

HUMANITARIAN DISARMAMENT: *THE WAY AHEAD*



Conference Summary

Harvard Law School
March 5-6, 2018





INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC
HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM AT HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

This conference summary was written by Bonnie Docherty, Daniel Levine-Spound, and Alice Osman.

The conference was co-organized by the Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, and the Harvard Kennedy School's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.

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Cover Images

Top left: A mushroom cloud rises after an atomic bomb test in Bikini Atoll of the Marshall Islands, 1946. Courtesy of the San Diego Air and Space Museum Archives.

Top right: A Syrian refugee walks among buildings severely damaged by explosive weapons in downtown Homs, Syria, June 3, 2014. Xinhua/Pan Chaoyue.

Bottom right: A mine laid by Iraqi occupation forces has been exposed by shifting sands in the southern Kuwait desert, March 29, 1991. UN Photo/John Isaac.

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Humanitarian Disarmament: A Timeline

- 1992** International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) formed in New York.
- 1994** ICRC president declares that from “humanitarian point of view” a “world-wide ban on anti-personnel mines is the only truly effective solution.”
- 1996** Ottawa Process to negotiate a ban on antipersonnel landmines begins.
- 1997** Mine Ban Treaty adopted and opened for signature.
ICBL and Jody Williams receive 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for starting “a process which in the space of a few years changed a ban on anti-personnel mines from a vision to a feasible reality.”
- 1998** ICBL creates Landmine Monitor initiative.
- 1999** Mine Ban Treaty enters into force.
- 2000** 100th country ratifies Mine Ban Treaty.
- 2003** Control Arms campaign created.
Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) launched in the Hague.
- 2007** Oslo Process to negotiate a ban on cluster munitions begins.
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) launched in Austria.
- 2008** Convention on Cluster Munitions adopted and opened for signature.
- 2009** UN General Assembly votes to initiate negotiations of an arms trade treaty.
UN Secretary-General first expresses concern about humanitarian impact of explosive weapons.
- 2010** Convention on Cluster Munitions enters into force.
- 2011** International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) established in Geneva.
Control Arms Secretariat established.
ICBL and CMC merge to create ICBL-CMC.
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies calls for abolition of nuclear weapons.
Efforts to adopt weak Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) protocol on cluster munitions defeated.
- 2012** Negotiations of an arms trade treaty begin.
Toxic Remnants of War Project launched.
Campaign to Stop Killer Robots formed in New York.
Human Rights Watch convenes first annual humanitarian disarmament forum.
- 2013** Norway hosts first conference on humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons.
Campaign to Stop Killer Robots publicly launched in London.
Arms Trade Treaty adopted and opened for signature.
CCW states parties adopt mandate to discuss lethal autonomous weapons systems.
- 2014** Mexico and Austria host conferences on humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.
More than 100 states endorse Humanitarian Pledge to “stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.”
Arms Trade Treaty enters into force.
- 2015** ICRC holds expert meeting on explosive weapons in populated areas.
AI researchers and roboticists issue open letter calling for ban on autonomous weapons.
First Review Conference of Convention on Cluster Munitions adopts declaration “condemn[ing] any use of cluster munitions by any actor.”
Austria convenes discussions of political commitment on use of explosive weapons in populated areas.
Toxic Remnants of War Network established.
- 2016** 100th country ratifies Convention on Cluster Munitions.
UN Environment Assembly passes resolution on protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict.
International Law Commission recognizes toxic remnants of war and proposes obligations to address them.
CCW’s Fifth Review Conference establishes a Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems.
UN General Assembly votes to negotiate treaty banning nuclear weapons.
- 2017** Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons adopted and opened for signature.
UN Environment Assembly passes resolution on mitigation of conflict pollution.
ICAN wins 2017 Nobel Peace Prize “for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons.”

Introduction

In March 2018, experts from around the world convened at Harvard Law School for the two-day conference “Humanitarian Disarmament: The Way Ahead.” The conference took place at a critical moment in the history of humanitarian disarmament, which focuses on reducing civilian harm rather than protecting national security. Humanitarian disarmament advocates were celebrating several milestones, including the tenth anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the awarding of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). At the same time, they were facing new challenges despite having built momentum over the past decade. The conference provided global leaders in humanitarian disarmament an opportunity to reflect on the state of the field and strategize about its future. It also introduced a wider audience to this approach to disarmament through two public events. This report summarizes the discussions and conclusions of the conference.

Origins and Goals of the Conference

Humanitarian disarmament seeks to prevent and remediate human suffering from problematic weapons, especially through the development of international norms. It originated in the mid-1990s when civil society spearheaded the creation of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. The negotiations of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions proved that humanitarian disarmament had become a well-established approach, and the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017 has been its most recent achievement. As it has matured, humanitarian disarmament has also expanded its scope. Civil society used the approach when advocating for the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty. Other campaigns have turned to humanitarian disarmament to counter the dangers of fully autonomous weapons, explosive weapons used in populated areas, and toxic remnants of war (TRW).

Humanitarian disarmament has reached a crossroads, however. While the field has had notable successes and grown rapidly, over the past several years it has faced numerous obstacles, including a more difficult political environment, limited funding, and the need to diversify its community and government allies. The Harvard conference asked key players from civil society and academia to step back from their individual campaigns and examine the approach that unites all their efforts. It encouraged participants to find ways to collaborate and reinforce each other's work in order to maximize their collective impact.

The conference also served as the inaugural event of the Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative (ACCPI).¹ Housed in Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic, the ACCPI aims to reduce the civilian harm caused by armed conflict by engaging in targeted legal advocacy, training students to be future leaders, and promoting innovation in dialogue with experts. The ACCPI co-organized the conference with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and the Harvard Kennedy School's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, laying the groundwork for further cross-campus collaborations among these distinct but complementary Harvard programs.

¹ For more information on the Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative, see <http://hrp.law.harvard.edu/accpi/>.

Overview of the Discussions

The two-part format of the conference was designed to raise awareness of humanitarian disarmament and promote strategic thinking about its future.

Public Events

Two public events attracted broad audiences that included students, members of the Harvard community, and local academics and civil society representatives. These sessions sought to educate the public about the humanitarian approach to disarmament.²

The keynote event featured leaders from two Nobel Peace Prize-winning campaigns: Steve Goose of Human Rights Watch, co-founder of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), which received the 1997 prize, and Beatrice Fihn, director of ICAN, which was awarded the same honor last year. Bonnie Docherty, who directs the ACCPI, moderated the conversation. Drawing on their extensive first-hand experience, the speakers discussed the defining characteristics of humanitarian disarmament, its evolution, its humanitarian impact, and the keys to its success.

