

THE PLOUGHSHARES MONITOR

VOLUME 44 | ISSUE 4

WINTER 2023

**EWIPA and
the moral
imperative
to protect
the most
vulnerable**



**AUTONOMOUS
WEAPONS**
A first-ever resolution

OUTER SPACE
Getting off the
diplomatic treadmill

NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Wake up world! You
need to hear this

ARMS TRADE
Canada's largest-ever
deal to Latin America
and the Caribbean

*"and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift
up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war
any more." Isaiah 2:4*

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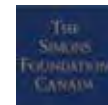
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The Ploughshares Monitor is the quarterly journal of Project Ploughshares, the peace research institute of The Canadian Council of Churches. Ploughshares works with churches, nongovernmental organizations, and governments, in Canada and abroad, to advance policies and actions that prevent war and armed violence and build peace. Project Ploughshares is affiliated with the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement, Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo.

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Project Ploughshares gratefully acknowledges the ongoing financial support of the many individuals, national churches and church agencies, local congregations, religious orders, and organizations across Canada that ensure that the work of Project Ploughshares continues.



We are particularly grateful to The Simons Foundation Canada in Vancouver for its generous support.

All donors of \$50 or more receive a complimentary subscription to *The Ploughshares Monitor*. Annual subscription rates for libraries and institutions are: \$35 in Canada, \$45 (U.S.) in the United States, \$50 (U.S.) internationally. Single copies are \$5 plus shipping.

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Publications Mail Registration No. 40065122.
ISSN 1499-321X.

The Ploughshares Monitor is indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index.



Printed at Ampersand Printing, Waterloo, Ontario.
Printed with vegetable inks on paper with recycled content.

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

From the Director's Desk

EWIPA: The epitome of civilian suffering in modern conflict



Written by Cesar Jaramillo

It seems obvious that those of us troubled by the horrible suffering that civilians are experiencing in ongoing armed conflicts, such as those in Gaza and Ukraine, are particularly disturbed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). It is also obvious that the international community is not responding adequately to such use.

We know that EWIPA is the leading cause of civilian casualties in armed conflict and that most of those killed and injured by EWIPA are civilians. Yet recent efforts to develop robust new standards to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of noncombatants, in which Project Ploughshares has participated, have been undermined by state and nonstate combatants that ignore norms for the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Authoritative evidence, including data from Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), reveals the extensive use of EWIPA in some of today's most devastating conflicts. According to AOAV's information as of November 15, in Ukraine alone, there have been 17,745 civilian casualties from explosive violence since the Russian invasion began on February 24, 2022, with 5,251 killed and 12,494 injured.

Recent data on Gaza: A disturbing surge in civilian casualties

AOAV is now providing data that illustrates the dire effects produced by the Israeli Defense Forces' Operation Swords of Iron in Gaza, in response to the Hamas attack on Israeli settlements on October 7. The 299 recorded airstrikes in October resulted in 4,104 civilian casualties, with 2,798 killed and 1,306 injured. These numbers represent an unprecedented level of violence, which demands a closer examination of the human costs and raises questions about adherence to international humanitarian law (IHL).

What sets this operation apart is not only the sheer intensity of the attacks but the profound impact on civilian lives. According to AOAV, this operation has caused an average of 10.1 fatalities per casualty-causing airstrike. This is four times higher than the rate in Operation Protective Edge in July and August 2014, when the average number of deaths per civilian casualty-causing airstrike stood at 2.5. This stark increase in lethality underscores the magnitude of the crisis Gazan civilians now face.

In addition to these alarming statistics, there are multiple credible and well-documented reports



A call for Canada to protect civilians

On November 9, *The Globe and Mail* published "Canada must do more for Gazan innocents" by Ploughshares Executive Director Cesar Jaramillo. In it, he demanded: "As the leader of one of the great democracies in the world, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau must speak out against what appear to be egregious human-rights violations and do everything he can to end the slaughter of innocent Palestinian children, women, and men." There had been no opportunity to protect innocent Israelis when Hamas struck, but strong intervention could make a difference in Gaza.

Cesar focused on the need for all states – and Canada in particular – to uphold international humanitarian law. He wrote, "Canada must always protest, loudly, whenever those rules are transgressed, especially when innocent civilians are forced to pay the price." In the present crisis, "Canada must do more to respond to the needs and pleas of innocent Palestinians. Now is the time to prove Canada's principles."

of airstrikes that targeted civilian infrastructure and services, including hospitals and ambulances, residential neighborhoods, and even religious sites. Such attacks on civilian spaces exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, violate fundamental principles of international law, and further underscore the urgent need for concerted global action.

The surge in civilian casualties raises critical questions about potential escalations in Israeli military tactics or shifts in targeting policies. The fourfold increase in lethality of airstrikes

suggests a departure from previous operational strategies, amplifying concerns about the impact on civilian populations. Moreover, the disturbingly high casualty rates bring to the forefront serious concerns about a lack of adherence to international humanitarian law. Principles such as distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack are fundamental to protecting civilian lives during armed conflict. The evident escalation in lethality prompts a critical examination of whether these principles have been adequately observed in the conflict in Gaza.

A humanitarian and legal imperative

The international community must confront the egregious violations of humanitarian law taking place in Gaza, holding responsible actors accountable and reinforcing the imperative to protect innocent lives caught in the crossfire of armed conflict.

Along with the urgent humanitarian imperative to address the unfolding crisis in Gaza, there is a legal obligation to comply with IHL. The international community must protect the lives of civilians and ensure that military actions adhere to the established norms of international law.

As the world grapples with the complex realities of conflict, it must recognize the moral responsibility of nations and global bodies to prevent further unnecessary loss of civilian life. According to AOAV Executive Director Dr. Iain Overton, "This isn't just a statistical concern; it's a human one. The numbers suggest a potential shift in military strategy that has had devastating consequences for non-combatants."

As we navigate the complex terrain of armed conflict and its devastating impact on civilians, confronting the issue of EWIPA becomes a moral necessity. The international community must unite to strengthen existing frameworks, develop new strategies, and hold accountable those who commit violence against civilians by using explosive weapons in populated areas.

