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# NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE HUMAN SUFFERING

Allison Pytlak | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

New beginnings are exciting. Fresh energy, fresh ideas, and the possibility of fresh solutions to old problems. Along with a new year and a new decade, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) community is starting in on a new cycle of meetings of the Treaty's working groups in preparation for the sixth conference of states parties (CSP6). Many of these groups will have new facilitation or leadership, some of the groups are looking to develop new outputs, and the CSP6 president has declared "transparency and information exchange" the theme for the year.

Yet in all the enthusiasm of a fresh start, it's important to remember how and why we've arrived at the current moment and not forget commitments of the past. Such continuity and awareness is relevant to the new ATT meeting cycle in several ways: in actioning the decisions taken at CSP5 on gender and gender-based violence (GBV); in determining how states parties will seek to unpack various concepts in relation to treaty implementation; and in resolving different challenges, particularly in reporting.

## Not yesterday's news

Less than six months ago, ATT states parties took a series of decisions meant to improve gender balance in ATT meetings and implementation; to better prevent GBV; and to enhance understanding of the gendered impact of the international arms trade. These decisions were the culmination of many months of focused learning, discussion, and examination of a subject that is too often and too easily overlooked. We, and other stakeholders, felt that the concrete—and generally measurable—decisions included in the final report of CSP5 would ensure that the conversation would not end in August 2019.

Thus it is concerning that the forward-looking plans outlined for the ATT working groups this year do not adequately account for those decisions. Some decisions appear to have been overlooked completely—notably those pertaining

to participation and representation—and others are referenced in summaries of past work undertaken, but then are not particularly accounted for in future planning.

For example, the draft workplan of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation (WGETI) includes many areas where the CSP5 decisions on gender or GBV could be taken up because they correspond well with items in the workplan. This includes the proposed future discussion on mitigation measures and the proposed exchanges of national practice, which could include discussion about gender-disaggregated data collection or experiences on training export officials on GBV risk assessment procedures—activities named in the CSP5 final report or in the report of the former WGETI chairperson to CSP5. The outline for a draft voluntary guide includes article 7(4) on preventing GBV, but it's not clear if this is a component of a broader guide or one that would be specific to GBV risk assessments, as included in the CSP5 decisions.

States and other stakeholders should use this round of meetings to make suggestions for where and how to action the CSP5 decisions within this workplan, and also begin to implement some of them—for example, in their preparation for, and representation to, these meetings. Will delegations be more diverse? Will there have been consultation with relevant gender and human rights experts from within governments in the preparation of statements? Reporting back about any relevant changes or domestic activities enacted by the decisions would also be welcome. Our list of suggestions on how CSP5 outcomes can be taken up in ATT meetings this year is included elsewhere in this edition, and WILPF is ready to continue working with states across all of these.

Taking up a thematic focus each year as part of a meeting cycle is becoming an unofficial tradition within the ATT community. Doing so has had many benefits but also risks creating a culture in which we move quickly onto the new thing, and the prior

year's focus becomes yesterday's news, as seems to have been the case with the CSP3 focus on the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, the CSP4 focus on diversion has been more meaningfully taken up in the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR). For all the same reasons that it was important to have a standalone criterion on GBV included in the ATT, it is now important to not lump these decisions back in with everything else.

### **Unpacking, not undoing**

The word “unpack” is found extensively across the documentation for this week's meetings. It is especially notable in the workplan for the WGETI's sub-working group on articles 6 and 7, which seeks to spend significant time in meetings over the next few years on unpacking various legal concepts found within those treaty articles.

Unpacking core concepts can be a good thing to do if it helps to foster knowledge and ensure common understanding and interpretation of concepts or terminologies. Having answers to some of the identified questions—for example, what constitutes “knowledge at the time of an authorisation”—would be valuable in order to have better and shared understandings within the ATT context.

Other concepts suggested for discussion, however, particularly those found in article 6(3), such as genocide or crimes against humanity, are already well-understood and employed within different fields international law. Even “knowledge” is a standard that on its own is very well understood in national and international law as a general matter. There are questions about when and how UN Security Council decisions (referenced in article 6(1)) can be considered to have created true legal obligations—but these are complex, and if ATT states parties want to engage in a discussion about this then they must do so carefully and with an awareness of what legal scholars and other practitioners are saying about it.

The way in which the methodology is presented suggests that some of these concepts and activities could in the course of this unpacking exercise become open for re-interpretation or would not always apply.

