



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

18 June 2014
Vol. 6, No. 3

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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 during meetings related to the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

See reachingcriticalwill.org for information, statements, papers, reports, archived *Small Arms Monitors*, and more.

THE TIES THAT BIND

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

There are several “fault lines” that separate delegations in this BMS. As noted yesterday, one of these fault lines is related to “conditions;” another fault line relates to the degree to which the PoA should be adjusted to meet new circumstances impacting small arms, including political and technological evolution. A third line that divides delegations is one that we feel strongly about: the need to fully link illicit small arms to at least more of the relevant, complementary human security issues on the UN agenda.

In 2012, a group of civil society members made an initial attempt to take armaments out of their silos and explore ramifications for a wide variety of UN issues and processes—development assistance, gender justice, atrocity crime prevention, and more. That book, published in conjunction with UNODA, was intended to organize conversations to help ensure that reactions, linkages, and policy suggestions from other sectors can find a more prominent place in disarmament discussions at the international level.

While the book is somewhat dated now, it helped set a tone that many delegations during this BMS have reinforced through their statements—the need to look beyond the important, immediate concerns to the larger security frameworks in which illicit arms find opportunity to terrorize and undermine. Illicit arms fuel atrocity crimes, impede women's participation, undermine food security, encourage drug trafficking, and so much more. These impacts are tangible, devastating, and not sufficiently addressed by our existing stable of disarmament treaties and Security Council resolutions. The topic of small arms needs to be on the agendas of many UN agencies. In turn, their agendas need to be more fully represented in all PoA-related deliberations.

This leads to another important theme in the book, articulated most clearly by Reach-

ing Critical Will's Ray Acheson. Efforts to control illicit weapons are much more likely to be successful in a world that exercises restraint in the production of such weapons. The protocols we establish to control small arms and light weapons, to end diversion, and so forth, cannot possibly come to full effect without a complementary commitment to reduce weapons flows. Arms manufacturers with state consent continue to upgrade arsenals and, simultaneously, lose track of the weapons these sales replace. The vast sums spent on such an obvious misapplication of security opportunity creates scandalous shortages affecting so many other state functions, including development assistance, environmental restoration, and the fulfillment of diverse human rights obligations.

A week of discussions is clearly insufficient to discuss all of the immediate and collateral issues relevant to the PoA. And we note with respect the limitations imposed on diplomatic missions (staff size) and UN agencies and NGOs (budget) that creates the necessity for triage that allows all of us the opportunity to do our jobs but not necessarily to fulfill our responsibilities.

We endorse the opportunity provided this week for states to wrestle with these three important fault lines. We especially applaud those delegations with the wisdom to endorse a full range of complementary analyses. As we move forward, we will need to summon up more foresight to follow the scourge of illicit small arms and light weapons wherever it leads.

Notes

1. The publication is available at http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/ODAPublications/CivilSocietyAndDisarmament/2012/NGO_pub_2012.pdf.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

When	What	Where	Who
8:30-9:45	Laying the Foundation for an Effective Arms Trade Treaty	Permanent Mission of Australia, 150 East 42 St, 33rd Floor	Permanent Mission of Australia
10:00-13:00	Plenary	Conference Room 3 Conference Building	
13:15-14:30	Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery	Conference Room 5 North Lawn Building	Permanent Missions of Mexico and Guatemala, Surviving Gun Violence Project, and IANSA
13:15-14:30	Integrated Regional Approaches to Crime and Security: The Caribbean Experience	Conference Room 4 North Lawn Building	Permanent Missions of CARICOM states and New Zealand
13:15-14:30	Small Arms and Light Weapons Trafficking and Insecurity in North Africa: The Case of Libya	Conference Room 3 Conference Building	Permanent Mission of Netherlands, Small Arms Survey
13:15-14:30	Arms and ammunition management in Somalia	Conference Room C Conference Building	UNIDIR, in cooperation with Conflict Armament Research
13:15-14:30	SALW and the post 2015 development agenda	Conference Room B Conference Building	Parliamentary Forum on SALW, PRIO, and IANSA
15:00-18:00	Plenary	Conference Room 3 Conference Building	
18:00-20:00	Preventing diversion of small arms & ammunition	German House 871 UN Plaza	Permanent Mission of Germany

For further analysis and reporting on the BMS5 this week, please see www.reachingcriticalwill.org.

Statements will also be posted on the RCW website.

