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Biennial Report

1 April 2019 to 31 March 2021

MINES ACTION CANADA

Mines Action Canada Biennial Report

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A Note from the Executive Director	2
About Mines Action Canada.....	3
Our Work	3
Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.....	4
Campaign growth, campaign spread.....	4
Gauging public sentiment	4
Advocating for change internationally.....	4
Convening members	6
A few other highlights	6
Landmines and Cluster Munitions.....	7
Working through a gender lens.....	7
Promoting and supporting the next generation	8
Mine Action Fellows Program.....	9
Small Grants Program.....	10
Mine Action Fellows Forum 2019.....	10
Mine Action Fellows Forum 2020.....	12
Education, Outreach and Collaboration.....	13
Humanitarian Disarmament and the 2019 Federal Election	13
Promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.....	14
Contributing to international policy action on explosive weapons in populated areas.....	14

A Note from the Executive Director



I am pleased to welcome you to our latest biennial report. It provides a brief overview of our achievements and activities in the various international campaigns in which we work and our focus on the cross-cutting areas of youth, gender, and humanitarian disarmament.

As happened with almost everyone in the world, the global COVID –19 pandemic had a huge impact on our work. As a small organization which travels a lot to meetings at the United Nations as well as to many countries, Mines Action Canada was in many ways well positioned to work remotely. However, other stakeholders such as states, international organizations, and the UN were less well suited for such work.

Nonetheless through cooperation, patience, flexibility and adapting to new technology, progress continued although at a slower pace and with some disruption.

Despite all the new challenges we were able to continue our work on landmines, cluster munitions, explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as, nuclear and autonomous weapons. For me the response of the global community to disruptions to disarmament work caused by COVID was reminiscent of how states came together after the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. Shortly after those attacks in September 2001, despite all the chaos to international travel caused by the attacks, a successful annual meeting of states parties to the Ottawa Treaty took place in Managua, Nicaragua. That required a tremendous cooperative effort by states, international organizations, the United Nations and civil society to make it work. A similar group effort has been required by all to keep moving forward on humanitarian disarmament. I am proud of the leadership role MAC has played in the face of all these obstacles.

In this Biennial Report you will learn more about that leadership and the successes we have been able to have. Since our founding in 1994 we have found that progress sometimes moves quite quickly and other times it moves almost at a glacial pace. However, with persistence and dedication we can find a way to keep it moving towards our mutual goal of a world without inhumane and indiscriminate weapons while also ensuring that the rights of those affected are respected and their livelihoods restored.

I hope you find this report informative and useful. It is merely a snapshot of our daily work, but you can get more information from our website www.minesactioncanada.org or by following us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. Thank you to our donors, funders, partners and volunteers for your support in making this all happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hannon'.

Paul Hannon

About Mines Action Canada

Mines Action Canada (MAC) is a Canadian civil society organization¹ working nationally and internationally to eliminate the serious humanitarian, environmental and development consequences of indiscriminate weapons, including landmines, cluster munitions, other explosive remnants of war, nuclear weapons and autonomous weapons. MAC achieves its goals through public engagement; national and international advocacy; collaborative initiatives with like-minded organizations; monitoring disarmament and international law compliance; cultivating youth involvement in disarmament; international capacity building and support; developing and disseminating information and educational resources.

Nationally, MAC works with Canadian non-governmental (NGO) social justice, development and peace groups, like Project Ploughshares and Mennonite Central Committee, whose interests include humanitarian disarmament. Internationally, MAC is:

- the Canadian partner of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), which has member organizations in about 100 countries;
- a founding member of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, a global coalition of international, regional and national non-governmental organizations in 66 countries calling for a preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapons;
- a founding member of the International Network for Explosive Weapons (INEW), an international partnership of NGOs working to reduce human suffering as a result of explosive weapons use in populated areas; and
- a member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a Noble Prize winning coalition of several hundred NGOs, that is supporting the international treaty with the goal of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons.

