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General Assembly First Committee Background Guide 2026

Written by Harrison Baile and Tammy Nguyen



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations Washington DC Conference (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to your committee, the General Assembly First Committee. Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Harrison Baile and Assistant Director Tammy Nguyen. Harrison holds a Master of Arts in Political Studies and currently works as Senior Legislative Advisor for a territorial government in Canada. Tammy is currently an undergraduate student, studying Political Science and Policy, and she also works as a public policy analyst. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Kaytlyn Marcotte, Catherine Tomczyk, and Tobias Willms, and Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser.

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and Its Implications for International Peace and Security
2. Youth, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation

The General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy-making body of the United Nations, with the First Committee focusing on seven thematic clusters across international peace and security. The First Committee coordinates global security policy through annual sessions, thematic discussion, and reports alongside the Security Council, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and other specialized bodies. Resolutions and treaty recommendations passed by the First Committee are consensus-based and non-binding. The 80th session of the First Committee calls for peace, development, and human rights.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. ET (DC time) on 15 October 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•DC Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact Under-Secretary-General, Kaytlyn Marcotte, at dcusg.kaytlyn@nmunstaff.org or the Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser, at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Harrison Baile, Director
Tammy Nguyen, Assistant Director



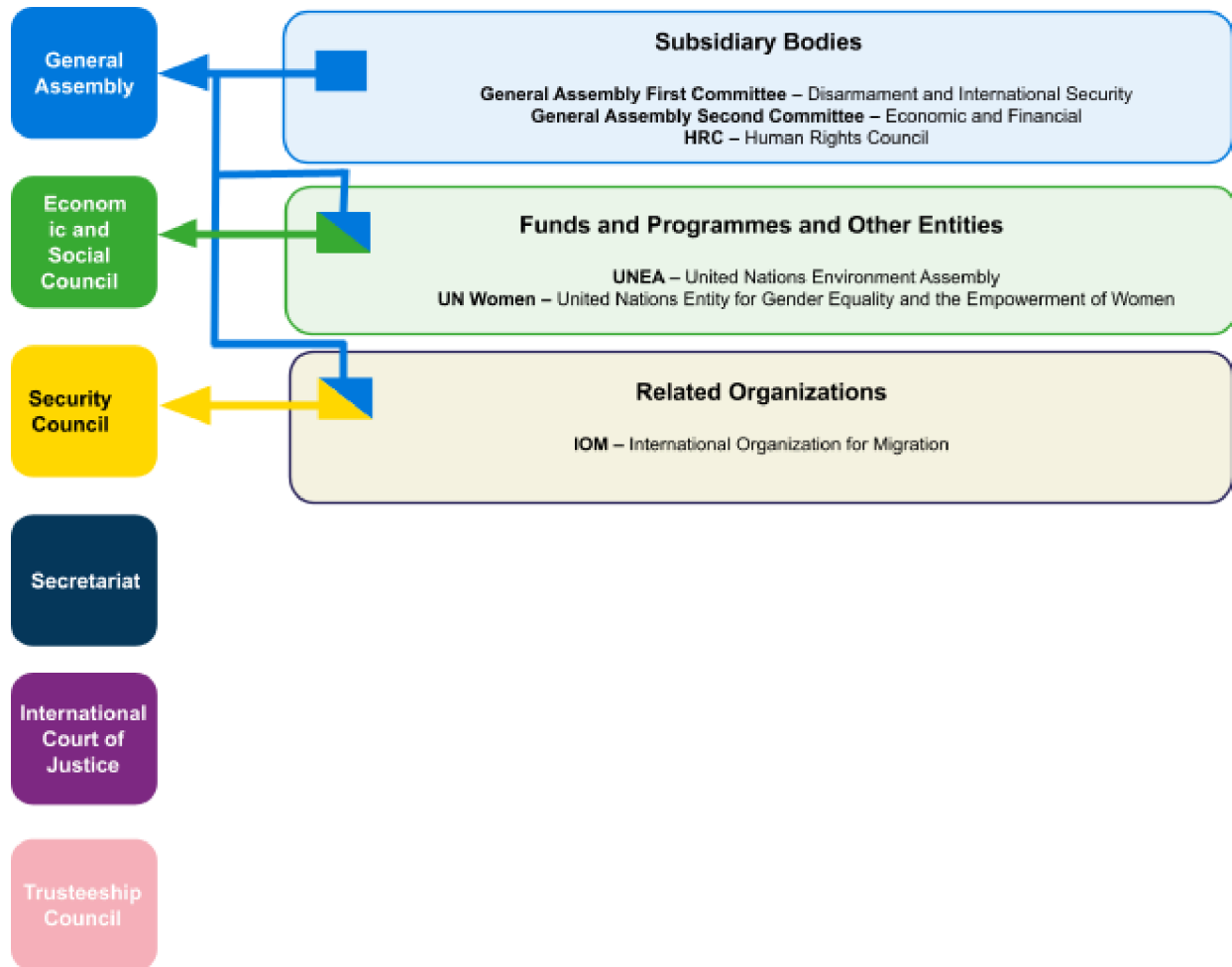
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United Nations System at NMUN•DC

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN•DC. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

The General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy-making body of the United Nations and one of the six principal organs established by the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).¹ The work of the General Assembly is undertaken in subsidiary committees, each of which debates and adopts draft resolutions on their thematic areas and allocated agenda items.²

The General Assembly First Committee considers matters relating to disarmament and international peace and security.³ It considers agenda items under seven thematic clusters: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; disarmament aspects of outer space; conventional weapons; regional disarmament and security; other disarmament measures and international security; and the disarmament machinery.⁴

Mandate, Function and Powers

The General Assembly acts as a forum for dialogue and cooperation, providing general policy recommendations rather than carrying out operative tasks.⁵ Its policy recommendations are non-binding and their implementation is conducted by Member States, the United Nations Secretariat, and other United Nations bodies, each of which independently align their work with General Assembly resolutions.⁶

The General Assembly adopts resolutions, which are formal documents expressing the agreement and will of the international community.⁷ The majority of these resolutions are adopted by consensus, meaning no vote is taken and no Member State has specific cause to object.⁸ The First Committee adopts around 50-70 resolutions each year, around half of which are adopted by consensus, after which they are sent to the General Assembly Plenary.⁹

In line with the *Charter of the United Nations*, the mandate of the General Assembly can be summarized as:

- The General Assembly **will generally**: make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council, other United Nations bodies and organs, United Nations specialized agencies, and other international actors; initiate studies and advance efforts to promote international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields and in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms; consider or request reports from other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies; establish United

¹ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

² Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 68.

³ Ibid. p. 69.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 69-70.

⁵ Ibid. p. 36.

⁶ Ibid. p. 52.

⁷ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 52.

⁸ Ibid. pp. 37, 52.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 68-70.



Nations observance days, create expert groups or commissions, formulate mechanisms for treaty negotiation, or refer an issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).¹⁰

- The General Assembly **will not generally**: dictate the specific actions required for the implementation of policies it recommends, allowing Member States and other bodies to determine operational details; create new bodies, except for in those rare instances where ubiquitous international demand requires the consolidation of existing bodies or a concept and mandate have been fully developed, typically through years of negotiations; make recommendations on situations under consideration by the United Nations Security Council.¹¹

Governance, Funding and Structure

The General Assembly meets annually and is composed of all 193 United Nations Member States.¹² It may also convene special sessions at the request of the Secretary-General, Security Council, or a majority of Member States.¹³ Observer status can be granted to intergovernmental organizations and states without full United Nations membership; the two organizations that have been granted Observer Status are the Holy See and the State of Palestine.¹⁴ In the General Assembly, each Member State has one equal vote and most decisions require a simple majority.¹⁵ As a principal organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is largely self-governing, determining its own agenda, procedures, officers, and subsidiary bodies.¹⁶

The First Committee's procedures are managed by its Secretariat and an elected Bureau which is elected at the start of each session of the First Committee and consists of a geographical rotation of the five regional groups.¹⁷ The committee's Bureau assists with opening and closing each meeting, managing the discussions, pronouncing decisions, assisting with drafts and documents, and ensuring compliance with the rules of procedure.¹⁸ The First Committee receives substantive and organizational support from three entities: the General Committee, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.¹⁹ The most notable resolutions that

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 36; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; UNFOLD ZERO. *UN Bodies*. N.d.

