



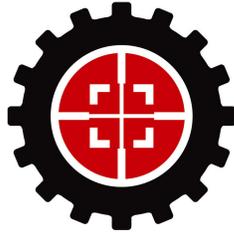
Reaching Critical Will

E-News, March 2016

It's March, and it's busy. We wrapped up meetings on nuclear weapons and the arms trade in February and have events coming up on autonomous weapons, military spending, and gender equality. And there are many other significant things happening around the world—the Marshall Islands is suing the nuclear-armed states, countries are under pressure to stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, and countries are building political momentum to stop the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Join us as we take on these challenges and more!

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Third UN meeting on killer robots coming up



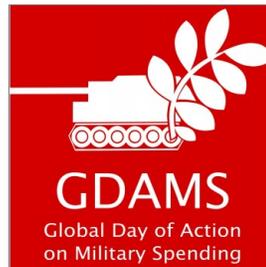
The third Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) [meeting of experts](#) on lethal autonomous weapon systems will take place from 11-15 April 2016 at the United Nations in Geneva. WILPF, as a member of the [Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#), will participate actively in this meeting, encouraging states to support a ban on autonomous weapons. Support for a preventative prohibition is growing—most recently, two UN special rapporteurs issued a [report](#) recommending at autonomous weapons without meaningful human

control should be prohibited. As usual, Reaching Critical Will's daily reporting and analysis of the meeting will be available online and through an [email subscription](#). Please subscribe to the mailing list for "conventional/emerging technologies of violence" list to receive the CCW Report. You will also be able to find [statements and other documents](#) on our website during the meeting.

Global Days of Action on Military Spending

This year the [Global Day of Action on Military Spending](#) will span two weeks, from 5–18 April 2016. On 5 April, the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#) (SIPRI) will publish the global military expenditure figures for 2015, together with its analysis of the trends. 18 April is Tax Day in the USA, a traditional moment in the calendar for civil society to challenge the uses put to public money. Furthermore, 4 April is the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and also of his remarkable

speech, "[Beyond Vietnam: Time to Break Silence](#)," delivered in 1967, exactly one year before his death. In this speech, Dr. King powerfully described the inextricable links between militarism, racism, and poverty in the struggle for peace and justice.



The [International Peace Bureau](#) will publish events that groups around the world organise to mark this fortnight of action. WILPF will be issuing materials highlighting the intersections of militarism, capitalism, racism, and patriarchy. We will also issue a

preview of a new report related to preventing gender-based violence through the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and other instruments. Stopping arms transfers and preventing armed violence and armed conflict are critical to challenging excessive military spending and militarist cultures.

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The [60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women](#) will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14 to 24 March 2016. This year, the priority theme is “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development” and the review theme is “The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”. WILPF is organising an [afternoon symposium](#) together with partners to look at strategies for implementing the [Global Study on UN Security](#)

[Resolution 1325](#). This event is relevant for those interested in the intersections of women, peace and security and disarmament, as among other things the Global Study highlights the impacts of militarism on gender equality and women’s rights. WILPF is also involved in an [event](#) focusing on violent masculinities and engaging men and boys in achieving gender justice. Violent masculinities are a focus of RCW’s work on disarmament and this event, hosted by [MenEngage](#), will be a great opportunity to engage in gender transformative approaches to militarism and other critical issues. Visit RCW’s sister programme [PeaceWomen](#) for more information.

Open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament wraps up work of its first session

The first session of the [open-ended working group \(OEWG\)](#) on nuclear disarmament concluded on Friday, 26 February 2016. The purpose of this body is to “substantively address” and make recommendations to the UN General Assembly about “concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms” to achieve and maintain a nuclear weapon free world. The [prohibition of nuclear weapons](#) was the dominant proposal during discussions and more concrete discussions will be necessary at the second session in May. It will be a good opportunity for states and others to submit elements of a nuclear weapon ban treaty for consideration. To find out what happened at the OEWG, read [RCW’s reports](#). You can also find [statements](#) and [documents](#) as well as [background information](#) on our website.

