

Championing disarmament

Advancement of disarmament
and non-proliferation

A view of the Peace Bell court at United Nations
Headquarters, a symbol of global disarmament and
harmony.

(New York; November 2023) © UN Photo/Loey Felipe

What we do

- Multilateral negotiations and deliberations
- Weapons of mass destruction
- Conventional arms
- Information and outreach
- Regional disarmament

Our team

- Office for Disarmament Affairs



Children paint a mural in a community with explosives contamination on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

(Damascus; April 2023)
© UNMAS/Dima Fallouh

Context

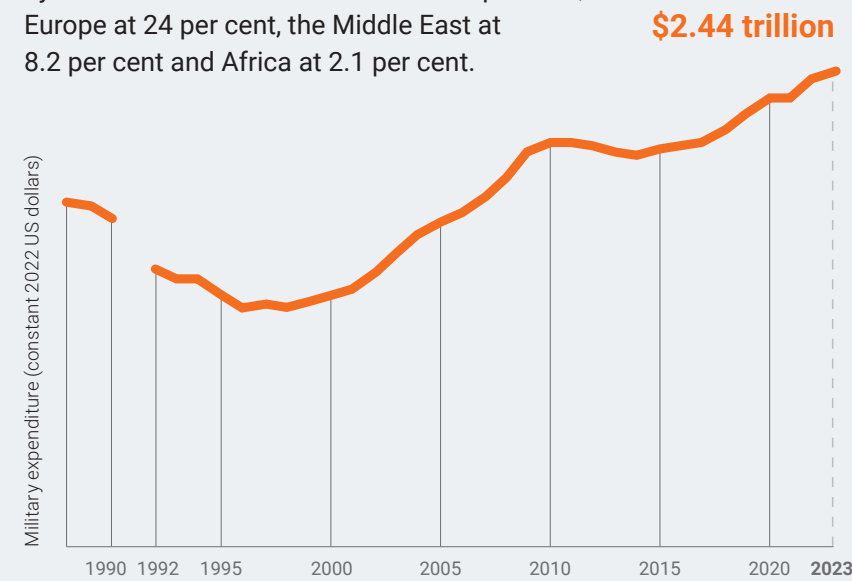
Civilians are bearing the brunt of armed conflict amid escalating global tensions. The threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction persists, while **military spending rises** and conventional arms, especially illicit small arms and light weapons, increasingly proliferate. **Emerging technologies pose additional challenges** to security.

Our goals

Our work enables high-level international negotiations and practical disarmament efforts on the ground. Our priorities are: eliminating nuclear weapons; upholding the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction; regulating conventional weapons; responding to the challenges of emerging weapons technologies; and promoting regional disarmament and public awareness. Those actions are essential to promoting a holistic approach to security through vigorous diplomacy, disarmament and sustained peace efforts.

Global military expenditure increased to a record \$2.44 trillion in 2023

Countries in the Americas accounted for 41 per cent of total global military spending in 2023, the largest regional share overall, followed by countries in Asia and Oceania at 24 per cent, Europe at 24 per cent, the Middle East at 8.2 per cent and Africa at 2.1 per cent.



Note: The absence of data for the Soviet Union in 1991 means that no total can be calculated for that year.
Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, April 2024.

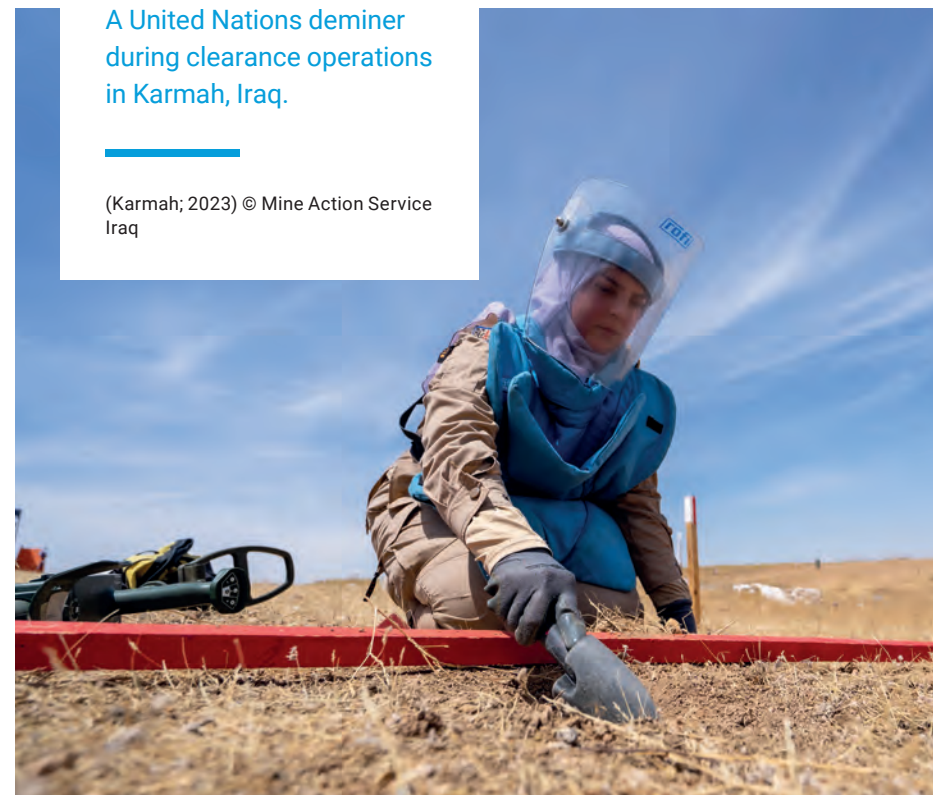


“Disarmament is essential to and indivisible from broader peace and security and development objectives.”