Unlocking the tragic truth of conflict encapsulated in the acronym EWIPA is not only a universal responsibility but a call to action for every citizen of the world to protect the most vulnerable in times of armed conflict. □

Cesar Jaramillo is the Executive Director of Project Ploughshares. He can be reached at cjaramillo@ploughshares.ca.

Political Declaration on the Protection of Civilians: A milestone achieved

In Dublin on November 19, 2022, 82 countries officially endorsed the Political Declaration on the Protection of Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. This momentous declaration, the result of a decade-long advocacy effort led by the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the United Nations, marks the first formal international recognition of the urgent need to regulate the use and effects of EWIPA.



Ploughshares Executive Director Cesar Jaramillo, front row, third from right. INEW Photo

The declaration promotes stronger standards to protect civilians and commits endorsing states to take action to implement those standards through changes to their national policy and practice, including military policies and operational rules of engagement. This momentous achievement was celebrated at the Dublin Conference, attended by Foreign Ministers, deputy ministers, other high-level diplomats – and Project Ploughshares.

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Getting outer space diplomacy off the treadmill



Written by Jessica West

Invoking Paul Warnke’s famous description of the futility of the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms race, Professor David Koplow paints a similar picture of contemporary humans in outer space in his essay “Apes on a treadmill in space.” For those of us in the peace community, this description epitomizes space diplomacy over the last four decades.

The current race to nowhere is fueled by strategic competition among military space powers to ensure the minimal number of restrictions on their own actions. This, of course, is not unique to space.

Despite occasional bursts of activity, the two key practical initiatives at the United Nations (UN) today are largely unchanged from those competing for support in 1981: not to place weapons in outer space, and how to rein in anti-satellite weapons. The achievement of either seems remote. How do we get off the treadmill?

A diplomatic treadmill

The United Kingdom tried to chart a new path based on actors’ conduct in space instead of capabilities. The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Reducing Space Threats took this approach, but discussions on norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviour ended in September without consensus on a procedural de-

scription of the meetings, let alone an outcome report.

A civil society statement on outer space, coordinated by Project Ploughshares, was delivered to the UN First Committee (see p. 9), calling for cooperation and compromise to end the stalemate. Instead, states presented proposals for TWO competing OEWGs, one focused on norms of behaviour and the other on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space.

We’re up on one treadmill but the international community is tired of running.

A role for an ethics of care

A handful of states that support both the development of norms of behaviour in outer space and a formal ban on weapons insist that complementarities can be found across these initiatives. But states must first find a common goal and possess the drive to reach it.

A variety of concepts and approaches can help pave the way. One such approach is informed by the ethics of care.

Pioneered by Sara Ruddick, care as a political concept is rooted in the lived experiences of women doing what is traditionally thought of as women’s work. It rejects state-based military protection in favour of a politics of peace that emphasizes shared vulnerability and the nurtur-

Panels on outer space security

In late October, Ploughshares Senior Researcher **Jessica West** participated in two panels that examined the state of outer space security in the wake of the final session of the United Nations (UN) Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on reducing space threats. The first was a side event associated with the current session of the UN First Committee hosted by UNIDIR; the second was put on by Secure World Foundation.

For the UN panel, Jessica provided a timeline of international processes on outer space security, which not only illustrated that outer space security has become a core diplomatic priority, at the UN and elsewhere, but showed that there is no need to start from scratch in regulating security in space.

Jessica emphasized that states' understanding of space has evolved and become more sophisticated. And she saw as progress the fact that more and more states – not only those with major space programs – have been participating in processes related to space security. She also applauded the growth of a civil society community that participates in these activities. The world is coming to understand that everyone has a stake – and needs a say – in this discussion.

One major topic of concern at both panels involved a perceived dichotomy between the pursuit of a legal agreement about weaponizing space and the establishment of norms of behaviour for outer space. Jessica did not believe that such a dichotomy existed. Instead, non-legally binding and legally binding agreements can be, and often are, complementary. Still, Jessica acknowledged that the lack of universal support for any one process could make achieving outer space security more difficult.



ing of others. Carol Cohn argues that such an emphasis allows for new security practices based on preservation – not of oneself, but of others.

From responsible to responsibilities

An ethics of care could help in the development of norms of conduct for space activities. This effort is currently framed by a focus on “responsible behaviour” (see above). But this concept has been divisive and was rejected by Russia during efforts to negotiate an OEWG outcome document in September. India, traditionally in favour of both legal arms control measures and norms of behaviour, also expressed serious concerns with the dichotomy between responsible and irresponsible behaviour embedded in the approach. Such concerns echo work by feminist scholars Penny Griffin, Jane Parpart, and Marysia Zalewski, who argue that the notion of the responsible actor

perpetuates distinctions between the responsible Self and the unruly Other.

Progress could follow if these concerns are taken seriously. The problem is not with the objective but with the process used to achieve it. Focusing on shared responsibilities that respond to the vulnerability and needs of others rather than responsible behaviour as a marker of identity can make this process more inclusive. Such a subtle shift can transform the ongoing security standoff in outer space that pits states against each other.

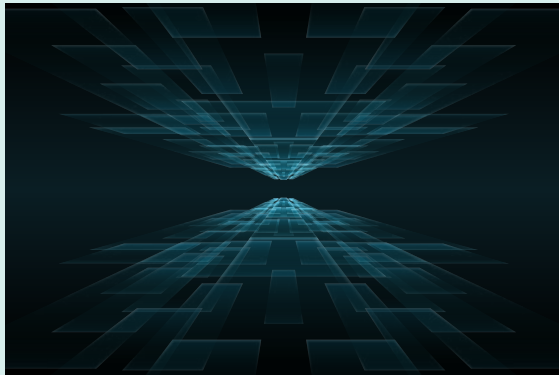
A focus on responsibility for others also resonates with foundational principles of the Outer Space Treaty such as equal access and use, shared benefits, transparency and non-contamination, and due regard.

