As protests and discussions of racism and anti-blackness swept across the world following the murder of George Floyd last year, the humanitarian disarmament community has had to turn its gaze inwards to question and investigate how we advance peace and security. As tools of colonial and imperial power, weapons that fuel war and conflict disproportionately affect marginalized and vulnerable groups of different races, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, socioeconomic status, faiths, and other social identities. Far from being limited to individual beliefs or acts of discrimination happening in some countries, structural racism and systemic oppression manifests in varied forms across all states. As a result, the global community is neither immune to its effects nor absolved of its role in being complicit and upholding current structures of power.

Nuclear weapons testing has displaced Indigenous and Pacific Islander communities, rendering their lands unsafe, uninhabitable, and toxic. Targeted killings and strikes by armed drones perpetuate gendered and racial biases in a vacuum of legal justification. Algorithmic bias in autonomous weapons systems risks entrenching historical systems of oppression, exacerbating inequality, and upholding disproportionate structures of power. The production, transfer, and use of arms facilitates and increases incidences of gender-based violence. Providing victim assistance is vital to address the challenges of care and support faced by victims and survivors with disabilities sustained from landmines and cluster munitions.

Racism, intersected with other systems of oppression, is upheld by structures of imperialist, colonialist, patriarchal, and white supremacist power. It is, in a manner of speaking, its own weapon of destruction. It poses a direct threat to the core values enshrined in international law: human rights, equality, peace, security, and human dignity. These values are strengthened by the humanitarian disarmament approach that centres freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom from indignity as the pillars of human security.

Taking an anti-racist, intersectional perspective to humanitarian disarmament is therefore fundamental for centring human security and peace, by understanding not only how people are affected by the use of these weapons but which communities will bear the burden of suffering and the aftermath. It is necessary that we question whose voices are valued in disarmament; whose voices lead the conversations and develop the policies; and whose voices, experiences, and expertise are missing from these spaces and processes.
Racial assumptions and unconscious biases in law, policy, and decision-making have a serious impact on disarmament. That a deliberate and intentional anti-racist approach has not been central to disarmament, even till today, is a monumental oversight. Without addressing these assumptions and biases, vulnerable communities and people will continue to be disproportionately affected by violence caused by weapons systems.

A future of peace and security that upholds human dignity and equality demands that we dismantle the systems of oppression and racism that both propel violence and conflict, and are perpetuated by the use of weapons.

In doing so, we make clear that the future we want is not about the weapons but truly about the people.

*Statement drafted by Farah Bogani, with input from Isabelle Jones, Clare Conboy, and Ousman Noor of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, and Hayley Ramsay-Jones of Soka Gakkai International.*

**Supporting organisations:**
- Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy (AIDD)
- Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)
- Afghan Landmine Survivors Organization (ALSO)
- Amnesty International
- Ethics in Technology
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
- Environmental Protection Promoters Initiative -EPPI
- Poverty and Associated Maladies Alleviation Initiative (PAMAI), Nigeria
- Peace Movement Aotearoa
- Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
- PEAC Institute - Peace | Education | Art | Communication
- PAX
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Ghana
- Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO), Pakistan
- Centro de Estudios Ecuménicos, (CEE), México
- Veterans For Peace Golden Rule Project
- Somali Human Rights Association -SOMALIA
- Reverse The Trend: Save Our People, Save Our Planet
- NuclearBan.US
- TreatyAwareness.US
- Peace Boat
- Indian Institute for Peace Disarmament & Environmental Protection
- PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY RESOURCES-UGANDA
- Zambian Network For Human Rights Defenders
Campaign to Stop Killer Robots - Hungary activist network
Corruption Tracker
United Nations Association - UK
Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS)
Secure Scotland
Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Nuclear Disarmament
RAJA/SENEGAL(Réseau des Anciens Jécistes d’Afrique/ Senegal)
The Norwegian Peace Council
Conflict and Environment Observatory
Bill Kidd, Member of the Scottish Parliament
Senzatomica
Nonviolence International Southeast Asia
Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
Committee of 100 in Finland
LABRATS International
Facing Finance
IM Swedish Development Partner
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Soka Gakkai International
Campagna Italiana contro le mine
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
Control Arms Coalition
International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition
Pax Christi Scotland
Women's Institute for Alternative Development
Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA)
Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM)
Project Ploughshares
Instituto Sou da Paz
Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft - Vereinigte Kriegsdienstgegner*innen (DFG-VK)
Vision GRAM-International
Mines Action Canada
Africa Centre for Security, Governance & Research (ACSGRE), Kenya
Medact
PROTECTION
Article 36
Saferworld
WILPF Zimbabwe
Lea Launokari, Women for Peace, Finland
Ulla Klötzer, Women Against Nuclear Power, Finland
Plataforma CIPÓ
Seguridad Humana en América Latina y el Caribe (SEHLAC)
World BEYOND War
ECPAT Guatemala
Human Rights Watch
Harvard Law School’s Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative
Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
People’s Federation for National Peace and Development (PEFENAP)
CPG Nuclear Disarmament, Scottish Parliament
Sri-Lankan Doctors for Peace and Development IPPNW Affiliate
PSALM: PROUD STUDENTS AGAINST LANDMINES AND CLUSTER BOMBS/USA,
Nora Sheets/Coordinator
Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture (VAST)
Global Thought MX
Physicians for Social Responsibility, USA
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)
Foundation for Peace and Democracy
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (Australia)
Environmentalists Against War
SafeGround Inc