ATT extraordinary meeting discusses procedure but avoids politics

On Monday, 29 February 2016, states parties of the [Arms Trade Treaty \(ATT\)](#) held an [extraordinary meeting](#) to agree on organizational matters with regard to the Secretariat and the second conference of states parties to be held in Geneva from 22–26 August 2016. The meeting did not consider substantive items, which unfortunately means it missed an opportunity to discuss possible violations of the Treaty by states parties, including continued arms exports to Saudi Arabia, which [has been found](#) to have engaged in “widespread and systematic attacks on civilian targets” in its use of explosive weapons in populated areas in Yemen. [Read more about the meeting with RCW’s report](#) and find [documents and other materials](#) online.

Huge demonstration against nuclear weapons held in London

On 27 February, the [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament](#), an ICAN partner organisation in the UK, [brought together an estimated 70,000 people](#) in London for what was dubbed the country's [biggest anti-nuclear weapons rally](#) in a generation. Demonstrators demanded that the government "scrap Trident", a reference to its ageing fleet of nuclear-armed submarines, which carry a total of up to 215 nuclear warheads. There was strong cross-party political support for the event, with speeches from three party leaders: Labour's Jeremy Corbyn, the Scottish National Party's Nicola Sturgeon, and Plaid Cymru's Leanne Wood. Caroline Lucas of the Green Party also spoke.



ICAN and its many partner organisations in the United Kingdom were at the march in large numbers, including health professionals from [Medact](#), cyclists from [Wheel Stop Trident](#), many [faith groups](#), [Scientists for Global Responsibility](#), and some huge [Scottish CND](#) puppets that caught a very early train from Glasgow. WILPF of course was also there. Members from WILPF Scotland [joined the march](#) to protest Trident, which is housed at Faslane, 40km north of Glasgow. £180 billion for the renewal of Trident, "at a time when one in four children in Scotland live in poverty ... is an immoral expenditure," said WILPF member Anne Scott, who lives in Edinburgh.

Impacts of and political positions on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas



In the latest edition of [Peace in Progress](#), a publication of the International Catalan Institute for Peace, RCW's director Ray Acheson [writes about](#) political action on explosive weapons. The article outlines government positions on a political process to end the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and suggests elements for such a commitment. The article also argues that states need to prevent those that use explosive weapons in populated areas from acquiring weapons. Arms exporters must not transfer weapons to countries that are bombing or shelling in villages, towns, cities, or other populated areas. The other articles in the publication examine explosive weapon impacts, surgical strikes, international humanitarian law, and living under bombardment.

Another member of the [International Network on Explosive Weapons \(INEW\)](#), Action on Armed Violence, recently published a [new report](#) looking in detail at the impact of three types of explosive weapons with wide-area effects. It examines the impact of air-dropped bombs in Yemen, mortar attacks on the Syrian-Jordanian border, and multiple-rocket attacks in Ukraine. The report gathers further evidence to demonstrate the devastating impact for civilians when such weapons are used in populated areas and shows why states must urgently address this issue.

Upcoming events

[Conference on Disarmament](#), Part One
26 January–1 April 2016 | Geneva, Switzerland

[Commission on the Status of Women](#)
14–24 March 2016 | New York, NY, USA

[Nuclear Security Summit](#)
31 March–1 April 2016 | Washington, DC, USA

[UN Disarmament Commission](#)
4–22 April 2016 | New York, NY, USA

[Global Days of Action on Military Spending](#)
5–18 April 2016

[Meeting of Experts on Protocol V of the CCW](#)
6–7 April 2016 | Geneva, Switzerland

[Meeting of Experts on Amended Protocol II of the CCW](#)
7–8 April 2016 | Geneva, Switzerland

[CCW informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)
11–15 April 2016 | Geneva, Switzerland

[Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence](#)
1–8 May 2016

[Open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament](#)
2–12 May 2016 | Geneva, Switzerland

Featured news

ICJ hears Marshall Islands cases against nuclear weapon possessors

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is hearing oral arguments in the cases filed by the Marshall Islands against India, Pakistan, and United Kingdom on the claim at these states are in breach of their nuclear disarmament obligations under existing international law. The Marshall Islands [filed](#) the lawsuits in April 2014 against all nine nuclear-armed. The three respondents at the ICJ are the only ones of the nine to accept the jurisdiction of the Court in this case. This round of hearings will address preliminary objections filed by each respondent. The Court's 15 justices will decide whether the cases will proceed to the next phase in which the merits will be considered. Rick Wayman ([@rickwayman](#)) and Jackie Cabasso ([@jackiecabasso](#)) are tweeting live from the ICJ every day at [#NuclearZero](#). You can also get updates from the NAPF [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) feeds, and a livestream of the oral arguments is available on the [ICJ website](#). Background can be found on the [Nuclear Zero](#) website.