¹¹ United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *Are UN resolutions binding?* 2023; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)*. 2026; United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Welcome to the Human Rights Council*. 2024; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

¹² United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *About Permanent Observers*. N.d.

¹⁵ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 13.

¹⁶ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. pp. 13, 15, 44.

¹⁷ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.

¹⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.19)*. 2021. pp. 30-31.

¹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.



have been passed by the First Committee during its 80th session include resolution 80/67 on “The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East,” and resolution 80/49 on the “Follow-up to 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament.”²⁰

The First Committee also works in close cooperation with the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).²¹ The CD is an independent entity and the only recognized “multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.”²² UNDC is a subsidiary organ of the First Committee and makes recommendations on various issues in the field of disarmament and following up on past decisions.²³ Both the CD and UNDC report to the First Committee.²⁴ The General Assembly also jointly oversees the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) with the Security Council and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) with ECOSOC.²⁵

²⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East (A/RES/80/67)*. 2025; United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (A/RES/80/49)*. 2025.

²¹ Ibid.

²² United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Conference on Disarmament*. N.d.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

²⁵ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.



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1. Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and Its Implications for International Peace and Security

Introduction

Due to its mandate on international peace and security, the First Committee is poised to lead the United Nations' response on artificial intelligence (AI) within the military domain.²⁶ The First Committee's mandate on addressing challenges to international security means it is one of the main United Nations bodies that can coordinate international responses to AI in the military domain.²⁷ The United Nations has no universal definition of AI; however, the Secretary-General broadly defines AI as "...systems designed and trained to learn, solve problems, make predictions, make decisions, and perform tasks that are considered to require a level of intelligence comparable to that of a human."²⁸ AI is more than generative AI and large language models (LLMs), which make up the most visible AI models.²⁹ Generative AI is an AI model that creates new content based on large data sets, while LLMs are AIs that can recognize and generate text.³⁰ Other AI model types include machine learning, a model in which AI learns via vast amounts of data, and computer vision models, which allow AI to interpret images and video.³¹

The use of AI in the military domain can take many forms, from drones to command and control support.³² AI has already been used to conduct cyberwarfare, with several state-level cyber actors using LLMs to assist in social engineering, scripting attacks, and reconnaissance.³³ The use of AI within the military domain outside of lethal actions is prevalent.³⁴ Intelligence-related AI systems allow for target tracking and identification at a scale unattainable with human analysis.³⁵

AI is becoming more involved in the military domain, with global military spending related to AI estimated to reach \$38.8 billion by 2028.³⁶ AI is actively being used for military action, with Anthropic's Claude, an LLM, being used in conjunction with Palantir's Maven platform for target prioritization in the 2026 Iran

²⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024. pp. 2-3.

²⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

²⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/80/237)*. 2025. p. 2.

²⁹ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Practice Guide on Artificial Intelligence and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism*. 2026. pp. 8-9.

³⁰ Government of Canada, Canadian Centre for Cyber Security. *Generative artificial intelligence - ITSAP.00.041*. 2025; CloudFlare. *What is a large language model (LLM)?*. 2026.

³¹ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Practice Guide on Artificial Intelligence and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism*. 2026. pp. 8-9.

³² Grand-Clément. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Artificial Intelligence Beyond Weapons: Application and Impact of AI in the Military Domain*. 2023. pp. 10, 12.

³³ Microsoft Threat Intelligence. *Staying ahead of threat actors in the age of AI*. 2024.

³⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/224)*. 2024. p. 3.

³⁵ Shehabi et al. United States Military Academy West Point. *Israel – Hamas 2024 Symposium – Algorithms of War: Military AI and the War in Gaza*. 2024.

³⁶ Simpson et al. Centre for International Governance Innovation. *Militarizing AI: How to Catch the Digital Dragon?*. 2025.



conflict.³⁷ Palantir's Maven platform is an AI-powered command and control system that uses military datasets to provide target recommendations.³⁸ Target prioritization is the systematic prioritization of targets in which the most important are attacked first.³⁹ As an example of non-weapon AI use, Maven is capable of analyzing large amounts of video footage and related intelligence.⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch stated that the Israeli military used four different AI tools during the most recent conflict in Gaza for both surveillance and targeting.⁴¹ The AI tool codenamed "Lavender" assigned a likelihood of a person's membership to an armed group based on surveillance and intelligence sources to find possible combatants.⁴² Additionally, AI systems surveilled social media, phone records, and daily activities; data gathered by surveillance AI tools was fed into targeting AI systems.⁴³

A 2025 United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) report, titled *AI in the Military Domain: A Briefing Note for States*, warns of several inherent risks of AI use in the military domain, including AI safety risks due to the inherent brittleness of the technology, bias and trust system issues, and cybersecurity threats.⁴⁴ AI brittleness is the inability of an AI model to adapt outside of its assumptions or training, meaning an AI may not register unexpected events.⁴⁵ AI bias is when human bias in AI training data influences bias within AI.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the international system is adapting to the implications of AI in the military domain, such as the legal question of state and individual responsibility for AI-enabled military actions under international law, which the United Nations has committed to researching.⁴⁷ The report also finds that AI can benefit military applications outside of weapons, such as Command and Control systems, information management, and logistics.⁴⁸

³⁷ Lindsey. The Conversation. *US military leans into AI for attack on Iran, but the tech doesn't lessen the need for human judgment in war*. 2026; Bergmann. IBM. *What is Claude AI?*. 2026.

³⁸ Jeans. Reuters. *Exclusive: Pentagon to adopt Palantir AI as core US military system, memo says*. 2026.

³⁹ Joint Air Power Competence Centre. North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *A Comprehensive Approach to Countering Unmanned Aircraft Systems*. 2021. p. 147.

⁴⁰ Shehabi et al. United States Military Academy West Point. *Israel – Hamas 2024 Symposium – Algorithms of War: Military AI and the War in Gaza*. 2024.

⁴¹ Düz. Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research. *Gaza as a testing ground: Israel's AI warfare*. 2025; Human Rights Watch. *Questions and Answers: Israeli Military's Use of Digital Tools in Gaza*. 2024.

⁴² Human Rights Watch. *Questions and Answers: Israeli Military's Use of Digital Tools in Gaza*. 2024.

⁴³ Düz. Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research. *Gaza as a testing ground: Israel's AI warfare*. 2025.

⁴⁴ Paoli et al. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *AI in the Military Domain: A briefing note for states*. 2025. p. 13.

⁴⁵ Puscas. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *AI and International Security: Understanding the Risks and Paving the Path for Confidence-Building Measures*. 2023. p. 16.

⁴⁶ Holdsworth. IBM. *What is AI bias?*. 2026.

⁴⁷ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and Its Implications for International Peace and Security: An Evidence-Based Road Map for Future Policy Action*. 2025. p. 6.

⁴⁸ Paoli et al. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *AI in the Military Domain: A briefing note for states*. 2025. pp. 7-8.