Moreover, there is a risk that a lot of time is being given to mapping and exchanging on how states parties understand these terms, and not considering if they are adhering to them. This means this exercise could become a delaying tactic or smokescreen for conversations about accountability and adherence that are not happening.

If this work plan is adopted, then we urge states parties to use the “unpacking” time effectively to zero in on where there is actual misunderstanding or grey areas, or insufficient understanding of how article 6 provisions interact with other treaties and agreements. Delegations must also thus have relevant experts in the room.

### **Apples and oranges: challenges of ATT reporting**

The ATT's voluntary reporting templates have always been problematic. Their voluntary status means that some states parties employ them while others do not, creating at the outset an uneven landscape from which to draw comparison or analysis. The manner in which questions are formulated give rise to ambiguity and interpretation, which further complicates efforts at analysis. Civil society and transparency advocates regret the inclusion of a tick box that gives the option to allow only other states parties access to the report. Problems stem from the options that states parties have to report on different types of information that are inherently incomparable, such as authorised or actual transfers; or the quantity versus the value of imported and exported weapons. This is a result of ambiguity in the Treaty text. Finally, the fact that after reports are submitted, they are not formally reviewed, analysed, or discussed is suspected to be a demotivating factor. Civil society initiatives such as the Control Arms' ATT Monitor report and the ATT Baseline Assessment Project managed by the Stimson Center help to fill this gap.

Many of these concerns are not new; in fact, some of them were first highlighted when the voluntary templates were endorsed at CSP2 in 2016. They are being raised anew in the context of an inventory of comments and suggestions about the ATT's voluntary reporting templates. The inventory will form the basis of some of the

discussion at the WGTR meeting this week and has emerged in response to a list of tasks endorsed by states parties for the WGTR at CSP5. It may lay the groundwork for possible adjustments to the templates.

This is one of several measures that states parties are undertaking to counter the downward trend in reporting. Not only are fewer states parties submitting annual reports, but more are requesting to keep those reports private and others are not updating the initial report to reflect relevant policy or legislative changes.

While not the sole focus of WGTR work, adjustments to the templates could be a significant step toward improved report quality and open up ways to include information that was overlooked before. The initial reports could, for example, include space to describe how states are conducting GBV risk assessments. Opening up agreed documents for change can be risky and lead to unexpected requests for change or re-negotiation but doing so can ensure an instrument's relevance and responsiveness to change over time. It appears unlikely that the templates' status would change however, but hopefully some updates coupled with the other activities that the WGTR will undertake can help overcome the reporting slump. Public, comprehensive, and timely reporting is essential for meeting the transparency objectives of the ATT.

### **The original goal: to reduce human suffering**

Finally, where we most need continuity and awareness of the past is in remembering the original aim of the Arms Trade Treaty—to reduce human suffering. For the ever-dwindling group of us who have been a part of this community since before there was a treaty, the landscape of meetings feels very different today. The humanitarian imperatives and energy that drove the process in its early days now sometimes feel lost in what are ever more technical conversations that appear to help states to “do” arms trading better, but not to assess if the human impact is any less. A lot of emphasis is put onto building the capacities of lesser-resourced states, ostensibly to have the same robust controls as the richer countries do—except that those countries are not having their own practice scrutinised and criticised in the same way. We know that the international arms trade is flourishing, and that the transfers which ought to not be allowed under the ATT happen anyway. The death, displacement, and loss caused by armed violence is a problem that the ATT has failed to address in the ways it was meant to. As we move into this new meeting cycle, states parties need to both remember and honour the Treaty commitments agreed in the past but also bring fresh energy and ideas to its meaningful implementation.

# IMPLEMENTING THE CSP5 DECISIONS ON GENDER AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Allison Pytlak and Katrin Geyer | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

The final report of the Fifth Conference of States Parties includes several decisions pertaining to gender and gender-based violence (GBV). WILPF is making the following suggestions for how states parties and other stakeholders can act on these decisions.

## **Final report paragraph 22 (a): On issues related to representation and participation in future CSP meetings<sup>1</sup>:**

- i. States Parties, Signatory and Observer States attending ATT Working Groups, preparatory meetings and CSP itself should strive for gender balance in their delegations.
- ii. The ATT Secretariat should report to CSPs on overall progress among delegations in achieving gender balance.
- iii. States, civil society organizations and industry are encouraged to share with CSPs policies and practices they have adopted to achieving greater gender balance, when appropriate during formal sessions or side events.
- iv. Gender balanced panels should be encouraged in plenary sessions, side events and other fora. Event organizers should strive to achieve gender balanced panels at an early stage in their planning.
- v. The sponsorship programme should consider gender balance as one of its selection criteria.

