

NEW ZEALAND DISARMAMENT STRATEGY

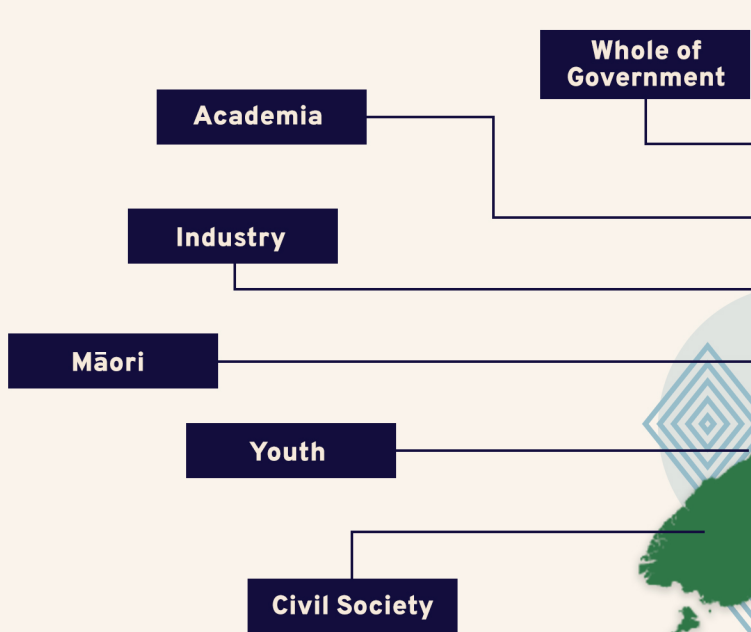
2021-22

Through our long history of leadership on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, Aotearoa New Zealand has sought to achieve a safer and more secure world – a world free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, where international humanitarian law is respected and civilians in conflict zones are protected from harm. This aligns with our values, including the role we play as kaitiaki in the interests of our global whanaunga.

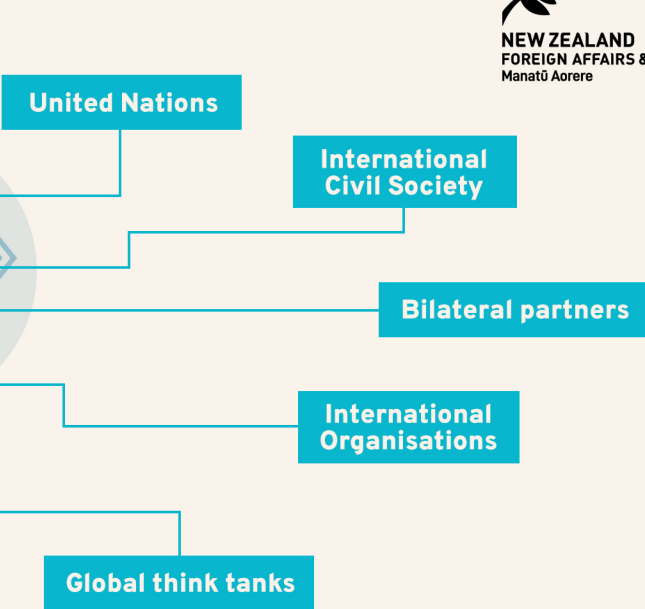
Although disarmament is always complex, the current global context is particularly challenging. Great power rivalry threatens long-standing disarmament frameworks, nuclear weapons arsenals continue to expand and recent conflicts have seen flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

The prospect of conflict in outer space, or use of weapons not controlled by humans, are additional challenges. In implementing the Strategy we will work with a diverse range of stakeholders, taking account of Māori and gender perspectives on disarmament. The Disarmament Strategy draws on our existing reputation, experience and relationships to ensure we are ready to take advantage of opportunities and can face challenges – now and into the future.

WHO WE WORK WITH DOMESTICALLY



WHO WE WORK WITH INTERNATIONALLY



HOW WE WORK:



NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT & NON-PROLIFERATION

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Eliminating nuclear weapons is our top disarmament priority. Reductions in global nuclear arsenals have slowed – and in some cases reversed – in recent years. The risks of a nuclear detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, continue to grow. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are well known, as we've seen in the Pacific and other regions, where the effects of nuclear testing continue to be felt.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO NEW ZEALAND?

Prioritisation of nuclear disarmament is a continuation of New Zealand's historical leadership role in this area. We reject nuclear weapons as unlawful and illegitimate and firmly believe that elimination is the only way to address their risks and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences they cause.

WHAT WILL NEW ZEALAND DO?

- Contribute to a positive outcome to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference including a meaningful result on nuclear disarmament
- Increase ratifications and signatures of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and achieve a positive outcome at its 1st Meeting of States Parties
- Achieve progress on nuclear legacy issues in the Pacific, supporting the work of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and building on the 1st meeting of parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Humanitarian considerations are at the heart of our approach to disarmament, which is reflected in the value we place on upholding International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Unfortunately, recent conflicts have seen flagrant violations of IHL; ratifications of key IHL treaties have slowed and implementation is patchy. States have also been slow to consider the application of IHL to technological and other developments.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO NEW ZEALAND?

New Zealand has long been a champion of IHL and has played an active part in the development of several major conventional arms treaties, including on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We have a history of working closely and constructively with international partners and organisations, and with civil society, to contribute to the strengthening of IHL, which is critical to the protection of civilians in conflict zones.

WHAT WILL NEW ZEALAND DO?

- Adoption and promotion of a meaningful Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas
- Increase uptake of key disarmament treaties in the Pacific and beyond (ATT & CCM in particular)

FUTURE ISSUES: OUTER SPACE AND AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

There are many areas where technological developments are outpacing policy and regulation. We must ensure that we are equipped at the national and international level to respond to evolving security challenges. There is growing competition for the benefits flowing from outer space, challenging its sustainable and peaceful use. There is also increasing awareness of the legal, political and ethical implications of autonomous weapons systems where decisions to kill could be made without human intervention.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO NEW ZEALAND?

New Zealand is increasingly dependent on space-based infrastructure to support our daily lives. However we cannot ignore the potential for the militarisation and weaponisation of space. As one of only 11 countries with space launch capabilities, we have an opportunity to show leadership in the development of new international norms and rules in this area. Similarly, the introduction of autonomous weapons systems has serious implications for national, regional and global security. Development of a robust national policy is necessary and will serve as a basis for increased engagement offshore on this important issue.

WHAT WILL NEW ZEALAND DO?

- Develop a national policy on responsible behaviours in space and related issues, and play a leadership role in multilateral efforts to develop new international norms and rules.
- Develop a national policy and step up international engagement on Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS)