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended

Protocol II (mines, booby traps, and other devices) and Protocol V (explosive remnants of war), as the appropriate fora to regulate landmines.

Singapore, who voted in favour of the resolution but is not a state party to the MBT, highlighted its indefinite moratorium on landmines and expressed support for all initiatives against their indiscriminate use, including through attending meetings of states parties of the MBT.

The ROK explained that due to the unique security situation on the Korean Peninsula, it is not party to the MBT and abstained on the resolution. The ROK reassured that it is committed to ending the suffering caused by the use of antipersonnel landmines through maintaining an indefinite moratorium on exports, domestic mine clearance, and contributing over \$40 million to UN programmes on demining and victim assistance.

Of the 33 states not party to the MBT, 16 voted in favour of the resolution: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Singapore, Tonga, and the United Arab Emirates. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines calls on all states not party to the MBT to engage with states parties and see how they have overcome any reticence and were able to join the Treaty, despite any regional or local security concerns.

The **19th Meeting of States Parties (19MSP)** of the MBT will be held from 15–19 November 2021 in the Hague, Netherlands. This meeting will be an opportunity to hear about progress on mine clearance, assistance to victims, and destruction of stockpiled mines, and share progress on the Oslo Action Plan.

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Katherine Young and Laura Boillot | Explosive Weapons Monitor, International Network on Explosive Weapons

Throughout the 2021 First Committee, many states voiced support for the ongoing multilateral process to urgently agree a political declaration that establishes robust commitments for states to address the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). Civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons remains unacceptably high, and a number of states reflected on the vital need for more to be done to strengthen the protection of civilians living through conflict (see [earlier editions](#) of the *First Committee Monitor* for reporting on these statements).

Consultations on the political declaration—led by Ireland and initiated in 2019—are expected to conclude in early 2022. While the declaration offers the chance to increase the protection of civilians from the harmful effects of the use of EWIPA, it can only do so if states agree commitments that drive genuine change.

During [consultations](#) on the draft text of the declaration, some states proposed that its operative sections simply restate existing legal obligations and focus only on the unlawful use of explosive weapons. While the [current text](#) reaffirms key obligations of international humanitarian law (IHL), a political declaration that merely restates the law would be insufficient in addressing the continued and well-documented pattern of civilian harm. As such, operative sections in the current draft focus on laying out new commitments.

These commitments, and the text overall, could be strengthened significantly when negotiations resume, to include:

A clearer description of the specific impact on people and the environment from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Overall, the text of the declaration should accurately and honestly describe and acknowledge civilian harm and suffering, as well as the impact on the

environment. The title of the declaration could be reformulated to reflect the humanitarian aims and signpost the purpose of the initiative, and the preamble could be modified so that the description of civilian harm resulting from their use is no longer qualified with references to where it “can cause” harm, despite widely documented harmful impacts.

A clearer description of the factors that produce “wide area effects” to promote understanding of the risks this presents to civilians when it occurs in a populated area. The preamble should stipulate and promote a common understanding that when the effects of the weapon extend beyond, or occur outside of, the specific military objective due to blast and fragmentation effects, inaccuracy of delivery, and/or the use of multiple warheads or multiple firings across an area, they have “wide area effects”. This marks a threshold at which additional caution must be applied including a presumption against the use of the weapon in this circumstance because it represents a significant likelihood of harm to civilians.

Strengthened data collection and sharing to understand and respond to the issue. The declaration should include a commitment to establish capabilities to track, analyse, respond to, and learn from incidents of civilian harm, including damage to civilian objects. There should be an additional commitment on gathering and publicly sharing data on the types, quantities, and locations of explosive weapons used, and the general location of known and probably unexploded ordnance. This should be on all use of explosive weapons in populated areas, not just those with wide area effects, and should be publicly acknowledged irrespective of which party is presumed responsible.

A robust commitment to assist victims of explosive weapons. The victim assistance commitment should be strengthened to “provide, facilitate and support assistance to victims,” and it should be

made clear that victims are understood to include those injured, survivors, family members, and affected communities. The text should also include a provision on supporting humanitarian relief efforts that urges all parties to armed conflict to provide and facilitate rapid and unimpeded access for principled and inclusive humanitarian assistance in line with international norms and standards.

A follow-up process to drive implementation and hold regular, open, and inclusive meetings.

A follow-up process should be initiated early and include the promotion and dissemination of the political declaration and its commitments, as well as the inclusion of other actors such as the UN, other international organisations, and civil society. Meetings under the declaration should be aimed

at reviewing the civilian harm of the use of EWIPA, implementation of the political declaration, and universalisation—not compliance with IHL more broadly.

First Committee discussions this year have shown both continued support for this initiative and the urgency of the issue at large. Many states are eager to see negotiations of the declaration conclude with the adoption of robust commitments to address the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in towns, cities, and other populated areas. Ongoing discussions on the draft text of the declaration will provide the opportunity for even stronger humanitarian protections that will meaningfully reduce the suffering of civilians.

INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

Paula Soumaya Domit | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Cindy Ebbs | Control Arms

In the final week of the First Committee meetings, states voted on conventional weapon resolutions. **L.46, “The Arms Trade Treaty” (ATT)**, was introduced by Germany, the President-designate of the Eighth Conference of States Parties (CSP8) to take place in 2022. It was co-sponsored by 83 member states. The text as a whole was **adopted** with 151 votes in favour, zero votes against and 27 abstentions.

The ATT resolution was updated to pragmatically reflect developments related to the ATT over the past year. Several preambular and operative paragraphs (PP and OP, respectively) were amended.

PP12 was amended to provide a general statement on the importance of universalisation by “Recalling” the adoption and entry into force of the Treaty and to note that “the universalization of the Treaty is essential to achieving its object and purpose.”

OP1 was updated to “welcome” the holding of the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the ATT, and the thematic focus of the Presidency on

“strengthening efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons ensuring sufficient stockpile management.” It also includes the dates for the 2022 Conference of States Parties.

OP2 was amended to reflect the continuing efforts of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation and specifically the core provisions of the ATT, including Articles 6, 7, 9, and 11 and transparency and reporting, more generally.

OP4 was also amended to include the announcement by the Gambia of its intention to join the ATT.

OP11 was updated to “Encourage States Parties and signatory States to “actively use the Diversion Information Exchange Forum,” a forum which was established in 2020.

Within OP8, which emphasises the importance of taking measures to combat the unregulated trade in conventional arms and ammunition, the key issue of “diversion” has been added.

OP9, a new paragraph, was added to the current text. OP9 “Also recognizes” the outcomes of the 7th Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its “potential synergies with” the ATT.