The next day, the directors of four other humanitarian disarmament campaigns spoke about additional areas of activity. The panelists included Laura Boillot of the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), Anna Macdonald of Control Arms, Mary Wareham of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, and Doug Weir of the Toxic Remnants of War Network. Jasmin Nario-Galace from the Center for Peace Education served as moderator. The panel introduced the audience to the motivations behind and objectives of these ongoing campaigns. The speakers also addressed the influence of humanitarian disarmament on their work.



International experts gathered in March 2018 for “Humanitarian Disarmament: The Way Ahead,” the inaugural conference of the Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative (ACCPI) at Harvard Law School. Photo by Heratch Ekmekjian.

² Video recordings of the two events are available at:
<https://today.law.harvard.edu/humanitarian-disarmament-way-ahead/>.

Experts Workshop

About 25 experts in humanitarian disarmament participated in a closed-door workshop. They included the heads of seven global campaigns, representatives of 11 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that have worked on multiple disarmament issues, and academics from Harvard and beyond.³ Descriptions of the campaigns appear at the end of this report.

The group began by examining the meaning of humanitarian disarmament and the challenges it faces. Participants widely referred to humanitarian disarmament as a “people-centered approach” in both its aim, which is to minimize human suffering, and its process, which is driven by civil society. Participants generally understood the term broadly to encompass efforts not only to ban indiscriminate and inhumane weapons but also to address the trade, use, and aftereffects of arms. Significant challenges highlighted by the group included a lack of diversity within the humanitarian disarmament community, the current political environment, funding shortages, and the need to reach out to new allies and the broader public.

The group then identified overarching, as opposed to campaign-specific, goals for humanitarian disarmament and strategized about how to achieve them. Participants agreed that over the next five years the community should prioritize increasing diversity and inclusion, collaborating more efficiently and effectively, and ensuring long-term sustainability. They broke into four smaller groups that brainstormed specific and implementable ways to advance these goals through internal collaboration, global outreach, government advocacy, and the marshalling of information, respectively.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants generated a list of specific action items that they could take on individually or collectively. These tasks centered around developing shared messaging on humanitarian disarmament, educating various actors about the approach, increasing cross-campaign collaboration, expanding the community and its supporters, and maximizing limited resources. Participants also agreed to reconvene at a future date to discuss progress and ways to maintain the momentum of humanitarian disarmament.

The rest of this report provides a more in-depth account of the public and private discussions. It also highlights key takeaways for each session.

³ Participants not affiliated with Harvard came from the following organizations and institutions: Article 36, Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas, Center for Peace Education, Conflict and Environment Observatory, Forum on the Arms Trade, Human Rights Watch, Humanity and Inclusion (formerly Handicap International), Mines Action Canada, Pace University’s International Disarmament Institute, PAX, Religions for Peace, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

Public Events

“From Landmines to Nuclear Weapons: A Conversation with Nobel Peace Laureates”

Key Takeaways

- Humanitarian disarmament places civilian protection, rather than national security, at the center of disarmament.
- Civil society drives humanitarian disarmament processes, which seek to establish new international norms around certain weapons.
- Humanitarian disarmament instruments commonly prohibit a specific type of weapon, obligate states parties to eliminate stockpiles, and require the provision of assistance to victims and clearance of contaminated land.
- Global coalition-building, advocacy in a range of fora, targeted messaging, and effective information-gathering are critical to the success of humanitarian disarmament campaigns.

The conference's keynote event explored the origins, evolution, and major achievements of humanitarian disarmament over the past two decades. The event featured leaders of two Nobel Peace Prize-winning disarmament coalitions. Steve Goose, director of Human Rights Watch's Arms Division, co-founded the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, a 1997 laureate, and has been a key player in the Cluster Munition Coalition and other humanitarian disarmament campaigns.⁴ Beatrice Fihn serves as executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.⁵ Bonnie Docherty, who created the Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative at Harvard Law School, moderated the conversation.

Goose and Fihn spoke in-depth about their campaigns' critical roles in the negotiation and subsequent efforts to universalize treaties banning landmines, cluster munitions, and nuclear weapons. They also shared broader reflections on the ways in which the humanitarian approach has shifted the disarmament paradigm. As Goose noted, humanitarian disarmament has “become the normal way to do business. . . . It's the only way to get things done now — and that's a good thing.”

⁴ For more information on the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, see <http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/home.aspx>. For more information on the Cluster Munition Coalition, which merged with the ICBL in 2011, see <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/en-gb/home.aspx>.

⁵ For more information on the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, see <http://www.icanw.org/>.

The event began with a discussion of the characteristics of humanitarian disarmament, and the ways in which it differs from earlier disarmament approaches. While disarmament traditionally focused on advancing the interests of states, according to Goose, “the top priority [for humanitarian disarmament] is the impact on civilians, not a narrowly conceived national security interest. It’s making sure that civilians are not harmed unduly through armed conflict.” Fihn added that humanitarian disarmament parallels other trends, such as the development of international humanitarian law, because it has shifted the international discourse “from looking at state security as the only thing that matters to actually looking at the impact on people.”

The speakers also emphasized that in contrast to traditional disarmament, humanitarian disarmament initiatives are driven by civil society. While civil society organizations often partner with progressive governments, as well as UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the force behind successful humanitarian disarmament efforts comes from outside of government. As Fihn explained, civil society organizations “channel public opinion and public pressure,” playing a central role in holding “governments accountable, particularly today when there is so much information and so much misinformation.”

The conversation then turned to the development of humanitarian disarmament, from the Mine Ban Treaty in 1997 to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2008 to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017. Over the past two decades, humanitarian disarmament has inspired the formation of multiple new campaigns, which have built on the successful strategies of their predecessors. For example, Fihn said that ICAN modeled its efforts largely on those of the ICBL, “coordinating and unifying civil society” around common objectives and tactics.



The conference’s keynote conversation featured Steve Goose, co-founder of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and director of Human Rights Watch’s Arms Division, and Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, with Bonnie Docherty of Harvard Law School as moderator (left to right). Photo by Martha Stewart.

The law reflected in the treaties has also evolved, as drafters have expanded the scope of states parties' obligations. Goose pointed out that the strong victim assistance provisions in the Convention on Cluster Munitions elaborated on an obligation in the Mine Ban Treaty, the first disarmament instrument expressly to address victim assistance. Fihn noted that unlike previous conventions, the TPNW explicitly required environmental remediation and underscored the importance of the effective participation of women in disarmament efforts. While they emphasized the progressive development of the conventions, Goose and Fihn highlighted elements that characterize most humanitarian disarmament treaties across time: a comprehensive prohibition on production, stockpiling, transfer, and use of certain weapons, obligatory destruction of existing stockpiles, and remedial measures, such as victim assistance and the clearance of contaminated areas. "You don't just stop more being used," Goose explained. "You take care of the problems that already exist."

