



# 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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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.

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## EDITORIAL: THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

*Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

Stockpile management is an important aspect of UNPoA implementation and small arms control, crucial to ensuring that stocks of small arms and light weapons are not diverted to unauthorised users. Any delegation addressing BMS6 on this issue will say that they see stockpile security and management as critical to preventing the illicit trafficking in small arms. The US delegation, for example, said it supports language on strengthening stockpile management in the draft outcome document, noting that "illegal armed groups and criminal organisations increasingly turn to poorly secured state stockpiles as a source for weapons." What the US and other concerned arms exporting states fail to mention in their interventions here at the UN, however, is how many of their own weapons have been diverted to "unintended" users or uses.

According to a comprehensive report from Amnesty International,<sup>1</sup> Daesh uses weapons designed or manufactured by more than 25 countries. The bulk of these arms and ammunition were seized from Iraqi military stocks. Daesh has also gained access to weapons from other sources, in particular from the capture or sale of Syrian military stocks and arms supplied to armed opposition groups in Syria by countries including Turkey, the Gulf states, and the United States. Daesh fighters are now equipped with large stocks of mainly AK variant rifles, but also US military issue M16, Chinese CQ, German Heckler & Koch G3 and Belgian FN Herstal FAL type rifles. In addition, Daesh has captured more sophisticated equipment, such as guided anti-tank missiles (Russian Kornet and Metis systems, Chinese HJ-8, and European MILAN and HOT missiles), and surface-to-air missiles (Chinese FN-6s).

In Somalia, the issue seems less about stockpile management and more about resale of weapons. On Tuesday, the Somali delegation reported to the BMS6 that it has

begun documenting and tracing weapons and ammunition that its forces have captured from al-Shabaab. Previous information suggests that many of these weapons were provided by the United States to the African Union's peacekeeping force in Mogadishu (AMISOM). Those troops then sold them to the blackmarket, from which al-Shabaab makes its purchases.<sup>2</sup>

Other times weapons apparently just get "lost". In 2015, for example, it was revealed that the US military was unable to account for \$500 million in weaponry and equipment sent to Yemen.

Whether weapons are lost, looted from stockpiles, or sold to unauthorised users, the key problem is that there is excessive production, excessive circulation, and excessive accumulation of weapons in the world. Manufacturing requires sales, which requires use. Overproduction leads to excessive accumulation, which leads to stockpile management issues.

The range and quantity of weapons available to those taking up arms to kill in conflicts such as Syria or Somalia or Yemen or any ongoing or past conflict is a product of decades of arms transfers to regions or countries in conflict and a product of the failure by exporting countries to manage arms deliveries. It is also, in the case of Daesh, a failure of the US-led occupation of Iraq to manage stockpiles.

These weapons represent billions of dollars spent on technologies of war over decades rather than on peacebuilding, development, and human rights. The arming of governments or armed groups in any given situation reflects and perpetuates the ongoing militaristic approach to conflict and international relations.

These issues are rarely discussed at UN meetings on small arms. Instead, there is a lot of talk about the importance of stockpile

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*Editorial, continued*

management or preventing diversion, without any sense of urgency to tackle these challenges in the real world by looking at the source of the problem: the unregulated development and production of weapons and the still poorly regulated international transfer of weapons. Strong language in the outcome document on how states should deal with the consequences of weapons production and transfers is important, but so is taking on the crux of the matter. •

**Notes**

1. *Taking stock: the arming of Islamic State*, Amnesty International, December 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde14/2812/2015/en/>.
2. David Axe, "U.S. weapons now in Somali terrorists' hands," *Wired*, 2 August 2011, <https://www.wired.com/2011/08/u-s-weapons-now-in-somali-terrorists-hands/>.
3. Craig Whitlock, "Pentagon loses track of \$500 million in weapons, equipment given to Yemen," *The Washington Post*, 17 March 2015.

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

Mia Gandenberger | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The News in Brief is not a comprehensive summary of all statements. It highlights positions on few critical issues covered during plenary discussions.

