

Civil Society Statement on Race and Intersectionality in Humanitarian Disarmament

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

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

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

Taking an anti-racist, intersectional perspective to humanitarian disarmament is therefore fundamental for centring human security and peace, by understanding not only how people are affected by the use of these weapons but which communities will bear the burden of suffering and the aftermath. It is necessary that we question whose voices are valued in disarmament; whose voices lead the conversations and develop the policies; and whose voices, experiences, and expertise are missing from these spaces and processes.

Racial assumptions and unconscious biases in law, policy, and decision-making have a serious impact on disarmament. That a deliberate and intentional anti-racist approach has not been central to disarmament, even till today, is a monumental oversight. Without addressing these assumptions and biases, vulnerable communities and people will continue to be disproportionately affected by violence caused by weapons systems.

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

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

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

Supporting organisations (by time of delivery on 08.10.2021):

1. Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy (AIDD)
2. Action for Women and Children Concern (AWCC) Somalia
3. Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)
4. Afghan Landmine Survivors Organization (ALSO)
5. Amnesty International
6. Ethics in Technology
7. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
8. Environmental Protection Promoters Initiative -EPPI
9. Poverty and Associated Maladies Alleviation Initiative (PAMAI), Nigeria
10. Peace Movement Aotearoa
11. Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
12. PEAC Institute - Peace | Education | Art | Communication
13. PAX
14. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Ghana
15. Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO), Pakistan
16. Centro de Estudios Ecuménicos, (CEE), México
17. Veterans For Peace Golden Rule Project
18. Somali Human Rights Association -SOMALIA
19. Reverse The Trend: Save Our People, Save Our Planet
20. NuclearBan.US
21. TreatyAwareness.US
22. Peace Boat

23. Indian Institute for Peace Disarmament & Environmental Protection
24. PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY RESOURCES-UGANDA
25. Zambian Network For Human Rights Defenders
26. Campaign to Stop Killer Robots - Hungary activist network
27. Corruption Tracker
28. United Nations Association - UK
29. Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS)
30. Secure Scotland
31. Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Nuclear Disarmament
32. RAJA/SENEGAL(Réseau des Anciens Jécistes d'Afrique/ Senegal)
33. The Norwegian Peace Council
34. Conflict and Environment Observatory
35. Bill Kidd, Member of the Scottish Parliament
36. Senzatmica
37. Nonviolence International Southeast Asia
38. Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
39. Committee of 100 in Finland
40. LABRATS International
41. Facing Finance
42. IM Swedish Development Partner
43. Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
44. Soka Gakkai International
45. Campagna Italiana contro le mine
46. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
47. Control Arms Coalition
48. International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition
49. Pax Christi Scotland
50. Women's Institute for Alternative Development
51. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
52. Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM)
53. Project Ploughshares
54. Instituto Sou da Paz
55. Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft - Vereinigte Kriegsdienstgegner*innen (DFG-VK)
56. Vision GRAM-International
57. Mines Action Canada
58. Africa Centre for Security, Governance & Research (ACSGRE), Kenya
59. Medact
60. PROTECTION
61. Article 36

62. Saferworld
63. WILPF Zimbabwe
64. Lea Launokari, Women for Peace, Finland
65. Ulla Klötzer, Women Against Nuclear Power, Finland
66. Plataforma CIPÓ
67. Seguridad Humana en América Latina y el Caribe (SEHLAC)
68. World BEYOND War
69. ECPAT Guatemala
70. Human Rights Watch
71. Harvard Law School's Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative
72. Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
73. People's Federation for National Peace and Development (PEFENAP)
74. CPG Nuclear Disarmament, Scottish Parliament
75. Sri-Lankan Doctors for Peace and Development IPPNW Affiliate
76. PSALM: PROUD STUDENTS AGAINST LANDMINES AND CLUSTER BOMBS/USA, Nora Sheets/Coordinator
77. Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture (VAST)
78. Global Thought MX
79. Physicians for Social Responsibility, USA
80. International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)
81. Foundation for Peace and Democracy
82. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (Australia)
83. Environmentalists Against War
84. SafeGround Inc

Additional supporting organisations (updated 21.10.2021)

85. Humanity and Inclusion
86. WCAPS, Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security, Conflict Transformation
87. ICAN Kurdistan Network-IKN
88. Organization Against Weapons of Mass Destruction in Kurdistan
89. Anfal Stories Organization
90. Kurdistan without Genocide
91. Organization of the Justice Campaign
92. Kurdish Organizations Network Coalition for the International Criminal Court (KON_CICC)
93. Halabja Chemical Victims society
94. Association of Defending the Anfal Victims and Their Families
95. A world without chemical and biological weapons-www
96. WILPF Lebanon

97. Center for Peace Education, Miriam College

98. Pax Christi Philippines

99. Forum for Nation Building Nepal