Underscoring the achievements of humanitarian disarmament, the speakers discussed ways in which the conventions, and the humanitarian approach that produced them, have improved peoples' lives. In reference to the impact of the Mine Ban Treaty, Goose asserted that "50 million antipersonnel mines have been destroyed from stockpiles" and 30 countries, including heavily affected ones such as Mozambique, "have cleared all of the landmines on their territory. He estimated that Mine Ban Treaty's implementation has "saved tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands" of lives and limbs and allowed for a significant amount of previously mined land to be returned to productive use. Fihn explained that nuclear weapons have long been accepted as "somehow exempt from international law and norms" because they have been seen "as a theoretical exercise" rather than as "dirty bombs meant to kill as many civilians as quickly as possible and to poison those that survive." The TPNW, however, "treats nuclear weapons as weapons," prohibiting their use and development and mandating victim assistance, just as other humanitarian disarmament conventions do. Though the nine nuclear armed states have not signed the TPNW, Fihn said, the treaty could influence a range of actors, from non-nuclear armed states hosting other countries' nuclear weapons or relying on them for national defense, to corporations investing in the development of these weapons. The TPNW, she asserted, "is already leading to stronger demands on financial institutions and banks to divest from production." She noted further that the treaty's victim assistance provisions could have a "huge impact" for survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and decades of nuclear weapons testing.

In reflecting on the successes of their campaigns, and civil society in general, Goose and Fihn emphasized the value of coalition-building, global advocacy efforts, and information-gathering in advancing humanitarian disarmament. Goose noted that in the landmine context, governments relied on NGOs to understand the subject: "We knew more than they did, and governments believed they could trust us." He also stressed the importance of placing survivors and civilians at the center of advocacy efforts. Fihn said that ICAN had played a similar role in amplifying the voices of civilians as it sought to hold governments accountable. "Change will only come from people," she said, "from ordinary people demanding change."

The speakers concluded their conversation by reflecting on the Nobel Peace Prize's impact on their respective campaigns. Goose said that the award inspired new countries to join the Mine Ban Treaty and increased campaigners' access to governments. "People thought the Peace Prize legitimized banning antipersonnel landmines," he said. Fihn responded that "[i]t

changes everything, and nothing.” She acknowledged that the prize will not alter the position of the US government but described the prize as an “enormous honor” and inspiration for ICAN. After years of hard work, Fihn said, “[t]o get this recognition was a huge mobilizer, energizer for the whole campaign.”

In response to questions from the audience, Goose and Fihn addressed the potential parallels between nuclear disarmament and gun control and climate change efforts, whether nuclear weapons actually constitute a “deterrent” to war, the importance of including women’s voices in humanitarian disarmament initiatives, and the mechanisms of enforcement of humanitarian disarmament treaties.

“Current Issues in Humanitarian Disarmament: Targeting, Toxicity, Technology, and Trade”

Key Takeaways

- Humanitarian disarmament has expanded beyond efforts to ban existing weapons. Its campaigns also seek to limit the use of certain explosive weapons in populated areas, preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons, combat the environmental consequences of armed conflict, and control the trade of arms.
- Humanitarian disarmament is spearheaded by global civil society coalitions, frequently acting in partnership with progressive governments, the ICRC, and UN agencies.
- Developing specific, tailored messages and gathering and disseminating information are key to successful humanitarian disarmament efforts.
- While humanitarian disarmament campaigns often strive to create new international law, they may also advocate for political commitments, implementation of existing treaties, and fresh, interdisciplinary approaches to regulating aspects of armed conflict.

The conference’s second public event was a panel discussion with the directors of four other humanitarian disarmament campaigns. Moderated by Jasmin Nario-Galace of the Center for Peace Education, the panel included (in speaking order) Laura Boillot of the International Network on Explosive Weapons, Mary Wareham of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, Doug Weir of the Toxic Remnants of War Network, and Anna Macdonald of Control Arms. The panelists each discussed the specific objectives of their civil society coalitions and the ways in which their coalitions have adopted the humanitarian disarmament approach.

Speaking first, Boillot explained that INEW seeks to prevent human suffering caused by the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas.⁶ Stated simply, INEW's work focuses on the civilian harm caused by bombing and shelling towns and cities. According to Boillot, explosive weapons—a broad category of arms that includes aircraft bombs, artillery shells, mortars, and rockets—are generally designed for military use on an open battlefield. In an age of increasing urbanization of armed conflict, however, militaries are employing explosive weapons in civilian centers, with disastrous humanitarian consequences. Boillot noted that the bombing of towns and cities “kills tens of thousands of civilians each year” and cited recent data indicating that “when explosive weapons are used in populated areas, 92 percent of the victims are civilians.” Aside from causing death and injuries, bombing urban areas often results in mass displacement, psychological trauma, and damage to civilian infrastructure and the provision of services. “For many years after a conflict ends, the effects are felt,” Boillot said.

INEW calls on states to stop the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects, due to their inaccuracy, blast size, or delivery of multiple warheads. Following the model of the humanitarian disarmament campaigns against landmines and cluster munitions, INEW looks specifically at the impact on individuals and communities and seeks to build a partnership of NGOs, progressive states, the ICRC, and UN bodies. Presently, INEW's central objective is the drafting of an international political declaration, by which states would commit not to use explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas. For Boillot, the declaration would serve as a “good tool” in pushing militaries to enact “operational changes” around the use of explosive weapons. She said that INEW is also working with states to “develop national policies and procedures” that would operationalize the political commitment and is promoting efforts to assist civilians in affected communities.



Laura Boillot (right) of the International Network on Explosive Weapons discusses her humanitarian disarmament advocacy on a conference panel with Mary Wareham of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. Photo by Heratch Ekmekjian.

⁶ For more information on the International Network on Explosive Weapons, see <http://www.inew.org/>.

Following Boillot's presentation, Wareham discussed the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, a growing coalition of more than 80 NGOs in at least 35 countries, which aims to bring about a preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapons, also known as "killer robots."⁷ These weapons systems would be able to select and engage targets without human intervention. As Wareham explained, "We want to ensure that there is human control over critical functions of weapons systems." Lack of meaningful human control, she asserted, would both cross "a moral line" and render weapons incompatible with states' obligations under international humanitarian law, such as a commander's responsibility to assess the proportionality of an attack before deciding to use force.

Applying the lessons of previous humanitarian disarmament efforts, Wareham said, the founders of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots recognized that they needed "a coordinated campaign with one voice and one goal—prohibiting the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons." Six months after the launch of the campaign in 2013, governments agreed to begin discussing the issue in the framework of the Convention on Conventional Weapons, and there have been several multilateral meetings since then. Over the past five years, a series of reports from Human Rights Watch and the Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic, along with publications from other member organizations, has helped build the case against fully autonomous weapons. Wareham made clear that the campaign seeks to "create new international law on this as quickly as possible," citing the end of 2019 as a plausible goal.