What might “responsibilities to care” in outer space look like? Not a radical departure from what came up in conversations at the OEWG that mentioned transparency, notification, communi-

Responding to the perils of cyberspace

At the end of October, the Centre for International Governance Innovation posted “Are we preparing ourselves for the gathering perils of cyberspace?” In it, four experts, including Ploughshares Senior Researcher **Jessica West**, were asked which emerging threats or tactics nations should be most concerned about.

Jessica’s key message: “Because the harm [digital tools] cause is, in theory at least, temporary and reversible, their use is often tolerated. This attitude to digital warfare is dangerous.” Why? “Command and control of weapons systems — including nuclear weapons systems — run through space; interference with such systems can unintentionally cause an escalation to armed confrontation.” As well, “temporary disruption of critical civilian services can compound other vulnerabilities experienced by citizens because of their gender, race, geography or socioeconomic status.”



cation, non-contamination, and non-interference with critical systems. Also valid: unilateral commitments not to conduct destructive tests of anti-satellite missiles in space, which pollute the environment with harmful debris and motivate arms-racing responses.

But a focus on care expands obligations to others — now and in the future. Not only must actors avoid armed conflict and environmental destruction, but they must also work to preserve outer space as a secure environment for all peoples. Care is not only more inclusive — it is more ambitious.

A new discussion on weapons

Banning weapons in space has been a notoriously elusive goal. Dual-purpose capabilities create a considerable complication because they can be used for either peaceful or non-peaceful activities. This makes commitments not to place weapons in outer space difficult for others to evaluate. It is not clear how the owner of a dual-purpose capability gains the trust of observers that only peaceful uses of the technology are intended, or how observers can be confident in such intentions.

A focus on common responsibilities rooted in an ethics of care might create a context in which all space actors could be assured about how capabilities in space are being used. This more empathic approach could get beyond the seemingly irreconcilable divisions created by technical questions of definitions and verification. The position changes from “trust me” to “here is what I am willing to do to demonstrate my commitment to others.” A focus on care can also help to shift the conversation from weapons in the abstract to the types of harmful effects on others that arms control measures can help to avoid. Importantly, these illustrations of peaceful and harmful uses of technology can help to bridge the gap between the competing arms control approaches, one focused on norms of behaviour and one on preventing the placement of any weapons in outer space.

A change of ethics not rhetoric

The steady march toward weapons and war-fighting in outer space is propelled by what Cynthia Cockburn has called “dangerous daydreams” — futile quests for dominance and superiority.

Prioritizing nurturing connections between the Self and the Other promotes more inclusive approaches to peace, balancing immediate goals of survival with long-term goals of sustainable peace for all. While this might sound naïve, mutual care is key to human survival; the alternative is catastrophic. □

Jessica West is a Senior Researcher at Project Ploughshares. She can be reached at jwest@ploughshares.ca.

Ploughshares at the United Nations

On October 11, Ploughshares Senior Researcher **Jessica West** delivered a statement on outer space to the UN First Committee, which deals with disarmament and international security. Jessica also prepared and coordinated this statement, which she delivered on behalf of the following civil society organizations: Australian Centre for Space Governance, Canadian Pugwash Group, Observer Research Foundation, PAX, Project Ploughshares, Rideau Institute, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Following are edited selections from that statement.

Despite decades of efforts to preserve outer space and celestial bodies as peaceful domains for the benefit of all, threats to space systems and the risk of an arms race are increasing. War in space would affect all life on our planet.

Support for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space [PAROS] is unanimous at this Committee. The challenge before us is how to translate this commitment into concrete actions that support enduring peace and security for all.

Among the recommendations made to states at this forum:

- Adopt or support unilateral measures of restraint as a step toward new arms control measures in outer space, such as the moratorium on destructive tests of ground-based, direct-ascent anti-satellite capabilities, and commitments not to place weapons in outer space;
- Identify additional practical and observable commitments that states can make to rebuild trust, confidence, and cooperation in outer space;
- Work constructively to establish the foundations that give practical effect to both multilateral and unilateral commitments, such as common understandings of key terms, and means of verification and compliance;
- Recognize the importance of gender, racial, and other forms of diversity in discussions on PAROS and the need to assess the possible differentiated impacts of an arms race or armed conflict in outer space on different peoples; and
- Acknowledge the value of transparency and civil society inclusion in official proceedings.

States were also advised to take action at home.

States should:

- not test or deploy capabilities for use as weapons in outer space or against space systems;
- refrain from activities that deliberately damage or destroy any space asset, or that interfere with essential civilian infrastructure and services;
- take steps to ensure that adherence with political commitments is observable to others;
- adopt national legislation and regulations to ensure that space activities are consistent with international law, norms, and voluntary commitments.

The complete statement can be found at https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com23/statements/11Oct_Outerspace.pdf.



Jessica West delivers a statement at the UN First Committee in New York on Oct. 11.

Reconnecting with former Ploughshares interns

Part One: What was it like?

By Wendy Stocker

Project Ploughshares has a long history of mentoring interns. I can picture them in our office below the chapel at Conrad Grebel University College, at the former Seagram Museum in uptown Waterloo when it was the home of both Ploughshares and the Centre for International Governance Innovation, and in our current space in the Centre for Peace Advancement at Grebel. I also recall their virtual images during the pandemic.

Recently, I was thinking about the work done by interns over this past spring term, and about the role of interns in such projects as the *Armed Conflicts Report* (ACR) and the Space Security Index. I began to wonder where our former interns were today.

I was able to get contact information for five former interns. Out of the blue, they got an email request from me to answer a few questions for use in a *Monitor* article – with a pretty short deadline. All five responded positively and, as you shall see, with generosity and grace.

Prepare to be impressed!



Role at Ploughshares

Benny Skinner interned first as an ACR researcher in January 2017, then as a multimedia intern for the spring term, in both instances working chiefly with Tasneem Jamal. The second internship turned into a part-time job as a multimedia assistant that lasted until 2021.

Thoughts on the internship

Benny, who got a copy of the ACR from a Peace and Conflict Studies professor, recalled, “I hung it on the wall in my dorm room and was infatuated by the thought of researching conflict in order to try and find solutions.” Two years later, Benny became one of the ACR interns and “worked my butt off.” Next, as a multimedia intern, Benny took on “creating videos, infographics, and social media posts.”