Our Work

Mines Action Canada currently plays a leadership role in international civil society in three major humanitarian disarmament campaigns: as an active member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) since 1994; and, founding member of the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) in 2003² and Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in 2013. While the first two campaigns are in their treaty phase with activities focused on universalization, monitoring and compliance, the Killer Robots campaign is building its base of active support for an international agreement to stop the development and therefore deployment of fully autonomous weapons (those without human control once deployed). MAC also participates in the disarmament efforts of INEW and ICAN.

The period covered by this biennial report covers two very different ways of working: the business as usual approach in 2019 and the first few months of 2020; and the response to the

¹ Founded in 1994 and incorporated in 2002, Mines Action Canada is registered in Canada as a not-for-profit organization, #412174-1.

² Mines Action Canada led the process that merged the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munition Coalition.

COVID pandemic, which saw almost all international disarmament activities move online. As this report illustrates, MAC, our colleagues and campaigners adapted to the ever-changing circumstances.

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Campaign growth, campaign spread

Membership between 2018 and 2019 increased 63% from 93 member organizations in 53 countries to 150 member organizations in 63 countries; and in 2020, to **174 member organizations in 66 countries**. Organizations continue to join the campaign from all regions of the world, which is a testament to the perceived threat associated with these weapon systems.

With Mines Action Canada serving as grants administrator, the Campaign continued its **small grants program** to support civil society groups to undertake activities at the national and regional levels, as well as build thematic support. During the reporting period, there were four rounds of grant funding, each lasting approximately 5–6 months:

- In 2019, 60 projects in 36 countries were supported, including 42 national campaigning and 12 regional campaigning projects and 6 thematic initiatives (under gender, military and youth streams).
- In 2020, 82 grants were distributed across 62 countries. Due to the challenges presented by COVID-19, campaigners carried out grant activities virtually, learning to connect with new audiences in ways that expanded the Campaign's reach (e.g. 29 webinars were held by grantees across 10 countries and 29 knowledge-building workshops across 13 countries). Activities reached 93 countries globally, and the initiative saw the start of new campaigning and advocacy activities in Chile, Costa Rica, Nepal, Paraguay, Somalia, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay.

Gauging public sentiment

A December 2020 survey, commissioned by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, indicated that even with COVID-19 and economic uncertainty dominating headlines in 2020, public awareness of and sentiment against the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems remains steady and strong. Overall, opposition to 'killer robots' had risen from an average of 56% in 2017 (the first survey) to 62% in 2020. In 21 (of 28 polled) countries, 59% or more of respondents were opposed (including Canada at 60%). Notably, a majority opposed killer robots in five countries most active in the development and testing of weapons systems with decreasing levels of human control: Russia (58%), UK (56%), US (55%), China (53%) and Israel (53%).

Advocating for change internationally

In the reporting period, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and Mines Action Canada remained active in keeping the threat posed by lethal autonomous weapon systems on the agendas of

relevant international forums. From April to December 2019, Killer Robot campaigners participated in the two scheduled UN Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) meetings held in Geneva; the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapon systems in August and the CCW Meeting of the High Contracting Parties in November. Statements were made at both meetings by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots; and in November, additional statements were delivered by campaign members Human Rights Watch, PAX and Mines Action Canada.

In 2020, two meetings of the GGE on lethal autonomous weapon systems were scheduled in Geneva in June and August. Due to COVID-19, both were rescheduled to later in the year; in the end only one session was held in September, mostly involving remote participation.

From the intervention at the GGE delivered by Executive Director Paul Hannon, September 2020:

To keep our conversations grounded in humanity, we recommend adding in a work stream on moral or ethical concerns. A technocratic debate is insufficient to deal with the challenges posed by autonomous weapons systems ... New international law is needed to address the multitude of concerns with autonomous weapon systems. It is time to negotiate another legally binding instrument, either here or elsewhere. That instrument should include:

- * A general obligation to maintain meaningful human control over the use of force;*
- * Prohibitions on weapons systems that select and engage targets and by their nature pose fundamental moral or legal problems; and*
- * Specific positive obligations to help ensure that meaningful human control is maintained in the use of all other systems that select and engage targets.*



Executive Director Paul Hannon addressing the GGE in Geneva from MAC's office in Ottawa, September 2020.

