

The United Nations
DISARMAMENT
YEARBOOK



Volume 46 (Part II): 2021



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Office for Disarmament Affairs
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Guide to the user

The *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, in print and electronic format, is designed to be a concise reference tool for diplomats, researchers, students and the general public on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues under consideration by the international community.

Part I of the 2021 *Yearbook* was published in April this year. It contains all the resolutions and decisions of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, as well as their sponsors, voting patterns and other related information.

Part II is divided among the main multilateral issues under consideration throughout the year. It includes developments and trends on the issues, a convenient issue-oriented timeline and, in chapter VII, short summaries of actions taken by the First Committee and General Assembly on resolutions and decisions.

Because much of the background information is condensed, it is helpful to consult previous editions for expanded historical knowledge. Factual information is provided in the appendix. Websites of United Nations departments and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations are referenced as hyperlinks in the online version of the *Yearbook*.

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Hyperlinks to these documents are included in the online version of the *Yearbook*. Alternatively, they can be accessed, in the official languages of the United Nations, from <https://documents.un.org>. Specific disarmament-related documents are also available from the disarmament reference collection at www.un.org/disarmament/publications/library.

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Foreword

Welcome to Part II of the 2021 *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. Since 1976, this annual flagship publication of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs has provided comprehensive, objective information for diplomats and the interested public on multilateral efforts to advance the cause of peace through the regulation, control and elimination of weapons.

In 2021, those efforts continued to face significant headwinds from the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond significantly limiting the ability of intergovernmental forums to tackle pressing concerns related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in formal, in-person meetings, the pandemic complicated the delivery of humanitarian aid to conflict-scarred communities while eroding gains made in recent years towards greater economic and gender equality. Furthermore, even as COVID-19 underscored the urgent need for societies around the world to direct additional public resources into critical sectors such as public health, global military expenditures surged to a new, record-breaking high while armed clashes persisted.¹

Against that backdrop, 2021 nonetheless saw important moments of progress. The year’s landmark developments included, on 22 January, the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That seminal accomplishment was followed, in early February, by a five-year extension of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty). The decision of the United States and the Russian Federation to extend their only bilateral, legally binding agreement on nuclear arms control within days of its scheduled expiration further highlighted the need to expeditiously lay the foundation for the next generation of arms control.

Meanwhile, with the support of the African Union and my Office, the Governments of Madagascar, the Niger and Uganda strengthened their capacities to safely collect, store and destroy firearms that are illegally held within their borders. The assistance was the result of an ongoing partnership to help 10 States of the region remove thousands of weapons from illicit circulation in connection with Africa Amnesty Month, which is part of the African Union’s Silencing the Guns initiative.

I also joined the Executive Director of UN-Women to co-author an [opinion article](#) in which we urged Governments to cut excessive military spending in favour of social and economic development initiatives to benefit all. Redirecting funds away from armed forces to instead help strengthen

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, “[World military expenditure passes \\$2 trillion for first time](#)”, 25 April 2022.