Benny enjoyed “getting to learn about the translations between research and policy (as a form of action). I think working at Ploughshares really opened my eyes to the mobilization of knowledge and data for making concrete changes, whether that was in the form of educating or policy briefing.” But what Benny loved best was “the people I worked with.”

On the path to ultimate work goals

Benny’s “ultimate work goal is to dedicate my life’s work to making the world a better place in any way that I can. I have committed to continuously fighting for decolonization and for the equitable treatment of those who have been historically excluded and oppressed.”

Benny Skinner





Role at Ploughshares

Kirsten Mosey interned virtually with Ploughshares in winter 2021, during the pandemic lockdown. She worked with Branka Marijan, Jessica West, and Kelsey Gallagher, mostly on “forced migration and its connections to disarmament.”

Thoughts on the internship

Kirsten enjoyed writing “deep-dive” articles, “such as the article I wrote about Libya’s forced migration and enforced disappearance problem and the role of European countries in deterring migration.” She found it “very fun” “to spend weeks on a topic, learning everything about it, and then having that work published.”

What she liked best about the internship was “being able to simply discuss key issues with the whole PP team – it felt like getting a peek behind the curtain, and both helped to make a career in disarmament more relatable and reinforced that it was something that was very unique.” Kirsten felt that an internship with Ploughshares was “like being a part of a special club – in all my travels (whether Geneva, New York, and Ottawa) and throughout my day to day, whenever I mention that I got my start with Project Ploughshares, those familiar with the staff and the work always welcome me with open arms, recognizing that to have worked with Project Ploughshares is a unique and extremely valuable experience that few of us have the honour of sharing.”



Kirsten Mosey

On the path to ultimate work goals

Kirsten “would love to continue representing Canada on the international stage.” She continued, “I owe my start to civil society, so I am always finding myself drawn back to my roots! But working alongside civil society in my current role (as a Nuclear Policy Officer with the Disarmament and Non-proliferation Division at Global Affairs Canada) is sort of the best of both worlds right now. I think as long as I am working towards general and complete disarmament and related issues I am happy!”



Role at Ploughshares

Grace Wright held two virtual internships with Ploughshares in 2021. In the first, she worked with Branka on “a project focused on understanding the current landscape of the policies, directives, and best practices of Canada and its allied states related to the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence in defence.” In the second, she worked with Jessica “to identify themes and characteristics of arms control initiatives in various domains of warfare that could be transferred to outer space.”

Thoughts on the internship

Grace “had a strong interest in technology policy, specifically its social, political, and economic impacts” and her two internships “were a great way to explore that through an international lens.” She felt that working with a civil society organization like Ploughshares “gave me a unique perspective on the role of civil society in shaping policy. I think this work environment really helped me hone some of my critical analysis skills and ability to understand the symbiotic relationship between policies at national and international levels.”

Grace “really enjoyed the level of autonomy I was given during the research process, while still meeting regularly with Branka and Jessica to ask questions and receive guidance.” She found the two researchers “incredible supervisors – they were great at providing guidance and were very personable.” However, Grace confessed, she didn’t like working remotely, missing personal contacts and interactions.

On the path to ultimate work goals

Grace “would definitely encourage anyone who is seeking research experience and has an interest in policy and social impact to intern with Ploughshares.” Why? “I think it provides a wonderful working environment and a great opportunity to work with a team of people passionate about making a positive change.”



Role at Ploughshares

Erin Yantzi had a virtual internship with Ploughshares in spring 2020, during which she “researched and wrote on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by militaries and – on a completely separate topic – military culture.” She worked mainly with Branka.

Grace Wright



Erin Yantzi



Thoughts on the internship

After the internship, Erin intended to begin graduate studies, hoping “to focus on international security (specifically critical security/military studies).” Thus, the internship “aligned with my academic interests.” Erin noted that “the internship taught me how to research and write in a more public-facing and policy way instead of the typical ‘academic’ style.” She was pleased that “PP staff took the time to align my internship with the topics that I was interested in researching which relate to their mandate.”

On the path to ultimate work goals

Erin, “at the beginning of my career,” knows that “I want to work with people like those I worked with at PP – hard workers and learners, smart, empathetic, supportive, always able to find a bit of light in hard situations or when dealing with difficult topics; those that are able to understand different perspectives and speak to a wide range of people.”



Role at Ploughshares

In 2015, Yelena Gyulkhandanyan was an intern, “coordinating a team of researchers to conduct research and draft the 2015 Armed Conflicts Report,” under the supervision of Tasneem.

Thoughts on the internship

Yelena appreciated the opportunity to lead a research team, which “allowed me to hone my leadership and people management skills. In addition, I learned a great deal about various sources of information on history, politics and current developments pertaining to conflict.” She really enjoyed “the learning aspect.” She wrote, “I learned a lot about an area of research that was in line with my education, interest, and career aspirations.” Yelena also enjoyed working with her team and with Tasneem, who was “very supportive and encouraging.”

Yelena Gyulkhandanyan



On the path to ultimate work goals

“My work goals have always been to work in an organization and have a job that is in the humanitarian sector, working in a team where we share a common goal of making positive change. I currently work in the nonprofit sector and aim to continue working in this field.”

Did the internship help Yelena along the path to her goals? She wrote, “Students and new graduates interested in peacebuilding and conflict resolution work would certainly benefit from such an internship, as I did.”

You will learn more about the thoughts and insights of this group of Ploughshares interns in the Spring 2024 issue of The Ploughshares Monitor.

A first-ever resolution on autonomous weapons

Written by Branka Marijan



After close to a decade of effort, there is still no treaty regulating autonomous weapons systems. But even if naysayers are convinced that no treaty is possible, it is still the case that crucial steps are being taken. And, if progress seems to come at a snail's pace, we must remember that arms control and disarmament efforts rarely happen quickly.

Recent progress

On November 1, the First Committee of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, which deals with disarmament and global threats to peace, approved the first-ever resolution on autonomous weapons. The draft, which is expected to be adopted at the General Assembly plenary session in December, highlights the “urgent need for the international community to address the challenges and concerns raised by autonomous weapons systems.” It was approved by 164 states, while five voted against and eight abstained.

