



Dear WILPF Members,

In this mailing you will find:

1. Brief Report From the European Social Forum
2. Take Action – Stop Uranium Weapons, send a letter to your Foreign Ministry (from WILPF Norway)
3. Update on the General Assembly – check out the indices!
4. Keep Space for Peace Week of Action – WILPF International Statement
5. Focus On 1325: Public Manifestation In The Peace Palace In The Hague – WILPF Netherlands
6. Support the Convention on Cluster Munitions

As always, we welcome feedback and input to these mailings. If you have something to contribute to the next mailing, please send it to [susi.snyder@wilpf.ch](mailto:susi.snyder@wilpf.ch) no later than the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Past updates are archived on the website at:  
[http://www.wilpf.int.ch/updates/up\\_index.htm](http://www.wilpf.int.ch/updates/up_index.htm),

Warm greetings,

Susi Snyder

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## 1. Brief Report from the European Social Forum

More than 10,000 people took part in the 2008 European Social Forum in Malmö, Sweden. WILPF members from Belarus, Denmark, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the UK participated in some of the hundreds of events. WILPF organized several events dealing with a range of subjects – from racism to human rights to uranium weapons to nuclear abolition. After the seminars, those members who were present gathered for a brief WILPF Europe meeting to discuss strengthening regional cooperation, preparations for the International Board meeting and our contributions to the European Women's Lobby.

WILPF organized or spoke at the following events:

### **War on terrorism and human rights**

The US-led "war on terror" has seen a devastating attack on international law and the framework of human rights around the world. This seminar focused on the role of European governments in the practices of enforced disappearance and secret detention and how this 'war' has contributed to the erosion of the human rights of targeted communities.



## **Combating Racism: From Transatlantic Slavery to the Durban Review Conference**

The World Conference Against Racism in Durban 2001 identified the roots of racism in the Trans-Atlantic Slavery which divided the world between rich and poor. In April 2009 the Durban Review Conference will be held in Geneva. The seminar focused on the upsurge of racism and the global implementation of the Durban programme in preparation of the Review and ways civil society can be mobilized.

### **War on Humanity – Nuclear Accidents and Use of Depleted Uranium**

The seminar examined the use of uranium ammunition, low dose radiation, and their effects on humans and environment. 1. Consequences of nuclear accidents and radiation fall-out on children and future generations, using Chernobyl as an example. 2. Effects of nuclear waste material, depleted uranium (DU) on soldiers and the local population.

### **Working for a nuclear free and peaceful Europe with Perspectives from Women and the Global South.**

How to create a culture of peace in Europe, proposing alternative security policies, promoting nuclear disarmament, solidarity and justice, cooperation with the South, the resolving of conflicts by peaceful means within the framework of the UN and OSCE and the involvement of women in decision-making.

## **2. Take Action- Stop Uranium Weapons—ACT NOW!**

Momentum is building to create a global ban on uranium weapons. This radioactive byproduct of the nuclear industry has been used in a number of conflicts in recent years. The debate on what degree of danger these weapons pose to human health and the environment is still raging. 6 November is the international day of action to ban uranium weapons. Send the sample letter below to your Foreign Ministry and encourage them to support a resolution in the UN General Assembly on these hideous weapons. The first vote will be taken in the General Assembly during the first week of November, so please use the below letter as a basis for one of your own, and send it today!

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Dear Foreign Minister,

I am writing to encourage our government to support a draft resolution L. 26 in the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, "Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium".

These weapons are pyrophoric and ignite on impact. They are radiologically and chemically toxic weapons that after detonation produce very small, volatile and "ceramic" particles of uranium oxide which release long term, low level radiation in the human organism and system, in which they remain for many years.



I consider that the use of these weapons is illegal under existing international humanitarian law because they fail the four main tests of weapons under international humanitarian law: temporal (continues after war), environmental (soil and water contamination), humaneness (unnecessary suffering beyond that required for military purposes) and affecting non-combatants under the Martens Clause

This resolution specifically asks the WHO, UNEP and IAEA to update their information on uranium weapons over the course of the next two years.

The draft resolution contains a request for states to continue submitting reports to the Secretary General, a process begun by 2007's landslide resolution. It also calls on three UN Agencies to complete or update their positions on uranium weapons. Many states are using the positions of the IAEA and WHO as justification for inaction; in spite of the fact that the WHO's position on uranium weapons is hopelessly out of date and lacking key peer-reviewed papers. Meanwhile UNEP is yet to publish its full report on the effects of uranium contamination in Iraq and the IAEA seems hopelessly wedded to the perceived economic benefits of nuclear power.

There is a marked difference between the position of many EU governments and the position of European Parliamentarians, 94% of whom backed a resolution calling for action on uranium weapons earlier this year. In a letter to UN Delegations, Members of the European Parliament wrote:

*"The fight for a worldwide ban on uranium in weapons and ammunition is part of our general fight for arms control and disarmament. Uranium weapons cause indiscriminate harm. It is crucial to act against violations of humanitarian, international and environmental law."*

I encourage our delegation to support draft resolution L.26 on uranium weapons.