During the voting, the Committee voted on the text as a whole, as noted above, as well as on PP9 and PP10, respectively. PP9 recalls the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, in particular the section of the agenda entitled “Disarmament that saves lives”. The paragraph was retained and received 143 votes in favour and 23 abstentions.

PP10 recognises the adverse impact of the illicit and unregulated trade in conventional arms and related ammunition on women, men, girls, and boys. It also recognises that the ATT was the first agreement to identify and address the link between conventional arms transfers and the risk of gender-based violence and violence on women and children. PP10 was retained with 149 votes for, one vote against (cast by the Russian Federation), and 27 abstentions.

Several states that have been consistently sceptical about the ATT, including Ecuador, Egypt, Armenia, Iran, Cuba, and Russia, took the floor to explain their abstentions. In their explanations of vote, Cuba, Iran, and Egypt argued that the ATT is unbalanced, prioritising the interests of arms exporter states over the purpose of the Treaty. Armenia advocated for a legally robust regime to enable the efficient regulation of the trade in conventional arms and prevent arms diversion and human rights violations; however, it expressed concern about the Treaty in its current state. Armenia, along with Cuba, argued that it hampers the right of states to acquire weapons for self defence. Russia maintained that common international standards included in the ATT’s provisions are weaker than those of Russia’s national export control legislation because (1) it does not contain a ban on weapons manufacturing and arms transfers to non-state actors and (2) it does not prohibit the re-export of military grade products. Russia stated that principles of transparency and responsible conduct in the arms trade are not being

observed by ATT states parties, noting a lag in this regard as compared to Russia and other importers.

India, affirming that it subscribes to the object and purpose of the ATT and submits annual reports to the UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) for the same weapons regulated by the ATT, noted that while the ATT is under review at the national level it planned to abstain from voting on L.46. Brazil spoke in favour of L.46, as a state party to the ATT and consistent supporter of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (UNPoA). However, Brazil referenced the resolution’s use of the term “synergies” as inadequate regarding these two instruments in light of the difference in their legal nature and scope.

Malaysia indicated its support of L.46, stating that the ATT will help to strengthen existing national policies on conventional weapons, while also bearing in mind the legitimate right to self-defence. Malaysia also indicated its status as a signatory of the ATT and affirmed that it is working toward its ratification.

The ATT was also referenced in other resolutions dealing with the illicit trade of conventional weapons. Resolution L.43, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, welcomed the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty. It was adopted with 152 votes and 17 abstentions. L.15, “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them”, also referenced the ATT. It welcomed the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the treaty’s scope as well as the inclusion of international assistance in its provisions. It was adopted as a whole without a vote. Further analysis of these resolutions can be found within the “Small Arms and Light Weapons” thematic reports of the *First Committee Monitor*.



OUTER SPACE

Jessica West | Project Ploughshares

Alarm bells warning of potential weapons and warfighting in outer space are growing louder. As Iran stated this week, an arms race in outer space is no longer hypothetical, but a real and serious threat—one that Russia asserted is fraught with potentially terrible impacts for the whole of humanity. Yet, as stated by the United States (US), there is clearly a preference to maintain outer space free from conflict. There is no shortage of initiatives at the First Committee to help do this. Five resolutions related to outer space were tabled once again this year, which included significant updates and next steps to move forward with concrete initiatives. Most importantly, beneath the political disagreements that subjected member states to a total of 13 votes, there is evidence of a renewed spirit of cooperation and consensus.

For the first time in recent history, resolution L.3, “**Prevention of an arms race in outer space**” (PAROS), was adopted unanimously without a vote. With the underlying objective of creating a legally binding instrument, it invites the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to establish a working group on PAROS as early as possible. Traditionally co-sponsored by Egypt and Sri Lanka, L.3 has been the backbone of outer space discussions at the First Committee for the last four decades. Despite some reservations to specific elements, Israel—which usually abstains along with the United States (US)—explained its support for the PAROS resolution in a “spirit of consensus and a constructive approach.”

This spirit of cooperation was extended to resolution L.60, “**Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities**” (TCBMs), which calls for a series of measures to implement the recommendations of the consensus report issued by a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) in 2013, including further work at the UN Disarmament Commission. Originally co-sponsored by China, Russia, and the US in 2014, this spirit of cooperation broke down two years ago. Like Israel, the US

indicated support for both L.60 and L.3 this year, despite linkages to the negotiation of what it views as a “fundamentally flawed” legally binding instrument, specifically the draft on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) last updated in 2014. Nonetheless, the US claimed that its reservations about the draft treaty do not detract from its desire to prevent conflict in outer space, and to support TCBMs.

Momentum on both PAROS and voluntary rules continued to build this year via the United Kingdom (UK)-led process on L.52, “**Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours**.” Initiated last year to restart stalled discussions on PAROS with a focus on space behaviours and activities rather than hardware and capabilities, L.52 calls for the convening of an open-ended working group (OEWG) to take stock of existing international legal and other normative frameworks, consider current and future threats by states to space systems as well as irresponsible “actions, activities and omissions,” and make recommendations on possible norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviours relating to such threats. Critically, although intended to inform voluntary behaviours, these recommendations may include “how they would contribute to the negotiation of legally binding instruments” on PAROS, creating an essential linkage to this long-standing objective of the international community.

L.52 was overwhelmingly supported with a final **vote** of 163 in favour, eight negative votes, and nine abstentions. Speaking to the resolution this week, the UK asserted that a focus on behaviour is essential to prevent actions that could lead to the escalation of conflict in outer space. Many states agree, and also view this approach as complimentary to the future negotiation of a legally binding instrument—including the European Union (EU), Ecuador, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Others supported the resolution with caveats. The Arab Group emphasised that it sees value in preventing interference with satellites from Earth, but argued that a focus on norms of behaviour for space activities must not legitimise any attempts at an arms race or conflict in space. The Philippines asserted that it must not be misconstrued as allowing weapons in space so long as such behaviour is regulated, a sentiment echoed by Costa Rica.

Among those casting votes against L.52—specifically China, DPRK, Russia, Iran, Cuba, Nicaragua, Syria, and Venezuela—the key objection is to the mandate of the OEWG, as indicated by requests to put almost all operational paragraphs to separate votes. Operational paragraph (OP) 3, desiring states to “reach a common understanding of how best to act to reduce threats to space systems” to keep outer space peaceful, safe, stable, sustainable, and free from conflict and an arms race, was adopted by a vote of 148-3-15. OP5(a) asking the OEWG to take stock of the existing international legal and normative framework was adopted by a vote of 147-9-9. OP5(b) asking the OEWG to consider current and future threats to space systems was adopted by a vote of 147-9-9. OP5(c) asking the OEWG to make recommendations on possible norms of behaviour and how they might contribute to a legally binding instrument was adopted by a vote of 146-9-9.

