

Civil Society Statement on Gender, Intersectionality, and Disarmament

UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, 17 October 2025

Thank you, Chair. I am delivering this statement on behalf of the 23 organisations that have signed on.

Interest in the topic of “gender and disarmament” has gathered momentum in recent years at the UN. But most statements, working papers, and resolutions do not take an intersectional or nonbinary approach to the gendered impacts of weapons, to diversifying delegations, or to studying the implications of gender norms on weapons and war.

A global backlash means that women’s liberation, LGBTQ+ rights and participation, and gender diversity are under extreme threat. 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, [33.8 per cent of resolutions](#) included gender references, and 80 delegations endorsed a [joint statement](#) on gender and disarmament. Several disarmament treaties have Gender Focal Points, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and most recently, the Arms Trade Treaty. States and civil society have made the effort to mainstream gender into work on small arms and light weapons, outer space, chemical weapons, cyber issues, and more.

These developments are very welcome and should be continued and enhanced in as many disarmament forums as possible. However, a more robust reflection of the gendered norms associated with weapons, war, and violence is also crucial for addressing the challenges associated with the proliferation and use of weapons.

Weapons are typically seen as important for security and power, while disarmament is treated as something that makes countries weaker or more vulnerable. This has implications for policies related to all weapons, from nuclear bombs to small arms. It also is reflected in the patriarchal approach to security that we’ve heard in this room, including the defence of genocide and military invasions.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. A key demand of the feminist peacebuilders behind resolution 1325 was to stop war altogether, not to make it “safer” for women. Empty condemnation of attacks against civilians while continuing to arm violence against them is unacceptable. As we confront record levels of armed conflict, militarisation, and military spending, states must stop arms transfers that violate international law and reduce their military spending, redirecting toward providing for people and the planet.

An intersectional approach to disarmament that recognises the importance of diverse identities and experiences is also essential. Diversity can help illuminate the various ways in which weapons have gendered, racialised, disability-related, and other impacts on communities and peoples. Hopefully, the new [UN panel of experts](#) to study the physical and social effects of nuclear war, established on the basis of last year's First Committee [resolution](#), will advance some of these considerations in relation to nuclear weapons.

The UN Secretary-General's [New Agenda for Peace](#), released in July 2023, calls for dismantling "the patriarchy and oppressive power structures" and encourages governments, society, and the United Nations to "fight back and take concrete action to challenge and transform gender norms, value systems and institutional structures that perpetuate exclusion or the status quo." This is what delegates to the First Committee should prioritise throughout their work for disarmament and demilitarisation.

Thank you, Chair.

This statement was drafted by Ray Acheson, Director of Reaching Critical Will.

The following organisations have endorsed this statement:

Campaign Against Arms Trade
Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM)
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
Cluster Munition Coalition
Disability Rights and Disarmament Initiative at Cape Breton University
Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC)
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)
International Campaign to Ban Landmines
International Peace Research Association
Kennis: Knowledge for Safety and Good Governance
Mines Action Canada
Nonviolence International
Nonviolence International Canada
PAX
Perú por el Desarme
Project Ploughshares
Saferworld
Secure Scotland
Soka Gakkai International
Stop Killer Robots
Vision GRAM-International
Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD)
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)