



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

Civil society perspectives on the meeting of governmental
experts of the UN Programme of Action on small arms

1–5 June 2015



Reaching Critical Will

4 June 2015
Vol. 7, No. 4

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 | Editorial
- 3 | Side event report:
Targeted action
on gun violence
- 4 | Extracts
from IANSA
statements

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.

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

EDITORIAL: SEX AND GENDER IN A WORLD AWASH WITH GUNS

Ray Acheson | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

Reducing the quantity of weapons in circulation and preventing easy access to weapons will contribute to security, contrary to the popular belief that the more weapons you have, the more secure you are, argued Argentina's representative during Wednesday morning's MGE2 plenary. This popular culture around guns in many societies is hugely problematic and is what leads to staggering rates of armed violence, including acts of gender-based violence (GBV).

"My country has developed a gun culture that has given rise to terrible incidents," said Dr. Omalade Oladejo of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in Nigeria during Tuesday's civil society segment. "Some people see guns as a form of protection for their families. However, as scientists we know that guns in our homes and in our communities are much more likely to be used to kill, injure, or intimidate an innocent person than to protect against an attacker."

"Gun culture" is highly masculinised in many societies. Boys come to learn—through parenting, media, and schooling—to define themselves as men through violence. They are socialised into militarised gender identities—and girls and women are socialised to support such identities—through the marketing of weapons culture through toys, stories, films, and social norms. In the United States, for example, "video game and film industries both take money from companies that make firearms to feature their products" and then the military uses these games and films for recruitment. "These extreme examples intersect with the everyday, mundane lessons about the importance of being 'real men' that boys and men receive from the media and their peers, parents, coaches, and more," writes sociologist Lisa Wade.

Boys and men are also taught a duty to protect those "weaker" than them—women, children, the elderly. Taking up arms to "protect" others is often construed as reflecting masculine strength. This construction of violent masculinities reproduces the power asymmetries and gendered hierarchies that underpin many acts of GBV against women and others. Boys that are brought up to define themselves as men through violence develop a particular sense of entitlement to and expectation of power and privilege over women and others, expectations that often play out in acts of GBV.

These constructions of violent masculinities also effectively devalue male life, producing a widespread acceptance of the relative expendability of men. Associating maleness with violence increases the vulnerability of men in the immediate term, notes professor Charli Carpenter, which exacerbates other "gender-based vulnerabilities that adult civilian males face, including risks of forced recruitment, arbitrary detention, and summary execution." In many armed conflicts today, all military-aged men tend to be seen as "potential" or actual combatants or militants—which as Reaching Critical Will and Article 36 found in a recent study, tends to have grave implications for drone strike targeting and casualty recording.

Such constructions, the RCW/A36 report highlights, also reinforce established gender hierarchies that work against the establishment and sustainment of a more equitable society. "Framing women as weak and in need of protection continues to enable their exclusion from authoritative social and political roles, while reinforcing violent masculinities reproduces the power asymmetries and gendered hierarchies that underpin many acts of GBV against women and others."

continued on next page

Editorial, continued

There is a highly negative feedback loop between the construction of violent masculinities and weak femininities and the oppression, marginalisation, and abuse of rights of women and others. Thus just as IPPNW describes armed violence as a public health issue, so too are violent masculinities. Oladejo called for a public health approach to armed violence, based on collecting data, identifying risk factors, and tailoring preventative interventions. This is also necessary in terms of the culture of guns in relationship to constructions around gender. As the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) noted during its 100th anniversary conference in The Hague in April, education that fosters alternative understandings of what it is to be a "real man" is crucial. As the forthcoming outcome document from this conference explains, "Showing a different kind of masculinity—one that is nonviolent, respectful of women and others, upholding of human rights and dignity, opposed to traditional concepts of what it is to be male—helps men understand that there are alternatives to the toxic hegemonic masculinity."

States and other actors must also ensure the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty's provision on preventing GBV. Article 7(4) compels exporters to deny a transfer of weapons if there is a risk they could be used to commit acts of GBV. The implementation of this provision must be undertaken in the context of both armed conflict and armed violence, and should be seen as one

way among many others to confront the challenges of violent masculinities and associated gun cultures.

