



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

*Civil society perspectives on the Biennial Meeting of States on
the UN Programme of Action on small arms
6–10 June 2016*



Reaching Critical Will

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The *Small Arms Monitor* is produced by the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) during meetings related to the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

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EDITORIAL: CONFRONTING A VECTOR OF VIOLENCE

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are a key part of the global armed violence epidemic, resulting in about half a million deaths annually. They are, as activist Daniel Mack wrote recently, “the main vector of death and injury worldwide.” The manufacture, trade, proliferation, possession, and use of small arms and light weapons facilitate gender-based violence, sexual violence, domestic violence, mass shootings, human trafficking, and armed conflict. They are also key factors in the development and perpetuation of violent masculinities and the militarisation of communities.

These challenges affect disarmament, development, human rights, and gender equality. In reviewing the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in SALW (UNPoA) over the next week, states should seek to articulate cross-cutting approaches to addressing the challenges of small arms. In particular, looking at the draft outcome document, WILPF makes the following recommendations.

Gender

Draft 3 of the BMS6 outcome document includes reasonably strong language on gender. Paragraphs 55–58 commit states:

- To ensure effective gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes designed to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.
- To promote the meaningful participation and representation of women in PoA-related policy-making, planning and implementation processes, including their participation in national small arms commissions and in programmes relating to community safety and conflict resolution, taking into account General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and subsequent resolutions on that question, as well as Security Council

resolution 1325 (2000) and follow-up resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015).

- To encourage the collection of disaggregated data on gender and small arms and light weapons.
- To seriously consider increasing funding for gender-sensitive programming designed to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

To strengthen these commitments, states could also include women's groups in national commissions on SALW, recalling that the UN Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security for 2011–2020 calls for inclusive and effective consultation with women leaders and groups in UN-supported disarmament activities.

Earlier versions of the draft outcome document also committed states to foster the creation of alternative livelihoods for young men. This is an important aspect to confronting SALW proliferation and use. Such a commitment would help address the challenges of violent masculinities as a contribution to small arms proliferation and use. In this regard, states could welcome the findings of the Global Study on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325, commissioned by the UN Secretary-General and published in 2015, emphasising the importance of demilitarization and measures dealing with the proliferation of small arms and violent masculinities.

Additional references could be made in relation to gender-based violence. For example, states could:

- Welcome the inclusion of a legally-binding provision on preventing armed gender-based violence in the Arms Trade Treaty and recognise the importance of its implementation together with the implementation of the UNPoA in order to

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Editorial, continued

reduce the flow of conventional weapons that could be used to facilitate acts of gender-based violence.

- Recall that General Recommendation 30 on the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recognises that the proliferation of conventional arms, especially small arms, can have a direct or indirect effect on women as victims of conflict-related gender-based violence, as victims of domestic violence and also as protestors or actors in resistance movements, and emphasizes state obligation to ensure robust and effective regulation of the arms trade, in addition to ensuring appropriate control over the circulation of existing and often illicit conventional arms, including small arms, to prevent their use to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence.

Strengthen implementation efforts

States should suggest language for the outcome document that involves action to strengthen implementation such as effective tracing programmes to address diversion of weapons to the illicit market and strategic approaches to monitoring and implementing UN Security Council arms embargoes.

States should suggest making obligatory the submission of biennial national reports on SALW, as these are necessary for stocktaking. Only 36.6% of UN member states submitted reports in 2014 as compared to 2012's 43.5%.

States should also call for the establishment of an independent mechanism to systematically measure and evaluate assistance, as well as UNPoA implementation, so as to identify and fill in the gaps. Developing indicators

will be a good first step to this end, including in relation to the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) that are affected by the proliferation and use of SALW.

States should encourage the destruction of surplus small arms and light weapons as part of stockpile management to ensure that these weapons do not end up being resold. At the other end of the spectrum, they should encourage the reduction of the production of SALW and their ammunition, noting the challenges posed by ongoing excessive production as well as legacy issues of weapons that are still in circulation.

Ammunition

The draft outcome document does not adequately address ammunition concerns. States could use this opportunity to clarify that the UNPoA applies to both weapons and ammunition; encourage states to develop laws regarding criminal possession of ammunition; and propose a concrete way forward towards international controls of SALW ammunition—not only of its trade, but from production to destruction.

Coverage of BMS6

Reaching Critical Will will provide full coverage of the BMS through this daily report. It will provide analysis and advocacy related to the plenary meetings. You can subscribe to receive this report by email by going to www.reachingcriticalwill.org. On that website, you can also find statements, documents, archived Small Arms Monitors, and more information. You can also follow the discussions on Twitter at #BMS6, @RCW_, @IANSAnetwork, @GlobalActionPW, @SALWstandards, among others. •



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THE IMPACT OF FIREARMS ON WOMEN

Maria Muñoz Maraver | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

The differentiated impact of firearms on women is rarely taken into account when addressing the firearms issue. Yet, firearms possession and use are clearly gendered: guns are mostly owned by men,¹ and women killed by guns are likely to be killed in a gender-based violence homicide.