Convening members

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots held its **second global meeting** in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 26-28 February 2020. More than 80 campaigners from 35 countries participated in the meeting hosted by Asociación para Políticas Públicas (APP), a member of SEHLAC, the Human Security Network in Latin America and the Caribbean, which serves on the Campaign's steering committee. Participants included representatives from 13 countries in the Americas and 22 other countries around the world.³ There was a packed agenda around the meeting that included public events, all important engagement with government officials and diplomats to build support for the campaign in the region, a public seminar with scientists and researchers, and a stunt to attract media. Several new publications were distributed at the meeting, including the Campaign's Medium blog on "Killer robots, feminism ... and a feminist foreign policy" by MAC's Program Manager Erin Hunt. In a different context, more than 60 campaigners from 37 countries attended the Campaign's **third global meeting**, held online in March 2021.

A few other highlights

The Campaign won the **2020 Ypres Peace Prize** award, given out by the Belgian city of Ypres every three years to individuals and organizations working for peace. This is a unique award in that the majority of voters are children. Thousands of students in Belgium studied the five shortlisted candidates before casting their votes; 90% of those who voted were aged 18 or younger, demonstrating that youth care about a future free from fully autonomous weapons systems. Campaign staff attended the 11 November 2021 ceremony to receive the award in person.

The Campaign attended **RightsCon** for the first time in July 2020 — an annual conference to discuss important technology and human rights issues; 7,800 participants from 158 countries tuned into this five-day virtual event.

In October 2020, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and Soka Gakkai International co-hosted the first virtual **Humanitarian Disarmament Forum** on the theme of race and intersectionality. The annual forum, which traditionally takes place in New York around the UN General Assembly First Committee (on disarmament), attracted a record-setting 115 participants from 40 countries.

Global Youth Conference on Fully Autonomous Weapons: In December 2020, the International Student Conference, in collaboration with the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, convened the first global youth event on fully autonomous weapons in Japan, which attracted over 150 participants and included youth speakers representing 20 countries.

³ Global meeting participants came from countries across the region (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and the United States) and around the world (Australia, Cameroon, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom).

For more detail about the work and achievements of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots during the reporting period, see the Campaign's 2019 and 2020 annual reports [on their website](#).

Landmines and Cluster Munitions

Working through a gender lens

As both campaigns continue their monitoring and advocacy roles in trying to ensure the terms of the landmines and cluster munitions treaties are respected and applied nationally and internationally, Mines Action Canada has been playing an increasing role in amplifying a gender focus in treaty-related work.

In February 2019, Mines Action Canada's Program Manager was invited to be a panelist during a session on "Building Stronger Communities - Youth and Women in Mine Action" at the [UN National Mine Action Directors Meeting](#) in Geneva, Switzerland. The presentation explored MAC's understanding of empowerment and our TEAM approach to youth engagement before speaking about how masculinity affects who belongs in mine action.

In Spring 2019, Mines Action Canada was asked to participate in the **Gender Working Group (GWG)**⁴ convened to provide expert advice from civil society to the Norwegian presidency of the **4th Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty**, which was to be held in Oslo in November 2019. The purpose of this group has been to support the mainstreaming of gender and diversity provisions within the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) and Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), as well as the wider disarmament and mine action sector. This working group comprises representatives from 11 organizations⁵, including Mines Action Canada, who served as co-chair for much of 2020.