Gender diversity in discussions and negotiations around disarmament and other peace and security issues is also critical. The outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States on small arms recognised the importance of women's participation in policy-making and programme development and implementation related to small arms control. States must follow through on this and other international commitments to increasing the gender diversity in disarmament, such those contained in UN General Assembly resolution 69/61 and UN Security Council resolution 1325.

"The focus of this MGE is technology," noted Marren Akatasa-Bukachi of the East African Sub-regional Support Initiative for Advancement of Women, based in Kenya. But most people around the world "have no say in the development or promulgation of new technologies for weapons production." Women are largely excluded from these decisions. While including women in discussions, policy-making, and negotiation does not automatically ensure changes in policy on any given issue, we can only hope to achieve change by diversifying the experiences, cultures, and priorities represented and by including the views and voices of everyone—because we are all impacted by the production, transfer, proliferation, and use of weapons. •

SEX AND DRONE STRIKES

Gender and identity
in targeting and
casualty analysis

SMALL ARMS MONITOR 4 JUNE 2015 | Vol. 7, No. 4

Reaching Critical Will
a programme of the Women's International
League for Peace and Freedom

777 UN Plaza, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10017
ph. +1 212.682.1265
email: info@reachingcriticalwill.org
web: www.reachingcriticalwill.org

Editor: Ray Acheson

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.

Available at www.reachingcriticalwill.org



SIDE EVENT REPORT: TARGETED ACTION ON GUN VIOLENCE

Ghazal Rahmanpanah | PeaceWomen of WILPF

On 3 June, the Flemish Peace Institute, supported by the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the UN, organised a panel discussion on gun violence from different perspectives. The event featured Ambassador Bénédicte Frankinet, Permanent Mission of Belgium to the UN; Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Small Arms Survey (SAS) Senior Researcher; Nils Duquet, Senior Researcher at the Flemish Peace Institute; Rebecca Peters, Surviving Gun Violence Project; and Alex Gálvez, Executive Director of the Transitions Foundation of Guatemala. Speakers presented a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding gun violence and discussed the possibilities for policy to prevent gun violence.

Ambassador Bénédicte Frankinet spoke broadly on the impact of firearms on the exasperation of armed violence. Policy is, thus, essential for creating change through legislation that will contribute to a decrease in deaths and harm caused by gun violence and enhance human security.

Anna Alvazzi del Frate highlighted some of the key findings from the new Global Burden of Armed Violence study by SAS on the nature of gun violence around the world. Overall, an estimated 508,000 violent deaths occur every year. This number takes into account intentional/unintentional homicides, direct-conflict deaths, and “legal intervention” killings. The trends show that direct-conflict related deaths are widely increasing each year. The highest rates for violent deaths are occurring in a group of 18 countries located within South America, West and South Africa, and the Middle East. Individually, in 2012, Syria had the highest rate of direct conflict-afflicted deaths. From a gendered perspective, 60,000 women and girls are victims of gun violence every year. Looking at the percentage of female homicides committed with firearms, while many of the same countries continue to appear consistently as perpetrators (Guatemala, Colombia, etc.)—there were others that were more surprising such as Norway, which was ranked in the middle.

The research shows that 44% of violent deaths yearly involve firearms: homicides (46%); direct-conflict deaths (32%). Furthermore, the study attempted to evaluate a relationship between firearms and conflict, however the relationship was complex and difficult to pinpoint. In South American countries, however, that relationship was clearer with a higher rate of gun ownership linked to higher rates of violence.

Nils Duquet presented results of a new study that looks at the linkages between gun possession, firearms legislation, and violent deaths in Europe. Most of the

research available currently is from the US. Looking at 33 European countries, research shows that there are roughly 6,700 gun deaths per year, with a majority being suicides. Based on self-reporting studies and expert estimates, at least 25 million gun owners were identified in the EU with an estimated 79.8 million firearms in circulation. Handgun possession is relatively limited and no general trend expressing an increase or decrease in gun ownership has been identified.

Overall, the study highlights the potential positive impact of policy to create an intervention and mitigate the rates of violence. However, the lack of research and data on the issue has created a vacuum that makes it difficult to determine what element of legislation has the greatest impact.