Sincerely,

[Your Name Here]

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Information, including critical papers on WHO and IAEA, discussions on UNEP's findings in the Balkans and Iraq, US veteran epidemiology, UNEP Bibliography, Joint Statement by Scientists on DU and a critique of the 2008 NAS report can be found:

<http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/a/190.html>



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Information including PDF versions of the legal and political documents distributed at the ICBUW workshop 'Banning Uranium Weapons: Legal avenues and political cul-de-sacs' can be found here:

<http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/a/193.html>

### 3. Monitoring the UN General Assembly

The General Assembly has begun and WILPF is maintaining two indices to help you keep track of the positions being taken by governments, the Reaching Critical Will Disarmament Index, and the PeaceWomen Gender Index.

**The Reaching Critical Will Disarmament Index** is an index of all references made to issues of disarmament, peace, and security, made in the 63rd General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly. This index is a tool to gauge the issues which will be detailed during the First Committee of the General Assembly, starting 6 October 2008. Included in this Index are all references made to arms control, disarmament, multilateralism, nuclear energy, security, proliferation, terrorism, cluster munitions, the US-India Deal, and nuclear and conventional weapons. It can be found here:

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/1com08/disarminde.html>

**The PeaceWomen Gender Index** includes all references to gender, women, girls, gender equality, violence against women and the participation of women made in statements delivered during the General Debate:

[http://www.peacewomen.org/un/genass/GA63/Women\\_63GA.html](http://www.peacewomen.org/un/genass/GA63/Women_63GA.html).

Reaching Critical Will also coordinates NGO reporting on the First Committee, and publishes a weekly newsletter, ***The First Committee Monitor***. If you would like to receive this weekly newsletter by email, please subscribe to the list, by sending an email to [info@reachingcriticalwill.org](mailto:info@reachingcriticalwill.org) with "First Committee subscribe" in the subject heading. *The Monitor* is available in PDF and HTML; please indicate which you would prefer. The Monitor can be found on the Reaching Critical Will website at:

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/FCM.html>.

### 4. Keep Space for Peace Week

WILPF co-sponsors international Keep Space for Peace Week, 4 – 12 October. Please share the WILPF statement below within your section and encourage members in your section to report on their actions to keep space for peace. Reports of your activities should be sent to Carol Urner – [carol.disarm@gmail.com](mailto:carol.disarm@gmail.com), convenor of the WILPF Peace and Security Working Group.

You can find more information on Keeping Space for Peace here:

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/paros/wgroup.html>.



## **WILPF Statement in support of Keep Space for Peace Week**

The first United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Outer Space, issued in 1958, recognizes that outer space should be used only for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all humankind. In October 1967, WILPF welcomed the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty and continues to reaffirm its goals by promoting and supporting efforts to prevent the weaponization of outer space and by calling for its demilitarization. One aspect of that support is WILPF co-sponsorship each year of Keep Space for Peace Week in cooperation with the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. Dozens of other citizens groups around the world participate actively in the week of protest, action, and education. Our groups initiated Keep Space for Peace Week in response to UN World Space Week, in order to raise awareness of the need to prevent an arms race in outer space in order to achieve the goals of the Outer Space Treaty.

The overwhelming majority of United Nations member states are concerned that the weaponization of outer space will lead to an arms race. They insist that a multilateral treaty is the only way to prevent such an arms race. Each year in the General Assembly, member states adopt a resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) by an overwhelming majority. In fact, every country in the world votes in favor of negotiating a treaty on PAROS—except for the United States, which has voted against it for the past three years, and Israel, which has abstained. The US administration argues that the existing multilateral arms control regime is sufficient, and that there is no need to address a “non-existent” threat.

Meanwhile, the United States and some of its allies—including Japan, South Korea, Israel, and NATO—continue to research, design, test, and deploy “missile defense” and small satellite technologies with dual-use capabilities. The United States invests millions of dollars into space technology aimed at dominating outer space and rejects resolutions and proposed treaties that it views will limit its actions.

In February this year, the United States shot down a failed satellite with a Standard Missile-3, whose primary vocation is interceptor for the US Navy’s “missile defense” system. This action could be considered an anti-satellite test, and is similar to the test that China conducted in 2007, for which the United States condemned the Chinese government. Both the Chinese and American tests created even more space debris, which already poses a considerable hazard for space objects. Potentially, such debris can prevent future stationing of satellites in space and limit or entirely prevent space access.

In August 2008, the United States signed an agreement with Poland to station US ground-based interceptors on Polish soil. In September, the Czech Republic agreed to a deal with the United States that will allow the US to build a “missile



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defense” radar based near Prague. The Russian government has responded angrily to both agreements, arguing that these elements of the US “missile defense” system upset the strategic balance in Europe. Russia has already begun developing “advanced” missiles that can “out-smart” the system.