Doug Weir of the Toxic Remnants of War Network explained that his campaign grew out of the Toxic Remnants of War Project, an initiative created in 2012 to research the environmental effects of armed conflict and military activities.⁸ The project examined "direct" toxic remnants of war, notably chemically toxic and radiological pollutants left by certain weapons, such as Agent Orange. It also studied "indirect" TRW, which emerge from "circumstances associated with conflict"; for example, due to lack of available fuel, communities in Syria and Iraq are increasingly refining their own crude oil, a process that can have serious environmental and health consequences.

Given that its work falls at the intersection of civilian protection during armed conflict and environmental protection, Weir said, the Toxic Remnants of War Network has merged humanitarian disarmament approaches with environmental thinking. It has engaged with both traditional disarmament fora, such as meetings of the Convention on Conventional Weapons and the UN General Assembly's First Committee, and with environmental bodies, such as with UN Environment Assembly. The Toxic Remnants of War Network has framed the issue of TRW and raised its international profile. The campaign has also sought to address other issues related to environment and armed conflict, including the lack of a mechanism through which states can request environmental assistance after armed conflict. The Toxic Remnants of War Network's efforts, Weir said, are a "remixed version of humanitarian disarmament."

⁷ For more information on the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, see <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/>.

⁸ For more information on the Toxic Remnants of War Network, see <http://www.trwn.org/>.



Doug Weir of the Toxic Remnants of War Network speaks about his work, along with fellow panelist Anna Macdonald of Control Arms and moderator Jasmin Nario-Galace of the Center for Peace Education (left to right). Photo by Heratch Ekmekjian.

The last speaker, Anna Macdonald, introduced Control Arms.⁹ She said that this campaign seeks to “stop the flood of weapons and ammunition around the world,” and to “stop arms transfers which fuel poverty, human rights abuses, and conflict.” Launched in 2003, the coalition sought to “achieve an international treaty to regulate the conventional weapons trade,” which encompasses transfers of weapons that are not chemical, biological, or nuclear as well as some military equipment. At that time, no global treaty or mechanism governing the legal arms trade existed, and arms traders could easily circumvent the “patchwork system” of national and regional laws. Given that most weapons are manufactured legally, the campaign focuses its efforts on controlling the legal arms trade, which can in turn help reduce the illicit transfers. Macdonald noted that Control Arms follows the humanitarian disarmament approach in several key ways. For example, it places the impact of arms on civilians at the center of its work, it disseminates information about the problem through the publication of well-researched reports, and it adopts clear and accessible messages, such as “why are bananas more heavily regulated than AK-47s?”

Since the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013, Control Arms has focused its efforts on pushing governments to implement and effectively comply with their legal obligations. Macdonald emphasized that a treaty “is only the first step. Implementation is as important, if not more important, than getting the instrument.” While she highlighted successes of implementation, Macdonald noted that the election of US President Donald Trump and the rise of other populist leaders around the world has posed a significant challenge. Humanitarian disarmament, she said, is “often two steps forward, one step back.”

Following their presentations, the four panelists answered questions from the audience on messaging strategies, the US stance on humanitarian disarmament, and how humanitarian disarmament campaigns should define success.

⁹ For more information on Control Arms, see <https://controlarms.org/>.

Experts Workshop

Understanding Humanitarian Disarmament

Key Takeaways

- Humanitarian disarmament is a people-centered approach to preventing and remediating human suffering caused by problematic weapons.
- Civil society drives humanitarian disarmament in partnership with states and international organizations.
- Humanitarian disarmament seeks to build international and national norms.
- Humanitarian disarmament can be defined broadly to encompass bans on specific weapons as well as other forms of regulations.

In the first session of the experts workshop, conference participants examined the concept of “humanitarian disarmament.” They discussed how individuals and campaigns working in the field interpret the term, with the aim of developing a common understanding of the approach that could be presented to others. The exchange of views helped participants identify several key features of humanitarian disarmament.

The group highlighted the “people-centered” nature of humanitarian disarmament as a fundamental characteristic of its purpose and process. Humanitarian disarmament seeks to prevent and remediate human suffering caused by problematic weapons. It differs from traditional approaches to disarmament, which focus on protecting national, rather than human, security.

Civil society drives humanitarian disarmament efforts. NGOs, often working in coalitions, partner with like-minded states and international organizations to achieve their goals. Participants observed that humanitarian disarmament campaigns define clear priorities and strive to have immediate, tangible impacts.

According to the group, humanitarian disarmament generally involves setting standards and building norms. In the words of one participant, it “identifies the unacceptable and makes what is unacceptable unthinkable.” Such norm-building can be achieved through international instruments and national legislation as well as disarmament education and the promotion of a culture of non-violence.

The discussion also addressed the origins and scope of humanitarian disarmament. The roots of humanitarian disarmament are intertwined with the longer history of international humanitarian law, but it became a distinct approach to disarmament in the 1990s. The term

emerged in the first decade of the twenty-first century and gained currency within civil society with the Humanitarian Disarmament Campaigns Summit convened by Human Rights Watch in October 2012. At that time, humanitarian disarmament was exemplified by the pioneering work of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munition Coalition, which led to legally binding prohibitions on landmines and cluster munitions. While banning indiscriminate and inhumane arms remains a goal, humanitarian disarmament is today understood to have a broader reach. The approach has been adopted by advocates working to reduce humanitarian harm caused by the trade, targeting, and aftereffects of weapons.

Challenges and Solutions

Key Takeaways

- Significant challenges for humanitarian disarmament include:
 - Lack of diversity in the community,
 - A need to increase the inclusion of survivors,
 - The current political climate,
 - Difficult policy choices,
 - Overuse of certain tactics and partnerships,
 - Funding shortages,
 - Limited involvement with the broader public, and
 - Practical difficulties, such as physical and information security and burnout of advocates.
- Potential solutions include:
 - Reaching out to and engaging more with national organizations and affected individuals and communities,
 - Increasing collaboration across humanitarian disarmament campaigns and ensuring consistent messaging,
 - Forging new partnerships with different states, civil society actors in related sectors, and other stakeholders,
 - Looking for creative opportunities to maximize limited financial resources,
 - Communicating humanitarian disarmament's goals and success stories more widely, and
 - Seeking ways to overcome practical challenges.

In the second workshop session, participants identified challenges faced by humanitarian disarmament. They also shared information about tools that they have found to be effective in overcoming such challenges and brainstormed other potential solutions.

Diversity

The lack of diversity within the community of humanitarian disarmament advocates attracted significant attention. Participants observed that the community is dominated by organizations based in the Global North. They saw more effective regional engagement as key to tackling limited geographic and linguistic diversity. International campaigns should also adapt their messages to specific regions and countries. Increased funding, such as through a small grants program, could help local organizations set their own agendas and engage in long-term planning.

Some participants questioned the extent to which humanitarian disarmament represents voices on the ground given that the views of affected individuals and communities are not always given sufficient prominence. One participant noted that language and cultural barriers make it difficult to explain international treaties to survivors. He also stressed the importance of involving affected communities in ways that do not merely use them as symbols of harm. The group agreed that there is a need to foster advocates in conflict-affected areas. Urging states to comply with their positive obligations to affected communities would increase both assistance for survivors and the role of survivors in decision-making.