Rebecca Peters and Alex Gálvez spoke on the experiences of gun violence survivors and identified ways to improve their prospects for full recovery and societal inclusion. Peters spoke on the urgent need for research that looks holistically at types of violence and then looks at trends in violent death (i.e., looking at “assaults” overall and then seeking trends in levels of death resulted from assault). Currently, national legislation related to firearms lacks recognition of the survivors of firearm violence and their medical and social needs (e.g. psychological support for trauma). One of the the greatest issues with contemporary policy gun violence is that it does not recognise the other elements of such violence. The actual death rate resulting from gun violence is much higher than what is reported because often many initial survivors will die prematurely due to secondary health issues that arose from the gun violence. Gálvez gave a personal account on the experiences of gun violence survivors and the timeline facing victims and survivors. Highlighting the anti-landmine campaign, Gálvez spoke on the importance of including gun violence survivors when advocating for legislative change in order to integrate the perspectives of survivors into policy. •



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

EXTRACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS STATEMENTS

From the civil society segment at MGE2 on 2 June 2015

Jamira Burley, Amnesty International USA

"Gun violence impacts us all, across borders, religions, race, gender and social or economic class. It destroys families and communities. It is up to us to ensure that governments everywhere use every mechanism available to prevent another person ...from losing their life to the barrel of a gun. Thank you for remembering that, in your deliberations this week. And thank you for joining us in wearing orange."

Dr. Omolade Oladejo, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) Nigeria

"Investment in combatting armed violence diverts money and human resources from health care and other vital human needs. Armed violence has shrunk national economies in Africa by a staggering 15 percent. In my home country of Nigeria, the average per capita health expenditure is only \$115 per year. Treatment for a gun injury can run from hundreds to thousands of dollars, diverting precious funds from basic health care.

...It is impossible to achieve development without health, as it is impossible to maintain and promote health in the midst of armed violence.

Recommendations:

1. PoA reporting documents should include a question asking about the implementation of programs within each country to prevent armed violence.

2. Health care professionals and Ministries of Health should have representation on National Commissions on Small Arms, to help assess the most strategic investments based on highest needs.

3. States should implement national collection of data on gun-related injuries and deaths.

4. Finally, States should ensure that survivors of gun violence receive the assistance they need for full care and rehabilitation.

Marren Akatsa-Bukachi, Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for Advancement of Women (EASSI)

Mr Chair, the focus of this MGE is technology. The majority of people around the world, especially the vulnerable, have no say in the development or promulgation of new technologies for weapons production. Last year at BMS5, Member States committed themselves to promoting the meaningful participation of women in combating the illicit trade in small arms, in training, policy-making, planning, and implementation of the Programme of Action, including stockpile management and physical security measures, awareness-raising and education.

Recommendations:

1. Follow through on the commitment at BMS5 to utilize women's knowledge and experience by increasing women's representation and participation in policy-making, planning, and implementation related to the small arms control.

2. Train and build the capacity of women so they can actively participate in the investigation and decision making processes related to the new technologies.

Victor Amisi Sulubika, Vision-Gram International

Our fear is that the new technologies being discussed this week will be yet another example of a commercial advance in the rich world that causes great damage in the poor world.

Recommendations:

1. As civil society organizations we urge Member States to regulate these new types of weapons very rigorously. International and domestic laws requires that all guns be marked so they can be traced – so if someone produces guns by a new manufacturing method, and those guns are not able to be marked effectively for tracing, those guns should be prohibited.

2. States should meet ALL of their commitments under the UN POA and its associated documents, including the BMS5 Outcome document, the International Tracing Instrument and the ATT.

3. States should apply new technologies to improve information exchange at the national, regional and international levels to combat arms trafficking and prevent diversion to unauthorized re-cipients.

4. States should acknowledge and support the important role of civil society in effort to interrupt the flood of guns and prevent violence.

Carmen Rosa de Leon-Escribano, Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible

La violencia armada extrema que nos toca vivir no puede ser afrontada en forma unilateral por una institución o sector social. Es un problema multidimensional, que requiere por tanto, respuestas de una gran diversidad de actores estatales y no estatales. La única forma de articular acciones exitosas e integrales, es a través de la alianza estratégica entre las instituciones del estado y las organizaciones de la sociedad civil, contando en todo momento con la participación de las comunidades y sobre todo de los grupos más vulnerables frente a la violencia armada: niños y niñas, mujeres y jóvenes. •