## **Possible actions:**

- Chairs and facilitators of the (sub) working groups could encourage participants in their letters and draft work plans to report on measures implemented and progress achieved in ensuring gender diversity across the different work streams.

- The president could ensure that agenda item 3 of the first informal preparatory meeting "Overview of the implementation of the CSP5 decisions,"<sup>2</sup> which include decisions on gender and gender-based violence (GBV), continues to remain on the agenda for the second informal preparatory meeting and CSP6.
- States parties could report in plenary under agenda item 3 of the first preparatory meeting on efforts undertaken to achieve gender diversity in their delegations; or to consult with gender and human rights experts, among others, from within governments in the preparation of ATT meetings.

## **Final report paragraph 22 (b): Agreed commitments related to increasing understanding of gendered impacts of armed violence in the context of the ATT**

- i. All Working Group Chairs and facilitators are encouraged to consider gender aspects in their sessions.
- ii. States Parties are encouraged to collect gender disaggregated data within their national crime and health statistics, including gender disaggregated data on victims of armed violence and conflict, and make this data publicly available.
- iii. States are encouraged to support research that helps increase understanding of the gendered impact of armed violence in the context of the ATT. Lists of existing research and data sources should be compiled and made available to all interested stakeholders. All stakeholders, including civil society, are encouraged to work towards elaboration and explanation of gender terms, to assist States in applying and working with gender issues within the ATT context.
- iv. Delegations are encouraged to consider including delegates with gender expertise where



possible. Such delegates should actively contribute to Working Groups' discussions and elaboration of recommendations as appropriate.

#### **Possible actions:**

- The draft workplan of the sub-working group on articles 6 and 7, as well as sub-working groups on articles 9 and 11 of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation (WGETI) could include encouragement across the meeting cycles to include suggestions for mainstreaming gender across all articles relevant to the WGETI. The former chairperson of the WGETI recalled that CSP5 participants recognised multiple gender dimensions of article 8 and article 5.<sup>3</sup>
- The Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR) could consider in its consideration of the initial reporting template to include a question on existing national practices to conduct GBV risk assessments.
- The draft work plan of the sub-working group on articles 6 and 7 of the WGETI could include specific references to an exchange of national practices on gender disaggregated data collection, as suggested by the 2019 WGETI Chair's draft report to CSP5 in paragraph 28.<sup>4</sup>
- States parties could be encouraged to regularly report back on new initiatives and efforts at the national level in line with this effort.
- The CSP6 president could ensure that agenda item 3 of the first informal preparatory meeting "Overview of the implementation of the CSP5 decisions," including commitments on the inclusion of gender experts, continues to remain on the agenda for the second informal preparatory meeting and CSP6.
- The ATT Secretariat could record and report back on the composition, roles and expertise within delegations to the next preparatory meeting and CSP6.

#### **Final report paragraph 22 (c): Agreed commitments related to the gender-based violence (GBV) risk assessment**

i. Encourage discussion on States' practice in

interpreting the language and standards entailed in Article 7(4), including "serious", "facilitate" and "overriding" risk, in order to assist States Parties in considering GBV issues in implementing the Treaty.

- ii. Encourage States Parties to provide information on their national practices relating to "mitigating measures" in the context of Article. 7(4): what these can be and how they are implemented.
- iii. Encourage States Parties to provide information on their national practices in GBV risk assessment in order to facilitate learning between States Parties.
- iv. Elements for a voluntary training guide to assist States Parties on the issues of GBV, including best practices for risk assessment, should be developed with voluntary funding, and with the participation of all stakeholders.

#### **Possible actions:**

- Plans within the WGETI sub-working group on articles 6 and 7 to unpack key concepts such as "facilitate" "serious" and "overriding" should be mindful of the CSP5 directive to consider them in regards to GBV risk assessment processes specifically.<sup>5</sup>
- At the proposed first CSP7 preparatory meeting where the draft work plan of sub working group on articles 6 and 7 suggests a focus on mitigation measures, participants should ensure to provide space to allow sharing of national practices relating to "mitigating measures" in the context of article 7(4) specifically.
- National or regional activities that provide GBV risk assessment training to export officials could be discussed during 2nd CSP7 preparatory meeting that proposes to discuss implementation of article 7 as part of the voluntary guide. The former chairperson of the WGETI recalls in her draft report to CSP5 in paragraph 18 that, "Delegations highlighted the value of training of licensing officials about gender-based violence in the context of article 7.4, and noted that further discussions would be needed to identify possible approaches thereto."<sup>6</sup> The chairperson noted that sharing of existing material and practical experiences

of states parties was considered as essential.