Follow discussions on Twitter with
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18 JUNE 2014 | Vol. 6, No. 3

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UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION: RESPECT THE DIGNITY OF VICTIMS

Nerina Čevra | *Action on Armed Violence*

We call on states to introduce discussions focusing on injuries and impairments as a result of illicit gun trafficking, within the framework of the PoA.

The Programme of Action is designed to fight illicit gun proliferation in all its aspects. An essential and most deadly aspect of such proliferation is the victimization of women, men, boys, and girls by guns. Over 500,000 people die of armed violence each year, and millions more are left with long-term injuries and impairments.

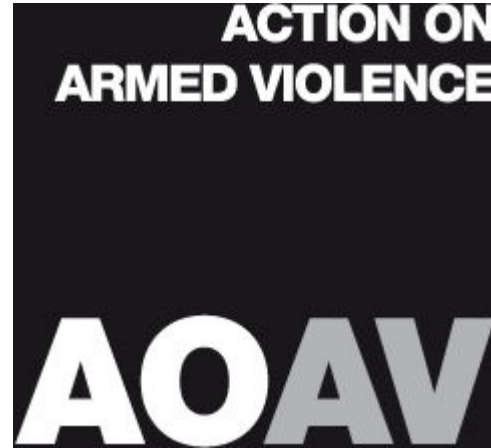
Now is the time for this framework to include a focus on injuries and impairments as a result of the illicit gun trafficking. This biennial meeting of states will show the way for the future of this process and including these topics into the discussions will not only reinvigorate the process but will help close the gap between the UN Programme of Action's aims on the paper and the reality on the ground.

States have committed in the PoA to "reduce the human suffering caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and to enhance the respect for life and the dignity of the human person." States have also noted that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects impedes provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict.

Yet, despite the fact that the international community has recognized the need to include assistance to victims in instruments designed to regulate weapons, the one instrument dealing with the most proliferated form of armed violence refuses to engage in these discussions.

The commitment to assist victims and survivors of armed violence with recovery is already set in international law and policy. The Mine Ban Treaty, followed by the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), codified a set of obligations and commitments made by states towards victims of these weapons.

In a non-discriminatory way, these two treaties have helped develop a framework for policy development to help improve access to health care and to other efforts to ensure recovery and inclusion in society of victims and survivors of armed violence. This arguably means that those states that are signed up to these two treaties already have the obligation to provide assistance to all those injured by armed violence, including gun violence.



Beyond these specific treaties, states of course have the obligation to protect their citizens from victimization and to ensure respect for their rights once they are victimized. They have the obligation to provide services and resources needed for recovery and inclusion in society. This is a basic obligation of a sovereign state, and is enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and all other human rights treaties, including the most recent Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It is high time that this community stops ignoring victims and survivors and starts considering ways in which it can help states that are dealing with the deaths and injuries caused by gun violence.

What better way to show respect for the dignity of the person and to reduce the human suffering as promised, than to begin discussing ways in which this framework can help improve the lives and well-being of those victimized by guns regulated by this instrument.

GENDER AND THE POA*IANSA Women's Network*

A gendered approach is a central component for sustainable progress in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA).

A gendered approach factors in the needs and capacities of men and women in the formulation of appropriate responses to small arms control. An inclusive approach will help provide fuller ownership of efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms.

We insist on the full and equal participation of women in the small arms process but we also recognise that men and boys need programmes to help them reject armed violence. There is an urgent need to fully address this dimension of small arms control and to provide training and support to local initiatives, many of which are led by women. It is a fact that gender-oriented policy, continuously and rigorously implemented, will maximise all efforts.

Mandates for gender in the PoA

The UN has long endorsed the strategies of gender mainstreaming and gender balance in its pursuit of gender equality. Most recently, UN Security Council Resolution 2117 (2013) calls for further measures to facilitate women's full and meaningful participation in all policy making, planning and implementation processes to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms. It also calls for those planning disarmament initiatives to engage with women and provide for their full access to these programmes.

BMS 5: Gender entry points*Stockpile management*

Stockpile management of weapons and ammunition can reduce illicit proliferation through safeguards to help prevent loss and theft.¹

1. Competent female experts should be given the opportunity to participate fully and equally in decision making on location, policy and process on stockpile management.

2. Women often have a unique role in the facilitation of dialogue between government institutions and communities in relation to stockpile sites, and can help to raise public awareness of the dangers of SALW if not adequately accounted for and secured.