Operating in a Difficult Political Climate

Participants identified the current international political climate as another matter of serious concern for humanitarian disarmament. Recent years have seen attacks on international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and civil society actors as well as the rise of leaders who do not support the goals of humanitarian disarmament. Some of the traditional partnerships between states and disarmament NGOs have deteriorated, as certain governments have chosen not to work as closely with civil society organizations as they did in the past.

The question arose whether in this political climate, humanitarian disarmament should continue to expand, or should focus on protecting what has already been achieved. Some participants proposed responding boldly to the contemporary international environment by presenting an overarching pro-peace “movement” as an alternative to rhetoric of violence and aggression. Others noted that the success of humanitarian disarmament to date has been partially due to individual campaigns’ focus on specific goals, and they warned that broadening the message of humanitarian disarmament could run the risk of weakening it. These participants expressed skepticism about the utility and feasibility of various humanitarian disarmament campaigns formally joining forces under a single umbrella, with, for example, a secretariat defining policy positions.

There was broad consensus, however, that regardless of how the humanitarian disarmament community is conceptualized or organized, it should speak with one voice on particular issues in order to have greater impact, especially in challenging times. For example, many participants considered it important that the community remain united when promoting existing humanitarian disarmament norms and institutions. Participants also saw the benefits of increasing coordination to ensure that there is consistency across issues, and that a position taken by one campaign does not undermine that of another. The group agreed that the term “community of practice” aptly described the collection of civil society actors involved in humanitarian disarmament.

Policy Choices

The discussion illuminated decisions the humanitarian disarmament community will need to make, and issues on which it may need to take a defined position. For example, advocates will have to choose which weapons the community should address. As one participant asked, “Are we banning everything that goes boom, or are we taking an international humanitarian law approach of limiting the nasty stuff and allowing conflict to continue?” The group talked about domestic gun control, an especially timely topic in the wake of the February 2018 school shooting in Florida, but it could not reach agreement on what stance the humanitarian disarmament community should take. Choosing areas of focus could become even more complicated given that the definition of weapon could change over time and encompass threats not only to life and limb but also to cyber security or economic and political stability.

Methods of Work

Participants discussed additional challenges related to their methods of work. They highlighted the risk of the humanitarian disarmament community applying identical tactics to numerous different issues. One participant warned that humanitarian disarmament should not operate as a “wind-up machine.” Humanitarian disarmament campaigns involve many of the same people and organizations, who often target the same governments and funders. Asking certain states to serve as champions on multiple disarmament issues can stretch their capacity. It was suggested that to relieve this pressure, different states could serve different roles within or across issues.

Participants also emphasized the benefits of forging new partnerships. Connecting with civil society organizations outside disarmament could offer opportunities to learn important lessons. During the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations, for example, Control Arms studied the tactics of other sectors to seek guidance on how to deal with particular challenges, such as antagonistic non-state actors in industry. In other campaigns, such as that to ban killer robots, industry representatives have proven to be helpful allies. One participant pointed out that humanitarian disarmament advocates should be careful not to alienate the military, as its members can be effective spokespeople on campaign issues; veterans were powerful partners in the campaign to ban landmines. Another participant saw potential for better communication between the humanitarian disarmament community and academics, who she believed often misunderstood the approach and criticized specific campaigns. The group identified national politicians, especially parliamentarians, as valuable partners but acknowledged that advocates needed to do more work to convince them of the importance of humanitarian disarmament issues.

Funding

The group identified a shortage of funding as another hurdle for humanitarian disarmament. Changes of governments in countries that have traditionally supported humanitarian disarmament, such as Norway, have had a significant impact on disarmament NGOs and demonstrated the precarious nature of government-based funding. One participant noted with surprise that foundations do not put give more funding to humanitarian disarmament, given the successes it has achieved, including two Nobel Peace Prizes and four international treaties. Several participants expressed concern that organizations sometimes focus on a particular issue or project simply because that is what states, the United Nations, or other donors are willing to support. They considered it important for the community to prevent funders from dictating the humanitarian disarmament agenda.

In brainstorming solutions, the group saw the benefits of looking beyond individual campaigns. One participant said presenting humanitarian disarmament as a broader humanitarian issue might lead to new funding sources. Another argued that humanitarian disarmament campaigns might attract more funding if they banded together with a common overarching cause.

Communications and Awareness Raising

Ensuring effective communication also presents challenges for humanitarian disarmament. Several participants recommended that humanitarian disarmament advocates make more of an effort to engage ordinary people and other stakeholders who can push their governments to act. Advocates talk frequently to government officials, but they should also strive to improve the public's understanding of humanitarian disarmament. They should avoid the "alphabet soup" of disarmament acronyms and explain the issues in laypersons' terms. Some participants suggested exploring new ways to involve other groups, such as religious leaders, in the conversation. Several participants said the community should present humanitarian disarmament as part of a broader shift in how security is viewed: in the areas of human rights, counter-terrorism, and torture, a state can no longer do anything it wants in the name of "national security." One participant observed that advocates with larger institutions or universities behind them were particularly well positioned to do communications work.

The group agreed that a win for one campaign is a win for all of humanitarian disarmament, and that it is important to celebrate each victory. One participant noted, for example, that the community could more effectively highlight how it has influenced the actions of non-state actors through divestment campaigns. A failure to broadcast the impact of humanitarian disarmament can lead to the spread of misperceptions. It also represents a missed opportunity to garner publicity and support.

Practical Matters

Finally, the group identified a number of practical challenges to advancing humanitarian disarmament. Security concerns have presented obstacles to documenting the impact of weapons on civilians and the environment, which creates difficulties for campaigns that rely on data and accounts of humanitarian harm to make their case. Participants involved in the landmine and cluster munition campaigns underscored the value of having field operators and researchers to gather such empirical information.

One participant highlighted the danger of burnout for humanitarian disarmament advocates given the long timeframe of the campaigns and difficult nature of the work. It is important to manage expectations and explain to new members that while humanitarian disarmament can be a gradual process, the foundations laid now may lead to significant results down the road. Lastly, participants noted the need to protect IT systems, given recent attacks on NGOs, and to develop safeguarding policies.

Goals for Humanitarian Disarmament

Key Takeaways

- The humanitarian disarmament community should aim to achieve greater diversity and inclusion.
- The community should collaborate more efficiently and effectively.
- The community should take steps to ensure its sustainability and foster a new generation of advocates.

Building on discussions in the previous session, participants identified overarching goals for humanitarian disarmament over the next five years. Three main objectives attracted general consensus in the group.