International and Regional Framework

The General Assembly has adopted several resolutions on AI in the military domain and its application to weapon systems since 2024; however, AI is not included in any international conventions.⁴⁹ The Geneva Conventions are international treaties that set rules for conflict among signatories, including the protection of persons not taking part in the conflict.⁵⁰ Article 51 of the *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts* (Protocol I) (1977) sets out protections for civilians against indiscriminate attacks.⁵¹ Protocol I defines indiscriminate attacks as: attacks not directed at a specific military objective, attacks which employ a method that cannot be directed at a specific military objective, and attacks which cannot be limited to comply with the Protocol, meaning they can only be used for indiscriminate harm.⁵²

The General Assembly adopted resolution 79/239 on “Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security” as its first resolution on the topic in 2024, affirming that international law applies to AI use and its development lifecycle in the military domain and calling for Member States to address the many challenges of AI use in the military domain, including its lack of integration in current conventions.⁵³ Furthermore, in 2025, the General Assembly adopted resolution 80/23 on “Possible risks of the integration of artificial intelligence into command, control, and communications systems of nuclear weapons,” which demands that human control be maintained over any nuclear weapon command and control systems and adds the topic of the resolution to the agenda of the 81st session of the General Assembly.⁵⁴ Additionally, the General Assembly adopted resolution 80/57 on “Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems” in 2025, which emphasized the need to address AI and Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) multilaterally.⁵⁵ AI is inherently linked to LAWS as AI can increase the complexity of LAWS.⁵⁶ As with AI, there is no universally agreed definition of LAWS as the international community is still working towards a universal definition.⁵⁷

The *Pact for the Future*, adopted as a General Assembly resolution in 2024, is a pact to make the international system more inclusive and includes the *Global Digital Compact*.⁵⁸ Within the *Global Digital Compact*, the signatories committed to enhancing the international governance of AI and increasing cooperation on emerging technologies.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the Compact recognizes that digital public goods,

⁴⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024. p. 1; United Nations, General Assembly. *Lethal autonomous weapons systems (A/RES/80/57)*. 2025. p. 2.

⁵⁰ Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in Armed Conflicts. *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1)*. 1977. p. 9.

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 37-38.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024. pp. 1, 3.

⁵⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Possible risks of the integration of artificial intelligence into command, control and communications systems of nuclear weapons (A/RES/80/23)*. 2025. p. 2.

⁵⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Lethal autonomous weapons systems (A/RES/80/57)*. 2025. p. 2.

⁵⁶ United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. *UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*. 2025.

⁵⁷ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems*. N.d.

⁵⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*. 2024. p. 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 38-39.



including AI, empower people to address their development needs.⁶⁰ Objective 5 of the Compact focuses on enhancing international governance of AI.⁶¹ Under objective 5, Member States committed to establishing an Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and a Global Dialogue on AI Governance, promoting the equitable development of AI that protects privacy and human rights, and mitigating the risks that AI poses to international humanitarian law.⁶² A high-level review of the Compact is planned for late 2027.⁶³

While the use of AI in the military domain is not explicitly included in current conventions, the international system is researching the possibility of integrating AI into existing frameworks, both directly and via the inclusion of weapon systems such as LAWS.⁶⁴ The *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects* (1980), also known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), addresses the use of weapons that may have indiscriminate effects, contrary to international law, such as the Geneva Conventions.⁶⁵ The annexes of CCW list the prohibitions of certain weapons under the convention, such as improvised explosive devices and blinding laser weapons.⁶⁶ In 2015, the High Contracting Parties of CCW mandated the creation of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems to research LAWS.⁶⁷ In 2025, the General Assembly adopted resolution 80/68, entitled “Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,” which recognized and continued the work of the GGE on LAWS.⁶⁸

In 2024, the European Union passed the Artificial Intelligence Act.⁶⁹ The act banned three applications of AI: the behavioral manipulation of people or vulnerable groups, the classification of people based on their characteristics, and biometric identification.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the act added assessment requirements to any AI use in high-risk areas, such as aviation, infrastructure, law enforcement, and legal.⁷¹ Generative AI content, such as videos, will also need to disclose the use of AI, and AI developers are required to ensure there are safeguards to prevent AIs from generating illegal content.⁷²

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 41.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 48.

⁶² Ibid. pp. 49-51.

⁶³ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Global Digital Compact*. 2026.

⁶⁴ Digwatch. Diplo Foundation. *GGE on lethal autonomous weapons systems*. 2026.

⁶⁵ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons*. N.d.; United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects*. 1980.

⁶⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons*. N.d.

⁶⁷ Digwatch. Diplo Foundation. *GGE on lethal autonomous weapons systems*. 2026.

⁶⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (A/RES/80/68)*. 2025. pp. 1, 3.

⁶⁹ European Union, European Parliament. *EU AI Act: first regulation on artificial intelligence*. 2025.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.



Role of the International System

The General Assembly has been active in the monitoring of AI's impact on international peace and security and has encouraged the development of responsible AI use in the military domain by both the United Nations and Member States.⁷³ The Secretary-General provides the General Assembly with reports on current developments in technology that can impact international peace and security, including the impact of AI on international peace and security.⁷⁴ Additionally, the General Assembly has emphasized that the impacts of AI in the military domain must be understood by both the United Nations and Member States.⁷⁵ The Secretary-General's report in response to General Assembly resolution 79/239 highlighted several opportunities and challenges of AI in the military domain identified by Member States.⁷⁶ The recommendations in the report included increased implementation of international law and support for peacekeeping missions, while excessive trust in AI by humans and deepened technological divides between Member States were identified as challenges.⁷⁷ The report recommended that these challenges be addressed with international knowledge sharing and capacity building.⁷⁸ The work of the GGE on LAWS is a priority of the General Assembly; in 2025, the General Assembly adopted resolution 80/68 titled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects," which recognized and continued the work of the GGE on LAWS.⁷⁹ The GGE on LAWS researches topics related to LAWS and acts as a forum for Member States who are part of the GGE.⁸⁰ For example, the GGE on LAWS produced a list of definitions in which Member States were able to submit their definitions of LAWS.⁸¹

The Security Council has a predominant role in the international system, adapting to the use of AI in the military domain.⁸² It sees the maintenance of international peace and security as its primary responsibility in this context.⁸³ Specifically, the Security Council addresses both the positive and negative impacts of AI

⁷³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024. pp. 1, 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 4; United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/224)*. 2024. p. 1.

⁷⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024. pp. 2-3.

⁷⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General (A/80/78)*. 2025. p. 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 5-6.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 12.

⁷⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (A/RES/80/68)*. 2025. pp. 1, 3.

⁸⁰ Digwatch. Diplo Foundation. *GGE on lethal autonomous weapons systems*. 2026.

⁸¹ United Nations, Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. *Non-exhaustive compilation of definitions and Characterizations (CCW/GGE.1/2023/CRP.1)*. 2023. p. 1.

⁸² United Nations, Security Council. *Letter dated 19 September 2025 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2025/593)*. 2025. p. 2.

⁸³ United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security: Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2024/6)*. 2024. p. 1.



in the areas of international peace and security, including any rules governing AI use in conflict.⁸⁴ On 24 September 2025, the Security Council held an open debate on AI and international peace and security.⁸⁵ During this session, the Secretary-General called for a ban on LAWS and clear global regulatory frameworks on military uses of AI.⁸⁶ Other speakers emphasized the need for AI to serve the common good and warned of unequal AI development, which would negatively affect less developed Member States.⁸⁷

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, supports efforts for general disarmament via international norm setting.⁸⁸ UNODA provides research and supports all disarmament efforts, from conventional arms to regional disarmament, and weapons of mass destruction disarmament.⁸⁹ Additionally, it researches and drafts reports on emerging challenges to disarmament, including developing technologies like AI.⁹⁰ As an autonomous research organization within the United Nations System, UNIDIR conducts independent research relating to disarmament and international security and has published several research papers on AI in the military domain.⁹¹ Additionally, UNIDIR has proposed the *Framework of Responsible Industry Behaviour for AI in the Military Domain*, which is a set of voluntary guidelines for industry actors developing AI in the military domain.⁹²

In 2023, the Group of 7 (G7) established the *Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for Organizations Developing Advanced AI systems* (Hiroshima Process), which is focused on AI development.⁹³ The G7 is an informal forum of seven industrialized democratic states and the European Union.⁹⁴ It is made up of France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Italy, and Canada.⁹⁵ The Hiroshima Process calls on developers of AI to be aware of the risks to and of AI, including lowering the barrier of entry for the development of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors.⁹⁶ Additionally, the Hiroshima Process calls for the public reporting of AI systems' capabilities and their appropriate and inappropriate uses.⁹⁷ The Hiroshima Process builds upon the AI Principles developed by

⁸⁴ United Nations, Security Council. *Letter dated 19 September 2025 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2025/593)*. 2025. p. 2.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 1; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *'Innovation Must Serve Humanity — Not Undermine It', Cautions Secretary-General, at Security Council Open Debate on Artificial Intelligence*. 2025.