The driving concern behind these votes is that the proposed OEWG is not sufficiently linked to weapons or PAROS, and not sufficiently legal in approach. As summarised by Cuba, the resolution’s focus on activities, space systems, and capabilities on Earth “seeks to deliberately change the approach that has prevailed so far.” This is indeed the point, as stated by France, to “unblock discussions by taking into consideration numerous threats to space systems.” However, based on these objections, this group of states each asserted that the OEWG instead falls under the mandate of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), under the direction of the UN’s Fourth Committee.

Additionally, Iran called on all developing states to reject the resolution on the basis that the OEWG will

create international divisions between “responsible” and “irresponsible” states reminiscent of the Cold War, while setting pre-conditions for states to enjoy the use of space technology peacefully. Concern about the “subjective” nature of core concepts, including “responsible behaviour” and “perception of threats,” was also raised by India, which switched from supporting the resolution last year to abstaining this year.

Also calling for a voluntary measure, but one focused specifically on weapons in space, resolution L.50, “**No first placement of weapons in outer space,**” calls on states to make political declarations not to be the first to place weapons in space. Russia—a core sponsor—indicated that 30 states are currently full participants in this initiative. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 124 in favour, 55 against, and 22 abstentions. However, New Zealand, which has a national policy against the weaponisation of space, changed its position this year to a no vote, concerned that the resolution provides tacit approval for subsequent weapons in space. Indeed, several states voting in favour of the resolution, including **Costa Rica**, Ecuador, and Mexico, emphasised that it *must not* be used to legitimise the placement of any weapons or arms race in space.

The limited scope of the declaration is another concern. “Space weapons” remains undefined, but the focus on “placement” in space indicates that it does not address the growing prevalence of weapons targeting outer space from Earth, as noted by New Zealand, nor non-kinetic means of interference, indicated in a **statement** by France, the UK, and US. The EU claimed that by failing to define space weapons or to account for dual-use capabilities, it instead adds to potential misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and miscalculation. Nonetheless, Russia asserts that it is the *only* practical measure currently in place to prevent the weaponisation in space. India, although noting that this initiative cannot substitute for legal measures, likewise provided support for this reason.

Turning to support for a legally binding instrument, Russia, China, and other co-sponsors once again

introduced resolution L.53, “**Further practical measures on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.**” This text calls for “the early elaboration of appropriate reliably verifiable legally binding multilateral agreements” to prevent the weaponisation of outer space. Although an outgrowth of the work done by the 2018–2019 GGE to identify possible elements of a legally binding instrument on PAROS, such work is indirectly linked to the draft PPWT. Supported by a vote of **126-9-46**, it speaks to the continued resonance of this focus within the First Committee.

Nonetheless, some states that do support a legal instrument, such as New Zealand, have reservations about the viability of the PPWT’s approach. Arguing that both Russia and China are “aggressively deploying capabilities to deny use of outer space,” the US referred to it as a “hollow” instrument that “cannot be confirmed or verified.” A preambular paragraph in resolution L.50 welcoming the draft PPWT was forced to a separate vote and adopted by 118-48-6. Indicative of continued mistrust among states, the French-UK-US **statement** asserted that neither L.50 nor L.53 are compatible with the behaviours of the lead sponsors in outer space.

This year’s L.53 seeks to renew practical momentum on a legally binding effort. OP7 requests the UN Secretary-General to “seek the views and proposals of Member States” on ways to “guarantee” both PAROS and “preserving outer space for peaceful purposes,” with a report due next year. Put to a separate vote, it was adopted by **112-19-38**. It is not clear if this process is envisioned as a complement or alternative to the OEWG.

Finally, states were once again asked to vote on specific phrasing contained in preambular paragraph

5 of both resolution L.50 and L.53, stating that work be pursued “in a common effort towards a community of shared future for humankind.” The phrase is initiated by China as a vision for global governance and has been included in space security resolutions since 2017. This is the third consecutive year that it has been subject to a vote. Voting no, India stated that it represents political ideology and is not appropriate for the UN General Assembly. France claimed that the language “has been used by China to challenge multilateralism and due process.” However, China argued that the phrase is in line with outer space as a global commons in which all states share a future, as well as the spirit of PAROS. Further, China insisted that resistance to this phrase is driven by a Cold War mentality that would recreate rigid blocks and predicted that it would once again be adopted by a majority of states. Tallied votes were 115-50-7 (as part of resolution L.50) and **112-47-10** (as part of resolution L.53).

Although the votes and disagreements were many, the outcome of this year’s First Committee points to a growing spirit of consensus and common cause. The adoptions on resolutions on PAROS and TCBMs is a critical step. And although Russia is one of eight states that voted against the creation of an OEWG related to norms, rules, and principles of behaviour for outer space and questioned its mandate, Russia also indicated that it “supports the OEWG to discuss the most pertinent issues related to the disarmament agenda” and “welcomes any ideas” to maintain outer space free from weapons. Likewise, Malaysia is one of many states that voted in favour of all draft resolutions as part of a concerted effort to maintain peace and security in outer space. The growing convergence of views that see TCBMs, norms of behaviour, and legally binding measures as different pieces of the same puzzle is progress.

CYBER PEACE AND SECURITY

Allison Pytlak | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Much has changed in UN cyber diplomacy over the last few years. The statements and positions of member states have deepened in nuance and detail, while common priorities, proposals for action, and more inclusive debate is emerging at the First Committee as well as in the cyber processes established by the Committee.

What was most strikingly different about this subject at the 2021 First Committee, however, was that the sole resolution on international cyber security (or information and communications technologies, ICTs) was adopted by consensus. After three years of bitter acrimony and politicisation, the absence of any real cyber controversy during the action phase of the First Committee session was a welcome relief to many.

L.13, “**Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies**,” was adopted without a vote in the First Committee on 3 November (see *First Committee Monitor* Vol. 19, No. 4 for analysis of its contents).

Russia presented the resolution during a **general statement** ahead of voting, which largely echoed points it made in its earlier statements this year. Russia briefly described the resolution's contents, acknowledged the diplomatic achievements in this area, and expressed gratitude to the United States, its primary co-sponsor, as well as to the 104 states that had also joined as co-sponsors.

Explanations of vote were offered by Iran, Malaysia, Costa Rica, South Africa, Syria, and the Philippines. Most of these states welcomed the resolution, with Costa Rica describing it as a “constructive example”.

Malaysia noted its support for the UN's Group of Governmental Experts (GGEs) and the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG I) and the distinct platform

that each group provided. It said it is pleased that the First Committee is able to agree on a single and unifying resolution this year to recognise the work of both groups.

In looking ahead, Costa Rica offered that the outcomes achieved by the OEWG should be a “starting line” for the second OEWG (OEWG II) that will commence work in December. South Africa observed that the ICT field is continually evolving and urged implementation as a priority, while noting that this will require capacity-building and assistance.

