

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019

GENEVA  
DISARMAMENT  
PLATFORM



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## Cover pictures :

Left and top right: © 2019 New Shape Forum: Weapons Governance, Antoine Tardy, Geneva Disarmament Platform & Global Challenges Foundation

Bottom right: © Young Reporters at the United Nations: Nuclear disarmament, an impossible task, UNOG

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Published in February 2020, Geneva (Switzerland)

# ABOUT

The Geneva Disarmament Platform (GDP) is an independent, non-profit association aiming to provide a neutral and dynamic forum of interaction in Geneva for all stakeholders in the field of disarmament.

Our aim is to serve as a focal point for the disarmament community, facilitating cooperation and the sharing of information, where new issues can be explored and where difficult questions can be taken up in a less political and formal setting.

We work to enable various actors to be better connected, enhance interaction with non-disarmament actors in Geneva, break silos, and, hence, advance disarmament.

The GDP acknowledges the financial support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Financial supporters of the GDP are not responsible for, and do not necessarily endorse, the material contained in this report.

# CONTACT

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**2019 marked the third year of operation of the Geneva Disarmament Platform (GDP). In the course of the past year, the platform strengthened its position as a reliable information hub for disarmament diplomats and experts, continued to facilitate disarmament work in Geneva and contributed to enable interaction between relevant stakeholders through four main activity areas.**

**This report covers activities carried out from 1 January to 31 December 2019. The following chapters highlight some of the key achievements in more details.**

## INFORMATION CENTRE

» We managed an online resource centre compiling information on all disarmament-related events in Geneva and elsewhere, as well as a consolidated list of all international disarmament treaties and forums and key organizations.

» We published regular bulletins on current disarmament activities and range of matters under discussion or relevant in the field.

## COMMUNITY FOCUS

» We organized events on disarmament topics designed to be interactive and challenging, to enhance expertise and dialogue among actors in and outside the disarmament sector.

» We raised awareness among a younger audience of disarmament processes, their relevance in addressing current and future global issues, and the key role of Geneva in international peace and security discussions.

» We facilitated and participated in related disarmament activities and gatherings on request.

## CROSS-FERTILIZER

» We continued to explore links and synergies with areas outside disarmament including public health, science and emerging technology, climate change and environment, and human rights to name just a few.

» We participated in regular meetings among civil society representatives to discuss avenues to bridge the silos and coordinate more effectively within the different processes and with relevant stakeholders.

» We partnered with various organizations to propose targeted activities in order to address more efficiently specific issues, challenges or needs.

## INCUBATOR

» We held consultations with different representatives of the disarmament and international humanitarian law community to discuss ways to reinvigorate current processes, identify new approaches and better connect disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation discussions with global governance.

» We designed and co-hosted a two-day conference to introduce the concept of weapons governance (2019 New Shape Forum). The Forum was attended by about 100 participants and featured a keynote address by 2011 Nobel Peace laureate and peace advocate Leymah Gbowee.

# INFORMATION CENTRE

## AIM

» Serve as a "one-stop shop" for disarmament related-activities for diplomats and experts in the field as well as other interested parties.

Over the course of 2019, the Geneva Disarmament Platform (GDP) managed to further strengthen its reputation as a reliable information hub by providing the most comprehensive and up-to-date information as possible on past and upcoming disarmament initiatives, mainly through our website and social media activity.

The GDP also designed a disarmament wall planner as a stand-alone resource. The planner was first released and distributed to diplomats during the 2019 opening plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament.

## WEBSITE

Launched in June 2017, GDP website aims to provide complete and up-to-date information on all disarmament-related events in Geneva and beyond.

The main feature of the website is the disarmament events calendar, which is regularly updated and allows for targeted searches for specific events based on date, topic, location, treaty, and organizer. Each event is linked with relevant documents, background material and related events (when available). About 1,000 events have been uploaded since June 2017, including 325 during the documented period.

In addition, the GDP posts regular blogs featuring upcoming disarmament activities and current issues.

A total of 120 blog posts have been published since June 2017, including 46 during the documented period.