⁸⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *'Innovation Must Serve Humanity — Not Undermine It', Cautions Secretary-General, at Security Council Open Debate on Artificial Intelligence*. 2025.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *About UNODA*. N.d.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *About UNIDIR*. N.d.; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Science and technology*. N.d.

⁹² United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Framework of Responsible Industry Behaviour for AI in the Military Domain*. 2026.

⁹³ Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. *Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems*. 2023. pp. 1, 3-5.

⁹⁴ Government of Italy. *About the G7*. 2026.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. *Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems*. 2023. p. 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 3.



the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2019, calling for transparent, safe, open, and equitable AI development.⁹⁸

Established in 2023, the Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM) is a state-led yearly international summit open to both states and non-governmental organizations.⁹⁹ The 2024 summit adopted the REAIM Blueprint for Action.¹⁰⁰ The document recognized the potential for AI to enhance adherence to international humanitarian law in conflict and that humans remain responsible for actions of AI in the military domain.¹⁰¹ The 2026 summit created the REAIM Pathways to Action, which emphasizes that AI decision systems should support human judgment.¹⁰² The document also stresses that Member States and individuals bear legal responsibility for AI actions in the military domain and the establishment of clear chains of command and control of AI-enabled systems to ensure clear individual responsibility.¹⁰³

AI & LAWS

In 2023, the GGE on LAWS called upon Member States to submit their definitions of LAWS, which included: "...weapon systems that incorporate autonomy into their critical functions of selecting, targeting, and engaging to apply force without human intervention."¹⁰⁴ LAWS, which are piloted autonomously, differ from uncrewed systems, also known as drones, as drones can operate autonomously, semi-autonomously, or be piloted remotely by humans.¹⁰⁵ LAWS benefit from AI integration into their autonomous capabilities, for example, by analyzing human behavior.¹⁰⁶ An example of AI LAWS integration is the use of AI to control swarms of drones to attack multiple targets without the control of a human operator.¹⁰⁷

The GGE on LAWS has stated that while AI has the potential to increase the effectiveness of LAWS, it also has the potential to increase negative risks.¹⁰⁸ The GGE on LAWS found high risks in LAWS inheriting the bias of an AI that is used to control them.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, the GGE on LAWS warned that AI-powered LAWS may misidentify civilian men as combatants, which is prohibited under the Geneva

⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 1, 3; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *AI Principles*. N.d.

⁹⁹ Responsible AI in the Military Domain Summit. Government of the Netherlands. *REAIM Call to Action*. 2023. p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Republic of Korea, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Outcome of Responsible AI in Military Domain (REAIM) Summit 2024*. 2024.

¹⁰¹ Republic of Korea, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *REAIM Blueprint for Action*. 2024. pp. 1-2.

¹⁰² Responsible AI in the Military Domain Summit. *REAIM Pathways to Action*. 2026. p. 3.

¹⁰³ Ibid. pp. 4-8.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations, Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. *Non-exhaustive compilation of definitions and Characterizations (CCW/GGE.1/2023/CRP.1)*. 2023. pp. 1-2, 4.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/224)*. 2024. p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems*. N.d.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. *UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*. 2025.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations, Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. *Addressing Bias in Autonomous Weapons (CCW/GGE.1/2024/WP.5)*. 2024. p. 3.



Conventions, and misrecognize women of color due to AI datasets focusing on Caucasian males.¹¹⁰ Additionally, a 2024 report by the Secretary-General warns that when used at a large or indiscriminate scale, AI weapon systems' data reliability issues, lack of contextual understanding, and errors in pattern recognition can risk the principles of proportionality as an AI may not apply proportionate levels of force.¹¹¹ AI may lack the understanding and contextual nuance around military actions, as most AI models make decisions via statistical analysis.¹¹²

The use of AI in LAWS also raises the question of the role of human emotion in lethal action, as machines are unable to replicate human emotions such as empathy or appropriately react to complex moral situations.¹¹³ Clear chains of command enable accountability for military actions that violate international law and actions against non-combatants.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the lack of human control or involvement in the decision chain for lethal actions removes the “moral responsibility,” in other words, ethics-informed decision making, for such actions.¹¹⁵ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) argues that autonomous weapon systems must maintain meaningful human control to ensure compliance with international law.¹¹⁶ ICRC further argues that the direct connection to the intent of the human user must be maintained.¹¹⁷ ICRC has stated that the lack of moral responsibility, in other words, whether an AI can have inhibitions of killing non-combatants or moral judgment, is a notion that international law must reckon with as AI becomes more prevalent within conflict.¹¹⁸

The Weaponization and Proliferation of AI by Terrorist and Violent Extremism Groups

The use of AI by terrorist and violent extremism groups (TVE) is a growing concern.¹¹⁹ There is no international definition of violent extremism; however, it has been described by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization as the actions of people or groups that use violence to support political, ideological, or religious goals.¹²⁰ TVE groups have used AI in other areas of the military domain, such as propaganda and recruitment efforts.¹²¹ While not used at an organizational level, AI has been used to assist in several lone-actor terrorist attacks, such as the planning of a terrorist attack using an improvised explosive device in New York in June 2025.¹²² Additionally, AI may be used to create fake

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/224)*. 2024. p. 3.

¹¹² Crifasi. Modern War Institute at West Point. *Targeting at Machine Speed: The Capabilities—and Limits—of Artificial Intelligence*. 2025.

¹¹³ Wilson. International Committee of the Red Cross. *AI, war and (in)humanity: the role of human emotions in military decision-making*. 2025.

¹¹⁴ Paoli et al. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *AI in the Military Domain: A briefing note for states*. 2025. p. 27.

¹¹⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross. *Ethics and autonomous weapon systems: An ethical basis for human control?*. 2018. pp. 7, 17.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 2.

¹¹⁹ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism et al. *Algorithms and Terrorism: The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence for Terrorist Purposes*. 2021. p. 7.

¹²⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *'Radicalization' and 'violent extremism'*. N.d.

¹²¹ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism et al. *Algorithms and Terrorism: The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence for Terrorist Purposes*. 2021. p. 20.

¹²² Ibid.



videos, also known as deepfakes, of political leaders or other persons to further the goals of TVE groups.¹²³ In a 2021 report, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) stated that TVE groups, including lone actors, rely on readily available technology, such as AI, to help plan attacks.¹²⁴ The report classified TVE use of AI into three categories: cyberthreats, such as cyberattacks; physical attacks, for example, with drones; and political attacks, such as through misinformation.¹²⁵ TVE groups have conducted cyberattacks in the past, such as the 2017 distributed denial-of-service attack by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and there is a risk that AI could support such attacks.¹²⁶ The attacks in 2017 targeted military, economic, and educational infrastructure, temporarily making them unavailable.¹²⁷ Additionally, AI can support the development and deployment of ransomware, which is when a computer's files are held hostage for ransom, enabling TVE funding through such attacks.¹²⁸ There is a risk of physical attacks being facilitated by AI as autonomous vehicles are being developed, and as autonomous vehicles become more prevalent, the risk of use by TVE groups grows.¹²⁹

In February 2026, UNOCT launched the AI and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Project.¹³⁰ The project aims to understand how TVE groups use AI and how AI can be used to counter TVE groups.¹³¹ The project released the *Practice Guide on Artificial Intelligence and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism* (2026), which highlights how the growing prevalence of AI may increase TVE activity, stating that AI's negative economic impact leaves young people more at risk of TVE recruitment and increased misinformation.¹³² However, the guide highlights several opportunities government anti-TVE work can benefit from AI use, such as online monitoring.¹³³

While TVE groups may leverage AI, counter-TVE efforts also benefit from AI.¹³⁴ AI can be used to monitor shifts in TVE ideology by monitoring vast datasets.¹³⁵ AI has also been used to test different intervention methods by simulating various scenarios.¹³⁶ Counter-TVE practitioners can use AI to detect AI-enabled TVE media, such as deepfakes.¹³⁷ Overall, AI can support counter-TVE efforts by monitoring vast amounts of information, such as social media posts, that humans would otherwise be limited in analyzing.¹³⁸ However, UNOCT has stressed that AI developers need to be proactive in ensuring that AI models report TVE-related activity within their AI platforms and include restrictions on TVE-related usage,

¹²³ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Practice Guide on Artificial Intelligence and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism*. 2026. p. 53.