While supportive of L.13, Iran said it does not agree with the resolution's references to the GGEs and their reports. It sees the OEWG as having a clear mandate and independence from the GGE and expects this to be reviewed and rectified in the second OEWG and the next resolution.

A few states referred to the bigger picture of what is happening in cyberspace outside of the UN. Iran referred to the Stuxnet operation of 2010. Costa Rica stated that it believes “cyberspace should not be a zero-sum competition between a few but should be a peaceful space for cooperation between countries with a strong multilateral component.” Syria said that the peaceful use of ICTs is in every country's interest, especially as a number of states are developing ICT capabilities for military purposes.

It's highly important to keep this bigger picture in mind. News headlines are chock full of stories about cyber “attacks” and the number of states possessing the capability to conduct malicious international cyber operations against or through ICTs is on the rise. The UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) recently released the first of a **series of research briefings** looking at the national doctrines and cyber capabilities of 15 states, which further sheds worrying light on the current status of cyber capabilities worldwide.

Within the UN, the **OEWG II** is scheduled to have its **first substantive session** in New York from 13–19 December 2021. It will be chaired by Ambassador Burhan Gafoor of Singapore, who is expected to release more information about the programme of work and modalities in the next few weeks. A big question mark hangs over the issue of civil society participation, both because of past OEWG political dynamics, which blocked the accreditation of several relevant actors at OEWG I, and because of the

continued closure of the UN Headquarters in New York to civil society. Consultations on a possible UN programme of action on state behaviour in cyber space are also ongoing; if they gain in momentum, this may have a ripple effect on the OEWG, as could any of the outstanding issues from OEWG II and the GGEs. For the moment however, the general atmosphere is constructive and there is a sense of anticipation among states to resume work.

AUTONOMOUS WEAPON SYSTEMS

Dr. Catherine Connolly | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

During the 76th annual session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee, 36 states, plus the European Union (EU), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the Nordic Countries, made statements on autonomous weapon systems (AWS), as did the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

At the beginning of this year's First Committee, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, noted that discussions on AWS in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) are at a "critical juncture". Her statement came following UN Secretary-General António Guterres' strong and direct declaration, in his address to the 76th UNGA general debate, that autonomous weapons "should be banned". In this context, numerous states expressed their desire for a legally-binding instrument on AWS, including Austria, New Zealand, Algeria, the Philippines, Cuba, Spain, Ecuador, Brazil, Liechtenstein, and Pakistan. Many states welcomed the work of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous

Weapon Systems (LAWS), and looked forward to further advances in discussions.

Retaining meaningful human control over weapon systems and the use of force was a central aspect of many states' remarks on autonomous weapons during this First Committee. As the ICRC noted in its statement, "the erosion of human control over the use of force—with human decisions about life and death, in effect, substituted with sensor, software and machine processes"—is a fundamental ethical concern for humanity.

The next meeting of the CCW GGE on LAWS will take place from 2–8 December, closely followed by the Sixth Review Conference of the CCW from 13–17 December. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots **urges** states to take advantage of this crucial moment in discussions on AWS and to adopt a mandate for a legally binding instrument to ensure meaningful human control over the use of force, and prohibitions on certain systems, including those that would target human beings.



Photo: Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Allison Pytlak | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Two First Committee resolutions this year relate to issues of science and technology in connection with disarmament and international security. One is an annual resolution adopted by consensus; the other is an entirely new initiative of China that met a divided response from member states.

L.6, “**Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament**,” is an annual resolution that has been tabled by India for several years, although over time the resolution has evolved to recognise various disarmament and arms control-related forums that intersect with issues of science and technology. This may be in connection to the work of the International Atomic Energy Association or the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, or outer space activities, for example; more recently, the resolution has taken note of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. It also requests a report from the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) on the subject; the most recent version of which was summarised in the *First Committee Monitor* Vol. 19, No. 4.

As in other years, this resolution was adopted by consensus. Pakistan issued an explanation of vote (EOV) before the vote to say that it will go along with the consensus but highlighted its position on the rights of states in the development, production, transfer, and use of science and technology for peaceful purposes, as outlined in the resolution's preambular paragraph (PP). Pakistan stated that science and technology is crucial for states' abilities to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while also noting that denials of export are often politically motivated.

A joint EOV from France, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US) also mentioned PP5. These states outlined the reasons for their support of L.6 but did note that the rights mentioned in PP5 are contained in specific provisions of treaties,

such as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and, as such, states parties to those treaties must comply with their obligations. They pointed out that none of the three treaties recognises the right to technologies or to sensitive materials.

Some of these issues came strongly to the fore in what proved to be one of the most controversial resolutions tabled at the 2021 First Committee. L.55, “**Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security**,” was narrowly adopted by a vote of 75-55-43, with votes on operative paragraphs (OPs) 2 and 3.

It was tabled by China, in what is **reportedly** the first time in 30 years that China has proposed a measure on international arms control and disarmament issues in the UN. China framed it as a concrete action “to uphold multilateralism, safeguard world peace and promote common development, reflecting the common position of developing countries and serving the interests of the entire international community.” One news source **speculated** that the resolution was in reaction to the recently announced Australian-UK-US (AUKUS) nuclear submarine deal, because at its core, L.55 tries to bring together issues of technology transfer and export control. What was particularly concerning to many of the states that delivered EOVs on this resolution is the concern expressed in PP11 that “undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes persist.”

OP2, which was put to a vote, requests the UNSG to seek the views and recommendations of member states “on all aspects of promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security, including identifying undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of materials, equipment and technology for peaceful

purposes, possible measures to achieve a balance between non-proliferation and peaceful uses, and the way forward.” It was retained by a vote of 68-53-37. OP3 requests the UNSG to submit a report on the items outlined in OP2, for consideration of the UN General Assembly in its next session. OP3 was retained by a vote of 69-54-35.

In a general statement for the cluster, China explained that with this resolution it aims to promote the impartial enforcement of arms export regimes, which, it said, may be designed with good intentions but are not always implemented that way. It hopes to enhance existing arms export regimes through this resolution, and that it sees peaceful uses and non-proliferation as two sides of the same coin.

The US, European Union (EU), Japan, UK, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Chile, and Switzerland delivered EOVs outlining why they voted against L.55. Criticism tended to centre around a few key points: that the resolution contradicts and could potentially undermine existing arms export control regimes and related goals of non-proliferation; that the reference to “undue restrictions” is not factual; and finally, a few delegations raised concern over China’s process to consult on the draft.