Occasional featured articles examining a specific issue in more depth are also posted on the website. Despite a call for paper launched during the summer of 2019, no entry has been made and this section of the website remains underused to date.

As illustrated by the figures below, in 2019, website traffic has continued to grow and expand its users base at a solid pace, indicating that the information centre activity has been providing a needed service.

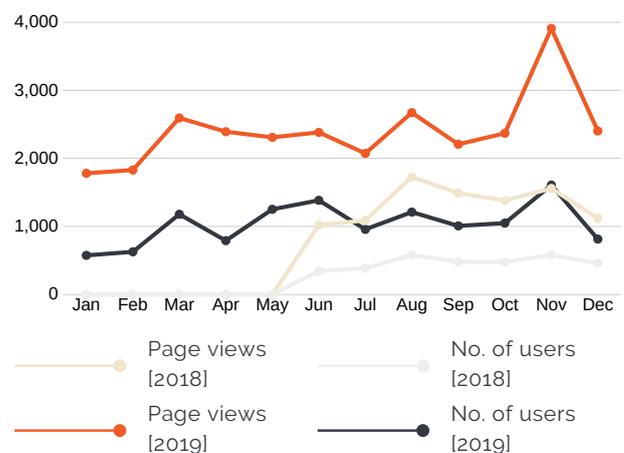
### 2019 Website traffic at a glance:

» Between January and December 2019, just over 12,000 users engaged with our website. While a total of 28,900 page views and 16,200 sessions were recorded. In comparison, between June and December 2018: 3,300 users, 9,300 page views and 4,600 sessions.

» A 120% increase in monthly average users. From 476 in 2018 to 1,038 in 2019.

» Top five countries by users: Switzerland (32%), the United States (14%), the United Kingdom (5%), India (3%), France (3%).

### Monthly Website Traffic: 2018-2019\*



\* Data for Jan-May 2018 are not available.

## NEWSLETTER

Since September 2017, the GDP has published a monthly newsletter highlighting key disarmament events and initiatives, including relevant resources and links.

During Spring 2018, a review of personal data stored was conducted following the entry into force of the General Data Protection Regulation; this led to a sharp decline in the number of contacts held by the GDP. However as of December 2019, the number of subscribers (253) had almost returned to its December-2017 level (273).

In 2019, open and click average rates of the newsletter remained broadly similar to 2018-levels (percentage-wise), while readership has increased by 60% since 2018.

	2017	2018	2019
<b>Clicks</b>	8%	13%	14%
<b>Opens</b>	40%	42%	43%
<b>Subscribers</b>	273	160	253

## SOCIAL MEDIA

In the course of 2019, the GDP has developed its activities on Facebook and Twitter, and has shared information on its activities as well as other disarmament-related events and initiatives.

Our social media audience has continued to grow in 2019 but at a lower pace compared to 2018: total number of individual followers was up by 20% on Facebook and 40% on Twitter. Meanwhile, across 2019, we reached about a thousand people per tweet and some 200 people per Facebook post.

## Social Media Community [as of December 2019]

Facebook:

- » 667 followers (up from 558 in 2018)
- » 54% men - 43% women - 3% not specified

Twitter:

- » 712 followers (up from 505 in 2018)
- » 55% men - 45% women

Lastly, to further expand its audience potential, the GDP also provided live streaming of some of its events (available on its Youtube channel).



# COMMUNITY FOCUS

## AIMS

- » **Contribute to on-going discussions on key disarmament issues and provide new approaches to such discussions.**
- » **Help in rebuilding a sense of community among disarmament actors in Geneva and beyond when possible.**

Since 2017, the Geneva Disarmament Platform (GDP) has organized more than 30 events to contribute to work on current disarmament issues and challenges and to explore and promote new approaches.

In 2019 alone, the GDP held 10 events. These events took different formats and targeted a variety of audiences from disarmament diplomats, academics, international organization representatives and civil society members to secondary-school or university students. As such, the GDP has developed expertise in engaging different stakeholders and has established a solid network of experts dealing with disarmament related issues as well as outside the traditional international relations or diplomatic sectors.