- States parties could report back about any relevant changes or domestic activities enacted by the decisions.
- Side events, workshops, or other learning and exchange opportunities including with relevant experts should be pursued. These need not take place exclusively in the context of ATT meetings in Geneva but could also be national or regional, or held during other relevant forums.
- The CSP5 final report provides for the WGETI to explore elements of a guide specific to article 7(4) and not necessarily as part of a larger guide. In the process of identifying the guide's purpose, as set out in the draft work plan of sub-working group on articles 6 and 7, states parties should remain mindful of existing relevant resources.

**Final report paragraph 22 (d): States Parties and others with planned regional meetings and projects supported by the VTF are encouraged to consider how work on gender and GBV can take place within their projects in order to make them more effective in contributing toward achievement of the object and the purpose of the Treaty.**

**Possible action:**

- The VTF chairperson, when reporting on the status of operation, as set out in agenda item 4(a) of the first preparatory meeting, could report back in plenary about the VTF's efforts in this regard.

**Final report paragraph 22 (e): States parties agreed to review progress on gender and GBV on an ongoing basis.**

**Possible actions:**

- The president, as well as chairs and facilitators of the (sub) working groups in their letters and draft work plans for the second preparatory meeting, could encourage participants to integrate gender perspectives into all aspects of their work, and to report back on measures taken.

- Civil society and other stakeholders should contribute and work with states parties to assess, and contribute to, progress either by monitoring or capacity-building.

1. *Final report of the Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty*, ATT/CSP5/2019/SEC/536/Conf.FinRep.Rev1, 30 August 2019, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/csp5/documents/csp5-final-report.pdf>.
2. *Draft annotated agenda: First CSP6 informal preparatory meeting*, ATT/CSP6/2020SEC/582/PM1.AnnAgenda, 20 January 2020, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/csp6-prep/draft-annotated-agenda-first-prep-meeting-csp6.pdf>.
3. See paragraph 27 of the Chair's Draft Report to CSP5, ATT/CSP5.WGETI/2019/CHAIR/529/Conf.Rep, 26 July 2019, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/csp5/documents/csp5-wgeti-draft-report.pdf>.
4. Ibid.
5. International Committee of the Red Cross, "International Humanitarian Law and gender-based violence in the context of the Arms Trade Treaty", April 2019, [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/csp5-prep/ICRC\\_WP.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/csp5-prep/ICRC_WP.pdf); and Control Arms Coalition and International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard University, "Interpreting the Arms Trade Treaty: International Human Rights Law and gender-based violence in article 7 risk assessments", April 2019, <https://controlarms.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Interpreting-the-Arms-Trade-Treaty-ver-1.pdf>.
6. *Chair's Draft Report to CSP5*, ATT/CSP5.WGETI/2019/CHAIR/529/Conf.Rep, 26 July 2019, <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/csp5/documents/csp5-wgeti-draft-report.pdf>.

# THE LETHAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE AND THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Ray Acheson | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

A political process to develop international commitments against the bombing of towns and cities is finally underway here in Geneva. After nearly a decade of activists organising to bring this issue to the fore of the UN's agenda, and after repeated calls from the UN Secretary-General, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and international humanitarian agencies, governments are now working on a draft political declaration looking to reduce humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons, especially those with wide area effects, in populated areas. WILPF, as member of the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), has been a longstanding advocate for such a mechanism. We believe that ending the use of explosive weapons in areas populated by civilians, that stopping the bombing of hospitals, schools, homes, and marketplaces, is imperative to preventing human suffering. WILPF also believes that part of ensuring such a commitment translates into real change is ending arms transfers that contribute to the practice of bombing towns and cities.

Over half a million people have been killed in the conflict in Syria since 2011, and millions more have been displaced. Over 100,000 have been killed in Yemen since 2015—with an additional estimated 85,000 more dead from the war-related famine. More than 70 million people are currently forcibly displaced due to war, conflict, or persecution, according to the UN Refugee Agency.<sup>1</sup> The UN warned that war-ravaged Gaza would be uninhabitable by 2020—and indeed today, “Hospitals, schools and homes are ... running on empty, worn down by the lack of clean water, electricity, infrastructure and jobs or money. Barely anyone has enough clean water to drink.”<sup>2</sup>

So much of this destruction has been caused, directly or indirectly, by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The bombing of city centres, towns, and villages in these and other

conflicts has killed incredible numbers of civilians. The reverberating effects—the damage caused to civilian infrastructure like water and sanitation—have led to scores more casualties and continue to do so.