GWG advocacy and side events leading up to the 4th Review Conference were successful in getting gender into the text of the Oslo Action Plan, which provided the five-year agenda and framework for the Mine Ban Treaty going forward. To this end, the group helped draft a working paper, submitted by Finland at the Review Conference, with practical recommendations on how to implement and monitor gender mainstreaming within the treaty framework.⁶



⁴ The Gender Working Group's name was changed to the Gender and Diversity Working Group in late 2020/early 2021. For purposes of this report we will use GWG.

⁵ The organizations in the Gender Working Group work in women's rights, human rights, international development and peace and disarmament.

⁶ The GWG has replicated this approach in the lead up to the 2021 Lausanne Review Conference for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. **Note:** Due to pandemic restrictions, the Second Review Conference of the CCM was held in two parts: Part I, a virtual event held in November 2020; Part II in Lausanne, a hybrid event, delayed until September 2021.

In February 2020, Mines Action Canada released a paper on **women's employment in mine action**, [*Gender and Employment in Mine Action by the Numbers*](#), which shared the results of research data collected from 12 NGOs and analyzed by MAC in 2019. The results of this survey were shared with the international community at the National Mine Action Directors' Meeting in Geneva. The purpose of this research was to shed some light on the success of gender mainstreaming in mine action and highlight areas of improvement for the sector.

Mines Action Canada is a member of **Women, Peace and Security – Canada**, a network of over 80 Canadian NGOs and individuals committed to promoting and monitoring the efforts of our federal government to implement and support the UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security; and to provide a forum for exchange and action by Canadian civil society on related issues. During the reporting period, MAC has continued to work on strengthening the links between humanitarian disarmament and the WPS agenda in Canada and internationally. For example, a delegate briefing paper on the intersections between the cluster munitions treaty and the WPS agenda – [*Implementing Intersections: Convention on Cluster Munitions and Women, Peace and Security*](#) – was released at the **9th Meeting of States Parties of the CCM** in September 2019.⁷

From *Implementing Intersections*

The need for effective and efficient mine action means that states, operators and national mine action authorities are already using gender analysis and integrating gender sensitive programming into their implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. States have obligations under the WPS Security Council Resolutions just like they have obligations to complete the implementation of the CCM ... Strengthening the links between mine action and the WPS agenda is a matter of demonstrating the intersection between existing work rather than adding new tasks. Legal obligations and political goals will be met more efficiently when we consider the intersections and the overlaps between the CCM and the WPS agenda.

The following section on Mines Action Canada's support of young women working in mine action and on rights issues provide further examples of how MAC is applying a gender lens to our work.

Promoting and supporting the next generation

Mines Action Canada has initiated **youth intern programs** for more than two decades, developing the skills and potential of students, campaigners and young professionals from Canada and abroad to contribute to mine action and human rights work nationally, regionally and internationally.

⁷ An expanded paper, [*1325 along the way to 2025: Mine Action and Women, Peace and Security*](#), covering both the Ottawa Treaty banning landmines and the Convention on Cluster Munitions was subsequently produced.

During the period covered by this report, 11 University of Ottawa undergraduates interned with campaign partners in Afghanistan (2), Columbia (2), Lebanon (1), Trinidad & Tobago (3) and Vietnam (3).⁸ Until March 2020 the internship program involved in-person placements; with the declaration of a global pandemic, the winter 2020 cohort of three interns had to return to Canada before the end of their internships. After a pause for the summer 2020 semester, the university started the program again as virtual internships. The COVID-driven modification in approach allowed MAC to provide some new placements with partners that had previously been ruled out due to security concerns (Afghanistan and Lebanon).

Through University of Ottawa's community service learning program, MAC has also benefited from student interns who have provided the organization research and writing support.

In 2019 and 2020, MAC organized international delegations of young women leaders to attend the annual Meeting of States Parties (MSP) of the landmines and cluster munitions treaties – in person and virtually – to highlight the importance of gender equality in ongoing disarmament efforts; *see Mine Action Fellows program below*.

