Every two years, the UN General Assembly requests the UN Secretary-General to prepare a report reviewing the results of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2002 UN study on disarmament and non-proliferation education. WILPF contributed to the 2020 biennial report which compiles work by governments, UN offices, inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations in this field.

Trainings

In conjunction with the Fifth Conference of States Parties (CSP5) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in August 2019, Reaching Critical Will led a training and orientation day on the ATT and its priority theme on gender and gender-based violence (GBV) with WILPF Sections and partners from Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Colombia, Burkina Faso, and Yemen.

Ahead of CSP5, WILPF-RCW co-convened together with the Permanent Mission of Ireland a one-day workshop for diplomats. Representatives from over 20 member states attended and improved their understanding about gender, gender-based violence and its linkages to the international arms trade, human rights, and Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

In 2019, WILPF-RCW held webinars for WILPF sections on fully autonomous weapon systems as well as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Similarly, WILPF-RCW staff engaged with interested WILPF Sections on their national advocacy on the TPNW in coordination with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and on advocacy for an international legal instrument to ban fully autonomous weapon systems.

WILPF Sweden delivered a feminist "crash course" about nuclear weapons discussing security policy, the history of nuclear weapons, a feminist analysis, and work to ban nuclear weapons. The course was delivered both in-person and electronically. WILPF Sweden offered the course 19 times throughout 2019, in more than twelve cities around Sweden, to a mixed audience of universities, organisations, and political parties.

WILPF Sri Lanka trained a group of young law students in peace building and disarmament education. In January 2019, the participants then trained women on how to handle violent situations, including those caused by religious tensions, and educated grassroots communities in selected districts on the importance of disarmament and sustainable peace.

WILPF Sri Lanka is currently designing a manual on disarmament education targeting government stakeholders, grassroots youth, and women. The objective of the manual is to fill the gaps in disarmament education in Sri Lanka and to provide outreach beyond current academic discussions. At the time of submission of this report, WILPF Sri Lanka had submitted funding proposals, and seeks to have finalised the manual within six months, after which it will be implemented on a continuing basis.
WILPF DISARMAMENT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Materials

RCW-WILPF published several new resources about disarmament online and in print in the period from July 2018-May 2020. Governments, international organisations, civil society groups, and the public used these resources to inform policies and debates. Below is an outline.

First Committee briefing book 2018 (September 2018): This briefing book provides a quick overview of the state of play on some of the most pressing issues to be addressed at First Committee. It also outlines recommendations for governments from civil society groups working on these topics.

Governments, international organisations, civil society groups, and the public used WILPF’s resources about disarmament to inform policies and debates.

We are still here: Mosulite women 500 days after the conclusion of the Coalition Military Operation (January 2019): WILPF released a comprehensive report about the gendered impacts of military operations in Mosul, Iraq.

A WILPF guide to killer robots (March 2019): This is a resource guide for the WILPF network about autonomous weapon systems, also known as killer robots.

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots: Campaigner’s kit (March 2019): WILPF-RCW provided a chapter on gender, bias, and autonomous weapons to the resource.

2019 NPT briefing book (April 2019): In advance of the 2019 NPT Third Preparatory Committee, WILPF-RCW produced a briefing book that highlights critical issues for states to consider during the Conference and beyond, as well as a history of the NPT.

Assuring destruction forever: 2019 edition (April 2019): This updated study explores the ongoing and planned nuclear weapon modernisation programmes in China, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

First Committee briefing book 2019 (September 2019): Published ahead of the 2019 UN General Assembly First Committee, this briefing book highlights a number of critical disarmament topics and suggests how governments can achieve progress in those areas.


Why gender matters in international cyber security (April 2020): Co-authored with the Association for Progressive Communications, this report looks into the otherwise under-explored area of gender-differentiated impacts of international cyber operations and the role of gender diversity in cyber diplomacy.

Assuring destruction forever: 2020 edition (May 2020): The updated study explores the ongoing and planned nuclear weapon modernisation programmes in China, France, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
WILPF-RCW also continued to publish monitors providing coverage of key disarmament fora or topics, including the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the General Assembly First Committee, the General Assembly general debate, the Arms Trade Treaty, small arms and light weapons, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) meetings on Lethal Autonomous Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the context of international security, explosive weapons in populated areas, the Conference on nuclear- and WMD-free zone in the Middle East, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-test-ban Treaty (CTBT).

WILPF-RCW provides daily or weekly reports and analysis on these meetings, providing information to researchers, students, and educators as well as NGOs, international organisations, and governments engaged in the work of the meetings.

WILPF-RCW also published a variety of printable fact sheets on key issues related to disarmament on its website, www.reachingcriticalwill.org, and archives of primary documentation from intergovernmental meetings on disarmament and analysis on weapons issues that is geared toward grassroots groups, students, academics, diplomats, policy officials, and others.