Considering the sometimes-low participation recorded in GDP events in 2018 and the already-heavy disarmament agenda, the plan for 2019 was to proposed events tailored more closely to the interests and needs of the targeted audience. This has resulted in the reduction of public events hosted by the GDP in order to focus more on invitation-only events. In the course of 2019, the GDP also partnered with other organizations more frequently when developing and conducting projects. This section presents the major objectives pursued through these events.

## EXPLORING ISSUES RELEVANT TO DISARMAMENT WORK

In March 2019, the GDP hosted a public lecture on the tools and mechanisms at play in multilateral disarmament diplomacy, looking in particular at the emergence and development of the humanitarian movement that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the response of the P5 nuclear-weapons states during the various stages of the process. This was followed by a moderated discussion.

The event was well-attended, with more than 50 participants including diplomats from more than 25 different permanent missions, UN and civil society representatives, as well as security experts, academics and students.

In May 2019, a few weeks after the end of the Third Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and as the Conference on Disarmament was focusing its discussions on deterrence and transparency matters, the GDP organized an event on deterrence and nuclear disarmament. Topics covered included: deterrence postures, approaches to nuclear risks, the concept of luck in nuclear crisis, the growing polarization within the NPT, engagement with TPNW supporters and the role of scholars.

With a total of about 30 participants, this event also generated great interest among the disarmament Geneva-based community, mainly from permanent missions (from countries with different views regarding nuclear weapons), the United Nations or civil society.

In December 2019, the GDP, the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO) project and the permanent mission of Ireland held a side-event during the Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties to review and explore the biological weapons related issues of a Middle East Free Zone of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction. This event provided a timely opportunity to review recent achievements and next steps following the UN Conference on the establishment of such a zone (held in New York in November 2019). It also considered options for making progress focusing on the biological weapons elements of the METO Project's draft treaty text. Approximately 25 participants joined the discussion, most of them were from permanent missions (at least 10 different countries signed-up) and UN/international organization members.

## ENHANCING EXPERTISE OF DISARMAMENT ACTORS

In April and November 2019, the GDP and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) co-hosted two briefings. The first one covered NPT key issues and challenges in the context of the forthcoming review conference, held just a few days before the PrepCom. The second examined emerging technology and nuclear weapons risks and aimed to identify the problems and outline solutions to mitigate the threats and the importance of communicating and informing the general public.

In August 2019, the GDP in partnership with the Harvard Law School's Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative (ACCPI) held a workshop on humanitarian disarmament for diplomats in Geneva.

The main objectives of the workshop were to increase awareness and improve understanding of humanitarian disarmament and to highlight some recommendations for coordinating effective partnerships between all stakeholders involved in disarmament work. Representatives from some 20 missions participated. The workshop was structured around two main themes, each introduced by a panel of invited experts. The first segment was on the history, definition and characteristics of humanitarian disarmament and how it can be an effective frame for making progress, while the second segment looked at the inclusive nature of humanitarian disarmament through partnerships between states, international organizations and civil society members. Participants of the workshop also took part in a group exercise during which they were provided with a model statement using "traditional security and arms control language" and were asked to re-frame the position using humanitarian disarmament terms. Engagement of the participants during the workshop was high with active discussions during the different sessions, in particular the group exercise. This type of event could be repeated in 2020.



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Geneva Disarmament Platform

## ENGAGING YOUNGER AUDIENCES

The GDP continued to hold events and participate in projects designed to raise awareness among the young generation of disarmament discussions and their linkages with international peace and security and global issues. When designing events for students, the GDP tried to propose interactive activities related to current events, in order to enable better understanding and engagement from the students.

In June 2019, the GDP took part in "Bâtisseurs de Paix", an annual event co-organized by organizations based at the Maison de la Paix: Foraus, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), the GDP, the Graduate Institute, Interpeace, Small Arms Survey, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.



With some 350 secondary-school students from the Geneva-area, the event aimed to promote the role of Geneva as a key city for international cooperation, and to introduce the variety of actors contributing to human security as well as the different levels of action and linkages between peace and disarmament, gender equality, mine action, small arms, or climate change. In particular, the GDP was in charge of two interactive workshops looking at how disarmament processes work, using the example of discussions around autonomous weapons.