Izumi Nakamitsu,
Under-Secretary-General and
High Representative for
Disarmament Affairs

A United Nations deminer during clearance operations in Karmah, Iraq.

(Karmah; 2023) © Mine Action Service Iraq



Our disarmament work

637

rostered experts for the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of the Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons

122

arms control-related projects funded, benefiting 148 Member States

37%

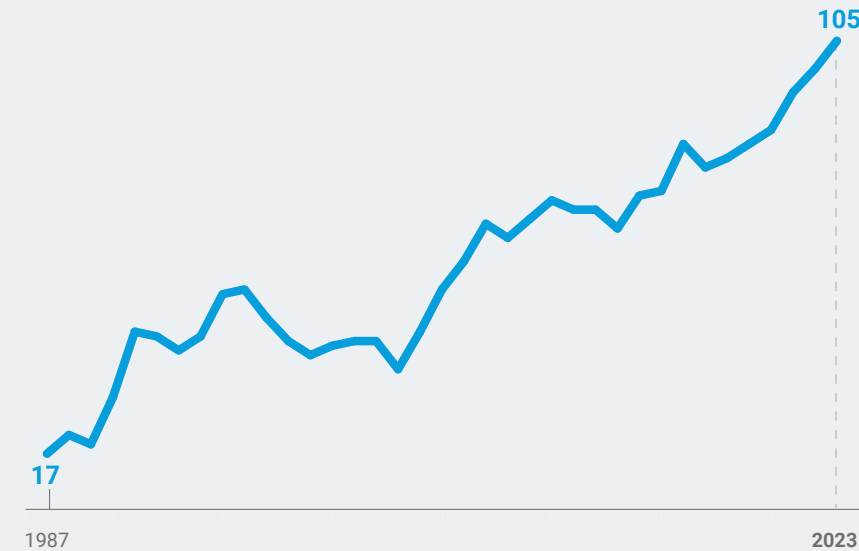
of Member States reported on their arms exports and imports to the Register of Conventional Arms

33%

of Member States submitted reports to the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures

Rising number of confidence-building measure reports

In 2023, a record number of 105 reports were submitted by States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.



Our achievements

At a time of heightened global uncertainty, we supported the implementation of the two major treaties on the prohibition and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We facilitated international dialogue on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons among 191 Governments, aimed at strengthening their commitments to a world free of nuclear weapons. In addition, we worked with the 24 Member States and observer States from the Middle East to make progress towards a new treaty aimed at freeing the region of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

To uphold the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction, we facilitated the creation of a new international working group to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and support its global implementation. We also enhanced the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons by providing a more geographically diverse and better-trained roster of potential investigators.



Ammunition technical experts during an all-women training session on the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

(Wiener Neustadt; October 2023) © UN Office of Disarmament Affairs

To strengthen the international response to risks from cyberspace, we helped to launch a global directory of points of contacts to facilitate communication between national authorities during cybersecurity incidents. The tool will contribute to a safer, more secure and peaceful online domain. We also supported multilateral discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems and the prevention of an arms race in outer space and supported new initiatives on the military use of artificial intelligence.

Gender parity in disarmament

45%

of statements were made by women during meetings of the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025

23

First Committee resolutions mention "gender", "women", or "diversity"



Participants attend the 2024 Vienna Conference on Autonomous Weapons Systems.

(Vienna; April 2024)
© United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs/Ana Moruja Nigro

To limit the impact of ammunitions on humans, we supported the creation of a **new global framework** to reduce their illicit trafficking, diversion and accidental explosion. We also linked weapons and ammunition management with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction programmes in Cameroon and Somalia. Through our Saving Lives Entity fund, we **promoted better control of small arms and light weapons for more sustainable security** and development, with new projects in Ghana, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Panama and Papua New Guinea.

We convened 16 Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to tackle illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking and launched a similar process for Central America. In addition, we engaged with national authorities in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America on small arms control and gender-based violence prevention.

Youth in disarmament

2,100+
applicants from 145 countries
for the Youth Leader Fund
for a World without Nuclear
Weapons

910
applicants to the Youth
Champions for Disarmament
training programme, of which
54 per cent are young women

In 2023, we launched the **new Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons**, which, to date, has **supported the education of 100 young people from over 60 countries as disarmament advocates**. Through other youth education tools, such as our Disarmament Education Dashboard, we empower women, young people and other partners to participate in global policymaking and disarmament processes.



United Nations personnel inspect an unexploded 1,000-pound bomb on a main road in Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip.

(Khan Yunis; April 2023) © OCHA/Themba Linden