WILPF believes that such actions and agreements by the United States will instigate a new arms race and increase geopolitical tensions and international insecurity. WILPF calls on the governments of the Czech Republic and Poland to not ratify the signed agreements.

WILPF welcomes the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) presented to the Conference on Disarmament in February this year by China and the Russian Federation. Although the draft treaty does not address all the questions raised by governments and NGOs over the past years, WILPF views the draft treaty as a positive step and maintains that multilateral, verifiable, non-discriminatory, legally-binding instruments are the key to ensuring international peace and security.

WILPF believes that arms control measures such as a treaty preventing the weaponization of outer space will not limit any state’s right to use outer space for peaceful purposes but rather will ensure that such use is possible. WILPF calls on the members of the Conference on Disarmament to end their twelve year deadlock and to begin serious discussions on that draft and/or other draft texts with a view to establishing an ad hoc committee to negotiate such a treaty within the CD.

WILPF is co-sponsor of the “PAROS Working Group,” an international consortium of activists working to prevent an arms race in outer space. For more information about this working group and on space security in general, please see [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/paros/wgroup.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/paros/wgroup.html).

## **5. Focus On 1325 During Public Manifestation In The Peace Palace In The Hague**

*The public manifestation ‘Women, Peace and Security’ on September 19, putting the spot light on resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council, has been assisted by more than 350 participants.*

The manifestation has been organized to present the outcome of the working conference ‘**Women Create Alternatives to violence – 1325**’, WCA 1325 to the public. Women from several conflict areas have worked out, together with their Dutch partners, an action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 in their regions. The WCA 1325-project is a joint project of the Netherlands Women’s



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Council and the Platform Women and Sustainable Peace, in which the Dutch section of WILPF participates.

WCA 1325 was launched on September 16<sup>th</sup> at the opening of the working conference. The purpose of the working conference was to bring women from conflict areas together, have them present their case, work out ways of cooperation and networking, and set up a practical action plan for a short and a long term. Six Dutch women organisations invited women from six conflict areas:

- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Netherlands: Palestine
- Womens Peacemakers Program (IFOR): Balkans
- Foundation Sundjata en Burundi Women for Peace and Development: Great Lakes region in Africa
- Women for Peace/ Nahid: Afghanistan
- Gender Concerns International: Kashmir
- Womens organisation Netherlands Darfur: Darfur/Sudan

WILPF Netherlands, in collaboration with Palestinian women living in the Netherlands, hosted three women from three Palestinian organisations and one from Israel. Two of the four women are members of WILPF, one of the Palestinian section and one of the Israeli section. The focus on the Palestinian case proved to be very useful because Palestinian women could express their views at an international forum.

On the program was also a visit to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague and a meeting with Dutch parliamentarians.

-- Submitted by Coby Meyboom, WILPF Netherlands

## **6. Support the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the new Convention on Cluster Munitions <[http://www.wilpf.int.ch/disarmament/clustermunitions/Dublin%202008/Convention%20on%20cluster%20munitions\\_30May08.pdf](http://www.wilpf.int.ch/disarmament/clustermunitions/Dublin%202008/Convention%20on%20cluster%20munitions_30May08.pdf)> will be opened for signatures in Oslo. States wanting to join the new Convention can attend this Signing Conference <<http://www.osloccm.no/>> or sign the Convention later at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Convention <<http://www.clusterconvention.org/>> will prohibit all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of Cluster Munitions and is the outcome of tireless efforts and partnership by states (both affected and non affected states), the UN, ICRC and the Red Cross Movement, and civil society. The convention also includes victim assistance, clearance of contaminated areas and the destruction of stockpiles.



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In May this year, 107 participating states at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, agreed to adopt the text of the new Convention on Cluster Munitions. This does not necessarily mean that all states will sign and ratify the convention in December.

Join the campaign and sign the petition

<[http://www.minesactioncanada.org/peoples\\_treaty/index.cfm?fuse=Peoples\\_Treaty.Petition](http://www.minesactioncanada.org/peoples_treaty/index.cfm?fuse=Peoples_Treaty.Petition)> ,

and send a letter to your Government requesting them to legally commit to banning cluster munitions, provide assistance to victims and affected communities and also to clear contaminated land. The Ban Bus is also making an eight week campaign trail through Europe. Click here

<<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=753>> to find out when they will be visiting your city.

For more actions, and sample letters, see WILPF's Cluster Munitions <<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/disarmament/clustermunitions/>> page, Landmine Action <<http://www.landmineaction.org/support/takeaction/index.asp>> and the Cluster Munitions Coalition <<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/>> websites. \*\*

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\*Countries that adopted the Convention: \*Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (FYR), Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela and Zambia.