

JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT ON HUMANITARIAN DISARMAMENT

UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security

**Delivered by Raluca Muresan, Control Arms, on behalf of Harvard Law School's
International Human Rights Clinic**

October 13, 2022

Thank you.

This statement has been endorsed by 127 civil society organizations, including 5 global humanitarian disarmament campaigns.

The devastating effects of the war in Ukraine have dominated this year's disarmament news, but there were also great achievements in the world of diplomacy and norm-setting. In the end, 2022 demonstrated both the need for and the possibilities of humanitarian disarmament.

This people-centered approach to governing weapons seeks to prevent and remediate the kind of arms-inflicted human suffering and environmental harm that has been evident every day in Ukraine and in many other conflicts that continue to rage around the world.

In Ukraine, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas has caused the majority of the conflict's more than 15,000 civilian casualties, according to UN figures. It has also leveled cities and towns and led to widespread displacement. Cluster munition attacks on residential neighborhoods have killed and injured civilians at the time of attack and left unexploded submunitions behind.

There has also been documented use of incendiary weapons and antipersonnel landmines. Attacks as well as damaged and abandoned materiel have led to a range of environmental harm. Conventional weapons have flowed into the conflict with a speed and volume that simply has no precedent.

Meanwhile, Russia has repeatedly threatened the use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine and its allies, despite condemnation from around the world.

These reports underscore the need for greater efforts on the humanitarian disarmament front. Now more than ever, states must comply with their international obligations with absolute rigor. They must also promote, strengthen, and universalize existing disarmament law and create new law where appropriate.

Despite these challenges, 2022 has also seen moments of hope that show progress is possible in the development and implementation of international norms.

For example, states finalized a new political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas in June, and Ireland will host an endorsement ceremony in November. The document, which

goes beyond restating existing international humanitarian law, commits states to strengthen the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences of this method of war.

A few days later, the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons demonstrated the viability of that treaty, adopting an action plan with strong steps for implementing its humanitarian obligations, including on victim assistance and environmental remediation.

This month, the UN General Assembly's Sixth Committee is expected to adopt the groundbreaking Principles on Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts.

In addition, the Mine Ban Treaty is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its adoption, and the Convention on Cluster Munition has proven its worth by preventing states parties from transferring cluster munitions to their ally Ukraine. Across humanitarian disarmament fora, there has been greater attention to gender perspectives, including the relationship with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda.

More work remains to be done. Words on paper need to be turned into practice in conflict zones like Ukraine, Yemen, Ethiopia, and elsewhere. In addition, there have been state threats to civil society involvement in international diplomatic forums, such as during talks on autonomous weapons systems at the Convention on Conventional Weapons and at Open-ended Working Group on Information and Communication Technology. The COVID-19 pandemic also continues to close civil society space. Furthermore, as discussed in last year's First Committee statement on humanitarian disarmament, more attention should be paid to issues of race and intersectionality.

Despite the tremendous challenges we face, 2022 underscores the value and promise of a humanitarian approach to disarmament, which other speakers will elaborate on in their statements today.

Thank you.

This statement has been endorsed by the following 5 global humanitarian disarmament campaigns and 122 other civil society organizations:

Control Arms
 International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
 International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition
 International Network on Explosive Weapons
 Stop Killer Robots

Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy
 Action for Women & Children Concern
 Action on Armed Violence
 African Council of Religious Leaders-Religions for Peace
 Airwars

Amnesty International
 Amputee Selfhelp Network Uganda
 Anglican Pacifist Fellowship
 Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
 Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Military Spending
 Aotearoa New Zealand Joint Working Group on Landmines and Cluster Munitions
 Aotearoa New Zealand Network on Militarisation of Children and Young Persons
 Aotearoa New Zealand Network on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas
 Aotearoa New Zealand Women, Peace and Security Network
 Arab Human Security Network
 ASMAR Human Security Organization
 Assistance Mission for Africa
 Associazione Italiana Vittime Civili di Guerra
 Aurat Foundation
 Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines

Campaign Against Arms Trade
 Campaign to Stop Killer Robots Activists Network–Hungary
 Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas
 Canadian Pugwash Group
 Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights
 Center for International Affairs Studies, Universidad de Buenos Aires
 Center for International Security and Policy, Kazakhstan.
 Center for Peace Education
 Center for Political Ecology
 Centre Delàs d'estudis per la Pau
 Centro de Estudios Ecuménicos–México
 CIVIC
 Committee of 100 in Finland
 Conflict and Environment Observatory
 CRISPAL-AFRIQUE

Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft–Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen (DFG-VK)
 Disarmament and Arms Control–South Africa
 Droits Humains Sans Frontières

Every Casualty Counts

Facing Finance
 Fight For Humanity
 Foundation For Environmental Rights, Advocacy & Development (FENRAD Nigeria)
 Fundación Cultura de Paz (Foundation for a Culture of Peace)
 FundiPau (Foundation for Peace)

Gemeinsam gegen Landminen–GGL-Austria (Together against Landmines-Austria)
 Global Thought Mx

Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic
Humanity & Inclusion

ICAN Aotearoa New Zealand
Indian Institute for Peace, Disarmament & Environmental Protection
Institute of International Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada
Instituto Sou da Paz
InterAgency Institute
International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons
International Committee for Robot Arms Control
Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Italian Campaign to Ban Landmines

Jesuit Refugee Service

Kingston and St Andrew Action Forum
KNOW NUKES TOKYO
Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva
Kurdistan Organizations' Network to Abolish Nuclear and Mass Destruction Weapons
Kurdistan without Genocide

Landmines Resource Center Lebanon

Mécanisme pour l'initiative de la Recherche de la Paix et le Développement (MI-RPD)
Medact
Mines Action Canada
Mines Advisory Group
Minnesota Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions/MCBLCM
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Justice and Peace Centre (Australian Province)
Mwatana for Human Rights

Namibia NGO Forum Trust (NANGOF Trust)
Naturefriends Greece
Noble Delta Women for Peace and Development International
Nonviolence International
Nonviolence International Canada
Norwegian Peoples Aid
Norwegian Peace Association
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Nuclear Disarmament Group, Scottish Parliament

Organization Against Weapons of Mass Destruction in Kurdistan
Organization of the Justice Campaign

PAX

Pax Christi-Asia Pacific
 Pax Christi Ireland
 Pax Christi Philippines
 Pax Christi Vlaanderen.
 Peace Boat
 Peace Angel Project
 Peace Movement Aotearoa
 Peoples Federation for National Peace and Development (PEFENAP)
 Plataforma CIPÓ (Brazil)
 Project Ploughshares
 PROTECTION
 PSALM: Proud Students Against Landmines and Cluster Bombs

Reverse the Trend

SafeGround
 Science for Peace, University of Toronto
 Security Research and Information Centre
 Seguridad Humana en América Latina y el Caribe (SEHLAC)
 Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) of the Jesuits
 Soka Gakkai International
 Somali Human Rights Association (SOHRA)
 South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA)
 Southern African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (SACCORD)
 Survivors Recovery and Rehabilitation Organization
 Sustainable Peace and Development Organization
 Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (Svenska Freds- och Skiljedomsföreningen)
 Syrian Network for Human Rights

Transcend Philipinas
 transform.at

Uganda Landmine Survivors Association
 United Against Inhumanity
 United Nations Association of Sweden
 United Nations Association–UK

Virtual Planet Africa

West Virginia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions
 White Helmets
 Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal
 Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
 World Federalist Movement–Canada
 World without Chemical and Biological Weapons