- During an informal meeting, participants heard panel presentations on regional and sub-regional arrangements and organisations by the Head of the Defence and Security Division of the African Union; the Under-Secretary-General for Arab National Security of the League of Arab States; the Head of the FSC Secretariat of the OSCE; and the Regional Crime and Security Coordinator of the CARICOM IMPACS.

**Implementation of the UNPoA***Synergies with other documents*

- Uruguay, Finland, Canada highlighted how the ATT and UNPoA are complementary.
- Brazil urged states to keep in mind the individual legal status and differential implementation requirements of various instruments.
- Sweden noted the UNPoA is not the only instrument addressing SALW and that the mutually reinforcing nature of various agreements should be recognised.

*Gender*

- Uruguay said women have a key role to play in disarmament and arms control processes.

When	What	Where
08:30-09:45	Advances in the implementation of the UNPoA in Central America and the Caribbean (Guatemala in cooperation with IEPADES and REDCEPAZ)	CR C
09:00-10:00	Fight against the illicit trafficking in SALW: what role for private actors and civil society (France)	CR 6
10:00-13:00	Consideration of international cooperation and assistance for the full and effective implementation of the UNPoA and the ITI	CR 4
13:15-14:30	Implementing PoA/ITI in the Arab World (Germany, League of Arab States, Permanent Peace Movement)	CR C
13:15-14:30	Towards the establishment of a national framework for weapons and ammunition management in the Federal Republic of Somalia (Finland in cooperation with UNIDIR)	CR 4
13:15-14:30	The role of parliamentarians and health professionals in connecting the dots between PoA and SDG16: reducing armed violence for sustainable development (Sweden)	885 Second Avenue, 46th floor
13:15-14:30	Achieving synergies for effective implementation of the international instruments for small arms control (IANSA)	CR D
15:00-16:00	Combatting illicit trafficking and proliferation of SALW in Southern Europe (UNDP SEE-SAC)	CR C
16:00-18:00	Regional centre on SALW tracing system software for management and control of SALW (Rwanda in cooperation with RECSA)	CR C
15:00-18:00	Consideration of international cooperation and assistance, <i>continued</i>	CR 4



## News in brief, continued

- Finland thought gender perspectives should be taken into account in the implementation of the UNPoA, including when planning assistance.
- Brazil welcomed the references to UNGA resolution 65/69 and UNSC resolution 1325 and its follow up resolutions.

### Zambia thought women's participation is vital in policy formulation relating to arms control.

- Thailand noted the implications of illegal weapons for gender-based violence (GBV).
- Sweden called for this BMS to reflect a gender perspective in the implementation of the UNPoA. Sweden noted that women remain underrepresented in the planning, creation, and implementation of national and international measures to control SALW, and this should be improved. Sweden also called for recognition of the gendered nature of armed violence and conflict.

### Ammunition

- Sweden felt it important to reflect that ammunition is a key component of the challenge that many member states are facing.
- Namibia called for including ammunition in small arms control measures.
- Ghana delivered a statement on behalf of 40 states calling for the inclusion of ammunition in the UNPoA.

### Implementation of the International Tracing Instrument

- Mr. Fleetwood reported on the Australian government's experience with tracing and the challenges of identifying individual firearms. He also highlighted challenges from emerging trends such as 3D printing of small arms.
- Mr. Emmanuel Roux, Head of INTERPOL's New York Office, presented INTERPOL's programmes on firearms in connection to the ITI, namely the illicit arms records and tracing management systems (iARMS), the INTERPOL ballistic information network (IBIN), and the INTERPOL firearms reference table (IFRT).

### Scope

- EU suggested amending the ITI to create standards regarding marking and recording keeping of modular weapons.
- CARICOM called for the ITI to be made legally binding and to include ammunition in its scope.
- Guatemala, Argentina underlined the importance of including ammunition and parts and components in

marking and tracing considerations and in the scope of the ITI.

- CARICOM, Switzerland, Guatemala welcomed the suggestion in the UNSG report to develop a technical annex to the ITI. Japan also welcomed the UNSG report.