¹²⁴ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism et al. *Algorithms and Terrorism: The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence for Terrorist Purposes*. 2021. p. 22.

¹²⁵ Ibid. pp. 21-22.

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 27.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 28; Kosinski et al. IBM. *What is Ransomware?*. 2026.

¹²⁹ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism et al. *Algorithms and Terrorism: The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence for Terrorist Purposes*. 2021. p. 33.

¹³⁰ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Practice Guide on Artificial Intelligence and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism*. 2026. p. 12.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. p. 16.

¹³³ Ibid. pp. 21-29.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 12.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 23.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 25.

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 26.

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 27.



such as attack planning.¹³⁹ The report calls for information sharing as a method to build collective knowledge on AI use in counter-TVE efforts.¹⁴⁰

Conclusion

AI is already being actively used in the military domain; however, there are areas such as LAWS and usage by non-state actors that pose future unknowns to international peace and security.¹⁴¹ The international system is starting to reckon with how to regulate military use of AI so that international law is upheld.¹⁴² The United Nations and the General Assembly are actively researching and building the path forward.¹⁴³ However, legal experts stress that it will take time and the willingness of the international community to integrate possible restrictions on AI use in the military domain into existing international frameworks like the CCW.¹⁴⁴ Until this integration occurs, the use of AI in military actions, for example, for decision-making and AI-enabled autonomous weapons, poses clear risks to non-combatants.¹⁴⁵ In the past few years, militaries across the globe have increasingly used AI in active conflicts, thus increasing the need for international frameworks.¹⁴⁶ As the use of AI expands within the military domain, so do the risks.¹⁴⁷ Should AI be integrated into the most destructive weapons in the world, such as nuclear weapons, the risks become global in scale.¹⁴⁸

The Secretary-General also emphasizes that the international system needs to work with the developers of AI systems to ensure that AI is not used for hostile military purposes.¹⁴⁹ Adherence to safe AI development principles, such as the Hiroshima Process, is one such method to ensure value-based AI

¹³⁹ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism et al. *Algorithms and Terrorism: The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence for Terrorist Purposes*. 2021. p. 56.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

¹⁴¹ Düz. Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research. *Gaza as a testing ground: Israel's AI warfare*. 2025; United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/224)*. 2024. p. 3.

¹⁴² Wilson. International Committee of the Red Cross. *AI, war and (in)humanity: the role of human emotions in military decision-making*. 2025.

¹⁴³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/80/237)*. 2025. p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Wilson. International Committee of the Red Cross. *AI, war and (in)humanity: the role of human emotions in military decision-making*. 2025.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/224)*. 2024. p. 3; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. 'Innovation Must Serve Humanity — Not Undermine It', Cautions Secretary-General, at Security Council Open Debate on Artificial Intelligence. 2025.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and Its Implications for International Peace and Security: An Evidence-Based Road Map for Future Policy Action*. 2025. p. 25.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. 'Innovation Must Serve Humanity — Not Undermine It', Cautions Secretary-General, at Security Council Open Debate on Artificial Intelligence. 2025.

¹⁴⁸ Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. *Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems*. 2023. p. 1.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/224)*. 2024. p. 4.



development.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, the integration of AI into military weapons, such as LAWS, represents a new challenge for international law and conflicts because the lack of human involvement in lethal military action might create accountability gaps.¹⁵¹ Both the General Assembly and the Secretary-General have therefore emphasized that AI use in the military domain must maintain a human component.¹⁵²

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can the international system adapt to the use of AI in the military domain? What are the benefits of AI in the military domain for international peace? How can the international community use existing frameworks, such as treaties and conventions, to ensure that AI deployment in the military domain upholds international law? What role should the private sector and AI developers play in advancing these goals?

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. *UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*. 2025.

¹⁵¹ Wilson. International Committee of the Red Cross. *AI, war and (in)humanity: the role of human emotions in military decision-making*. 2025.

¹⁵² United Nations, General Assembly. *Possible risks of the integration of artificial intelligence into command, control and communications systems of nuclear weapons (A/RES/80/23)*. 2025. p. 2; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *'Innovation Must Serve Humanity — Not Undermine It', Cautions Secretary-General, at Security Council Open Debate on Artificial Intelligence*. 2025.



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2. Youth, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation

*"To meaningfully engage youth in SALW control policy and decision-making processes, we must first recognize their potential as agents of change."*¹⁵³

Introduction

In global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, youth play an increasingly significant role, shaped by access to education, technology, and political engagement, positioning them as both contributors to prevention and participants in addressing emerging proliferation risks.¹⁵⁴ While there is no universally determined age group for youth, it typically refers to individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, and is often associated with young adulthood, when an individual attains full legal recognition and rights.¹⁵⁵ Youth represent approximately 1.2 billion, or 16%, of the total population, and are projected to surpass 1.3 billion by 2030.¹⁵⁶ Small arms and light weapons (SALWs) have a particularly severe impact on youth, who are often affected as both victims and actors in armed violence.¹⁵⁷ Arms groups frequently recruit young people into combat and auxiliary roles, exposing them to displacement, human rights violations, disrupted access to education and services, and enduring psychological challenges.¹⁵⁸ Disarmament is the process of reducing or eliminating weapons held by both state and non-state actors, including armed groups, while addressing the illicit manufacture and trafficking of conventional arms, particularly SALWs, to limit their proliferation and use.¹⁵⁹ Non-proliferation refers to prevention efforts against the spreading of nuclear weapons to states and non-state actors, including terrorist groups, while reducing the risk of nuclear war and its humanitarian consequences through measures that strengthen global security.¹⁶⁰ Nuclear weapons are devices that cause massive destruction through the rapid release of nuclear energy and that can be used for purposes of war.¹⁶¹

In conflict-affected areas, youth are often recruited into armed groups through abduction, coercion, or manipulation, while others join due to poverty, survival needs, or a sense of duty to protect their communities.¹⁶² This vulnerability is heightened by evolving conflicts and digital technologies like smartphones and social media, which reshape illicit markets and let non-state actors exploit gaps in existing treaties.¹⁶³ As non-state actors become more involved in conflicts, a key concern is their growing access to the nuclear domain by exploiting governance gaps such as weak security, poor stockpile control, corruption, and limited enforcement.¹⁶⁴ Strengthening policy frameworks that combine

¹⁵³ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *How can we meaningfully involve youth in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control policy/decision-making processes?*. 2024. p. 53.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Youth*. N.d.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Hazarika. United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. *Role of youth in advocating against "weapons of widespread destruction"*. N.d. p. 49.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Disarmament*. N.d.

¹⁶⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (A/RES/2373 (XXII))*. 1968.

¹⁶¹ *Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean*. 1967. Art. 5.

¹⁶² United Nations Children's Fund. *2024: Devastating year for children in conflict zones*. 2024; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *About UNODA*. N.d.