First, the humanitarian disarmament community should increase its diversity and inclusiveness. The community should expand to incorporate different voices and reflect a collective identity. Improving communication with colleagues in the Global South is crucial. Their increased participation in decision-making processes would help ensure that the agenda is not set exclusively by advocates from the Global North. One participant suggested that humanitarian disarmament meetings should more frequently take place in conflict-affected areas, allowing colleagues who cannot afford to travel to be heard. The group also recommended ensuring greater involvement of survivors and persons with disabilities, in line with the “nothing about us without us” principle.

Second, the humanitarian disarmament community should aim to collaborate more effectively and efficiently. Participants generally preferred that the community’s organizational structure remain flexible, rather than become institutionalized, but they agreed that the campaigns could enhance their influence and impact through greater collaboration. Several participants said that the community should be prepared to react promptly and collectively to events and develop guidelines setting out which circumstances warrant such a response. One participant suggested that the humanitarian disarmament community could highlight its shared identity by having an individual affected by conflict deliver a joint statement on humanitarian disarmament at First Committee, the UN General Assembly’s disarmament body. Internal tools could also be developed for use by advocates, such as a repository of common language describing humanitarian disarmament and specific campaigns. Furthermore, campaigns could make more efficient use of limited resources. For instance, an event held at a given location on one issue could be used strategically to address or gather information on other issues.

Third, the humanitarian disarmament community needs to ensure its sustainability. Numerous participants spoke of the importance of generating a stream of new civil society leaders. The community currently has an impressive set of expertise that it cannot afford to lose. It should plan ahead to ensure that the work of humanitarian disarmament continues even without the involvement of particular individuals. The community should also work over time to cultivate new champion states and spread responsibilities across a larger group of countries.

Planning for the Future: Breakout Groups and Presentation of Plans

The first day of the conference concluded with participants working in four breakout groups to develop specific and implementable plans to advance humanitarian disarmament. Each group focused on a particular strategy and discussed how it could be applied to achieve the humanitarian disarmament goals participants had identified in the previous session. The strategies explored were: internal collaboration, global outreach, government advocacy, and marshalling of information. Day two of the conference opened with each group presenting its plans.

Internal Collaboration

Key Takeaways

- Ideas for increasing collaboration within the humanitarian disarmament community include:
 - A cross-campaign small-grants program and pooled sponsorship funding,
 - Cross-campaign staff members,
 - Improved coordination on messaging and policy positions,
 - Capacity-building activities, such as trainings for new staff, national advocates, and diplomats,
 - Information sharing across campaigns, and
 - Regular discussions among humanitarian disarmament leaders about other opportunities for collaboration.
- These collaborative measures should not significantly increase advocates workloads or hinder the progress of individual campaigns.

The first group identified six ways to enhance internal collaboration within the humanitarian disarmament community. First, the group generated ideas for increasing the impact of limited funding. A proposed cross-campaign small grants program could offer multi-year funding to national NGOs and allow grantees to determine their own priorities. A consortium of humanitarian disarmament campaigns and organizations could seek out funders and draw up the necessary structures for applications, disbursement, governance, and accountability. Campaigns could also build on existing informal efforts to share the costs of bringing advocates to conferences by systematically raising money for a joint sponsorship program. In the meantime, the humanitarian disarmament community should try to coordinate activities around moments in the disarmament calendar when gatherings that address different issues coincide, such as during the annual meetings of First Committee. The group noted that one of the benefits of cross-campaign funding programs is that trending issues in individual campaigns can be used to raise money for humanitarian disarmament work across the board.

Second, the group proposed shared staffing as a way to use resources more efficiently, at least in some contexts. For example, participants saw the benefits of a cross-campaign digital advocate and dedicated people to oversee small grants and pooled sponsorship programs. Participants predicted that it might be less effective to share communications staff members.

Third, the group discussed how to improve coordination on policy issues. Participants recommended that NGOs involved in multiple campaigns stay alert to potentially conflicting positions and that the international campaigns should ensure that national organizations understand the appropriate messaging. For example, even if a campaign, such as the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, is working toward an international ban treaty, it should encourage its members not to dismiss the usefulness of political commitments as a class because such a commitment may be the goal of another campaign, such as the International Network on Explosive Weapons.

The group also suggested developing shared language to describe humanitarian disarmament, which all organizations could use as a frame for their work. Organizations could highlight successes across humanitarian disarmament that show the possibility of change. One participant proposed selecting an annual theme to guide humanitarian disarmament advocacy, such as the link between disarmament and the Sustainable Development Goals; different campaigns should be consulted before choosing a theme to maximize buy-in and impact. A new humanitarian disarmament website, built on the existing Ministry4Disarmament site, could facilitate such coordination.

Fourth, the group put forward ideas for capacity-building activities that would strengthen humanitarian disarmament and build its sense of community. For example, it would be valuable to introduce new staff members in individual campaigns to the broader concept of humanitarian disarmament and various issues in the field. Such an introduction could take the form of an introductory call with representatives from other campaigns in order to instill a collective mindset from the outset. National organizations should also be educated about humanitarian disarmament and receive support for developing networks that deal with multiple relevant arms issues. Humanitarian disarmament training for new diplomats should be reinstated.

Fifth, the group considered ways to enhance information sharing across humanitarian disarmament campaigns and organizations. Participants noted the value of exchanging details about active national NGOs and advocates and reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of creating a shared database rather than relying on *ad hoc* communication across campaign staff members. Participants also discussed the possibility of establishing a shared database of disarmament officials in New York and Geneva, although concerns were flagged regarding privacy of information and the amount of work that would be required to maintain it.

Sixth, the group considered how best to operationalize the above proposals. They agreed that measures to increase coordination needed to fit seamlessly into advocates' existing workflows and not introduce significant work or formal structures that could hinder progress. The group supported the idea of continued discussions among humanitarian disarmament leaders, such as those assembled at this conference. They suggested reconvening annually or semi-annually in the margins of an international meeting, such as First Committee. Campaign directors could have periodic calls to talk about how to collaborate at that level.

Global Outreach

Key Takeaways

- The humanitarian disarmament community can expand and increase its influence by working with national networks and cultivating new allies and constituencies.
- Developing a symbiotic relationship between global and local actors will ensure a diversification of the humanitarian disarmament community.
- The humanitarian disarmament community should do more to engage young people and affected communities.
- Ongoing dialogue across campaigns and dissemination of best practices can help ensure the sustainability of humanitarian disarmament.

The second breakout group focused on strategies to enable humanitarian disarmament to reach a wider and more diverse audience, which would in turn help advance the its goals of creating new norms and universalizing existing ones.

First, the group examined how humanitarian disarmament can increase its number of supporters and influence. Participants recommended that the humanitarian disarmament community build on the resources and energy of regional and national networks to develop local campaigns. At the global level, advocates should look beyond traditional supporters and find new allies and constituencies. Participants identified indicators by which to measure their support and influence, including: treaty signatures and ratifications, the passage of national laws and resolutions, the adoption of humanitarian disarmament messages by local actors (militaries, unions, NGOs, parliamentarians), and media coverage. These indicators can be tracked not only through official sources, but also through polls, social media, press monitoring, and outreach to civil society and political actors.