International Tracing Instrument

Both in crime and conflict situations, women can play a vital role in tracing efforts.

1. Women's experience and knowledge should be integrated into approaches of customs, police, and intelligence organisations.

2. Women should be trained in identification of weapons so they can actively participate in investigations and tracing efforts.

3. States should create appropriate training materials and resources for all government officials, containing gender-specific best practices on how to conduct and integrate the needs and experiences of women particularly those who have been trafficked.

4. States should incorporate gender-inclusive consultations in information sharing mechanisms to source information from active civil society groups working toward eliminating the illicit trade in SALW.

In providing international assistance and capacity building, States should:

1. Initiate a more systematic approach to the gathering of sex-disaggregated data, thus facilitating more effective actions for combating the illicit trade in SALW.

2. Incorporate the knowledge and experience of different civil society groups, including women's organisations in exchanges and training processes.

3. Incorporate civil society groups, including women's organisations into training programmes and as a resource tool for training and awareness purposes to ensure that women's perspectives as users and victims of illicit SALW are reflected in all training programmes.

4. Allocate financial and technical assistance to civil society groups, in particular women's networks, for peace and disarmament and community reintegration and sensitisation.

States should include gender aspects of small arms and light weapons control, in addition to levels of women's participation in related processes, in their reports on PoA implementation.

A vicious cycle: lack of knowledge and exclusion

Women are largely perceived as less knowledgeable in the field of small arms control. This can also happen at the governmental level where women's minis-



tries may choose to not take part in national security decision-making bodies because of lack of resources and perceived lack of knowledge.

A related challenge is that many times women's issues and gendered concerns are seen as only women's concerns and not something that men can have opinions on, advocate for, or be involved in. Gender should be addressed as a cross-cutting theme throughout programmes and projects with men as well as women championing gender equality.

Action and discourse around small arms control and disarmament serve in specific ways to limit and restrict women's participation. For instance, much of the discourse surrounding small arms control is focused on technical issues such as firearms transfers, firearms ownership, trade, stock management issues, firearms marking, and tracing mechanisms. While these technical issues are very important, focusing on technical issues can overshadow the human aspects and consequences of arms proliferation and armed violence making the issue abstract.

Women's organisations are often active in raising awareness on the impact of armed violence on individuals and communities. Keeping a focus on technical issues can thereby further exclude and sideline women's participation. The technical discourse as well as women's lack of economic empowerment and lack of resources in many situations negatively impacts women's preparedness to engage effectively in security discussions.

Democratising peace and security

Research shows that women are more likely to support strong measures to control access to small arms and actually have, to date, played a major role in initiatives aimed at reducing the availability and misuse of weapons around the world.

Education involving men and women on issues of gender and small arms can help to increase their democratic participation in arms control and disarmament initiatives.

Gender guidelines for the PoA

The Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender for the Effective Implementation of the UN PoA (A/CONF.192/2006/RC/CRP.3)² were designed to assist policy makers and field personnel in incorporating gender perspectives in all relevant initiatives and operations in the process of implementation of the PoA.

The Guidelines help practitioners identify concrete ways of mainstreaming gender perspectives in all relevant initiatives and operations, and at all stages, from information gathering and planning to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in the process of effective implementation of the PoA.

Women's participation in national frameworks

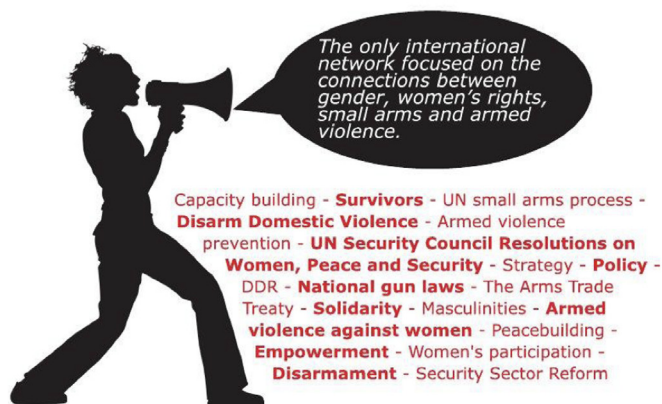
The PoA calls upon States to "Establish or designate, as appropriate, a national point of contact to act as a liaison between States on matters relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action" (II:5). This requires effective inter-agency and civil society communication on the implementation of the PoA. There is an opportunity to involve women and incorporate gender perspectives through the inclusion of government ministries on women and gender and providing them with training on weapons identification, tracing and data collection mechanisms.

