

Current Issues in Disarmament and Arms control

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“Disarmament is essential to and indivisible from broader peace and security and development objectives.”

Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
Opening of the 78th session of the First Committee of the General Assembly
2 October 2023



Current trends in Disarmament and Arms control

Old challenges resurging

- Global military expenditure at an all-time high: \$2.2 trillion
- Rising number of conflicts in all continents
- Increased geopolitical tensions with decreasing trust among States
- Threats of nuclear weapons posing existential threats to humanity



Current trends in Disarmament and Arms control

New challenges

- Changing nature of conflict with new means or warfare and potential new areas of battlefields
- Eroding respect of international norms and institutions
- Multilateral governance becoming more complex with increasing influence of non-State actors



UN Secretary General's Disarmament Agenda

Disarmament to Save
Humanity



Disarmament That
Saves Lives



Strengthening
partnerships for
disarmament



Disarmament For
Future Generations



UN Secretary General's New Agenda for Peace

- The Secretary-general's policy brief on *A New Agenda for Peace* outlines his vision for multilateral efforts for peace and security in preparation for the Summit of the Future.
- It recognizes that Disarmament and Arms control can:
 - ✓ Bolster the implementation of the SDGs
 - ✓ Advance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda
 - ✓ Strengthen the interlinkages between conflict prevention, climate, human rights and humanitarian issues.



Disarmament and Arms control linkages with broader Global Security Challenges

- This complex global security environment demands innovative and dynamic responses
- A renewal of international negotiations on disarmament and arms control to strengthen the current governance frameworks aiming at:
 - ✓ supporting non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
 - ✓ developing a “human-centered version of disarmament” through curbing military expenditures and arms race
 - ✓ Regulating emerging technologies and innovations.
 - ✓ Preventing the emergence of new domains of strategic competition and conflict.



Biological weapons

1. Supporting non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

- Biological Weapons Convention 1972: prohibits the development, production, stockpiling acquisition, retention or transfer of biological weapons
 - ✓ First multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of WMD
 - ✓ Increased awareness on emerging biorisks and preparedness



Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas - EWIPA

2. Developing a “human-centered version of disarmament”

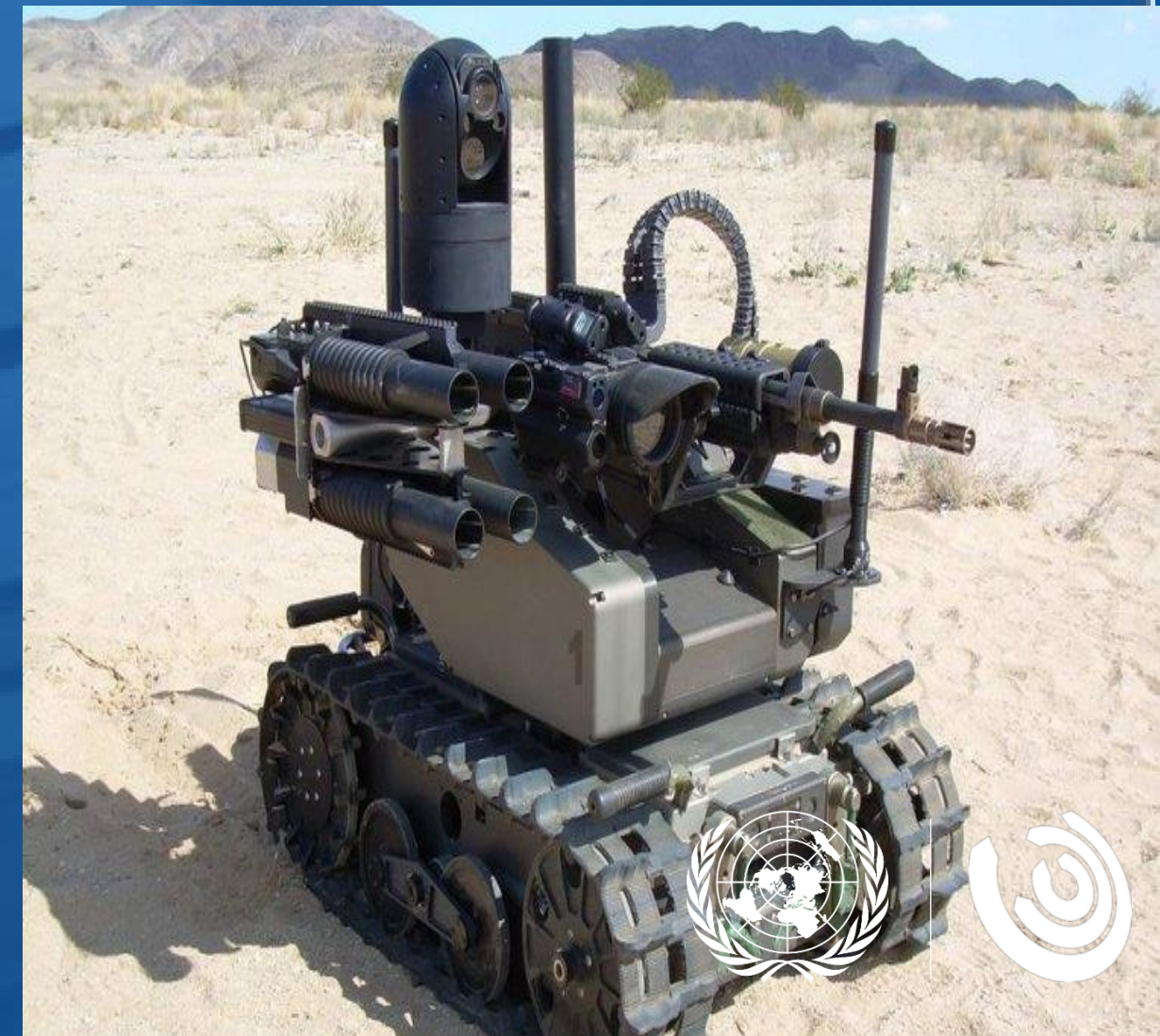
- In 2021, when explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 90% of people killed and injured were civilians
- Recent development: Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, *Dublin Conference 2022*



Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems - LAWS

3. Regulating emerging technologies and innovations

- Increasing levels of autonomy in weapons systems pose several concrete challenges on diverse aspects:
 - ✓ Humanitarian
 - ✓ Legal
 - ✓ Ethical
 - ✓ Security



Outer Space Security

4. Preventing the emergence of new strategic domains and potential conflicts

- Preventing any conflict from extending into outer space is becoming an urgent imperative
- *UN OEWG on Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules and Principles of Behavior* aims at
 - ✓ Taking stock of the existing legal framework
 - ✓ Considering current and future threats:
 - Space debris
 - Dual-use capabilities
 - Harmful interference
 - Weaponization
 - ✓ Providing recommendations



Looking ahead

- Advancing Nuclear Dialogue
- Biorisks
- Enabling and Converging Technologies
- Space security
- Gender and Inclusion
- Conflict prevention and Weapons and ammunition management






Disarmament and Arms control linkages with broader Global Security Challenges

- Climate crisis & resource scarcity
- Digital transformation of societies
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Global health



Thank you for your attention

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