This result reflects the growing recognition of the need to regulate the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy in weapons systems. What follows this resolution is not clear. Perhaps concrete politically binding measures, ideally a legally binding treaty. One thing is certain: more dialogue and pressure on states to crystallize their positions on this issue will help to move the regulatory process forward.

The steps to a successful outcome

This UN resolution did not happen in a vacuum. Discussions on autonomous weapons at the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) have been happening since 2014, kept alive by an active civil society and a few key states. Many experts to the CCW have provided member states with important insights into the technological developments that have, over time, become more significant. However, the CCW as a forum has run its course because of its inability to make consensus work and opposition by key states, such as Russia.

In 2022, 70 states reacted to the CCW's stagnation by presenting a joint statement at the UN General Assembly, calling for more efforts on autonomous weapons. This group, which included the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Korea, provided cross-regional representation.

Several states with technically advanced militaries also started to look for additional ways to address certain aspects of wider military use of AI that had been somewhat neglected in UN discussions, such as battlefield decision-making and war-gaming. This past February, the government of the Netherlands, with the government of the Republic of Korea as co-host, organized the Responsible Military AI (REAIM) Summit in the Hague. The Summit attracted many states, with 57, including China, agreeing to the call for action.

At the close of the Summit, the United States introduced a Political Declaration on responsible military AI and autonomy. The declaration urges that “states should ensure that relevant personnel exercise appropriate care in the development, deployment, and use of military AI capabilities, including weapon systems incorporating such capabilities.” What is meant by “appropriate care” will likely be discussed by the United States and those of its allies that have endorsed the declaration so far. It is unlikely that either China or Russia will join this U.S.-dominated effort.

The 2024 REAIM Summit is set to be hosted by the Republic of Korea and we could soon learn more about the relevance of this gathering to efforts on regulating autonomous weapons. Russia was absent from the 2023 Summit, while China, even though it joined the call to action, has not been an enthusiastic supporter of greater regulation. So, it is possible that these efforts will become little more than preaching to allies.

Other efforts, such as the United Kingdom’s Safety Summit, while focused on existential risk, did not address aspects of defence but catered to the views of key industry leaders.

Some states have expressed concern about technological competition and AI arms racing, over which they have little control. Latin American and Caribbean countries have called for the prohibition of weapons that do not employ meaningful human control in the selection and engagement of targets. This regional group, which met in Costa Rica in February, released the Belen Communiqué, which outlined the position of these states: that a legally binding instrument that prohibits systems that function outside of human control is necessary.

All these efforts have been important in the leadup to the First Committee resolution and will remain important following its adoption. The various summits and meetings show that the CCW is not the only forum where states are discussing concerns related to autonomous weapons.

Future steps – and hurdles

The First Committee resolution does not bridge the divide between those who favour concrete regulation and those who favour voluntary measures. Although an overwhelming majority of states voted for the resolution, the group that voted against or abstained is significant and will play a large role in future resolutions and the regulation of autonomous weapons.

Both Russia and India voted against the resolution; both have opposed efforts at CCW, not seeing a need for new law on autonomous weapons. Interestingly, China, Israel, and Türkiye abstained. China’s unwillingness to agree to regulations that are not on its terms means that a comprehensive binding instrument is unlikely. Israel is a key player

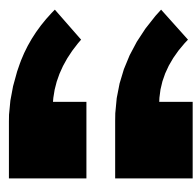
in military AI, having developed innovative AI weaponry, including sophisticated loitering munitions, drone swarms, and new tanks; it, too, has spoken against new law. Türkiye’s abstention reflects its positioning of itself

as an exporter of medium-sized drones and loitering munitions.

As well, rapid advancements of AI capabilities, including large language models like ChatGPT, show that autonomous weapons are only one type of AI-enhanced capabilities used by modern militaries; all deserve attention.

The steps that lead to the regulation of autonomous weapons will include further resolutions. No steps can be taken without political will, particularly from middle powers such as Canada. These middling states will need to show leadership and political savvy in an arena dominated by the great AI powers.

When Austria proposed the resolution at the First Committee some weeks before it was approved, it did so after years of study and many consultations with other national governments and civil society. Other middle powers, particularly Canada, should follow this model. □



If progress seems to come at a snail’s pace, we must remember that arms control and disarmament efforts rarely happen quickly.

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What will war look like in the future?

This autumn, Senior Researcher Branka Marijan and Research Assistant Carlos Cantafio Apitz co-authored two major reports on future warfare: *The future of global conflict: A synthesis of contextual and technological perspectives* and *On geopolitics and innovation: How the military technology race between the United States and China will shape global security*.

The first report is “based on the collection of data points from 20 reports by private, public, and nonprofit actors from North America and Europe” in which emerging military technologies (EMTs) have been classified and assessed. Close comparisons of all these reports resulted in the discernment of six “emerging military technology clusters”:

1. AI & big data analytics
2. Autonomy & robotics
3. Novel delivery technologies
4. Advanced materials & manufacturing
5. Biomedical sciences & human augmentation
6. Quantum technologies.



These clusters were then examined through a variety of lenses – economic, social/ demographic, political, technological, and environmental – to predict global trends in the development and deployment of each cluster over the next two decades or so.

Analysis of the data from all these perspectives produced the following insights:

Insight #1: Known military applications of AI and big data analytics as well as novel delivery technologies are likely to be mature and leveraged on the battlefield by 2030, as government and commercial actors have a long history of continuous investment in their development.

Insight #2: A combination of current state regulatory constraints, global normative ethical considerations, and limited technological progress is likely to delay the launch of military applications of advanced materials and manufacturing, autonomy and robotics, biomedical sciences and human augmentation, and quantum technologies until at least 2035.

Insight #3: Transformative and disruptive effects are most likely to occur when militaries combine or interconnect two or more of these emerging technologies. Therefore, state and nonstate decision-makers should not focus solely on siloed technology concerns.

The report concludes that “The emerging technology-security environment, coupled with the rise of great power competition, will likely challenge existing global norms.” The main text ends with this advice: “In anticipation of the expected transformations that emerging technologies will bring to warfare, international governance bodies should ensure that overseeing technological development and prioritizing arms control frameworks are at the top of their agendas.”