In collaboration with WILPF’s human rights programme, WILPF-RCW submitted a number of reports on the link between human rights, gender, and disarmament to different human rights mechanisms, including Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), special procedures such as the working group on mercenaries, and treaty bodies such as the CEDAW Committee. This helped to advance knowledge about disarmament within the human rights community and its mechanisms.

WILPF Sweden submitted a report to the UPR of Sweden with recommendations to stop the arms trade to countries involved in the Yemen conflict, to sign and ratify the TPNW, and that all companies should respect human rights abroad.

WILPF Sweden published “Grejen med militarisering,” a short pamphlet about militarisation. Its target audience is students in elementary and high school.

WILPF Sweden published “Grejen med kärnvapen,” a short pamphlet about nuclear weapons. Its target audience is students in elementary and high school.

WILPF Sweden published an impact report of WILPF Sweden’s activities in the past decade. It includes chapters about nuclear weapons; WPS; the GBV criterion in the ATT; the Swedish arms trade; and its work with sister Sections in Africa.

WILPF Sweden publishes the feminist magazine *Fred & Frihet – kärnvapen, patriarkatets förlängda arm* on security policy, human rights, and disarmament four times per year. Around 2,000 copies of each edition are printed, reaching WILPF members, government authorities, and libraries. This edition, for example, is about nuclear weapons.

WILPF Colombia published the report *Mujeres por el desarme: Una mirada al desarme desde la la Resolución 1325* (October 2018). It presents field research on the proliferation of weapons and their gendered impacts, conducted by WILPF Colombia between December 2016 and August 2017.

WILPF Sri Lanka drafted the report Case study on gender-based violence and small arms in Sri Lanka (2019). It explores the impacts of small arms on GBV in Sri Lanka, and highlights the importance to include women in decision-making processes linked to small arms control.

WILPF Burkina Faso, WILPF Cameroon, and WILPF DRC published briefing papers (August 2019) about the link between the proliferation of conventional weapons and GBV in their respective national and local contexts.
Translation

The WILPF guide to killer robots (March 2019) has recently been translated into Spanish and French.

The nuclear weapon ban treaty: a resource guide for WILPF (March 2018) is also available in English, French, and Spanish.

The briefing paper on GBV and arms, published by WILPF Burkina Faso, is available in French and English. Similarly, the briefing paper on the link between small arms and GBV, published by WILPF DRC, is available in French and English.

Dissemination

WILPF-RCW continued to provide information about disarmament and arms control through its website, which includes an online resource page about disarmament and non-proliferation education. More information is available at www.reachingcriticalwill.org. Staff from Reaching Critical Will have distributed materials and given presentations at many local and international venues on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In January 2020, WILPF-RCW launched the very first database on the topic of gender and disarmament. It compiles and makes searchable a broad range of resources, including UN documents, reports, presentations, podcasts, government statements, academic journal articles, and more on the topic.

WILPF Sri Lanka participated in CSP5, and spoke at side events on the promotion of the universalisation and effective implementation of the ATT. In January 2020, WILPF Sri Lanka participated as a panelist in an event organised by the Forum on Disarmament and Development (FDD) that launched publications on Sri Lanka and nuclear weapons treaties.

In July 2019, WILPF USA organised the “Nuclear-Free Future” tour. Three WILPF members spoke at public events about the UN’s efforts towards nuclear disarmament and current US legislative campaigns regarding moving government funds from nuclear weapons to citizens’ needs, such as better health care. Along with local constituents WILPF USA visited nine legislators’ offices to inform Congressional representatives about the needed shift of funds. In August 2019, WILPF USA participated in the World Conference Against A & H Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and visited Kobe, the world’s first nuclear weapons-free port. Videos and photos of the California and Japan tours were posted online. In January 2020, 140 letters were hand-delivered to key senators and representatives in Washington, DC, which resulted in several representatives signing on to Eleanor Holmes Norton’s bill, HR-2419, which calls for nuclear weapons abolition and economic conversion.

WILPF USA posts regularly on Facebook and Twitter, and in Google Groups and sends out by email the “NucNews” which keeps subscribers up-to-date on all things nuclear.

WILPF USA had planned to go on a speaking tour in California titled “What’s in your Water? Exposing the Pentagon: Hidden Polluter of Water,” to visit ten WILPF branches and ten military bases to expose the military’s state-wide drinking water contamination and the current nationwide public health and environmental crisis. Due to COVID-19, the tour had to be cancelled.

WILPF Australia collaborates with ICAN Australia to mobilise activists, raise public pressure, and build political support at local government level to persuade the Australian government to sign and ratify the TPNW. WILPF Australia also co-hosted the Women’s Ban the Bomb rally in Canberra in June 2019 with the Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW) and were actively involved in marches in other cities.

WILPF DRC has been raising awareness among decision-makers and civil society organisations to mobilise for strong advocacy for the DRC to ratify the ATT as a tool to stop the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to prevent GBV.