In November 2019, the GDP also held a disarmament education afternoon for over 150 final-year students at College Sismondi with the participation of five organizations (Article 36, Control Arms, ICAN, the Geneva Center for Security Policy and the Small Arms Survey). The afternoon was divided into three segments. First, an opening lecture introduced disarmament processes and how they relate to the broader global agenda. This was followed by six interactive workshops each looking at one of the following topics: autonomous weapons, nuclear weapons, arms trade and armed violence. Then, during the closing session, students reported back on their group exercises and reflected on lessons learned. Based on feedback from the teaching staff as well as the interest and great level of engagement demonstrated by the students, the experience will likely be repeated in 2020.

Throughout the year, the GDP also made presentations to visiting groups of university students aiming at examining and discussing the current state of play and developments in disarmament and the contribution of civil society to such processes.

# CROSS FERTILIZER & INCUBATOR

## AIMS

- » Explore links and synergies with activities in areas outside disarmament.
- » Provide a space for informal dialogue to interested stakeholders in order to discuss, explore, develop, and elaborate new approaches and initiatives.

Through the range of events conducted in 2019, the Geneva Disarmament Platform (GDP) worked to increase sharing, lesson learning, and collaboration across different disarmament activities. It also continued to explore potential synergies with other fields, including but not limited to public health, human rights, science and technology, and humanitarian affairs.

## SETTING UP A WEAPONS GOVERNANCE MODEL

The GDP partnered with the Global Challenges Foundation (GCF) to develop the concept of **weapons governance** as a subset of global governance and a means of reinvigorating disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and international humanitarian law and related activities by removing arbitrary divisions, engaging a wider range of actors, developing new governance tools, and building a multi-dimensional governance network.

During the development of the project, the GDP consulted with potential partners such as states, international organizations officials, think tanks and civil society representatives to gauge the interests of relevant stakeholders, and to gain a comprehensive overview of the needs and current and future challenges. These initial consultations enabled the project to better refine the objectives and scope of the concept, and to design the content for the launching conference.

## NEW SHAPE FORUM 2019

The New Shape Forum was a two-day conference, hosted in Geneva by the GDP and the GCF in partnership with Chatham House and the Observer Research Foundation on 30 September and 1 October.

The event introduced the concept of weapons governance and aimed to bring tools and approaches from other areas of global governance to examine if and how they might be applied in the disarmament and international security sphere. Attended by around 100 participants from various fields including artificial intelligence, public health, biotechnology, climate change and finance, the forum employed an innovative format mixing plenary segments, lightning pitches on specific governance stories, a brainstorming session, and a keynote address by Nobel Peace laureate Leymah Gbowee.

Participants were split into five working groups to discuss how tools and mechanisms used in other fields could be applied to improve weapons governance. Five sub-themes were addressed: delegation, distribution and coordination; inclusion and agency of non-state actors; data and monitoring; soft law, standards, and codes (4); forecasting and adaptation.

The forum produced a number of specific ideas and proposal for concrete measures including:

- » an Intergovernmental Panel on Weapons Governance, modeled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;
- » a Weapons Governance Commission developing policy guidelines and recommendations to national governments;
- » a Declaration on collaborative governance by governments and maybe UN and intergovernmental organizations;

» the development of regional initiatives on weapons governance through engagement of regional organizations;

» a mapping exercise to identify publicly available data and sources on weapons and to identify gaps (and the reasons for these gaps);

» data collection and analysis for compliance assessments by civil society;

» the development of risk assessment and management tools and standards.

A separate and more detailed report on the New Shape Forum is available on GDP website.

## FURTHERING WEAPONS GOVERNANCE

First steps to develop ideas to take forward weapons governance were already undertaken in 2019 and will be pursued in 2020.

