

Civil Society Statement on Gender, Intersectionality, and Disarmament

UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, 15 October 2026

Thank you, Chair. I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the 54 organisations that have signed on.

In disarmament discussions, including in this First Committee, we often hear discourse that portrays weapons as important for security, power, and control, while disarmament is treated as something that makes countries weaker or more vulnerable. Far from being a small detail, this reasoning is harmful, not only because it has implications for policies related to all weapon systems, but also because it stands in the way of progress towards sustainable peace and security. Thus, for the purposes of the First Committee, challenging gender norms is important not just to reflect reality, but also to support disarmament and demilitarisation.

While gender and disarmament has gathered momentum in recent years, most statements, working papers and resolutions do not take an intersectional or nonbinary approach to the impacts, diversity, or norms described. Globally, women's liberation, LGBTQ+ rights, and gender diversity are all coming under threat from reactionary and conservative pressures.

The UN must be a place to uphold human rights and work for the freedom and equality of all people.

At last year's First Committee, [over 26 per cent of resolutions](#) included gender references. Though the past two years have demonstrated a percentage decrease in gender-related language in resolutions, the overarching trend has been a steady increase. Last year, 86 delegations endorsed a [joint statement](#) on gender and disarmament, and several disarmament treaties now have Gender Focal Points.

Despite these positive developments, there is still a lack of diversity in disarmament discussions. Diversity is important as it can help illuminate the various ways in which weapons have gendered, racial, and other intersectional impacts on particular communities and peoples.

There are numerous examples, in the past, and in the present, of how weapons and militarism have disproportionately impacted communities, peoples and genders: nuclear weapons testing on the lands, water, and bodies of Indigenous Peoples; [drone strikes](#) in the Global South; and the use of small arms and light weapons in gender-based violence.

New weapon technologies, such as the use of artificial intelligence and autonomy in weapon systems, underscore the urgency to make disarmament discussions more diverse, as they will further increase the gendered, racial, and other impacts of weapons and war. The technologies are known to be biased and discriminatory to people of colour, women, trans people, and people with disability.

Diversity and a more robust reflection of the gendered norms associated with weapons, war, and violence are crucial for effectively addressing the challenges associated with the

proliferation and use of weapons. An intersectional approach to disarmament that recognises the importance of diverse identities and experiences is also essential.

As encouraged by the UN Secretary-General in his [New Agenda for Peace](#), states should “fight back and take concrete action to challenge and transform gender norms, value systems and institutional structures that perpetuate exclusion or the status quo.” It is only through the dismantling of oppressive power structures, including the patriarchy, that we are able to take meaningful action towards peace. This is what delegates to the First Committee should prioritise.

Thank you, Chair.

This statement was drafted by Reaching Critical Will based on the article “[Gender, Intersectionality, and Disarmament](#)” written by Ray Acheson. The statement has been endorsed by the following organisations:

A world without chemical and biological weapons-www
Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)
ACTORS RWANDA (ARO)
Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Military Spending
Arab Human Security Network
Back from the Brink Coalition
Ban Landmines Campaign Nepal (NCBL)
Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas
Conflict and Environment Observatory
Control Arms
Dhesarme - Brazilian Action for Humanitarian Disarmament
Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft – Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen e.V.
ECPAT GUATEMALA / SEHLAC
FEPAD Burundi/Femmes Engagées à consolider la Paix et l'Assainissement pour le Développement durable
Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e. V. / Women's Network for Peace, Germany
Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC)
Genuine
ICAN Aotearoa
ICAN France
ICBL-CMC
Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)
Kurdistan organizations Network to Abolish Nuclear and Mass Destruction Weapons-KONW
Kurdistan without Genocide
LABRATS
Mines Action Canada
National Network on Explosive Weapons Aotearoa New Zealand
Nonviolence International
Nonviolence International Canada
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

Organization of the Justice Campaign- OJC
Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG)
Peace Boat
Peace Movement Aotearoa
Project Ploughshares
PROTECTION
Qazaq Nuclear Frontline Coalition
Red Feminista de Inteligencia Artificial en América Latina y el Caribe
SEHLAC
Soka Gakkai International
Somali Human Rights Association (SOHRA)
Stop Killer Robots
Stop Killer Robots Aotearoa New Zealand
Stop Killer Robots Finland
Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society
United Nations Association - UK
Vrede vzw
West Virginia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
WILPF Togo
Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal
WPS National Network Aotearoa New Zealand