## **Killing civilians: the role and responsibility of the international arms trade**

Many of the bombs and other explosive weapons killing civilians around the world, which should be controlled by international law and moral conscience, are instead sold for profit to those who use them for political gain. Those selling the weapons are complicit in the deaths of civilians; the destruction of their villages, towns, and cities; and the mass displacement that follows. Yet many of these same weapons exporters try to shirk their responsibility to protect the refugees fleeing the explosive violence that they helped facilitate.

The stated objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) include preventing the diversion of weapons to the illicit market; contributing to international and regional peace, security, and stability; and above all, reducing human suffering. This was the key motivation for states and civil society to call for the regulation of the international arms trade in the first place. Yet throughout the Treaty's negotiation and since its entry into force, there have been countless examples of irresponsible arms transfers. Many of the weapons transferred by states parties, signatories, and non-states parties alike have ended up being used to bomb towns and cities, resulting in the deaths of and damage to civilians.

Those bombing Yemen, for example, have received weapons from the United Kingdom, United States, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea, Ukraine, and China.<sup>3</sup> Russia and Iran have supplied many weapons and training to the Syrian government forces, while the United States and



many Gulf countries have supplied the Syrian opposition forces with military equipment. The weapons used to make Gaza uninhabitable have come from Israel, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, and others. The lists—of countries affected by explosive violence, and the countries and companies that supply the means of this violence—are endless.

Despite all of these examples and evidence, there have been few outcries about how the deaths, injuries, displacement, and destruction caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas relate to the ATT, even when states parties or signatories are responsible for the transfers that lead to this destruction. The fact that ATT states parties and signatories continue to engage in arms transfers that result in human suffering highlights the critical gap between law and practice.

It also highlights the power of the war profiteers. Commercial interests operating without scruples are a serious driver of arms production and sale. Corporations and governments make billions from the international arms trade. And commercial interests often influence arms transfer policy. Way back in 1918, Royal Navy officer Admiral Lord Wester Wemyss recognised the grave implications of private companies producing weapons:

“Apart from the moral objections to the present system, which makes warfare a direct occasion of private gain, the system is attended by the inevitable consequence that the multiplication of armaments is stimulated artificially. Every firm engaged in the production of armaments and munitions of every kind naturally wants the largest possible output. Not only, therefore, has it a direct interest in the inflation of the Navy and Army Estimates and in war scares, but it is equally to its interest to push its foreign business. For the more armaments are increased abroad, the more they must be increased at home. This interrelation between foreign and home trade in armaments is one of the most subtle and dangerous features of the present system of private production. The evil is intensified by the existence of international armament rings, the members of which notoriously play into each other’s hands. So long as this subterranean conspiracy against peace is allowed to continue, the possibility of any serious concerted

reduction of armaments will be remote.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus if the ATT is to have any meaning at all, it must be used to confront and dismantle the “subterranean conspiracy against peace”. Rather than legitimising the global arms trade as a reputable business, as some of its states parties desire, it must be used as a tool to illuminate, stigmatise, and prevent arms transfers that are responsible for death and destruction, regardless of who is selling or receiving the weapons.

But the ATT is not enough. It is the responsibility of all states, governments, organisations, and activists to condemn and prevent arms transfers that violate law, rights, and our collective conscience. It is the responsibility of us all to stop bombing and bombardment of towns, cities, and villages.

## Recommendations

- States must implement the ATT with a view to enhancing peace, justice, and human rights, not profits and political manipulation. Each and every arms transfer must be weighed against the risks highlighted in the ATT. To this end, relevant actors should identify and promote indicators that would prevent the sale of weapons. States must not transfer weapons that are at risk of being used to bomb populated areas.
- The peddling of tools of war, violence, and oppression at international gatherings must stop, as it does not reflect the stated collective ambition of advancing peace and security and reducing human suffering. Action needs to be taken to dismantle the military-industrial complex and the influence that arms manufactures have over politics and policies.
- States and other relevant actors should support the development and implementation of a political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as relevant policies and practices, that seek to end the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas. The declaration should recognise the connection between arms transfers and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. It could reaffirm that all states must maintain the

highest possible standards on their exports of conventional arms, including by adhering to and implementing fully the ATT. It could also commit signatories, including those not party to the ATT, to develop specific guidelines to restrict or stop the transfer of certain types or categories of conventional weapons to state and non-state actors. In the context of any data collection practices recommended by the declaration, it would be useful to collect data of civilian harm on the basis of type of weapon(s) used, in order to better track which weapon systems are causing harm. This will be relevant for understanding the impacts of particular weapons as well as for making arms transfer decisions.