As part of the Geneva Peace Week (GPW) in November 2019, the GDP held an event to present the most promising areas and ideas put forward during the New Shape Forum, namely data collection to support monitoring and verification efforts, establishing an "International Panel on Weapons Governance" providing independent global data and assessment on weapons governance issues, and a "Declaration on collaborative weapons governance" listing specific measures to improve and facilitate involvement of civil society in international forums dealing with weapons governance. The event benefited from the platform provided by the GPW to reach out to new potential interested parties.

The event generated some interest from quite a number of permanent missions, academics, civil society and officials of international organizations.

This is an encouraging sign that the weapons governance initial ideas have real potential for development.

Also in November, GDP and GCF launched an e-consultation process to build support around the main ideas outlined during the Forum and engage potential partners and implementing actors.



# CONCLUSION

After three years of operation, the Geneva Disarmament Platform (GDP) has succeeded in providing services to the disarmament community in Geneva, establishing good contacts with the different stakeholders and offering a space for open discussion and interaction on a wide range of topics relevant to disarmament. However, its impact remained modest in some areas, suggesting there was still room for improvement.

The information centre achieved its original purpose of centralizing basic information on disarmament activities in one easy-to-navigate website. Since its launch, the number of users and traffic has continued to grow at a good rate and feedback has been very positive. As such, the platform has become known as a reliable point of information for disarmament experts.

It has proven more challenging to fully implement the community focus function. Overall participation and engagement of the target audience have remained disappointingly low over the three-year period, despite the breadth of events and issues addressed. The value of approaching disarmament issues differently might have not always been clear. Nevertheless, there were encouraging signs of interest. Disarmament education activities proved to be remarkably successful both in terms of engaging with the younger generation and in encouraging cooperation between various members of the disarmament community. Meanwhile, the focus on building expertise through more exclusive workshops tailored for addressing specific needs and issues seemed to have found its audience.

Lastly, the cross-fertilizer and incubator functions were still at an experimental stage as establishing solid and broader-based partnerships has been rather difficult.

This was particularly true in the case of cross-cutting and innovative projects not obviously connected to immediate or short-term disarmament concerns. This demonstrated the need for more dialogue and outreach on the long-term benefits of breaking silos. Follow-up activities as part of the weapons governance project offered real potential to further develop these activity areas of the platform.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

Here are our priorities for 2020:

- » Explore and begin to implement ideas and proposals on weapons governance.
- » Consolidate GDP visibility and reputation of reliable provider of information, services and support to the disarmament community.
- » Contribute to better integrate disarmament work within the global development framework.

## PRINCIPAL RISKS & UNCERTAINTIES

The GDP has identified the following main risks that could have a negative impact on its activities:

- » Difficulties in securing a sufficient level of funding.

To mitigate this risk, the GDP will take action to further expand its funding base. It will notably continue exploring the possibility of establishing new partnerships, refresh its strategy to ensure its vision and direction are clearly understood and in line with current issues and needs in the disarmament field. Efforts will be pursued to strengthen GDP networks and to attract new donors through exclusive events and head-to-head meetings. This may mean that more resources and staff time could be allocated to fundraising activities in the future.

» "Multilateralism fatigue" and gradual deterioration of support for and openness to new initiatives and measures requiring compromise and cooperation. To mitigate this risk, the GDP will maintain and expand its network, and notably continue to explore potential partnerships from stakeholders outside of the disarmament sector. Special attention will also be given to better explain the purpose and added value of exploring non-traditional approaches either through one-on-one meetings, briefings or publication of relevant resources.

» Differing understanding and absence of a shared perception of what disarmament measures consist of. To mitigate this risk, the GDP will continue to propose and design events looking at the shift in the principles and objectives guiding disarmament practices. It will also contribute to efforts to outline the relevance of disarmament efforts in moving the broader global agenda forward (including the implementation of the SDGs).



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# ANNEX I: STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

## ORGANIZATION

The Geneva Disarmament Platform (GDP) is a non-profit association governed by its statutes and by Articles 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code.

The operations and day-to-day activities of the GDP are carried out by a small staff team based at the Maison de la Paix, in Geneva.

### Staff in 2019

- » Richard Lennane, Executive Director
- » Marion Loddo, Assistant Coordinator

The GDP is governed by a Committee of voluntary members who oversee its work and review its activities.