Second, the group considered how to make humanitarian disarmament community more diverse. The group believed that the relationship between the local and the global should be symbiotic. Global campaigns should listen to local communities and share messages without imposing views and priorities. The campaigns should then report back to constituents about the impact of their contributions. The humanitarian disarmament community should also make an effort to share knowledge and resources, such as best practices, advocacy techniques, and substantive materials, all of which should be made accessible, particularly to survivors. Key strategic messages should be communicated in relevant languages.

Third, the group discussed how a new generation of campaigners could be developed. Participants concluded that the humanitarian disarmament community should do more both to bring survivors into the fold and to foster intergenerational collaboration. Messaging should be communicated on different media platforms and targeted to the audience the community

wants to engage. Experienced advocates should proactively pass on knowledge to the younger generation and train new leaders. Broader peace and disarmament education was seen as an important tool for achieving these goals.

Finally, the group explored how the humanitarian disarmament community can be effectively sustained. In addition to cultivating new and young voices, consistent dialogue was considered to be a fundamental element. Lines of communication across campaigns should remain open, and collective discussions should occur regularly, no less than once a year. The location of meetings should expand beyond the traditional cities and countries, to bring the discussions closer to affected areas and populations. Securing sufficient funding for activities is clearly essential. The community should also continue to build collective best practices, which are then translated, disseminated, and periodically updated.

Government Advocacy

Key Takeaways

- The partnerships between civil society and states, including champion states, are not as close as they were previously, and humanitarian disarmament organizations have been increasingly marginalized in international lawmaking.
- Civil society should clearly communicate to states the benefits of partnering on humanitarian disarmament issues and the criteria for an effective partnership.
- Measures should be taken to foster new champion states and to reward existing ones.

The next breakout group analyzed how the humanitarian disarmament community could strengthen its government advocacy. Discussions focused on the community's need for champion states that see civil society organizations as true partners in disarmament processes.

The group began by examining which states are champions of humanitarian disarmament. They noted that champion states vary across fora and issues and that their characteristics differ in several ways. These countries may be affected states or middle powers that hold particular foreign policy positions. A champion state should not only support humanitarian disarmament but also have credibility on the specific issue. Variables that determine which states act as champions include: the personal views of particular diplomats; the national ambitions of the government; the geopolitical context; and interpersonal connections. Some states have been disappointing because they seem like promising supporters of humanitarian disarmament but have chosen not to step up as champions. The group noted that it can be helpful to have a different set of champion states for different humanitarian disarmament issues, rather than always appealing to the same states, as often happens. It may also be preferable to have champions for specific topics, rather than champions of "humanitarian disarmament" in general.

Next, the group reflected on the challenges faced by the humanitarian disarmament community in engaging with states. The group noted that there has been a backsliding from the close partnerships between civil society and states that drove the landmine and cluster munition ban processes. Civil society was less involved in the actual negotiations of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons than in early ones. Indeed, during the TPNW process, NGOs were excluded from sessions in which the language of the treaty was drafted. These experiences suggest that states have started to view civil society actors as “cheerleaders” who are expected to garner support for instruments they have not had a sufficient say in shaping. The group also expressed frustration at the hierarchy in UN fora, in which NGOs rank below the ICRC and UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). Champion states often contribute to reinforcing that hierarchy.

Participants suggested several steps to help address these challenges. They recommended finding ways to convince states that it is in their interest to work with civil society and that NGOs are not simply add-ons whom they can invite to participate halfway through a process. Humanitarian disarmament organizations could better explain to states what type of cooperation they expect and could perhaps provide diplomats with materials setting out how best to engage with civil society. In some contexts, regional meetings with small groups have helped build trust. At the same time, a wary eye should be kept on unfriendly states who may seek to block civil society’s involvement in humanitarian disarmament processes.

To cultivate new allies, the humanitarian disarmament community could talk to certain states about what they need to become champions. States that are active on related issues outside disarmament, such as environmental protection, could be promising targets. The community should look to states with legitimacy on an issue as well as significant financial capital. Furthermore, greater efforts should be made to mobilize support from domestic politicians. One participant proposed inviting diplomats from possible champion states to part of the annual humanitarian disarmament campaigners’ meeting, perhaps for a session with external speakers. Participants also recommended rewarding champion states with recognition and praise, such as through a “humanitarian disarmament champion state of the year” award. It was noted that states that championed the process to ban nuclear weapons relished the attention they received for their leadership, including through the Nobel Peace Prize celebrations.

The group recognized the importance of working with other actors as well. They agreed that civil society should maintain good relations with the ICRC and UN agencies and talk to them about potential champions. The private sector could also be mobilized to pressure governments, as has been done by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

Marshalling of Information

Key Takeaways

- Internal databases would allow humanitarian disarmament organizations to share valuable information on, for example, national ratification processes, government positions and contacts, and the community's common messaging.
- A humanitarian disarmament website could raise awareness about the approach and educate the public about its activities and accomplishments.

The final breakout group focused on how the humanitarian disarmament community can most effectively marshal and share information. Relevant information may take many forms, including: evidence-based research, whether qualitative or quantitative; monitoring reports; compilations of states' policies and practices; legal and political research and analysis; factsheets about weapons; descriptions of humanitarian disarmament and its organizations; and media and other forms of communications. Such information should be disseminated both within the humanitarian disarmament community and to the outside world.

To facilitate the exchange of information across campaigns, the group proposed internal databases containing, for example, details about the ratification processes in various countries, political analyses of states' positions, lists of government or organizational contacts, and common humanitarian disarmament language and messages. While such databases would be highly useful resources, the group acknowledged that close attention would have to be paid to information security, particularly in light of the hacking of NGO websites last year.

The group agreed that a comprehensive, public website would be a valuable tool for raising awareness of and improving education around humanitarian disarmament. The website could provide an overarching description of humanitarian disarmament and identify key actors. It could include a history of the approach, relevant publications, and news and updates from specific campaigns. It could also advertise job vacancies across the community. The group recommended developing the website this year in order to improve the branding of humanitarian disarmament in an expedient manner.

Setting the Agenda and Next Steps

Key Takeaways

- The humanitarian disarmament community should take concrete steps to implement these proposals, focusing on measures to:
 - Develop shared messaging on humanitarian disarmament,
 - Educate various actors about the concept of humanitarian disarmament,
 - Increase cross-campaign collaboration,
 - Expand the community and its supporters, and
 - Maximize limited resources.