Mine Action Fellows Program

Initiated in 2018, the Mine Action Fellows program is a capacity building program for young people aged 18 to 30 who are involved in mine action and disarmament. In 2019 the second cohort of fellows brought the total number of participants to 45 young women from 23 countries⁹; the third cohort expanded to include co-ed participation in 2020, with a total of 58 youth from 23 countries and other areas (areas not recognized as states) registered.

The three main activities of the project have been 1) monthly online learning modules and networking; 2) small grants to support youth-led activities; and 3) Mine Action Fellows

Forum, which is held alongside a treaty meeting to promote youth participation in international decision making. The program aims to empower youth, especially young women, through training, education, action and mentorship.

Mine Action Fellows: Focus on Gender

The program's main objective has been to empower young women in civil society working on indiscriminate weapons through building their outreach, advocacy, program management and organizational skills. MAC believes that empowering young women working in disarmament will contribute to efforts towards gender equality, in addition to supporting the goals of the WPS agenda and UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. MAC feels the addition of young men in the Fellows program should increase our collective ability to promote inclusive mine action while maintaining a focus on gender equality.

⁸ Afghan Landmine Survivors Organization, Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines, The Landmine Resource Centre (Lebanon), Women's Institute for Alternative Development (Trinidad & Tobago) and Association for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Vietnam)

⁹ Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada (including Yemeni dual citizen), Colombia, DR Congo, France, Georgia, Germany, Iraq, Lebanon, Kenya, Norway, Philippines, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and Vietnam

Small Grants Program

The Mine Action Fellows Small Grants 2019 program was aimed at December 3rd, which is a significant day in the disarmament and human rights calendars. On 3 December 1997 the Mine Ban Treaty opened for signatures in Ottawa; on the same date in 2008, the Convention on Cluster Munitions opened for signatures in Oslo; and it is also the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. MAC encouraged the Fellows to commemorate this day by organizing awareness raising activities, relevant to these issues, in their communities — supported by a small grants program offering up to \$700 per organization. Four organizations from Cambodia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal submitted proposals and received funding for information sharing events, public exhibitions, video production, engagement sessions with policy makers and outreach to post-secondary students.

In 2020, two rounds of small grants took place. The first round focused on the 10th anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions' entry into force (1 August); 10 grants were awarded to Mine Action Fellows in 11 countries (Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina/ Brazil [joint proposal], Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Colombia, DR Congo, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe) Activities focused on universalizing the Convention and disability rights through social media campaigns, outreach to students and the public, workshops, street art and public exhibitions. A second round was offered in December 2020 awarding nine small grants to Fellows in eight countries (Algeria, Azerbaijan, Colombia, DR Congo, Senegal, Uganda, UK and Zimbabwe), which supported a range of activities including social media campaigns, victim assistance activities, advocacy meetings and workshops, and public engagement.

Mine Action Fellows Forum 2019

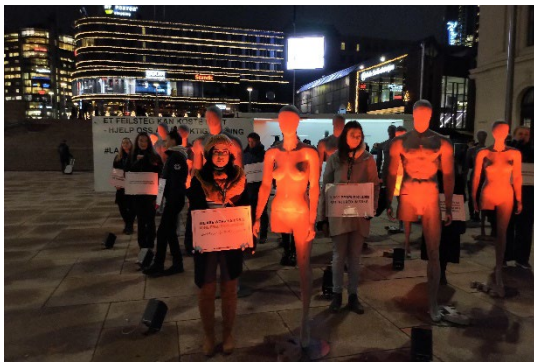
In November 2019, Mines Action Canada hosted the Mine Action Fellows Forum for a week of events held alongside the 4th Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty in Oslo, Norway. A total of 32 young women participated in the Forum including two unsponsored youth from Norway and 30 international participants from 18 states. All Mine Action Fellows participants were full members of the ICBL's delegation to the Review Conference, so had complete access to the conference; the group included three landmine survivors from Colombia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, and 22 young women who live in landmine affected countries.