The second report examines a case of great power competition – “the intensifying rivalry between the United States and China,” which “is continuing to fuel the speedy innovation and adoption of emerging military technologies.” It explores “great power competition as a cause and consequence of the development” of these technologies, also highlighting “the need for greater bilateral and international cooperation, regulation, and oversight to manage this growing arms race.” In a highly useful table in the Annex, the competition between the two states is broken down by technology cluster.

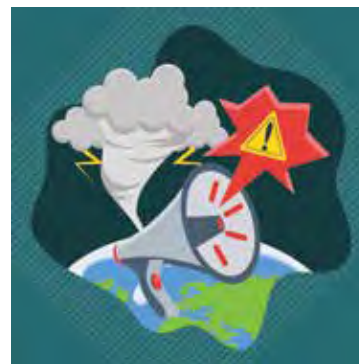
The text of this second report concludes with a “Call to action” that demands “attention and remediation” in response to deteriorating relations between the United States and China. Without some mending of this critical relationship, the existing competition between the two “may make the resolution of common problems more difficult.” Think climate change, environmental degradation, the risk of nuclear war or war in outer space.

This second report ends with a warning that reinforces the one found at the end of the first report: “Anything less than urgent action to establish global EMT governance could result in irreparable harm.”

Both reports are products of a project funded by the Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security program of the Canadian Department of National Defence. They can be found on the website of Project Ploughshares (www.ploughshares.ca). Click on Research, then Reports, and scroll down.

Wake up, world! You need to hear this

Written by Wendy Stocker



This autumn I was in the audience when Ploughshares Executive Director Cesar Jaramillo delivered lectures on nuclear weapons at Conrad Grebel University College on the University of Waterloo campus and at a Science for Peace public lecture at the University of Toronto.

I have heard Cesar speak on this topic before, of course. I've read articles and op-eds. His words get scarier and scarier – even if he insists that there is reason for optimism.

A world with nuclear weapons is a scary place

In the lectures, Cesar outlined five fundamental truths that shape the contemporary reality of nuclear weapons.

1 The risk that nuclear weapons will be used has never been higher.

Cesar made a basic assumption (if you don't accept it, then perhaps you aren't too worried about the threat of nuclear annihilation): sooner or later, if nuclear weapons continue to exist, they will be used. According to Cesar – and other analysts – only “sheer dumb luck” has saved the world from the use of nuclear weapons since bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Cesar referred in both lectures to the Doomsday Clock of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which illustrates the likelihood of a human-made global catastrophe. At the beginning of 2023, we were the closest to Doomsday that we had ever

been – tied with 1953, at the height of the Cold War.

What factors contribute to the heightened risk? Cesar pointed to escalating global tensions – not only the Israel-Gaza war and the war in Ukraine, but sabre-rattling by China and tensions between India and Pakistan. Climate degradation and the continued existence of nuclear weapons are other major factors.

Today, the world is home to approximately 12,500 nuclear warheads. While the number is far lower than the almost 64,000 that existed in 1985 (according to Statista), there are still more than enough weapons to destroy the world as we know it. Moreover, as Cesar explained, in recent years, the nuclear-weapon states (NWS) have been modernizing their nuclear weapons, making them even deadlier.

The combination of nuclear weapons and global tensions is unsettling, especially when the following is considered:

- Three NWS – the United States, Russia, and China – are directly or indirectly involved in almost every current hot conflict.
- All five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – the United States, Russia, and China, along with the United Kingdom and France – possess nuclear weapons.
- The number of NWS is now nine, with four – India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel – not party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.



Ploughshares Executive Director Cesar Jaramillo delivers a lecture on nuclear weapons at Conrad Grebel University College. *Margaret Gissing/CPA.*



- The Iran nuclear deal is all but dead.

Nuclear-armed states seem to hold all the cards. Certainly, they seem to believe in their strategy – that nuclear weapons will protect them in an increasingly dangerous world.

2 There is no plan in place for nuclear disarmament.

... no process, no project, no benchmarks, no goals. As Cesar noted, nuclear-weapon states are looking for an ideal set of circumstances before earnestly undertaking a disarmament process. But we know that those circumstances will never exist; instead, nuclear disarmament efforts must advance and co-exist with a variety of global security challenges.

3 Every state has legitimate security interests and concerns.

Russia, for example, is concerned about the existence of U.S. nuclear weapons on the lands of other NATO countries, some uncomfortably close to Russian territory. As Cesar emphasized, no state has the right to pursue its own security

at the expense of another country. (He was also clear, however, that **NOTHING** justified Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.) The use of nuclear weapons has become entangled with these security interests and disentangling won't be easy.

4 The world is transitioning to a new, multi-polar order.

The United States is no longer the only hegemon, Cesar advised. China is on the ascendant. And there are other contenders. Solutions to conflicts must take this new world order into account. Presumably, such solutions will involve a recognition of the need to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

5 Sometimes nuclear deterrence works.

Yes, Cesar came right out and said this. While he admitted that this claim was controversial, he was able to find support for it in the containment of the Ukraine crisis. Neither NATO nor Russia (for the moment, at least) has wanted the war to grow outside its present boundaries, in part be-

cause of the chance that such an escalation will make an opponent feel sufficiently threatened to employ the ultimate defence.

However, Cesar was adamant that any strategy based on the possible use of nuclear weapons was too dangerous to keep and must be replaced by one based on common security.

Where is Canada in all of this?

The Canadian government says that it supports nuclear abolition but does not treat abolition as a priority. Canada shelters under the nuclear umbrella of nuclear-armed NATO members, although it accepts no nuclear weapons on its territory. Like all other NATO member states, Canada has not joined the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which entered into force in 2021. The Canadian government even refused to send representatives to the first meeting of States Parties to the treaty in 2022 and seemed unlikely at the time of the lecture to send any to the second meeting at the end of November this year.

Canadian civil society, however, has performed well on this file, in Cesar's opinion, and continues to challenge the status quo. According to a 2021 opinion poll, Canadian citizens support the elimination of nuclear weapons; most also want Canada to join the TPNW.