As the EU stated, “This resolution creates a false dichotomy between peaceful uses of nuclear, chemical and biological material on the one hand, and export control measures and regimes on the other hand. Export control is necessary to maintain international peace and security and to prevent proliferation of sensitive items and material.” Similarly, Japan observed that the resolution pits peaceful uses against non-proliferation and creates unnecessary conflict between them.

The US, EU, UK, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, and Chile, among others, reinforced the importance of upholding existing international law and cooperating within existing treaties that regulate the transfer of technology in line with rights to peaceful use. Some of these delegations were specific in naming the NPT, CWC, or BWC, with the EU additionally referencing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540.

Chile referenced the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, and the Missile Technology Control Regime. Switzerland observed that export control regimes are key for the implementation of UNSCR 1540 and related Security Council embargoes.

The EU noted that existing export control regimes stem from international legal obligations and are a condition for enabling peaceful uses by all states. New Zealand highlighted that undermining these existing regimes will have repercussions for the rules-based international order.

New Zealand also said that while it strongly supports improving international cooperation with a view to advancing implementation of the SDGs, it cannot support an initiative that would undermine efforts to prevent proliferation of weapons and sensitive technology.

The UK said that L.55 does not strike the right balance between the resolution’s objectives, contrasting it with L.6, which it noted as having been adopted for years by consensus.

Switzerland said that OPs 2 and 3 risk undermining the efficiency of export control regimes and it could not support this “counter-productive” resolution. In its general statement, China said that asking for paragraph votes on these two paragraphs is not constructive, as UNSG reports are a common practice.

Chile stated that the resolution questions the traditional support that it has provided to important issues to prevent proliferation.

The EU, Canada, Australia, US, and UK said that the assertion of undue restrictions being placed on exports of sensitive items as described in PP 11 is not factual, with the EU warning that this could give rise to an unnecessary politicisation of export controls. The EU and Australia both referenced the 1540 Committee in this regard, noting it has found no evidence of export denials affecting socioeconomic development. Australia spoke of the resolution

creating a “false premise” of states seeking to unduly restrict development or discriminate against developing countries.

The EU, UK, US, Mexico, were, to varying degrees, critical of China’s consultative process on the draft. These delegations indicated that there were insufficient opportunities to engage on the draft or that consultations were selective and limited. The EU also asserted that China had expressed, during the only informal consultation held on this text “its frustration at certain denied exports.” China maintained that the resolution was prepared in an open and inclusive manner.

Other EOvs came from states that supported or abstained on L.55 and/or OPs 2 and 3, such as Pakistan, Cuba, Singapore, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Viet Nam, Mexico, Uruguay, and the Philippines.

Co-sponsor Cuba welcomed that the resolution references the inalienable right of states to participate in the broadest possible exchange of technology, which could facilitate the economic and social development of states. It also welcomed that the UNSG report requested in the resolution could contribute to countering the remaining obstacles for international cooperation around peaceful uses, which most acutely affects developing nations. Similarly, resolution co-sponsor Pakistan felt that as the UN is the world’s most representative multilateral institution, it should play a role in striking a balance between peaceful uses, technology transfer, and non-proliferation. Pakistan made a strong plea for narrowing the wide technology gap within the world, particularly in order to “build back better” from COVID-19, and to realise the SDGs and climate change goals.

Singapore said it felt the resolution is compatible with existing arrangements on non-proliferation, and that states must cooperate to establish robust export control regimes without hampering legitimate trade between countries. Ghana supported L.55, stating that the inalienable right to nuclear technology must not be diminished. It stressed, however, that

the promotion of peaceful uses of technology is not about opening up to the development of new weapons of mass destruction, and that conformity with non-proliferation obligations is critical.

Brazil voted in favour of OPs 2 and 3 and abstained on the resolution as a whole. It said it has concerns about the language in other parts of the resolution and that concerns raised by member states about the draft were not addressed. However, it supports guaranteeing the right of all states to the peaceful uses of science and technology while recognising the contribution of export regimes, especially to forestall access by non-state actors.

India said it abstained because there is a need to recognise the provisions within international treaties and obligations on the non-proliferation of WMD to non-state actors, but that it supports the role of international cooperation in science and technology to facilitate economic and social development. Similarly, Indonesia indicated it supported L.55 as it is in line with its principled position that export control regimes should be established through multi-lateral, inclusive, and transparent processes.

Mexico, which abstained on the resolution, took note of the resolution as an “interesting initiative”. While it intends to contribute to the exercise of the UNSG set out in OP2, it regrets that the outcome of this process is being pre-judged. It also underlined the importance of adhering to existing agreements in this area, which are supplemented by voluntary political agreements such as export control regimes. It emphasised that these regimes have made significant contributions to non-proliferation, have proven useful for ensuring control over the movement of sensitive material, and do not constitute undue restrictions to trade.

Uruguay, which voted yes on the resolution, stressed the importance of balance between the rights and obligations on non-proliferation and peaceful uses, while taking into account important issues such as access for technology in relation to development. It also said that the resolution has concepts that need further contemplation.

DISARMAMENT MACHINERY AND TREATY COMPLIANCE

Ray Acheson | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

A handful of resolutions tabled at this year's First Committee address issues related to specific organs of the UN disarmament machinery and to broader issues of disarmament and arms control treaty compliance and negotiation.

The United States (US) last tabled L.16, "**Compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments**," as a resolution in 2017, though a **draft decision** under this item was **adopted** last year. The resolution urges all states to "implement and fully comply with their respective obligations," urges states to provide assistance and encouragement to each other to this end, and to resolve compliance questions or hold those not in compliance accountable, in order to "prevent serious damage to international security and stability arising from non-compliance." A new operative paragraph (OP) 4 "Calls upon all States to include and empower women, including through capacity-building efforts, as appropriate, as full, equal and meaningful participants in the design and implementation of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts." OP6 (former OP5) also now adds the word "applicable" in ahead of "international law".

Ahead of the vote, the US issued a **general statement** arguing that, "Given the compliance challenges posed by several countries with respect to their arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation obligations, now is the time to signal strong support for compliance as an essential contribution to international peace and security." L.16 was **adopted** with 166 votes in favour, three opposed (China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Iran), and 10 abstentions.

Last year, Russia tabled a competing resolution, "Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements." As it is very similar in content to the US-led resolution, most delegations voted

in favour of both texts, while the main sponsors of each accused each other of hypocrisy on the issue of compliance. Russia didn't table its text year, nor did it issue an explanation of vote on L.16, upon which it abstained.

In keeping with the rising China-US tensions, however, China voted against L.16 and said in an explanation of vote that while it supports the basic principles and purposes of the resolution, the US itself has a "terrible track record" on compliance with its disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation commitments. It called on the US to eliminate its chemical weapons stockpile, shoulder its nuclear disarmament responsibilities, stop its nuclear submarine cooperation with Australia, and abandon its double standards in relation to fulfilling its Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments. Rather than paying lip service to compliance, China asserted, the US should stop its provocations and "toxification" of the First Committee work environment.