¹⁶³ Borrie et al. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Understanding Nuclear Weapon Risks*. 2017. p. 83.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 26.



enforcement with non-proliferation measures, including youth education and engagement, is essential as young people face growing exposure to conflict and exploitation.¹⁶⁵ To advance these efforts at the international level, multilateral institutions play a critical role in their development.¹⁶⁶ Amid these developments, the General Assembly First Committee plays a central role in addressing disarmament and emerging global threats, aiming to identify and implement solutions to weaknesses in the international security system.¹⁶⁷

International and Regional Framework

Global efforts to manage weapons proliferation rely on multilateral treaties covering nuclear and conventional arms, but implementation varies due to unequal participation and differing state interests.¹⁶⁸ The *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) (1968) is a key global framework aimed at preventing nuclear weapons proliferation, promoting peaceful nuclear energy use, and supporting nuclear disarmament.¹⁶⁹ Its implementation is reinforced through safeguards agreements administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), mandated to verify that nuclear materials and technologies are not diverted to military purposes.¹⁷⁰ The treaty undergoes a five-year review cycle through Preparatory Committee meetings that evaluate progress and prepare negotiations and Review Conferences, where states assess compliance, address emerging risks, and negotiate consensus-based outcomes to guide future action.¹⁷¹ At the 2026 NPT Review Conference, states were divided on disarmament and deterrence, with some stressing humanitarian and environmental concerns, and others upholding nuclear deterrence as a security tool.¹⁷² These opposing positions highlight ongoing disagreements over disarmament responsibility and strategic security, reinforcing both the continued relevance of NPT and the challenges it faces in reaching consensus under current geopolitical tensions.¹⁷³

International treaties play a central role in contemporary disarmament and arms control efforts by establishing legal frameworks that regulate the transfer, possession, and elimination of weapons.¹⁷⁴ The *Arms Trade Treaty* (2013) regulates the international trade in conventional arms, requiring states to assess risks of human rights violations or conflict escalation before approving exports.¹⁷⁵ In 2017, the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW) was adopted as the first legally binding instrument to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons.¹⁷⁶ It came into force in 2021 after reaching the required threshold of 50 ratifications by states.¹⁷⁷ TPNW also requires victim assistance and environmental remediation, while providing a framework for the verified dismantlement of the nuclear arsenals of States

¹⁶⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation - Report of the Secretary-General* (A/RES/80/165). 2025. p. 14.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and international Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

¹⁶⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (A/RES/2373 (XXII)). 1968. p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 7.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 8.

¹⁷² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *LIVE - Eleventh NPT Review Conference*. 2026.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Arms Trade Treaty*. 2013.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*. 2017.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.



parties.¹⁷⁸ Despite its broad scope, TPNW has limited practical impact because no nuclear-armed states have joined it and several states that rely on nuclear deterrence have also been hesitant to support it.¹⁷⁹

In addition, regional frameworks have been established to address the specific concerns and circumstances of regional areas regarding the development of small arms.¹⁸⁰ The European Union's (EU's) Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium (2010) is composed of six independent European think tanks that provide research and policy support for the EU's non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.¹⁸¹ The Economic Community of West African States' (2006) *Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons* is a regional agreement designed to curb the proliferation of SALWs, promote disarmament, and strengthen security and stability across West Africa.¹⁸² By addressing both the supply and demand of illicit weapons, the convention aims to reduce armed violence through stockpile management, enforcement cooperation, and public awareness.¹⁸³ The convention seeks to reduce armed violence and its impact on communities, particularly on youth populations, who are often among the most vulnerable to recruitment, coercion, and involvement in armed conflict.¹⁸⁴ The *African Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone Treaty* (1964) extends protections by establishing specific safeguards and prohibitions to prevent the development, possession, or stationing of nuclear weapons on the continent.¹⁸⁵ The *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty* (1996) bans all nuclear explosions and seeks to limit the development of nuclear weapons, supported by a global verification system using the International Monitoring System and on-site inspections.¹⁸⁶ Although it has been signed by 187 states and ratified by 178, it has not yet entered into force due to several states not having ratified it.¹⁸⁷ UNODA states that it has created a strong international norm against nuclear testing, with most states refraining from conducting nuclear explosions in practice.¹⁸⁸

Outlined in General Assembly resolution 70/1 on "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (2015), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) guide international cooperation across all sectors.¹⁸⁹ SDG 3 (good health and well-being) advances disarmament objectives by addressing the human cost of armed violence and the strain that weapons proliferation places on the healthcare system.¹⁹⁰ SDG 4 (quality education) contributes to disarmament efforts by encouraging non-violent conflict resolution and safeguarding educational institutions from the effects of armed

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Trezza. Istituto Affari Internazionali. *The UN Nuclear Ban Treaty and the NPT: Challenges for Nuclear Disarmament*. 2017.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *As Geopolitical Tensions Escalate, United Nations, Regional Organizations Must Strengthen Cooperation, Preventive Diplomacy, Speakers Tell Security Council*. 2023.

¹⁸¹ EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium. *Fourteenth EU Non-proliferation and Disarmament Conference*. 2025.

¹⁸² Economic Community of West African States. *Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Associated Material*. 2006.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ International Atomic Energy Agency. *African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty)*. 2009. p. 2.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty*. N.d.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 1.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*. N.d.



conflict.¹⁹¹ SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) promotes combating illicit arms trafficking and strengthening institutions responsible for implementing arms control and non-proliferation measures.¹⁹² SDG 16 has been progressively developed through General Assembly resolutions on “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education,” the latest of which stressed the urgency of promoting concerted international efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation education in 2024.¹⁹³ Although there is no dedicated treaty on the subject, General Assembly resolution 76/45 on “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation” (2021), encourages Member States to promote meaningful participation of young people in disarmament processes through fellowships and other capacity-building mechanisms.¹⁹⁴ This evolving framework is further strengthened by General Assembly resolution 79/1 on “The Pact for the Future” (2024) as it elevates youth engagement to a system-wide commitment across peace and security agendas, including disarmament and non-proliferation.¹⁹⁵

Role of the International System

The General Assembly plays a central role in overseeing the implementation of disarmament and arms control agreements by providing guidance and supporting Member States in developing and implementing relevant policies such as arms trade regulations and small arms control legislation.¹⁹⁶ It serves as a forum for dialogue and cooperation on emerging disarmament and non-proliferation challenges, working closely with UNODA, which supports implementation of the First Committee’s mandate at both international and national levels.¹⁹⁷ These include encouraging youth engagement in non-proliferation efforts, strengthening measures against the illicit trade in SALW, and supporting confidence-building measures among states.¹⁹⁸

The international disarmament and arms control system operates through multilateral institutions that shape policy, support implementation, and increasingly incorporate youth participation in global peace and security decision-making.¹⁹⁹ The Security Council, composed of 15 members including the five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States with veto power, is central to maintaining international peace and security through legally binding measures such as sanctions and arms embargoes.²⁰⁰ However, the Council often faces significant challenges in addressing disarmament and arms control issues because all five permanent members possess nuclear weapons.²⁰¹ As several of these states are major arms exporters, Security Council action on weapons reduction, non-proliferation, or arms transfer limits can be blocked when it conflicts with a permanent member’s

¹⁹¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. N.d.

¹⁹² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. 2018. p. 8.

¹⁹³ United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/RES/79/28)*. 2024. p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation (A/RES/76/45)*. 2021. p. 1.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*. 2024. p. 16.

¹⁹⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *About*. N.d.