Arms transfers to Saudi Arabia in question

The European parliament has passed a resolution calling on EU member states to [impose an arms embargo](#) against Saudi Arabia, noting that the UK alone has licensed more than \$3 billion worth of arms sales to Saudi Arabia since it began bombing Yemen last March. A [full-scale inquiry](#) into the UK's sales of arms to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen is to be mounted by the powerful cross-party committee on arms exports controls. The inquiry is going to look not just at arms sales to Saudi Arabia and their use by the Saudi air force in Yemen, but also UK arms sales to other Gulf countries. In addition, the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) has launched [formal legal action](#) against the UK government for its arms exports to Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile the Canadian government is facing increasing pressure to cancel its arms deal with the Saudis. Under existing export control policy, Canada must determine that "there is no reasonable risk" that Canadian-made goods might be used against civilians before an export permit can be issued. The Trudeau administration [has not explained](#) if or how it has concluded there is no reasonable risk, given [mounting evidence](#) of civilian casualties in Yemen. The foreign minister has argued that the Liberal party did not endorse the deal but indicated his government [would not terminate it now](#). He even argued that if Canada didn't sell them the weapons, someone else would. However, as Canadian NGO Project Ploughshares [continues to argue](#), adhering to existing arms control restrictions, on the basis of Saudi Arabia's human rights abuses, gives Canada a legitimate reason to cancel the deal.

Syrian and Russian forces targeting hospitals as a strategy of war

Russian and Syrian government forces appear to have deliberately and systematically targeted hospitals and other medical facilities over the last three months to pave the way for ground forces to advance on northern Aleppo, an [examination of airstrikes by Amnesty International](#) has found.

Cluster munitions are being used in Yemen

Saudi Arabia's coalition in Yemen is [using](#) internationally banned cluster munition explosives supplied by the United States, despite evidence of civilian casualties and the fact that the weapons fall short of US weaponry standards. "Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners, as well as their US supplier, are blatantly disregarding the global standard that says cluster munitions should never be used under any circumstances," said [Steve Goose](#), arms director at Human Rights Watch and chair of the international Cluster Munition Coalition. "The Saudi-led coalition should investigate evidence that civilians are being harmed in these attacks and immediately stop using them." Vice News aired a [documentary video](#) about cluster bomb use in Yemen last week.

WILPF Sweden joins Swedish National Commission on disarmament and international law

WILPF Sweden's Secretary General Malin Nilsson [will be one of the delegates](#) in the new Swedish National Commission on International Law and Disarmament. The commission, which had its first meeting 1 March 2016, will function as an advisory board to the Foreign Minister. It includes 15 representatives from the government, parliament, relevant authorities and institutions, and civil society as well as academic experts. Foreign Minister Margot Wallström will chair the Commission. The purpose of the Commission will be to follow and analyse developments in the areas of humanitarian law

and disarmament. It will also develop proposals for Swedish positions and initiatives on issues concerning humanitarian law and disarmament, including when these encompass or touch upon other areas of international law, such as human rights.

Recommended reading

Ray Acheson, "[Political action to end the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.](#)" *Peace in Progress*, No. 26, February 2016

[Peace in Progress No. 26: Bombarded Cities](#), February 2016

Cesar Jaramillo, "[Here's An Entirely Legitimate Exit Strategy On The Saudi Arms Deal.](#)" *Huffington Post*, 7 March 2016

Madeleine Rees, "[Gender, war, and peace: 'we the people'.](#)" *openDemocracy*, 8 March 2016

Margot Wallström, "[Syria's peace talks need more women at the table.](#)" *The Guardian*, 8 March 2016