Learning and training events – both before in preparation and in Oslo throughout the week – were a feature of the Fellows Forum program. It was a rich opportunity for the participants to learn by doing, especially by lobbying delegates. In consultation with the ICBL, the Mine Action Fellows Forum participants undertook an **advocacy project** during the Review Conference to promote the completion of Article 7 transparency reports. During the Review Conference, the Mine Action Fellows carried out at least 26 meetings with states — an impressive achievement.

Mine Action Fellows spoke in three **side events**: a Sharing the Torch event sponsored by the Mine Action Fellows Forum and the ICBL; a Sri Lankan film screening and book launch; and an event on Gender Mainstreaming. The Sharing the Torch event brought together founders of the mine ban movement with youth campaigners to share reflections on the past and future of the

treaty. Four Fellows presented on their work and their thoughts for moving towards the 2025 goal of a mine free world.

The Fellows also contributed to **visual stunts** taking place around the conference in the public square outside the Oslo main train station, located near the conference venue. Early morning on the day the Review Conference opened, the Fellows joined volunteers from Norwegian People's Aid and Norwegian Red Cross to take part in an installation by the train station entrance, holding up messages and joining mannequins representing landmine survivors, and engaging with commuters about landmines. The final public event of the Fellows Forum was a candlelight vigil held midweek in the square in solidarity with the 60 million people who still live with landmines, in collaboration with the LandmineFree2025 campaign. A Mine Action Fellow introduced herself as one of the 60 million still affected by landmines and then 19 of the Fellows stated their solidarity with her in their own language before a moment of silence for those lives lost to landmines in 2019. The well-attended vigil was widely shared on social media to bring that message to the public outside of Oslo.



MAC photo: 7am vigil with Fellows and one-legged mannequins in front of Oslo train station during morning commute, November 2019



MAC photo: Mine Action Fellows delivering closing statement at 2019 Mine Ban Treaty Review Conference

Once again the Mine Action Fellows were invited to present a **Youth Statement** at the closing of the Review Conference. Developing this statement was the result of a week-long process, involving listening to the debates and at the events, and then compiling key points for the drafting committee to pull together. When it was discovered that four of the United Nations official languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish) were represented among the participants, the decision was made to divide the statement between four volunteers who spoke those languages.

From the Mine Action Fellows speech delivered at the 4th Review Conference in Oslo

This week 32 women from 18 countries have been here learning about how to become better leaders and the valuable contribution we can make to get a mine free world ... The obligations that we've made over the past week do not disappear when you leave this room today... Most of us come from mine affected countries and the world needs you to make progress, to back up your good intentions. We hope that next time, we will see progress and know that the Oslo Action Plan has succeeded ... Our generation is ready to help finish the job on landmines, but in many of our countries we still need your support.

Mine Action Fellows Forum 2020

After the 2nd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions was moved to a two-part hybrid format due to COVID, the Fellows Forum was redesigned as a Virtual Mine Action Fellows Forum for Part I of the Review Conference, which took place in November 2020. With no travel costs and visa challenges involved, this meant for the first time all Mine Action Fellows were invited to participate. The Virtual Forum took place over six days and included 'in-person' sessions, worksheets, recorded video lectures and meetings with diplomats (from Australia, Canada, Netherlands and Sweden). For Fellows who faced financial barriers to accessing the internet during the Virtual Forum, Mines Action Canada provided small data grants (although bandwidth in some communities still posed challenges).

A highlight during the conference was the **Mine Action Fellows side event “[Ending Cluster Munitions in Our Lifetimes](#)”**; the webinar style event attracted over 60 registrants from governments and civil society. Four Mine Action Fellows from Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq and Western Sahara talked about their work and how it had been adapted due to the pandemic.