1. "Worldwide displacement tops 70 million, UN Refugee Chief urges greater solidarity in response," *UN High Commissioner for Refugees*, 19 June 2019.
2. Hazem Balousha and Miriam Berger, "The U.N. once predicted Gaza would be 'uninhabitable' by 2020. Two million people still live there," *The Washington Post*, 2 January 2020.
3. Some of these have suspended new arms deals with Saudi Arabia but have not necessarily cancelled existing orders.
4. Fenner Brockway and Frederic Mullally, *Death Pays a Dividend* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1944), pp. 9–10.



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# SIDE EVENT PREVIEW: DATA AVAILABILITY FOR ARTICLE 7(4) ASSESSMENTS

Anna Alvazzi del Frete and Emile LeBrun | The Small Arms Survey

In preparatory discussions for the Fifth Conference of States Parties (CSP5) in 2019, states observed that a major challenge to implementing article 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was the “lack of clear evidence and data that help to make assessments about the prevalence of GBV in a recipient country”.<sup>1</sup> This led to clear language in the CSP5 Final Report encouraging states to gather sex-disaggregated data (Paragraph 22(b)). What is the current state of sex- and gender-relevant data collection and reporting that would allow states to make informed article 7(4) assessments?

The Small Arms Survey has conducted a review of global violent death datasets for sex and gender relevance<sup>2</sup>, the findings of which will be discussed in a side event on Wednesday 5 February. Other speakers will address the challenges of data availability for article 7(4) assessments from the perspective of the national statistical offices and civil society organisations. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) will also update the ATT community on progress towards reporting on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Indicator 16.1.2, which calls for disaggregated data on conflict deaths.

The Survey’s main finding is that the gender relevance of most violent deaths datasets is still low, primarily because sex-disaggregated data at the national level are not accessible. A majority of countries have only recently started to share sex-disaggregated homicide statistics, while the numbers of female fatalities in ongoing armed conflicts are almost completely unknown because relevant data is rarely disaggregated by sex.

Improving the sex disaggregation of datasets will require resources and the sharing of expertise and good practices. On the positive side, political signals are improving within various frameworks to support sex-disaggregated data collection and sharing. In the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA) process, for example, states are called on to collect of gender-disaggregated data.<sup>3</sup>

According to states’ UNPoA reports, however, less than 10 per cent collect gender-disaggregated data.<sup>4</sup> This is a clear sign of how much room there is for improvement.

Similarly, OHCHR has developed a data collection tool for SDG Indicator 16.1.2 on conflict deaths. While the commitment to share data on this indicator started with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, this is a brand new methodology, concluded in 2019. We should therefore expect the reporting curve to begin slowly, under the assumption that it will progressively contribute to article 7(4) assessments.

While pushing for improvements to official reporting, states have other sources of valuable relevant information. Donor-supported, independent efforts by civil society and academia to generate and assess data on gender and lethal violence remain essential. In fact, when official data is strong, independent actors often take the lead in providing the most rigorous analysis of it; when it is weak, these actors frequently step in to generate information otherwise unavailable. Ultimately, both official and independently generated data will be needed to produce more holistic and detailed pictures of the gendered impacts of lethal violence, including GBV.

1. Katrin Geyer, “Summary: Sub-working Group on articles 6 and 7”, ATT Monitor 12.1, 4 February 2019.
2. Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Gergely Hideg, and Emile LeBrun, *Gender counts: Assessing sex- and gender-relevant data in global armed violence datasets*, 2020.
3. UN General Assembly, *Report of the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*, Annex, II.B.2, para. 79, 6 July 2018, [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3&referer=/english/&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3&referer=/english/&Lang=E).
4. Shanayah Renois, “A Call to Action on Gender and Small Arms Control,” *Small Arms Monitor*, Vol. 10, No. 5., 29 June 2018.

# ATT MONITOR

Reaching Critical Will is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest women's peace organisation in the world. Reaching Critical Will works for disarmament and the prohibition of many different weapon systems; confronting militarism and military spending; and exposing gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and disarmament processes with a feminist lens. Reaching Critical Will also monitors and analyses international disarmament processes, providing primary resources, reporting, and civil society coordination at various UN-related forums.



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