²⁰¹ International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. *UN Security Council members respond to inaction on nuclear disarmament with support for TPNW*. 2024.



strategic or economic interests.²⁰² UNODA is responsible for advancing global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts by promoting international peace and supporting the elimination and regulation of weapons including nuclear and conventional arms.²⁰³ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports Member States in advancing sustainable development and governance through country-level programs that provide technical assistance for institutional reform, including public administration and inclusive economic growth.²⁰⁴ Saving Lives Entity Fund (SALIENT) is a United Nations funding mechanism established by UNODA and UNDP to support projects aimed at reducing armed violence and the illicit flow of SALW.²⁰⁵ SALIENT provides financial and technical assistance to national governments and local communities to strengthen weapons control and promote sustainable development in line with the SDGs, particularly efforts to reduce violence and enhance peace and security.²⁰⁶ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promotes peace and disarmament education through curriculum development and youth programs that foster global citizenship and awareness of non-proliferation norms.²⁰⁷ Through the expansion of Global Citizenship Education, an educational initiative designed to help young people understand diverse perspectives, UNESCO integrates peace and security awareness into formal curricula under SDG target 4.7, alongside advancing youth-centered peace education that promotes critical engagement with global conflict and non-violence.²⁰⁸ The establishment of the United Nations Youth Office further strengthens this framework by promoting meaningful youth participation and engaging young people as equal stakeholders in peace and disarmament governance through inclusive partnerships across policymaking stages.²⁰⁹ The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, an independent research institute that provides evidence-based analysis and policy recommendations on issues such as nuclear disarmament and space security, further complements this system.²¹⁰ Increasingly, the international community also embeds meaningful youth participation in peace and security governance, ensuring that young people are included in the process of policy making rather than treated solely as peripheral actors.²¹¹

UNODA leads Youth4Disarmament, a flagship initiative that includes structured programs such as the *Youth Champions for Disarmament* training, which provides selected participants with technical instruction on international treaties and multilateral negotiation processes.²¹² For Member States, Youth4Disarmament can serve as a practical model for domestic implementation.²¹³ For example, the German Federal Foreign Office regularly engages with youth representatives through its Advisory Board on Civil Society Engagement in Foreign Policy, where young delegates contribute to discussions on arms control and non-proliferation priorities.²¹⁴ In Kenya, programs such as youth-led peace committees in the

²⁰² Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. *SIPRI Fact Sheet: Trends in International Arms Transfers 2025*. 2025. p. 2.

²⁰³ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *About UNODA*. N.d.

²⁰⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP: Results*. N.d.

²⁰⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *End armed violence – a development challenge for a violence-free future*. 2024.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *UNESCO in brief*. N.d.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ United Nations Youth Office. *Meaningful Youth Participation*. N.d.

²¹⁰ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Youth and Disarmament Hub*. 2026.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Youth4Disarmament Forum. *About the Forum*. N.d.

²¹³ Moustafa. United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Youth4Disarmament Forum. *Youth Voices Shaping the Future of Disarmament and the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda*. 2026.

²¹⁴ Advisory Board to the Federal Government for Civilian Crisis Prevention and Peacebuilding. *Advisory Board meeting with ministerial representatives at GIZ*. N.d.



Rift Valley and border areas, train young people in conflict mediation and community reporting mechanisms to reduce cattle raiding and armed violence.²¹⁵ Member States may also integrate youth representatives into national delegations or consultation processes, strengthening policy inclusivity and fostering the next generation of disarmament practitioners.²¹⁶

Regional organizations play a crucial role in advancing disarmament by translating global frameworks into localized initiatives that promote education, coordination, and treaty implementation.²¹⁷ The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific supports Member States in advancing peace, security, and disarmament goals through technical assistance, the coordination of regional and international initiatives, and information sharing on disarmament efforts.²¹⁸ Regional bodies such as the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) oversee the implementation of the *Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the first treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a population region.²¹⁹ OPANAL advances disarmament education through partnerships with universities and regional institutions, including youth-oriented initiatives such as academic outreach, policy simulations, and collaboration with emerging scholars.²²⁰

Youth and the Digitalization of Arms Markets

The emergence of digital technologies poses a growing challenge for disarmament and non-proliferation within the United Nations framework, as illicit arms trafficking shifts from traditional smuggling networks to Dark Web platforms.²²¹ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that the global illicit firearms market amounts to roughly 10% to 20% of the weapons circulating within the legal market.²²² In 2025, global law enforcement agencies succeeded in dismantling several Darknet sites that specialised in the trade of firearms and other explosive commodities.²²³ However, because the Darknet is difficult to monitor, it is not known how deeply embedded organised crime is in this market.²²⁴ This shift towards the digital illicit market is especially evident in the growing availability of 3D-printed firearms such as ghost guns, which can be manufactured using downloadable blueprints and commercially available materials.²²⁵

²¹⁵ Okumu. Academia. *Youth-Led Peace Caravans and Inter-Community Peacebuilding Among Pastoralists in North-Western Kenya*. N.d. p. 52.

²¹⁶ Moustafa. United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Youth4Disarmament Forum. *Youth Voices Shaping the Future of Disarmament and the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda*. 2026.

²¹⁷ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Regional Disarmament*. N.d.

²¹⁸ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. *About UNRCPD*. N.d.

²¹⁹ International Press Syndicate Japan. *Latin America and OPANAL: Crucial References in the Fight Against Nuclear Weapons, 79 Years After Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. 2024; *Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean*. 1967.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Without Adequate Guardrails, Artificial Intelligence Threatens Global Security in Evolution from Algorithm to Armaments, Speaker Tells First Committee*. 2023.

²²² Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. *Illicit Firearms in Australia*. 2016; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment*. 2010.

²²³ CyberSecureFox. *Global Law Enforcement Operation Dismantles Major Darknet Criminal Networks*. 2025.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Dass. Taylor & Francis. *3D-Printed Firearms: Global Proliferation Trends and Analyses*. 2025.



These digital resources are frequently circulated across open-source platforms, where anonymity and limited oversight facilitate the exchange of both weapons components and instructional content.²²⁶ As such, the accessibility of such materials reduces traditional barriers to entry, allowing individuals, such as youths, to engage with weapons-related content without direct involvement with established trafficking networks.²²⁷ As a result, access to the Internet has not only expanded the reach of illicit arms trafficking but has also decentralized it, making regulations and enforcement increasingly complex across jurisdictions.²²⁸

As the age of technology continues to grow with the emergence of artificial intelligence and increasingly sophisticated digital platforms, young people become a growing target audience for cyber exploitation, misinformation, and illicit online activity.²²⁹ For young users who are highly active on these platforms, this increases exposure to harmful networks where curiosity and ideological influence can intersect with information on weapon construction and acquisition.²³⁰ Rising political and social polarization has further reshaped how young people engage with online spaces.²³¹ In particular, the migration of discussions from public social media platforms to closed communication channels has created new challenges for monitoring and preventing the dissemination of weapons-related content.²³² Within these digital environments, narratives surrounding security, identity, and perceived threats can become intensified, at times normalizing discussions of militarization or resistance.²³³ This split in communication makes disarmament efforts more difficult, as traditional messages often fail to reach closed online networks where distrust of institutions and rules is already strong.²³⁴ As a result, efforts aimed at youth disarmament and violence prevention must increasingly address the role of closed digital ecosystems in shaping attitudes towards weapons and providing pathways to access them.²³⁵

Regulations and educational initiatives have yielded measurable successes when applied in contexts aligned with the United Nations' policies toward balanced, integrated approaches.²³⁶ While firearm restrictions can reduce access and opportunities for misuse, they are more effective when combined with educational programs addressing the social and behavioral drivers of violence.²³⁷ The assassination of Shinzo Abe, a former Prime Minister of Japan, in 2022 illustrates this complexity, as the weapon used was assembled from accessible materials outside conventional firearms supply chains, highlighting how non-traditional forms of weapon acquisition may fall outside standard regulatory frameworks.²³⁸ While

²²⁶ United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute et al. *Beneath the Surface: Terrorist and Violent Extremist Use of the Dark Web and Cybercrime-as-a-Service for Cyber-Attacks*. 2024. p. 13.

²²⁷ CyberSecureFox. *Global Law Enforcement Operation Dismantles Major Darknet Criminal Networks*. 2025.

²²⁸ Persi Paoli et al. RAND Europe. *Behind the curtain: The illicit trade of firearms, explosives, and ammunition on the dark web*. 2017. p. 74.

²²⁹ United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. *The AI Generation: Youth in the Artificial Intelligence Era*. 2025.

²³⁰ American Psychological Association. *Potential risks of content, features, and functions: The science of how social media affects youth*. 2024.

