

# **JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT ON HUMANITARIAN DISARMAMENT**

**UNGA First Committee**

**October 16, 2024**

**Delivered by Erin Hunt from Mines Action Canada**

This statement is read on behalf of 93 civil society organizations and coalitions from around the world.

After a year of horrific bloodshed that has challenged the rules and norms we hold most dear, putting people at the heart of our work is more important than ever.

Humanitarian disarmament prioritizes the protection of people in conflict. Its central objective is to prevent and address human suffering and environmental damage caused by arms, through the establishment of international norms.

Momentum to negotiate a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons systems has increased since last year. The UN Secretary-General's report based on last year's resolution 78/241 included substantive contributions from a wide range of stakeholders. This year's resolution on autonomous weapons should be easy to support for all states wanting to ensure humans retain control over the use of force and see real progress towards a much-needed treaty on autonomous weapons systems.

In April 2024, the first international follow-up conference on the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA) Declaration was held in Oslo, Norway. Despite this success, there is more work to do. With current conflicts and extreme use of explosive weapons in populated areas, we call on all states that haven't already endorsed to do so without delay. Endorsing states should fully implement and promote the Declaration.

Amid appalling threats of nuclear weapons use, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons now counts half of UN members as signatories or states parties, and efforts towards universalisation and treaty implementation - including toward justice for the victims of nuclear weapons use and testing, continues. A new nuclear arms race is diverting resources from other global challenges, and it is urgent to reverse course before the unthinkable occurs.

The international community is increasingly recognizing the urgent need to address the environmental impacts of armed conflicts and military activities, in part responding to the documented harm in recent conflicts.

The past year has also been a reminder of the enormous challenges we face. We deplore Lithuania's announcement to withdraw from the Convention on Cluster Munitions and call on the Government of Lithuania to remain a state party.

Use of antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions is contrary to the strict norms established by both the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We call upon states to defend these norms, and by doing so prevent the harm that prompted these norms in the first place.

Finally, all those involved in humanitarian disarmament should ensure their work takes into account inclusion, diversity and intersectionality and addresses racial and gender discrimination. This inclusion extends to civil society. States must protect our access to meetings and our role as a necessary part of the international ecosystem, to ensure that the work done in these rooms has real world impact.

Going forward, and especially in these times of tensions and wars, we as a community need to be unified, and continue to put people at the centre of our work. The joint goal to prevent and remediate human suffering should drive a cooperative, inclusive and progressive agenda.

Thank you.

### **Supporting Global Campaigns**

Control Arms

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition

International Network on Explosive Weapons

Stop Killer Robots

### **Supporting Civil Society Organizations**

Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy (AIDD)

Action from Ireland (Afri)

Action on Armed Violence

Alianza por el Desarme Nuclear

Amnesty International

Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Military Spending

Aotearoa New Zealand Network on Explosive Weapons

Article 36

Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA)

Association SALAM (Comoros-Indian Ocean and East Africa)

Associazione Italiana Vittime Civili di Guerra

Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines

Ban Nuclear Weapons - ICAN in Denmark

Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace

Campaign Against Arms Trade

Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM)

Center for Peace Education, Miriam College, Philippines

Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP)

Centro de Estudios EcuMénicos (México)

Changemaker

Civil Society Coalition on Natural Resource (CSNRC)  
Comisión General Justicia y Paz de España  
Conflict and Environment Observatory  
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)  
Danish UN Association  
DAWN  
Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft – Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen (DFG-VK)  
DHESARME  
Encode Justice  
Facing Finance  
Femmes Unies pour la Paix dans la région des Grands Lacs  
Fogo Cruzado Institute  
Forum on Disarmament and Development Sri Lanka  
Friends of the Earth Canada  
Fundación Barco  
Handicap International  
Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO)  
Human Rights Watch  
Hungarian Campaign to Stop Killer Robots Activist Network  
ICAN Aotearoa New Zealand  
ICAN Australia  
Indian Institute for Peace Disarmament & Environmental Protection  
info.nodes  
International Peace Research Association  
Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament  
Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines(JCBL)  
Jesuit Refugee Service  
Kingston and St Andrew Action Forum (KSAAF)  
Landmines Resource Center Lebanon  
Legacies of War  
Mines Action Canada  
No to Armaments - Yes to Sustainable Security (Nej til Oprustning - Ja til Bæredygtig Sikkerhedspolitik)  
No to Nuclear Weapons Norway (Nei til Atomvåpen)  
NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark  
Nonviolence International - Canada  
Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)  
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation  
Nuclear Truth Project  
Organization of Landmine Survivors and Amputees in Rwanda (OLSAR)  
Oxfam International  
Pathways To Peace  
PAX  
Pax Christi International  
Peace Movement Aotearoa  
Peoples Federation for National Peace and Development (PEFENAP)  
Perú por el Desarme  
Project Ploughshares

## PROTECTION

Rete Italiana Pace Disarmo (Italian Network for Peace and Disarmament)

Réveil Communautaire d'assistance aux Victimes (RECOVI)

Reverse the Trend: Save our People, Save our Planet

SafeGround

Seguridad Humana en América Latina y el Caribe (SEHLAC)

Soka Gakkai International

Somali Human Rights Association (SOHRA)

SPADO

Stop Killer Robots Aotearoa New Zealand

Suomen Sadankomitea ry - The Committee of 100 in Finland

Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society

United Against Inhumanity (UAI)

United Nations Association - UK (UNA-UK)

Vision GRAM-International

West Virginia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Bombs/PSALM

WILPF - Norway

Women Against Nuclear Power - Finland

Women for Peace - Finland

Women, Peace and Security National Network (Aotearoa New Zealand)