In the final two sessions of the conference, participants discussed the breakout groups' proposals and prioritized certain elements. While this conference summary will not detail specific action items, the larger group focused on the following areas:

- Developing a common description of humanitarian disarmament that can help raise awareness and improve understanding of the approach,
- Increasing collaboration and information sharing across humanitarian disarmament campaigns,
- Building the diversity of the humanitarian disarmament community, including by fostering greater involvement by advocates in the Global South,
- Promoting inclusion, especially of survivors and affected communities,
- Identifying ways to maximize the impact of funding, such as cross-campaign small grants and sponsorship programs,
- Engaging with and educating diplomats about humanitarian disarmament as well as individual campaigns, and
- Working at the national level to generate more government support for humanitarian disarmament and its campaigns.

Humanitarian Disarmament Campaigns

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

www.stopkillerrobots.org



The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots was established to provide a coordinated civil society response to the multiple challenges that fully autonomous weapons pose to humanity. It was formed by ten nongovernmental organizations in October 2012 and launched in April 2013.

The campaign calls for a preemptive and comprehensive ban on the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems or killer robots. This goal should be achieved through new international law (a treaty) as well as through national laws and other measures.

The campaign is concerned about weapons that operate on their own without meaningful human control. The campaign seeks to prohibit taking the human “out-of-the-loop” with respect to targeting and attack decisions on the battlefield.

Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC)

www.stopclustermunitions.org



The Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) is a global civil society coalition of hundreds of organizations working for a world without cluster munitions, in which the suffering caused by these weapons has ended, and the rights of victims are upheld and realized. The CMC works through its members to change government policy and practice on cluster munitions, especially through promoting universal adherence to and full compliance with the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The CMC raises public awareness and advocates at the national, regional, and international levels. Through its global membership the CMC brings the reality of cluster munition-affected communities into the diplomatic arena. CMC campaigners around the world work in a spirit of cooperation with their governments and other partners to ensure countries join the Convention on Cluster Munitions and live up to the letter and spirit of the treaty.

The CMC was formed in 2003, and in 2011 it merged with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to become the ICBL-CMC, one organization with two separate campaigns on cluster munitions and on landmines. The campaign work of both the CMC and the ICBL is underpinned and supported by the research work of the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor.

Control Arms

www.controlarms.org



With more than 300 civil society partner organizations in all regions of the world, Control Arms successfully campaigned for the creation and adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. The campaign involved coordinated advocacy, research and policy analysis, international popular mobilization, clear digital and media communications, the participation of a wide range of stakeholder organizations, and a partnership approach with supportive governments.

The goals of the Control Arms Coalition now are to ensure that more states join the Arms Trade Treaty to advance universalization and that governments robustly implement the treaty, thereby establishing high international norms for future arms transfer decision-making.

The individuals and organizations that have consistently called for a bulletproof Arms Trade Treaty come from diverse sectors of society, demonstrating the broad-based support that exists for strong regulations on arms trade. The Control Arms Secretariat, established in 2011, is the coordination body for Control Arms Coalition.

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

www.icanw.org



The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a coalition of nongovernmental organizations in more than 100 countries promoting adherence to and implementation of the United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty. This landmark global agreement was adopted in New York on July 7, 2017.

ICAN began in Australia and was formally launched in Austria in April 2007. The campaign's founders were inspired by the tremendous success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Since its founding, ICAN has worked to build a powerful global groundswell of public support for the abolition of nuclear weapons. By engaging a diverse range of groups and working alongside the Red Cross and like-minded governments, the campaign has helped reshape the debate on nuclear weapons and generate momentum towards elimination.

ICAN was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its "work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons" and its "ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons."

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)

www.icbl.org



Since its launch in 1992, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) has been the voice of civil society in the diplomatic arena, pushing for changes in government policies and practices to address the suffering caused by landmines. The campaign includes national and international nongovernmental organizations, as well as dedicated individuals, across many disciplines including human rights, development, refugee issues, and medical and humanitarian relief.

The ICBL raises awareness and advocates at the national, regional, and international levels. Through its global membership the ICBL brings the reality of mine-affected communities into the diplomatic arena. ICBL campaigners around the world work in a spirit of cooperation with their governments and other partners to ensure countries join the Mine Ban Treaty and live up to the letter and spirit of the treaty.

The ICBL and Jody Williams received the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for their work to achieve a treaty banning antipersonnel landmines. In 2011 the ICBL merged with the Cluster Munition Coalition to become the ICBL-CMC, one organization with two separate campaigns on landmines and on cluster munitions. The campaign work of both the ICBL and the CMC is underpinned and supported by the research work of the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor.

International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)

www.inew.org



**International
Network on
Explosive Weapons**

The International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) is a nongovernmental organization partnership, established in 2011, that calls for immediate action to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

INEW believes that this suffering can be reduced, and unnecessary deaths and injuries prevented. INEW is calling on states and other actors to face up to the problem as a policy challenge, to meet the needs of victims and survivors, to review their national practices, and to come together to develop stronger international standards to curb this pattern of violence.

INEW members undertake research and advocacy to promote greater understanding of the problem and the concrete steps that can be taken to address it. They develop partnerships calling for improved policy at a national level and work together to develop stronger standards internationally. Many INEW member organizations also work in countries affected by explosive violence, providing development assistance, documenting the impact of violence, assisting the victims of explosive weapons, and clearing landmines, unexploded ordnance, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Toxic Remnants of War Network (TRWN)

www.trwn.org



The Toxic Remnants of War Network is a civil society network working to reduce the humanitarian and environmental impact of pollution generated by conflict and military activities.

The Toxic Remnants of War Network aims to work with organizations and experts active in the fields of humanitarian disarmament, the environment, public health, and human rights to ensure that the generation and impact of toxic remnants of war are properly documented and addressed. The network supports the development of improved legal protection for civilians, military personnel, and the environment from toxic remnants of war.

The Toxic Remnants of War Network was created in 2015. Its secretariat was originally housed with the Toxic Remnants of War Project and is now housed with the Conflict and Environment Observatory. Its Steering Group comprises Article 36, Green Cross International, the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), Norwegian People's Aid, and PAX.

Humanitarian Disarmament: The Way Ahead

Humanitarian disarmament seeks to prevent and remediate human suffering from problematic weapons, especially through the development of international norms. A people-centered approach, it focuses on reducing civilian harm rather than protecting national security.

Humanitarian disarmament originated with the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, became a well-established approach with the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, and addressed weapons of mass destruction in the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Civil society also used the approach when advocating for the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty, and other campaigns have applied it to efforts to counter the dangers of fully autonomous weapons, the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas, and toxic remnants of war.

In March 2018, experts from around the world convened at Harvard Law School for the two-day conference “Humanitarian Disarmament: The Way Ahead,” which was the inaugural event of Harvard’s Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative. The conference provided global leaders in humanitarian disarmament an opportunity to reflect on the state of the field and strategize about its future. It also introduced a wider audience to this approach to disarmament through two public events. This report summarizes the discussions and conclusions of the conference and, in so doing, sheds light on humanitarian disarmament, the challenges it faces, and the steps necessary to further its goals.