From Afghanistan, the audience heard about efforts to increase awareness of cluster munition and landmine survivor rights through street art. The Fellow from Colombia spoke about adapting services during the pandemic to landmine-affected communities, which included trying to counter the increase in domestic violence due to lockdowns. From Iraq, participants learned about Community Liaison Teams adapting to the pandemic to ensure communities were still able to receive life-saving Explosive Ordnance Risk Education messages, while adhering to public health protocols. The Fellow from Western Sahara outlined the work of the team in refugee camps in Algeria, bringing risk education messages to children in the community. A lively question and answer session followed these presentations.

Education, Outreach and Collaboration

From speaking to students and in communities, to conducting research, to producing and posting papers, to participating in conference panels and webinars, to organizing side events and stunts at UN meetings and other international gatherings, to collaborating with other disarmament groups, the staff of Mines Action Canada have been active in delivering and developing education and outreach activities at home and abroad. *Some examples:*

Humanitarian Disarmament and the 2019 Federal Election

As in previous Canadian federal elections, Mines Action Canada submitted surveys on humanitarian disarmament policy to the major political parties — Conservative, Green, Liberal and New Democratic Party. The purpose of the survey was to garner answers and opinions on what Canada's position is and should be on topic-specific areas; an analysis of the respective party's answers, prepared with the support of recognized experts, was then shared on MAC's website. The topics covered cluster munitions, landmines, the Arms Trade Treaty, nuclear weapons, fully autonomous weapons, explosive weapons in populated areas, armed drones, conflict and the environment, depleted uranium, and women, peace and security and disarmament.

The Green Party and NDP provided responses to all the topic areas; the Liberal and Conservative parties did not respond to the survey. The Liberal Party did have one point in their official party platform referring to fully autonomous weapon systems, and following the election, Prime Minister Trudeau's December 2019 mandate letter instructed his new Minister of Foreign Affairs to help advance international efforts to ban such systems.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

Landmines: *The International Campaign to Ban Landmines has issued a completion challenge for all states ... Canada as a State Party to the Ottawa Treaty committed [in 2014] to work towards the goal of completion by 2025... If your party forms the government after the 2019 election, what concrete steps will the government take to ensure the work of the 1997 Ottawa Treaty is completed?*

Explosive weapons in populated areas: *Recent research confirms that when heavy explosive weapons (weapons with wide area effects) are used in populated areas the vast majority of casualties are civilians ... Will your party support the UN Secretary-General's proposal [to develop a political declaration to prevent harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas], and review and strengthen domestic policies and practices on the use of explosive weapons?*

Nuclear weapons: *For more than six years, Canada has not joined any of the main [UN] humanitarian statements partially due to objections about the inclusion of the phrase 'under any circumstances' ... If your party forms the government after the 2019 election, will Canada state clearly that the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances is unacceptable? If not, could you please articulate under what circumstances your party believes the use of nuclear weapons is appropriate?*

Promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Canada is not a Party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was adopted by 122 states in 2017. In advance of the treaty's entry into force (i.e. become international law) on 22 January 2021, and as part of our ongoing efforts to reach out to politicians on the validity of this disarmament tool, MAC prepared [*The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: Canadian Myths and Reality*](#), which countered six assumptions about the TPNW. MAC encouraged Parliament to study the TPNW and look for ways to engage with the treaty as steps towards joining. The House of Commons set precedent in 2010 by adopting a unanimous motion that encouraged "the Government of Canada to engage in negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention". MAC feels that studying this treaty is an opportunity and starting point for Parliament to live up to that motion.

Contributing to international policy action on explosive weapons in populated areas

In the reporting period there were official international discussions led by the Government of Ireland to create a Political Declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), intended to emphasize the importance of offering protection to civilians from such weapons and of compliance with international humanitarian law. Mines Action Canada felt combating the humanitarian consequences of the use of EWIPA must be central to Canada's feminist foreign policy. As a first step, MAC called on our government to lend its support and leadership to the draft political declaration negotiations and to implement the Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group's core policy principles. MAC provided specific suggestions on the January 2021 draft declaration on how Canada and other states could improve the text in line with feminist foreign policy in "[*We should not be afraid to do more*](#)".