Iran explained it would vote against L.16 because it is another example of US hypocrisy. It noted the US has not complied with many of its relevant commitments, and that it continues to increase its military spending. Iran also argued that L.16 is redundant when bearing in mind compliance mechanisms contained within various instruments. Cuba said it abstained on L.16 because the US has no moral grounds to promote a text on compliance when it fails to comply with disarmament and arms control agreements, including its NPT commitments, and while it modernises its nuclear arsenal, has not yet finished the destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal, hinders the development of a protocol for verification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and promotes conflicts around the world.

Indonesia, which voted in favour of L.16, cautioned that the new qualifier "applicable" in OP6 of L.16 must not be used to apply conditionality to

compliance. It also urged that future iterations of this resolution include a new OP on verification, which is related to compliance.

The Non Aligned Movement's L.25, "**Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament**," is unchanged from last year. It recalls the work and report of the open-ended working group on this topic and encourages continued consultations on next steps for convening the conference. It was adopted without a vote.

The Non Aligned Movement's L.27, "**Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation**," is unchanged from last year. It reaffirms multilateralism as critical to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and requests states parties of relevant instruments "to consult and cooperate among themselves in resolving their concerns with regard to cases of non-compliance as well as on implementation ... and to refrain from resorting or threatening to resort to unilateral actions or directing unverified non-compliance accusations against one another to resolve their concerns." The resolution was **adopted** with a vote of 125 in favour, four against (Israel, Micronesia, United Kingdom, and United States), and 51 abstentions. No explanations of vote were issued.

Australia tabled draft decision L.33, "**Disarmament Commission**" (UNDC), which establishes the dates for the next session (although the UNDC has at this point not convened in two years and it remains unclear if it will do so in 2022). **Last year's action** on the UNDC resolution was complicated and unprecedented, when Russia introduced "hostile amendments" to the draft decision and introduced a competing resolution. Both were voted down by the Committee. Its discontent stemmed from the failure of the US government to comply with the host country agreement's obligation to grant visas to diplomats. While Russia raised this issue again in an explanation of position, expressing hope that access to UN Headquarters will be non-discriminatory in the future, it joined consensus on L.33's adoption without a vote. Malaysia said it hopes that with the adoption of this draft decision, the UNDC will be able to meet as scheduled in 2022 and submit a substantive report to the next session of the UN General Assembly.

L.48, "**Report of the Conference on Disarmament**" (CD), contains only technical updates from its predecessor in 2019. It calls upon the CD to "further intensify consultations" to overcome its deadlock of two decades. It was adopted without a vote.

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Laura Varella | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

During the action on First Committee resolutions, several delegations raised issues relating to disarmament and development, and a specific resolution was adopted on the topic. Most delegations recognised the connection between disarmament and development, but a few member states questioned the relationship between these concepts.

This was the case of **France and the United Kingdom** when addressing the resolution L.24, "**Relationship between disarmament and development**," tabled by the Non-Aligned Movement. Although they said they

recognise practical linkages between disarmament and development in the field of conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons (SALW), and disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR), they questioned the notion of a "symbiotic relationship" between these concepts. They argued that effective arms control and disarmament are not necessarily dependent on development only, as seen with the growing military expenditure of some developing countries. They asserted that there is no automatic link, but rather a complex relationship that was not captured in the resolution. They further argued that the idea that military expenditure diverts

resources from developing requirements needs to be nuanced, because “defence investments are also necessary to deliver the peace and security that facilitates development, including through legitimate military operations, peacekeeping, and an improved response to natural disasters (airborne and maritime equipment).”

The **United States** built on this and added that it believes that disarmament and development are two distinct issues. It also stated that it does not consider itself bound by the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development that was adopted in September of 1987. Despite these statements, resolution L.24 was adopted without a vote.

Still within the discussion of cluster 5 resolutions, the link between disarmament and development was raised by at least six other member states. During the explanation of vote of resolution L.55, **“Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security,”** India stressed that it supports the important role of international cooperation in science and technology to facilitate social and economic development of developing countries, but it abstained on the voting of the resolution. Uruguay voted in favour of the resolution, as it saw as an opportunity to achieve a just balance between rights and obligations regarding peaceful use of technologies for development purposes. Mexico and Viet Nam also agreed that development in security and technology should be used to contribute to sustainable development. (The action on this resolution is covered in more detail in the article on Science and Technology.)

In relation to L.6, **“Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament,”** Pakistan, when explaining its vote, stated that science and technology are crucial for the achievement of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) and are related to every country’s right to develop, use and acquire technologies for socioeconomic development, including to overcome climate change challenges.

The link between disarmament and development was also addressed in the voting for resolutions from other clusters. In cluster 4 on conventional weapons, Malaysia stated that it will work to enhance cooperation toward a strong global solution of illicit trade in SALW in order to support peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and socioeconomic development.

During the voting of resolutions regarding other weapons of mass destruction (cluster 2), the Philippines reminded that in 2018, the UN Secretary-General called for reimagining efforts in disarmament of these weapons in the context of development, and suggested that there is space to take further steps to unlock synergies between disarmament and the 2030 Agenda. The Philippines also addressed the issue of sustainable development during the voting of cluster 3 resolutions, regarding outer space, stating that the recognition of interface



Image: Dimity Hawkins

between security and development should guide governance of outer space.

On the same topic, Austria stated that peaceful use of outer space is essential, but as challenges in space sector become more serious, and military expenditure increases risking a potential arms race, addressing these issues requires the engagement of relevant international organisations, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders. Cuba added that the threat of an arms race in outer space and the continued development and refinement of space weaponry threaten the realisation of the aspirations of peoples, in particular smaller countries, to benefit from the potential of space technologies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

From all the statements issued during the five weeks of this First Committee session, it is evident that the

increase in military spending during 2020 did not go unnoticed. The fact that countries spent over 1981 billion USD during a global pandemic that killed millions of people around the world demonstrates an active choice of prioritising military budgets over the preservation of life itself.

The increase in famine and poverty in the last year, together with other social difficulties imposed by the pandemic, show that we are still far from achieving the goals established in the 2030 Agenda. It is therefore necessary for states to recognise that investment in weapons will not provide security. On the contrary, only an active commitment in achieving effective levels of education, care, justice, housing, equality, and other basic rights will provide real security. Countries must reevaluate their priorities and reduce military spending, in order to achieve stability and sustainable development.

ENVIRONMENT AND DISARMAMENT

Katrin Geyer and Ray Acheson | WILPF with Doug Weir | Conflict and Environment Observatory

In the final week of the First Committee, member states adopted resolution L.26, “**Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of disarmament and arms control,**” by consensus. The resolution was discussed in the previous edition of the Monitor.

