



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

Civil society perspectives on the fifth biennial meeting of states
of the UN Programme of Action on small arms, 16–20 June 2014



Reaching Critical Will

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 | Conditions in conflict
- 2 | Calendar of events
- 3 | Event report:
Physical security
and stockpile
management

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

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CONDITIONS IN CONFLICT

Dr. Robert Zuber | *Global Action to Prevent War*

One of the core areas under discussion at this BMS5 concerns states' need for capacity support in meeting their PoA implementation responsibilities.

As we have written elsewhere, capacity support is in many ways the lifeblood of the UN system. Discussions around capacity support are increasingly cognizant of the need to integrate South-South and 'triangular' cooperation between and among states into the capacity support framework, and most delegations at this BMS would enthusiastically affirm the core importance of such support. They recognize that many of the items on the BMS agenda, including stockpile management, border control, and the marking and tracing of weapons, require technical assistance that is beyond the immediate reach of many states. Without such assistance, it is highly unlikely that commitments made in the area of illicit arms will ever become commitments kept.

At this BMS5, a number of delegations are focusing, beyond capacity support itself, on addressing the 'conditions' for such support. These states claim that political 'interests' throughout the UN system can impact the fairness of responses to capacity applications. In other words, some states have (legitimate, GAPW believes) concerns that requests for capacity support too easily bend in subtle or not-so-subtle ways to the political exigencies of the larger donor states.

There is a growing ideological gap between states that would reject all 'conditions' to capacity support and states that would seek to impose a structural framework to capacity support. In GAPW's private moments, we wonder if this is entirely necessary.

While working in Harlem in the late 1980s and 1990s, a group of pastors and activists decided to file suit against banks that were deliberately 'redlining' entire neighbor-

hoods, meaning the creation of arbitrary criteria that restricted access of local residents to capital that could help them rebuild their homes and neighborhoods. Once our suit was pursued and won, several of us applied for loans. Though the criteria issue had largely been sorted out, this was not the end of the conditions; but now they were couched specifically in the form of assurances that I could both pay off the loan and that the money loaned would be used for the purposes intended.

These two assurances might both be interpreted as 'conditions' according to the criteria applied by some delegations in the PoA, especially the second one which has more direct relevance. However, though we continued not to trust the banks fully, the condition of 'fidelity to outcome' was not a deal breaker. Indeed we felt it was of dubious benefit to impede assurances that recipients of capacity support will be accountable to the objectives that defined the application in the first place.

Certainly at the PoA level, the imposition of 'conditions' for assistance has significant abuse potential and this must be swiftly addressed in whatever form it manifests itself, including 'conditions' related to projects that turn out not to be as feasible as was initially thought or otherwise don't work out as intended. That said, it is surely not too high a bar for a state requesting assistance to be accountable to the ends for which the assistance is sought. Indeed, the 'matching needs and resources' program of UNODA implies that needs can be clarified and that appropriate capacity responses can be defined. But should it not also imply a commitment to do all we can to ensure that, for the sake of the many persons worldwide impacted by arms-related violence, PoA requests result in positive public outcomes? Thankfully, it seems that many states already see the wisdom in this.

continued on next page

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

When	What	Where	Who
10:00-13:00	Plenary	Conference Room 3 Conference Building	
13:15-14:30	Implementing the PoA: launch of the Small Arms Survey publications	Conference Room C Conference Building	Permanent Mission of Australia to the UN, Small Arms Survey
13:15-14:45	iTrace Global Weapons Reporting System	Conference Room 3 Conference Building	Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN, Conflict Armament Re- search
13:15-14:45	UNPoA: stop gun violence and save lives	Conference Room B Conference Building	IANSA, Permanent Mis- sion of Germany to the UN
15:00-18:00	Plenary	Conference Room 3 Conference Building	
18:00	Improving the health of the UNPoA	Church Center	IPPNW, IANSA, Parliamen- tary Forum on SALW

Conditions in conflict, continued

It is important to refrain from politicizing capacity assistance. But it is also important to make the best use of scarce available resources to increase security and alleviate violence. There is no perfect system, nor is there perfect intent, but a clarification of 'conditions,' adoption of peer-reviewed implementation benchmarks and/or best practices from UNSCAR and other UN trust funds, along with persistent demands for fairness by state funding sources, can create more trustworthy conditions for what we hope will be a much more robust capacity engagement under PoA auspices.

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.



EVENT REPORT: PHYSICAL SECURITY AND STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT

Simon Rose | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

There are a variety of UN organisations working with issues of small arms and light weapons, and UNMAS is one of the entities that has developed capabilities and best practise methods on how to deal with some of the problems that the UNPoA is trying to solve.

UNMAS focuses on sequencing methods in order to secure the civilian population and avoid the worst disasters, for example by finding stockpiles in densely populated areas and removing them. The strategy of UNMAS sequencing method is dedicated to solving immediate problems as a first priority, and thereafter analysing the complexity of the situation in order to achieve a secure environment in a long term perspective.

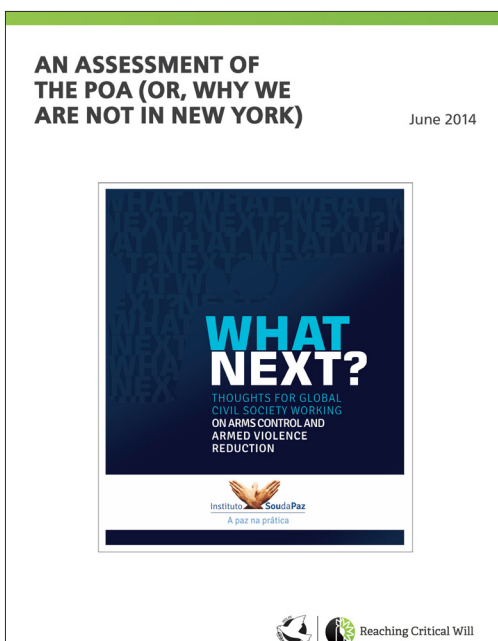
As most would agree, one of the main objectives of the this BMS5 conference is to avoid another Mpila disaster, where a stockpile exploded in Brazzaville leaving over 300 people dead, 2,500 injured and 120,000 displaced, according to the Small Arms Survey. UNMAS has also developed a rapid response capability, allowing it to move in faster into certain areas. Recently its team discovered a huge, unguarded stockpile in the middle of a city, with one school and one hospital within 100 meters of the site.

On the other hand, solving the immediate problems will only get you so far, as threats are ever evolving and

the challenges faced by the international community are more diverse and more complex now than ever before.

General Kani Diabate Coulibaly, President of the National Commission for the Fight Against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Mali stressed several important points in order to achieve a long term secure environment. He noted that being a vast country, the importance of Regional Focal Points in Mali cannot be underestimated, as different solutions are needed in different areas. In a broader sense, an understanding of the age and gender of the people affected is very important, and a lack of gender mainstreaming in the working progress diminishes the possibility of protecting the entire population. When addressing and trying to create a long term secure environment, General Coulibaly also stressed the importance to working closely with civil society and the grassroots level in order to make sure that your work has an impact on local society.

For both long and short term perspectives, the panel agreed that states should consult with UN entities and other countries in a greater extent, using the competence and methods developed. There are examples and best practises on how to act, and so states have the opportunity to take advantage of the lessons already learned.



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