²³¹ Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. Taylor & Francis. *Young people, media and politics in the digital age*. 2024.

²³² Polizzi. Vision of Humanity. *Youth Radicalisation: A New Frontier in Terrorism and Security*. 2025.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Observer Research Foundation. *Challenges and Opportunities in Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*. 2024.

²³⁵ Polizzi. Vision of Humanity. *Youth Radicalisation: A New Frontier in Terrorism and Security*. 2025.

²³⁶ RAND. *What Science Tells Us About the Effects of Gun Policies*. 2026.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Pletcher. Britannica. *Shinzo Abe*. 2026.



Japan has very low civilian firearm ownership, with roughly under 0.3 firearms per 100 people, and consistently low firearm-related deaths, the case highlights the need to pair strict regulations with prevention measures such as education and early intervention.²³⁹ Within this context, disarmament education can equip youth with critical thinking skills to recognize and resist harmful online content.²⁴⁰ UNODA's creative campaigns, including the #StepUp4Disarmament Youth Campaign, poster and music competitions, as well as the #75Words4Disarmament Challenge, use digital media and online dialogue to encourage participation and awareness.²⁴¹ These initiatives demonstrate best practices for addressing the digitalization of security issues by combining education and youth-led dialogue rather than relying solely on regulatory approaches.²⁴² Together, these efforts illustrate how the General Assembly's approach to disarmament in the digital age incorporates both legal regulation and youth education in addressing challenges associated with the digitalization of the global arms trade.²⁴³

Non-State Actors and the Gaps in Existing Treaties

The emergence of non-state actors has become an increasingly significant concern for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, as actors operating outside state authority can seek weaknesses in international regulatory systems and control mechanisms.²⁴⁴ Traditional non-proliferation efforts rely on state safeguards, inspections, and reporting, but terrorist and criminal groups can still obtain materials, technology, and knowledge through illicit markets or corruption.²⁴⁵ IAEA has documented instances in which non-state actors have attempted to procure fissile material or dual-use equipment, demonstrating the need to address the risks posed by such groups in the development of preventive measures.²⁴⁶ Fissile materials are highly enriched uranium or plutonium capable of sustaining a nuclear chain reaction, while dual-use equipment includes technologies with civilian uses that can also support nuclear weapons development.²⁴⁷ Since the 1990s, IAEA has recorded hundreds of incidents involving stolen, lost, or unauthorized possession of nuclear and radioactive materials, including highly enriched uranium or plutonium.²⁴⁸ Criminal networks also contribute by trafficking nuclear materials through black markets, exploiting weak border controls, corruption, and gaps in nuclear security to move highly radioactive substances.²⁴⁹ As a result, the risk of diversion of materials outside state control is present, particularly in regions with limited regulatory oversight or ongoing security challenges.²⁵⁰

²³⁹ World Population Review. *Gun Ownership by Country 2026*. 2026.

²⁴⁰ United Nations Children's Fund. *Technical Brief: Children and Armed Violence*. 2025.

²⁴¹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and Youth*. N.d.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *What you need to know about global citizenship education*. N.d.

²⁴⁴ United States Government, National Intelligence Council. *Non-State Actors Playing Greater Roles in Governance and International Affairs*. 2024.

²⁴⁵ Bunn et al. Arms Control Association. *Guarding Nuclear Reactors and Material From Terrorists and Thieves*. N.d.; International Atomic Energy Agency. *Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear and other Radioactive Material*. 2007. pp. 88-89.

²⁴⁶ International Atomic Energy Agency. *IAEA Database Shows Continued Incidents of Trafficking and Loss of Control of Nuclear and Other Radioactive Material*. 2020.

²⁴⁷ Union of Concerned Scientists. *Fissile Materials Basics*. 2024.

²⁴⁸ International Atomic Energy Agency. *IAEA Database on Trafficking of Nuclear and Other Radioactive Material Records 4243 Incidents Since 1993*. 2024.

²⁴⁹ Shkolnikov. Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. *Thwarting nuclear terrorism through data-sharing*. N.d.

²⁵⁰ Litwak. Wilson Center. *Deterring Nuclear Terrorism*. 2016.



Students and youth initiatives can join education programs and simulations on nuclear non-proliferation and WMD control, advocate for responsible science and technology use, and research evidence-based policies on emerging technologies and security risks.²⁵¹ By raising awareness of these threats, youth engagement can help strengthen prevention and support early detection of non-state actors' involvement in weapons proliferation.²⁵² One prominent example is the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (2007), which engages young people in global advocacy through social media, public education events, and storytelling that highlights the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons.²⁵³ Similarly, the United Nations' observance of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests on 29 August has become a platform for youth-led activities.²⁵⁴ In multiple Member States, such as in Kazakhstan and the United States of America, students organize awareness campaigns, exhibitions, and panel discussions that connect historical nuclear testing to contemporary non-proliferation goals.²⁵⁵ These initiatives help frame disarmament not only as a technical issue but also as a humanitarian and intergenerational concern.²⁵⁶

Global non-proliferation efforts focus on treaty-based frameworks and informal export control regimes to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) through regulation, verification, and capacity-building.²⁵⁷ Efforts for global atomic security and transparency have focused on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, but progress has been limited since its proposal through General Assembly resolution 48/75 entitled "General and complete disarmament" (1993).²⁵⁸ The international community has responded to problems and challenges in two major ways.²⁵⁹ The first has been the elaboration of multilateral international treaty regimes intended to prevent the proliferation of WMD.²⁶⁰ The second approach involves non-treaty "suppliers' clubs" that restrict the spread of technologies and equipment that could help states or non-state actors develop WMD or delivery systems like ballistic or cruise missiles.²⁶¹ The General Assembly encourages Member States to adopt comprehensive strategies that combine regulation, verification, and capacity-building to maintain effective non-proliferation.²⁶²

Conclusion

By promoting educational initiatives, research, and community-based programs, Member States can strengthen the role of youth in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.²⁶³ Specifically, these initiatives show that youth engagement can strengthen global disarmament efforts by connecting education, advocacy, and policy awareness at both local and international levels.²⁶⁴ By translating complex technical

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. *ICAN addresses NPT Review Conference with nuclear risks at highest ever level*. 2026.

²⁵⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *International Day against Nuclear Tests, 29 August*. N.d.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Engelke et al. Atlantic Council. *The future of multilateral peacebuilding and conflict prevention*. 2023.

²⁵⁸ Center For Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. *Fact Sheet: Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT)*. 2023; United Nations, General Assembly. *General and complete disarmament (A/RES/48/75)*. 1993. p. 15.

²⁵⁹ Engelke et al. Atlantic Council. *The future of multilateral peacebuilding and conflict prevention*. 2023.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Orlov. International Atomic Energy Agency. *Illicit Nuclear Trafficking & the new agenda*. 2004.

²⁶² United Nations, General Assembly. *Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation (A/RES/76/45)*. 2021.

²⁶³ Ibid. p. 1.

²⁶⁴ Litwak. Wilson Center. *Deterring Nuclear Terrorism*. 2016.



issues into accessible narratives, youth initiatives help broaden support for non-proliferation goals.²⁶⁵ This growing participation reinforces the role of younger generations in shaping a more informed and cooperative global security environment.²⁶⁶ To address the risks posed by non-state actors and the digitalization of the arms market, multilateral cooperation, guided by the General Assembly priorities of disarmament and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, is essential to combine regulatory enforcement with targeted preventive and educational measures.²⁶⁷

Further Research

As delegates examine this topic, they should consider: How can existing arms control and non-proliferation frameworks better support meaningful youth engagement in disarmament education and awareness-building? In what ways can Member States strengthen educational initiatives, outreach programs, and capacity-building efforts that empower young people to contribute to non-proliferation and peacebuilding objectives? Finally, how can United Nations guidance help Member States align national policies with these objectives, thereby fostering safer communities and more robust non-proliferation regimes?

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *UNODC Supports Botswana and Zambia to Prevent the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction by Non-State Actors through Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)*. 2004.



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