Despite its adoption without a vote, and as ever, **France and the United Kingdom (UK)**, as well as the **United States (US)**, provided explanations of vote (EOVs).

France and the UK jointly stressed that they “operate under stringent domestic environmental impact regulations for many activities, including the implementation of arms control and disarmament agreements.” They asserted that they do not see a direct connection between general environmental standards and multilateral arms control, as stated in the resolution. They also noted, for what seems to be the first time, that climate change is among the most serious challenges threatening the environment and

global security. They claimed their commitment to fighting it and to the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development.

The US explained that it did not participate in the action on this resolution. It said that it does not see a direct connection between “general environmental standards and multilateral arms control,” and argued that this matter does not belong to the realm of the First Committee. It asserted that it operates under “stringent domestic environmental impact regulations”.

It is deeply regrettable that some of the most heavily militarised countries in the world do not see any “direct connection” between environmental degradation and the **full lifecycle** of weapons. As explained by the joint civil society statement to the First Committee this year on the protection of the environment in armed conflict, there is a growing body of evidence outlining the plethora of impacts

that weapons and armed conflict have on the climate crisis and on water, soil, air, animals, and plants.

The same countries that reassure their full commitment to fighting the climate crisis are also the ones responsible for massive consumption of energy through their military activities, contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. They also cause wider adverse environmental impacts from military training, activities, and operations as well as weapons development and use.

Pressure on governments is mounting, including through a **call for action**, launched by the Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), calling on parties to the 2015 Paris Agreement to commit to reducing their militaries' greenhouse gas emissions. The call is endorsed by 215 organisations, and counting. Similarly, a **petition** by World Beyond War has gathered over 26,500 signatures, calling for an end to the exclusion of military pollution in climate agreements.

With the United Nations Climate Conference (COP26) in full swing in Glasgow, it is time for governments to mitigate and prevent the devastating ecological impacts of the military and to recognise

these connections at COP26, and within the First Committee.

There are many First Committee resolutions where the impacts of weapons on the environment should be recognised. Member states should undertake an audit of all resolutions adopted at the First Committee to assess how ecological and environmental considerations could be meaningfully integrated within resolutions. They should also update the current resolution on environmental norms to make it more ambitious and meaningful, or draft a new resolution that recognises the impacts of weapons and war on the environment and climate; acknowledges disarmament and demilitarisation as essential to climate change and sustainable development; and calls for a reduction of military emissions and the inclusion of such emissions in climate agreements.

WILPF and CEOBS are two of many organisations that would be delighted to work with states on an audit, or a resolution whose purpose is to explore, articulate, and address the environmental dimensions of the topics on the First Committee's agenda.



Photo: Youth Climate Strike in Glasgow, Scotland at COP26 © Nancy Mancias / CODEPINK

GENDER AND DISARMAMENT

Katrin Geyer | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

During its 2021 session, the First Committee continued to increase its incorporation of gender-related issues and considerations. An unprecedented number of resolutions include gender references: 19 resolutions out of 61 resolutions, or 31 per cent out of all adopted resolutions call for women's equal participation; stress the gendered impacts of weapon systems and armed violence; and/or underscore the need for gender considerations in disarmament efforts more broadly. These are L.4, L.5, L.12, L.16, L.18, L.21, L.31, L.35, L.36, L.38, L.41, L.43, L.44, L.46, L.47, L.51, L.52, L.59, and L.61. Two resolutions include strengthened or new language on gender, namely L.16 and L.43.

For comparison, in 2020, 25 per cent out of all adopted resolutions included gender references, while this was 28 per cent in 2019, and 25 per cent in 2018. The proportion of resolutions including gender references was only 15 per cent in 2017, 13 per cent in 2016, and 12 per cent in 2015.

Unfortunately, likely due to the continued restricted meetings this year, a joint statement on gender was not delivered for the second consecutive year. In past years, an increasing number of states delivered a joint statement on gender under the cluster of disarmament machinery. In 2019, the statement **mobilised 79 states** to support gender considerations in disarmament and arms control processes. This is almost 20 more states than in 2018, where 60 states supported a similar statement.

While the continued attention to gender within disarmament and arms control is welcome, words need to follow action. Women's participation at this year's First Committee has been exceptionally low, as observed by Austria and Canada. As well, if states are serious about including gender perspectives, they need to acknowledge and address false assumptions that violence provide security. Such assumptions are closely linked with violent ideas of about "masculinity". As noted by this year's joint

civil society statement on gender, "a more robust reflection of the gendered norms associated with weapons, war, and violence" is urgently needed.

In addition to resolutions presented in the **previous edition** of the *Monitor*, the following additional resolutions below include gender references. Please note that resolutions where action has been taken are reported on in other reports in this Monitor, as are the other non-gender related aspects of these resolutions.

L.44, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments," includes the same language from 2020, "noting the strongly disproportionate and gendered impact of exposure to ionizing radiation for women and girls".

L.51, "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices," referring to women's equal participation in PP10, reads slightly differently than in the 2018 version. While in 2018, when the resolution was last adopted, it recognised "the importance of concerted efforts to ensure that both women and men can participate equally, fully and effectively in the negotiation process of a future treaty," it now is condensed to "Reaffirming the need to ensure the equal, full and meaningful participation of women in the negotiation process of a future treaty."

L.61, "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa," contains the same language from 2020. It urges member states of the Standing Advisory Committee to strengthen the gender component and women's representation in its meetings. It calls on states to ensure that disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programmes take into consideration the needs of women.

YOUTH AND DISARMAMENT EDUCATION

Nicki Eichenholtz, Mandi Karpo, Vanessa Keeley, and Matthew Breay Bolton
Pace University International Disarmament Institute

During its final week, the First Committee adopted draft resolution L.36, “**Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation**,” without a vote. The resolution encourages the international community “to promote the meaningful and inclusive participation of young people in discussions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation” by “developing and implementing policies and programmes for young people to increase and facilitate their constructive engagement,” including “education and capacity-building.”

Republic of Korea (ROK), the main sponsor, told the First Committee that the resolution aims to empower and engage youth, providing them with opportunities to be stakeholders, not just beneficiaries, of disarmament discussions. Youth involvement, said ROK, will ensure sustainability.

This year’s resolution includes elements that extend beyond the 2019 version (A/RES/74/64). Most notably, it requests the UN Secretary-General to “seek the views” of member states, the UN, international organisations, and civil society on “promotion of youth engagement and empowerment activities in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation” and to submit a report to the General Assembly in 2023.