Firearms, femicides, and gender-based violence

Firearms constitute an important threat to women's human rights. Indeed, firearm femicides can be strongly correlated with the level of firearms availability. For example, on the frequency of intimate partner homicide-suicide, the rates in countries with wide availability of firearms, such as Switzerland or USA, are higher than in the Netherlands where the possession of firearms is very restricted. A fact even more striking: firearms are used in a third of all femicides worldwide.²

Furthermore, firearms may also be involved in femicides as a way of intimidating or coercing the victim. Such cases are, unfortunately, severely under reported. In a study carried out in a region of Pakistan characterised by a high level of possession of firearms, it was found that women felt they were in danger not only because of gun violence, but also because of physical abuse. It was found that guns are used to threaten women within the family more frequently than they are used to kill. Indeed, in intimate partner homicides, there is most generally a history of violence that did not however prevent the perpetrator from possessing a gun.³

Moreover, the correlation between high rates of sexual violence and the flow of firearms has been demonstrated in countless examples.

Firearms and the patriarchal system

With men almost always the bearers of guns, power imbalances between men and women are further distorted. The threat that firearms represent to women both within the household and on the streets, to their lives, to their physical integrity and to their freedom is closely linked to the imposition of patriarchy.

Current levels of regulation or the implementation of regulation regarding firearms are not enough.

When it comes to civilian ownership of guns, measuring perceptions of firearms i.e. among Liberian women and men, show that both groups overwhelmingly referred to as guns as a threat to safety rather than a source of security.⁴ It is essential to strictly regulate the possession of guns and to implement regulations

closely, by processes that must take into account the gendered aspects of gun possession.

Firearms constitute a threat for women's rights and security, but also represent an element which reinforces the domination of men over women and this patriarchal system. A stronger regulation of firearms would reduce gender-based and domestic violence as well as femicide. Enforcing the Arms Trade Treaty, the UN Programme of Actions on Small and Light Weapons and other related UN Security Council resolutions would be a great step forward.

Notes

1. Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. 2013. Chapter 2: Too close to home – Everyday dangers, small arms survey 2013. Cambridge University Press: page 30

2. Matthias Nowak, Femicide: A Global Problem Research Notes Armed Violence Number 14. Small Arms Survey, 2012. http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-14.pdf

3. Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. 2013. Chapter 2: Too close to home – Everyday dangers, small arms survey 2013. Cambridge University Press

4. Ibid.

This article originally appeared as a blog post on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom website as part of the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence. •



GUN VIOLENCE: A CHALLENGE TO THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

Abigail Ruane and Grace Jennings-Edquist | PeaceWomen of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Six months ago, the Global Study on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) was launched at the fifteenth anniversary of UNSCR 1325.

The October 2015 Global Study provided the evidence base for action to implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and strengthening women's participation, protection, and rights across the conflict spectrum. A key recommendation was strengthening action on conflict prevention including demilitarisation as a key priority area.

As WILPF's disarmament program Reaching Critical Will has shown, small arms are part of a global armed violence epidemic. Small arms facilitate sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, and armed conflict, and are integrally tied up with violent masculinities and the militarisation of communities.

Yet six months after the Global Study, how far have we come in moving from words to action? This week's Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence provides an opportunity to assess where we are at on this key area for conflict prevention and peace.

What did the Global Study say on arms?

The Global Study recognised that demilitarisation is a critical part of structural conflict prevention and addressing root causes of war. It found that militarism and cultures of militarised masculinities create a climate of political decision-making in which resorting to the use of force becomes a normalised mode of dispute resolution.

The Global Study called for member states to address inequality, arms proliferation, organised crime, and militarisation including by:

- implementing the Arms Trade Treaty's criterion on gender based violence (article 7(4)),
- implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on gender equality (Goal 5) and Stable and Peaceful Societies (Goal 16), and
- adopting gender responsive budgeting to address militarised state budgets and their destabilising impact on peace and women's rights in consultation with civil society
- providing financial, technical and political support to encourage educational and leadership training for men, women, boys and girls, which reinforces and supports non-violent, non-militarised expressions of masculinity.

Where are we now?

Today we have made some progress. Eighty member states have now ratified the 2014 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which obligates States Parties who transfer arms to assess the risk of arms being used to commit SGBV or "serious acts of violence against women" (Article 7(4)). Almost all states have signed on to the international women's rights convention, CEDAW, which in General Recommendation 30 outlines state obligations to uphold women's rights in conditions of conflict, and includes a recommendation for states to sign, ratify and implement the ATT. The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals include an indicator addressing reducing illicit arms flows (16.4). Other international norms, guidelines and international instruments exist to regulate small arms and light weapons.¹

Despite these promising developments, WILPF's PeaceWomen programme has brought attention to how many member states that purport to be "friends" of the Women, Peace and Security agenda continue to invest in militarism and arms, which directly facilitate sexual and gender based violence, conflict and war.² Three of the five permanent members of the Security Council have not ratified the ATT; indeed, China and Russia have not even signed it. The US, Russia, China, France and the UK were respectively the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th largest exporters of arms in the world in the years 2011-2015 and combined, the USA and Russia supplied 58 per cent of all exports.