Signs of hope

While Cesar did not explicitly explore grounds for optimism during these lectures, I was able to come up with the following list:

- Our luck has held – so far.
- Civil society organizations, including Canadian Pugwash Group, the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017 for its work on the TPNW, have made a major impact and continue to work hard to eliminate these weapons.

- The TPNW exists! At the time of writing, 69 states had ratified it.
- Many Canadians support the abolition of nuclear weapons, although there has been a move to the right since the latest phase of the war in Ukraine began in February 2022.
- The commitment to nonproliferation found in the NPT has “held quite well.” (However, this plus factor is countered by the lack of any drive to disarmament.)
- The ascendancy of survivors of nuclear bombs (Hibakusha) and nuclear testing (downwinders) to the world's stage has made it clear that nuclear weapons exist in defiance of the tenets of international humanitarian law.
- A few NATO member states attended the first meeting of States Parties to the TPNW.
- Developing and middle powers, including Mexico, Ireland, and Austria, are being recognized globally as strong supporters and champions of the TPNW.
- Many young people are eager and willing to work together to save the planet.

What to do now

Maybe you want some more detailed information. A good place to start is the Project Ploughshares website (www.ploughshares.ca). You will find recent reports and blogs on the topic. Almost every issue of *The Ploughshares Monitor* has a feature on nuclear weapons. And you will find a series of videos on Canada and the abolition of nuclear weapons on the Ploughshares YouTube channel.

Then you must act. The abolition of nuclear weapons is a cause that everyone should support. All the good actions and endeavours of governments, scientists, entrepreneurs, civil society, the young and the old to make the world a better place – all will be wasted if nuclear war breaks out.

Send us your ideas and plans. Let us all work together to save the world from nuclear destruction. □

Canada's largest-ever arms deal to Latin America and the Caribbean



Written by Kelsey Gallagher

In June 2023, the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) announced a landmark arms deal with the Colombian Ministry of National Defense valued at \$418-million (CAD). The deal covers the design, manufacture, delivery, and in-service support of 55 light armoured vehicles (LAV IIIs) by General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada (GDLS-C) of London, Ontario.

Selling LAVs to the southern market

The six-year arms deal is Canada's largest-ever to any country in Latin America and the Caribbean. The ultimate end-user of the LAV IIIs under the 2023 contract will be the Colombian Army, which, along with the rest of Colombia's armed forces, is undergoing modernization. The LAV IIIs will reportedly be armed with Samson 30mm Remote-Control Weapon Stations (RWS), produced by Israel-based Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.

Colombia first procured 46 Canadian-made LAVs following two contracts in 2013 and 2014. The 2023 contract would therefore bring the total number of Canadian LAVs in Colombia's arsenal to 101.

Latin American states Peru and Chile have also procured GDLS-C LAVs over the last decade. In

all these cases, the CCC signed the deals on behalf of GDLS-C. As a result, the Government of Canada is ultimately responsible for the terms of these contracts, guaranteeing deliveries to these Latin American governments and payment to GDLS-C.

The appeal of the LAV

GDLS-C has produced and sold thousands of LAVs over decades of activity, with its largest customers Saudi Arabia and the United States.

The LAV is an eight-wheeled combat vehicle. But, despite its name, it is not "light"; the variant destined for Colombia boasts a maximum weight of more than 20,000 kilograms.

LAVs are flexible in use and can be deployed by both conventional militaries during armed conflicts and by police and security forces in urban settings. LAVs have seen extensive use in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. As well, they were deployed to the war in Yemen by the Saudi government, which also diverted some to Yemeni forces. During the Arab Spring, the Saudi National Guard diverted a segment of its LAV-25 fleet to the Kingdom of Bahrain to violently suppress protestors.

Türkiye's use of Western optical sensors

On October 10, Reuters published a special report, "As Turkey intensifies war on Kurdish militants in Iraq, civilians are suffering" by reporters Lena Masri and Amina Ismail. One of the sources quoted was Ploughshares Researcher Kelsey Gallagher, who has done significant work on exports of Canadian-made L3Harris Wescam sensors to Türkiye.

The report describes "escalating attacks by Turkish aircraft and drones in mainly Kurdish areas of Iraq and Syria." It explains how Western firms have "supplied critical components for the drones," including optical sensors. As Kelsey noted, "without these types of sensors drones as we know them wouldn't work."



Other sales to Colombia

Between 2012 and 2022, Canada exported military goods worth \$56.1-million to Colombia. Included were some Canadian-made INKAS armoured vehicles that were reportedly deployed during nationwide protests in 2021; photos of their involvement were circulated on social media networks, according to Peace Brigades International-Canada.

Colombia has also purchased Canadian military aerospace goods. According to documents obtained by *The Maple*, Bell Helicopter Textron Canada is under contract to provide four 412 helicopters to the Colombian Navy and four 407 helicopters to the Colombian National Police; the documents also indicate that the CCC is pursuing a further contract on behalf of Viking Air to provide the Colombian Ministry of National Defense with Twin Otter aircraft.

Accusations of human rights abuses

Colombian security forces have recently been condemned for using excessive force against civilians on several occasions, with some civilians killed. Such circumstances should raise red flags for Canadian officials when they are evaluating the potential that Canadian military goods, including LAVs, could be used to commit human rights violations in Colombia.

Following more than a year of social unrest in Colombia, in April 2021, tens of thousands of Colombians took to the streets to oppose proposed

tax and healthcare reforms by the government of President Iván Duque Márquez. Colombian security forces, including the national police and particularly the Mobile Anti-Disturbances Squadron (Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios or "ESMAD"), responded with excessive force. Instead of quelling protests, the crackdown helped to fuel a more rigorous reaction: a national strike (Paro Nacional).

Colombian security forces, in turn, stepped up their violent response. Human Rights Watch's *World Report 2022* linked the deaths of 25 protesters and bystanders to Colombian security forces, most from the firing of live ammunition. According to the report, the Colombian Ombudsperson's Office also received reports of more than 100 instances of gender-based violence. Amnesty International reported that some protestors were forcibly disappeared by the government and determined that the actions of Colombian security forces during the National Strike contravened international law.