### Emerging technologies/challenges

- CARICOM, Japan, Switzerland, Australia recalled the welcome opportunity of the MGE2 in 2015 to address emerging challenges.
- CARICOM, Indonesia, Israel stressed their concern with emerging technologies and their implications for marking and tracing of SALW.
- Thailand in this connection observed that firearms with polymer components have reduced marking durability and are more difficult for tracing. International cooperation and assistance can ensure that developing countries take advantage of new technologies such as laser-engraving and micro-stamping to trace illicit weapons.
- Australia highlighted that all of new technologies can pose new challenges and own complexities.
- China believes that new technologies will contribute to the management of arms and thought there was a need to further analyze their impact. The focus for now should be on helping development countries with building capacity.
- Japan, France, UK, and Spain highlighted the importance of information sharing on best practices on various levels.

### International cooperation and assistance

- Japan highlighted the importance of including women in DDR processes as well as UNPoA policy making.
- NAM, Nigeria, Algeria, Iraq, China, Switzerland, DRC, Australia, and France highlighted the importance of international cooperation and assistance for the successful implementation of the UNPoA/ITI.
- Cuba underlined that nothing should be imposed on states and assistance should be given without preconditions.
- DRC highlighted the efforts in the Great Lakes region and the challenges around it, seeking international assistance, i.e. through machines to mark SALW. •



## PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH ARMS CONTROL

Nela Abey | PeaceWomen programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

On 6 June 2016, the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom's programme Reaching Critical Will launched a report, *Preventing gender-based violence through arms control*, at a side event to the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6). The report, which was authored by Rebecca Gerome, discusses tools and guidelines for effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA) provisions related to gender-based violence (GBV). The panel of speakers, Gerome along with Reaching Critical Will's Mia Gandenberger and Marren Akatsa-Bukachi of the IANSA Women's Network, presented the key findings in the report and addressed the link between gender and disarmament.

Gandenberger spoke of the invisible violence that is GBV. She explained the ATT is the first international agreement that recognises the link between GBV and the arms trade. She also noted that women should not just be treated as vulnerable or as victims, but as actors with equitable contributions to make to arms control and disarmament.

Gerome spoke of the demographics of GBV, discussing the patterns of gun violence, in particular the pattern of gender and age. She spoke of how despite 80-90% of gun homicide victims are made up of young men, women are affected and involved and constitute the majority of GBV victims. Rebecca discussed the notion of gender as a socially constructed concept and the uneven power relations that GBV is rooted in. She highlighted Article 7.4 of the ATT, which stipulates that states are committed to taking GBV into account as binding criteria when assessing whether or not to export arms. She noted that unlike the ATT, the UNPoA makes no mention of gender; however, there have been some developments as of June 2014, with reference to women in policy making.

Gerome discussed her research process in writing the report and spoke of the lack of data and the difficulties in collecting it. She explained the differing requirements of countries when conducting risk assessments and noted that to date, no countries have specific language on GBV in their documentation, only incorporating it more broadly under the banner of human rights. She discussed her finding that many arms exporters didn't have expertise in GBV or the gender component of arms trade nor did they have enough time to make risk assessments due to constraints. She further called for consultation with women's groups in all sectors of society to ensure gender mainstreaming into the implementation of the UNPoA.

Akatsa-Bukachi spoke of the connection between gender and disarmament, recounting an example from Uganda to highlight the unequal power relations between men and women and the link between domestic violence and access to arms. She presented statistics regarding the proliferation of firearms including that abusers with gun access are seven times more likely to kill their partners and that having a gun in the home increases chances of death by up to 20 times. Akatsa-Bukachi further spoke of issues of prohibition and methods of limiting access.

In closing, the audience was given an opportunity to contribute to discussion, conversation was thought provoking and lively, ultimately concluding with the sentiment that gender-based violence is not just a women's issue but an issue for everyone, and that patriarchal norms and violent masculinities are present in today's global society and as such it is important to disarm gender-based violence. •



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