An inclusive approach will help in full ownership of all efforts to eradicate the trade in illicit small arms and light weapons. It is a fact that gender-oriented policy, continuously and rigorously implemented, will maximise all efforts.

Notes

1. ISACS 05.20: <http://www.smallarmsstandards.org/isacs/0520-en.pdf>
2. The Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender for the Effective Implementation of the UN PoA (A/CONF.192/2006/RC/CRP.3): <http://www.iansa-women.org/node/454>

The IANSA Women's Network



WOMEN AND GUNS

Arianna Framvik Malik | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The launch of the *Small Arms Survey 2014—Women and Guns*, was hosted by the Swiss mission to the UN. This year, the Small Arms Survey covers a range of issues, but it focuses on the issue of women and guns. As presented by Anna Alvazzi del Frate, director of the Small Arms Survey, the relationship between women and guns is changing. Highlighting that discussions about women and guns should not only entail the victimization of women, the project decided to interview women in various formal and informal security arrangements to gather an overview of various dimensions of this issue. The Survey spoke with women in police and peacekeeping missions to women participating in non-state armed groups. They have found that women are victims and survivors of armed sexual and domestic violence inside and outside of conflict, and that women possess and use firearms significantly less. Women are also increasingly joining police, military, and peacekeeping forces, though have been found to be less likely to use weapons less or be slotted into non-combatant positions. On the other hand, women and girls have been found to be more active in non-state armed groups; however, they frequently perform tasks considered less important than their male colleagues and face greater difficulty in reintegrating in society following the end to armed conflict.

In the special feature of the Small Arms Survey called “Women behind the gun,” interviewed soldiers and rebel fighters talk about the experience of sexism, their pursuit of gender equality, and the actual challenges in the practical implementation of UN resolution 1325. These women demonstrate the slow, yet certain shift in the dynamics between women and men that is in fact taking place.

Over the past few years, the project has observed improvements in the alignment of the international women, peace and security (WPS) and small arms agendas. Starting with the outcome document of the 2012 UNPoA review conference, which included language addressing the concern regarding violence against women as well as encouraging the participation of women in small arms policymaking, this trend continued in 2013 with the Arms Trade Treaty’s legally-binding criterion on preventing armed gender-based violence and the UN Security Council’s resolution on small arms. While parallel, both initiatives reaffirmed the need for gender provisions in small arms processes. Yet even in countries where the different impacts of small arms on women and men indeed are reflected in gun control policy, this is still rarely reflected in concrete action.

STOP GUN VIOLENCE AND SAVE LIVES

Simon Rose | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

Examining how small arms and light weapons affect different countries and regions, some cases offer hope while others highlight challenges. As Ema Tagicakibau from the Pacific Foundation for Women’s Advancement pointed out, the challenges facing the Pacific region is not widespread possession of arms, but rather the misuse of power from legitimate actors. When organs of the state are misusing arms, causing harm and destabilisation, the issues to solve become very different from those associated with illicit trafficking. The process of capacity-building within the state will not be as successful, as there is a risk of giving state organs the means and methods to maintain their power positions and thus continue abuses. When there’s a lack of political will, Mrs Tagicakibau stressed that civil society organisations should be strengthened instead to achieve real progress.

The challenges in the MENA region are somewhat different, as there are more household weapons, partly due to the fragile security situation. This diminishes the chances of a successful regulation, especially of small arms. Raising the issue is also becoming much harder. In the present situation, there seems to be a lack of knowledge both in regards to the media and to politicians of the disastrous long-term effects the spread of small arms has for countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. Together with the experiences from the Pacific region, it shows the importance of political will, and how lack of it is a great hindrance in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

One example of successful work from all actors comes from the regional ECOWAS convention on small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, and other related materials. One of the major reasons for success in the West Africa region is because of the connection between governments and civil society, together with a combination of both regional and international support. But the West Africa experience also shows the importance of working on all levels, the initial step of creating the political will needed in order to make a change.

As to how to work most effectively with the implementation of the UNPoA and other similar processes, the most important factor seems to be to work mostly with those actors willing to make real change, as other measures potentially could be counterproductive. And when these actors have been identified, creating the political will to make a difference would be the combined task of civil society and the international community.