According to Colombian human rights organization Defender La Libertad, more than 100 cases of eye trauma were caused by the widespread and frequently indiscriminate firing of non-lethal ammunition into crowds; some Colombians were left permanently blind. On some occasions, national police fired from moving armoured vehicles. Reports also indicate that state repression during the National Strike disproportionately affected Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations.

Although the 2023 Canada-Colombia LAV con-

Figure 1: Canada's Top 15 Arms Export Contracts to Latin America and the Caribbean (1978-2023)

YEAR	RECIPIENT	VALUE	SUPPLIER	DESCRIPTION
2023	Colombia	\$418,000,000	General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada	55 Light Armoured Vehicles
1997	Brazil	\$384,878,587*	MDA Ltd.	Integrated Radar Imaging Systems for 3 EMB-145RS aircraft
2017	Chile	\$218,119,266	Lockheed Martin Canada	Combat management systems on 3 Type 23 naval frigates
1982	Brazil	\$181,466,905†	Bombardier Inc.	8 DHC-5D Buffalo aircraft
2007	Chile	\$169,973,190†	Bell Textron Canada	12 Bell 412 helicopters
2014	Peru	\$130,498,594	General Dynamics Canada	Remanufacture & upgrade of 5 SH-2G Seasprite helicopters
1992	Chile	\$122,357,482	Unknown	Lead construction of 5 naval vessels
2001	Brazil	\$122,170,385*†	Pratt & Whitney Canada	76 PT6A-68 turboprop engines for EMB 314 Super Tucano aircraft
1994	Colombia	\$119,935,972	Bell Textron Canada	12 Bell 212 helicopters
1994	Venezuela	\$92,258,440*†	Bell Textron Canada	5 Bell 412 helicopters
2011	Peru	\$91,111,595	Viking Air Ltd.	12 Viking Series 400 Twin Otter aircraft
2014	Peru	\$90,589,428	General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada	32 Light Armoured Vehicles
2013	Colombia	\$82,785,077	General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada	24 Light Armoured Vehicles
2011	Argentina	\$78,855,721*†	Pratt & Whitney Canada	60 PT6A-62 engines for IA-58A Pucará aircraft
2009	Mexico	\$70,825,847*	Bell Textron Canada	5 Bell 412EP helicopters

All records collected from the Canadian Military Industry Database (CMID). Values are reported in constant CAD. Values marked with (*) indicate that the transaction was a subcontract, and those marked with (†) indicate that the contract value is an estimate based upon available information.

tract was officially announced by the CCC this past June, Colombian media began reporting on the deal as early as May of 2022. Given that negotiations for deals of this size typically occur over long periods, it appears likely that negotiations between the CCC and the Colombian Ministry of Defense occurred during the National Strike and repression by Colombian authorities, which began in April 2021 and persisted in different forms throughout the year.

Arming human rights abusers

In response to abuses by security forces during the National Strike, human rights organizations have called on states to stem the flow of arms to Colombia as those arms could be used against civilians and in instances of excessive force. Amnesty International Canada urged the Canadian government to suspend arms transfers to Colombia until “Colombian security forces fully comply with international law and

standards on the use of force.”

Most abuses during the National Strike were tied to the Colombian National Police and ES-MAD, which has since been reformed under the current government of Gustavo Petro. The end-user of the CCC’s 2023 LAV deal has been listed as the Colombian Army, which is distinct from the National Police.

However, both the National Police and the Army fall under the jurisdiction of the Colombian Ministry of National Defense, raising serious questions about the ability of the Ministry to ensure that the bodies under its control observe human rights obligations.

States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, including Canada, must refuse arms transfers if officials believe that there is a substantial risk that those exports could result in human rights abuses.

The recent 2023 Canada-Colombia LAV contract, Canada’s largest-ever arms deal to a country in Latin America and the Caribbean, was lauded by the CCC as a success story for Canadian manufacturers. At the same time, however, the contract is sending more Canadian-made military goods into an environment in which human rights violations and breaches of international law have been widely reported. □

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A lecture on military AI

On October 18, Ploughshares Senior Researcher **Branka Marijan** gave a lecture for Third Age Learning in Guelph on the Military Use of Artificial Intelligence. Branka’s lecture was part of a series on artificial intelligence, and the audience of more than 100 in person, with about the same number livestreaming, was clearly interested in and concerned about the topic.

Branka began with a brief description of artificial intelligence, then made the serious point that the same AI capabilities can have both civilian and military applications. Computer technology that allows for ever faster analysis of images and video is used by social media, in computer games, and by weapons manufacturers.

Weapons systems that incorporate AI are becoming more autonomous, selecting and engaging targets without human direction, and therefore useful in the most dangerous contexts. Branka talked about humanitarian concerns because AI programs always have flaws that could result in errors, causing death and destruction to nonmilitary targets. She also mentioned the significant risk to global stability caused by the proliferation of AI-assisted weapons.

The audience seemed particularly interested in Branka’s evaluation of the current attitude of the Canadian government, which does not have a clear policy on responsible military use of AI. Although the Minister of Foreign Affairs was given a mandate to support international efforts to prohibit autonomous weapons, the mandate has not been meaningfully addressed. The Department of National Defence has been developing a responsible military AI policy, which has not yet been released.

Branka concluded by reminding the audience that organizations like Project Ploughshares work independently, encouraging conversation and providing analysis that we hope will lead to the regulation of AI-enhanced technology.

– Helen Vreugdenhil

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Help Project Ploughshares protect the innocents

On October 30, Project Ploughshares published a 10-point statement that condemned both the “horrific attacks by Hamas against Israel on October 7” and “the devastation inflicted upon Gaza in response to the October 7 attacks.”

The statement noted that the right of self defence does not exempt any state from the obligation to comply fully with International Humanitarian Law and lamented the “tepid defence” of IHL by some in the international community. It supported the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, urging “a fair and just resolution that not only safeguards civilians but addresses the root causes of violence.”

Support Project Ploughshares in its work to protect civilians and contribute to a new world order based on justice for all.

Donate at www.ploughshares.ca or call 1-888-907-3223