In addition, recent trends to focus on gender-blind counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism threaten to blindly continue militarised approaches to state security that put at risk women's human security and peace. As civil society has pointed out, action aimed at counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism has resulted in women human rights defenders and peace activists being labelled as potential terrorists; silenced legitimate, peaceful dissent; and raised concerns around reallocating funding away from the WPS agenda, women's human rights defenders and other gender-equitable social development.

What should be done?

As the Global Study recognised, civil society has affirmed "Women, peace and security is about preventing war, not about making war safer for women" (191). This requires substantially strengthening the conflict prevention pillar of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, to transform political economies of militarism

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Gun violence, continued

and arms connected to violent masculinities for non-violent conflict resolution alternatives, gender justice, and peace.

A holistic understanding of conflict prevention includes strengthening small arms controls; further preventing SGBV by harmonising firearms laws with other national laws; and incorporating means to prevent the diversion of legal arms into the illicit market, since illicit arms remain a driver of modern armed violence and the vast majority of illicit weapons begin their lives as legal weapons.³

As member states continue to take action around preventing terrorism and violent extremism, they should also recognise the constraints of militarised approaches. Instead, they should seek constructive alternatives, including through holistic gendered conflict analysis of the causes of conflict and violence, address injustices, and support peacebuilding and transformative governance based on rule of law, justice, and gender equality.

Conclusion

More than 15 years on from the adoption of the ground-breaking UNSCR 1325 and six months after the UNSCR 1325 Global Study, effective implementation of the agenda, especially in the area of conflict prevention remains a major gap. Recognising the connections between arms proliferation and sexual and gender-based violence, and taking action to transform systems of violent masculinities and political economies of war is critical for transformational change.

As lead author of the UNSCR 1325 Global Study Radhika Coomaraswamy declared at the October civil

society launch: "No to militarisation, yes to prevention – that is what women claim." It is time for states to listen, and take action.

Notes

1. Relevant norms, guidelines and international instruments include, eg.: Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition; United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (2001); International Tracing Instrument (2005); UNSCR 2117 Small Arms and Light Weapons (2013); Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (1983); Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention (1997); Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008) 43 Arms Trade Treaty (2013); UN Security Council sanctions (arms embargos); General Assembly Resolution on Women, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Control (2014); Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (2006); Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence (2010); General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/23, Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence, 17 November, 200849 OECD's Armed Violence Reduction Lens.

2. Three root causes of conflict. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 2014, <http://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Root-causes.pdf>.

3. Aditi, Malhotra (2011). Reducing illicit arms flows and the new development agenda. *Small Arms Survey*. http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-50.pdf.

This article originally appeared as a blog post on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom website as part of the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence. •

When	What	Where
10:00-13:00	Opening of meeting; Consideration of the implementation of the UNPoA	CR 4
13:15-14:30	<u>Side event</u> : Weapons and gender: preventing gender-based violence and promoting equality through implementation of the ATT and UNPoA (WILPF)	CR D
13:15-14:30	<u>Side event</u> : Presentation on the progress of the iTrace-project (European Union)	CR 4
13:15-14:30	<u>Side event</u> : Activities in Africa in support of the implementation of the UNPoA (UNREC, ECOWAS, UNDP Nigeria Country Office)	CR C
13:15-14:30	<u>Side event</u> : Peace operations in action: developing capacity in weapons and ammunition management, case studies in the Central African Republic and Cote d'Ivoire (Lithuania, UNMAS)	CR 7
13:15-14:30	<u>Side event</u> : Trade, transparency, and illicit trafficking (Switzerland, Small Arms Survey)	CR 12
15:00-18:00	Consideration of the implementation of the UNPoA, <i>continued</i>	CR 4



upcoming side event: **6 June** | 13.15-14.30 | UNHQ CR D

Preventing gender-based violence through arms control: Tools and guidelines to implement the ATT and UNPoA



Photo: AFP / Marco Garcia Rivera

speakers

Ray Acheson, Reaching Critical Will Director, Women's international League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Rebecca Gerome, WILPF Report Author, Foley Hoag LLP

Marren Akatsa-Bukachi, IANSA Women's Network

This event will address gendered aspects of multilateral agreements on conventional weapons as highlighted by RCW Director, Ray Acheson.

It will be the launch of WILPF's new report on tools and guidelines for effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons provisions related to gender-based violence. The author, Rebecca Gerome, will present the report and outline its main findings.

Marren Akatsa-Bukachi of the IANSA Women's Network will speak about the connections of gender, small arms and the sustainable development goals agreed upon in 2015.



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