A separate vote was held on preambular paragraph (PP) 10, noting Action 38 of the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future*, which describes “young generation as the ultimate force for change and proposes actions to promote youth engagement.” No states voted against the paragraph; Djibouti, Iran, Russia, and Syria abstained.

A few hours before the vote, a “Youth Initiative to Reverse the Trend of Existential Threats” side event at New York’s Yale Club highlighted the crucial importance of disarmament education and meaningful participation of young people.

Soo Hyun Kim, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) Focal Point for Youth Engagement, spoke about UNODA’s Youth4Disarmament programme. Ambassador Amatlain Elizabeth Kabua, Permanent Representative of the Marshall Islands, called for raising awareness of the ongoing humanitarian and environmental consequences of US Pacific nuclear testing. Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Austria’s Permanent Representative, highlighted the pivotal role of young people in advocacy for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ambassador Maritza Chan, Costa Rica’s Deputy Permanent Representative, raised concerns about military expenditure’s diversion of resources from sustainable development and called for a feminist approach to disarmament.

Speakers from civil society and academia—including Columbia University’s Center for Nuclear Studies, Pace University, Marshallese Educational Initiative, Reverse the Trend, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, and Hibakusha Stories—called on states to reinvigorate youth engagement and education on the humanitarian impact of weapons and war. Taylor Mangus, a Pace University political science student, highlighted the importance of intersectionality in youth participation, “recognising the ways in which LGBTQIA+ people, indigenous people, people with disabilities, people of color, and women have been disproportionately affected by the use of weapons.” The event was organised by Reverse the Trend, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Prospect Hill Foundation, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, and Marshallese Educational Initiative.

The First Committee also adopted other resolutions with provisions related to youth and/or disarmament education.

Resolutions L.28, “**United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament**,” L.18/Rev.1, “**United**

Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific,” L.21, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,” and L.38, “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” all passed without a vote. These resolutions include recognition of the regional centres’ role in disarmament education, training, and youth outreach.

L.43, “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” which calls for “a dedicated fellowship training programme,” was adopted without a vote.

Several resolutions on nuclear weapons highlighted the importance of disarmament education, awareness raising, and youth participation. L.23, “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament,” passed with 138 states voting in favour, 34 against and 11 abstentions. L.44, “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments,” was adopted

135 in favour, 34 against, 15 abstentions. L.49, “Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,” was adopted without a vote. There were paragraph-level votes on each of these resolutions, but none involved provisions specifically addressing youth or disarmament education.

L.59, “Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons,” was adopted with a vote of 152 in favour, 4 against, 30 abstentions. In separate paragraph votes, Russia and China voted against provisions welcoming “visits of leaders, youth and others to Hiroshima and Nagasaki” (PP20: 160 in favor, 2 against, 9 abstentions) and that call on “All States to facilitate efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education” and “efforts in which the young generation can actively engage,” including visits “to and interactions with communities and people, including the hibakusha (those who have suffered the use of nuclear weapons) who pass on their experiences to the future generations” (operative paragraph 3(f): 158 in favor, 2 against, 10 abstentions).



Photo: Disarm Oxford

EVENT REPORT: ADDRESSING NUCLEAR HARM

Talei Luscia Mangioni | International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

On Wednesday, 27 October, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Article 36 jointly hosted a virtual First Committee side event on Victim Assistance (Article 6), Environmental Remediation (Article 6), and International Cooperation and Assistance (Article 7) in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Moderator Alicia Sanders-Zarke, ICAN Policy and Research Coordinator, acknowledged the harmful impacts of nuclear weapons on affected communities and their environments around the world. Sanders-Zarke highlighted the TPNW and its positive obligations as an important tool for nuclear justice and to build stronger global norms. Given the forthcoming TPNW First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP), scheduled for 22–24 March 2022, it is timely to encourage implementation of these articles.

Bonnie Docherty, Lecturer at Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic, offered a brief overview of the TPNW's positive obligations followed by insights on how 1MSP should initiate the process of implementing these provisions. Docherty

recommended that states parties should underscore their commitments through their statements and the meeting's final declaration, create a framework for implementation, and an action plan with proposed deadlines. States parties should actively involve affected individuals, communities, and civil society at all levels. Docherty also highlighted principles for the long-term implementation, such as emphasising the shared responsibility of affected states; understanding harm in its multiple forms; the collection and dissemination of accessible information for survivors, governments, and the international community; and following guiding principles such as inclusivity, nondiscrimination, transparency, and accessibility throughout the process.

Zhangeldy Syrymbet, Councillor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations in New York, provided a background on the history of over 500 nuclear tests in his country by the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan has a long history of resistance to nuclear testing and since independence in 1991 has been a strong advocate of nuclear disarmament. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan renounced the nuclear arsenal left on its territory and in 2006 declared itself a nuclear weapon free territory. Kazakhstan has welcomed and championed the TPNW. Syrymbet referenced Kazakhstan and Kiribati's First Committee [statement](#) on Articles 6 and 7 and the working paper they are preparing in consultation with states and others that will contain recommendations for the 1MSP. Kazakhstan is willing to share its expertise, including through the work of its National Nuclear Centre, and work to remediate territory for peaceful and agricultural purposes.

Bernice Gutierrez, New Mexican nuclear testing survivor and Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium (TBDC) Steering Committee member, provided an overview of the issues her family and community face from the ongoing impacts of the



Trinity nuclear test. She identified her community as the first-ever downwinders from the Trinity nuclear test, describing how her family has suffered from cancer for five generations. The mission of the TBDC has been to get New Mexican residents and uranium miners to benefit from the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA), which included Utah, parts of Arizona, and Nevada, but not New Mexico. Gutierrez called for restitution and proper healthcare, especially due to lack of adequate access to healthcare in New Mexico. The TBDC is promoting

the RECA amendments to expand coverage through the House of Representatives Bill 5338 and Senate bill 2798, both of which were introduced in Congress and have received bipartisan support.

Questions from participants touched on a global needs assessment, multigenerational legacies of trauma, collaboration between Russia and the United States in Kazakhstan on environmental remediation and finally, the responses of nuclear testing governments to survivors' calls for justice.



Image: Dimity Hawkins

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).

Contributors to this edition:

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, Cluster Munition Coalition, Conflict and Environment Observatory, Control Arms, International Action Network on Small Arms, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, International Campaign to Ban Landmines, International Network on Explosive Weapons, King's College London, Pace University International Disarmament Institute, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



Reaching Critical Will

www.reachingcriticalwill.org



www.wilpf.org

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

Reaching Critical Will is your primary source for information, documents, and analysis about the United Nations General Assembly First Committee and other multilateral disarmament conferences and processes.

FIRST COMMITTEE MONITOR

Vol. 19, No. 5

5 November 2021

Editors: Ray Acheson and
Allison Pytlak
disarm@wilpf.org

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