In 2019, the Committee met twice in person to take note of the 2018 Annual Report, approve the work plan for 2019, and discuss funding matters and future strategy and direction.

### Committee in 2019

- » Mia Gandenberger, President
- » Peter Herby, Secretary
- » Maya Brehm, Treasurer

## AUDIT

The accounts of the Geneva Disarmament Platform are subject to annual audits. The audit is carried out by: CCCG SA, Place Saint-Gervais 1, 1201 Geneva.

# ANNEX II: GENDER POLICY

The GDP promotes and ensures gender mainstreaming in its activities. As such, it has a particular regard to gender balance when organizing events.

## GENDER MONITORING

In 2019, 24 out of the 54 panelists/moderators invited were women (representing 44% of the total). In comparison, in 2018 and 2017 women represented respectively 62% and 42% of the speakers.

In 2019, attendance at Geneva Disarmament Platform events was pretty well balanced, with a slight majority of men participants (53% on average).

As in 2018, attendance at private meetings were more male dominated (60% men participants, 40% women).

## INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS NETWORK

In June 2018, the GDP joined the International Gender Champions Network. By joining this network, the platform aimed to contribute to integrate gender perspectives in disarmament activities in more practical and operational ways, and to take actions to be a more gender-responsible organization through the panel parity pledge and the implementation of annual commitments.

### Commitments for 2019 were:

- » Engage relevant stakeholders to discuss specific measures and tools to better integrate gender perspectives into their disarmament work.
- » Track the gender participation in all events/projects organized.

# ANNEX III: LIST OF 2019 EVENTS

## PUBLIC EVENTS

### **P5x5, Nuclear diplomacy and the limits of power**

Mar 2019 | Maison de la Paix

### **Nuclear deterrence and nuclear disarmament**

May 2019 | Maison de la Paix

### **2019 New Shape Forum: Weapons governance**

Sep-Oct 2019 | CICG

In partnership with: Global Challenges Foundation (GCF), Chatham House and the Observer Research Foundation

### **Weapons governance: a network approach to security and peacebuilding**

Nov 2019 | Maison de la Paix

In partnership with: GCF

[as part of the Geneva Peace Week]

### **Taking forward the biological weapons aspects of the UN Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction**

Dec 2019 | United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)

In partnership with: METO Project

[side event to the Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties]

## INVITATION-ONLY EVENTS

### **Key issues and challenges for States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Apr 2019 | Maison de la Paix

In partnership with International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

### **Humanitarian disarmament workshop**

Aug 2019 | Domaine de Penthes

In partnership with Harvard Law School's Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative

### **Emerging technology and nuclear weapons risks workshop**

Nov 2019 | Maison de la Paix

In partnership with: ICAN

## DISARMAMENT EDUCATION

### **Bâtisseurs de paix**

Jun 2019 | Maison de la Paix

In partnership with seven other organizations based at the Maison de la Paix

### **Understanding disarmament efforts within the current and future global environment**

Nov 2019 | College Sismondi

With the participation of: Article 36, Control Arms, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), ICAN, Small Arms Survey

## PANEL PARTICIPATION & FACILITATION

### **Young reporters at the United Nations: Nuclear disarmament, an impossible task?**

Feb 2019 | UNOG

Organized by Eduki Foundation and UNOG

### **Presentation to Public Law Students from Leiden University**

Apr 2019 | Maison de la Paix

### **International Conference: Global security challenges: problems and solutions**

[Panel on Institutional Strengthening of the BWC]

Jun 2019 | Rosa Khutor (Russia)

### **Presentation to Northeastern University students: The role of civil society in disarmament**

Jul 2019 | UNOG

### **Presentation to the UNIDIR Disarmament Orientation Course: NGOs and disarmament**

Aug 2019 | UNOG

### **Presentation to the UN Disarmament Fellows: NGOs and disarmament**

Aug 2019 | UNOG

### **GCSP International Disarmament Law Course: Reporting, international cooperation and assistance**

Nov 2019 | Maison de la Paix

