



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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EDITORIAL: REAL CHANGE REQUIRES REAL COMMITMENT

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The Chair has issued a fifth draft outcome document, but as with all discussions on the document this week, it is only being discussed in informal meetings. Civil society representatives are not allowed to attend these discussions. This makes it difficult to follow the development or regression of the document or to feed into discussions in a helpful way. While the UN Programme of Action and International Tracing Instrument are agreements made by states, their implementation is crucial for citizens of every country in the world. It is regrettable to have so little scope for civil society engagement in the UN small arms control process, both for the advancement of arms control and disarmament and the advancement of UN transparency and member state accountability.

Civil society was, as usual, given only one time-slot to speak during this meeting. During the presentations on Thursday morning, Baffour Amoa of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) noted that while some progress has been made, "care has given way to callousness, protection has given way to betrayal, and development has given way to insensitive destruction." It is in part the dislocation of the diplomatic process from the challenges faced by states and civilians around the world that led Instituto Sou da Paz and Reaching Critical Will to publish a critique of the UNPoA in 2014.¹ We recognised that as a national framework for action, "the UNPoA was and remains an essential guiding document, and many countries could benefit greatly from taking it more seriously." However, we argued that the international approach to small arms control tends to revolve around the lowest common denominator, with little chance to advance beyond the 2001 programme.

The latest BMS6 draft outcome document may defy this trend. It seems quite strong in many respects and contains many useful

guidelines and recommendations that we as WILPF hope are retained. It remains to be seen what will actually be adopted, but as it stands there is an unprecedented amount of material that could be helpful in advancing the small arms control agenda, including around development and gender. However, even if it is adopted as it stands now, a document is only a piece of paper if it is not effectively implemented or built upon. Furthermore, it can be undermined by contradictory policies and practices, as we have written about the last few days in terms of excessive production and irresponsible arms transfers.

The exclusion of civil society from the conference room, coupled with a reticence of states to address key challenges such as production, ammunition, and the seemingly routine overruling of arms control commitments by economic or political interests, makes it difficult to see how the outcome of meetings such as this will translate into progress outside of the UN conference room.

Real change requires real commitment, not just words. It requires a process that is driven by humanitarian concern rather than economic profits from arms sales or manipulation of geopolitical power struggles. It requires concrete action by many actors at many levels. The more perspectives heard and challenges raised at the international level, the more likely this process can develop guidelines that will effect real change regionally, nationally, and locally, for people everywhere. •

Notes

1. Daniel Mack, *An assessment of the PoA (or, why we are not in New York)*, Instituto Sou da Paz and Reaching Critical Will, June 2014.

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 morning plenary discussions. Closed informal consultations were held during the afternoon session.

IGO and NGO statements

- International and regional organisations highlighted their activities under the UNPoA, including the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), African Union, East African Community, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Regional Center on Small Arms (RECSA), Organisation of American States (OAS), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).
- The ICRC stressed that every day in its operations it is confronted with the devastating consequences for civilians of inadequate controls on the availability of SALW. It underlined that the uncontrolled proliferation of ammunition fuels brutal armed conflicts, wanton armed violence, and the consequent suffering of civilian populations. Therefore, controlling the supply of ammunition should also be a priority.
- Civil society speakers from the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) highlighted the need for gun destruction to be part of the Colombian Peace Process; the effectiveness of gun control regulations in Australia; the challenges of SALW proliferation in the Middle East, Sahel, and East African regions; and the gender dimension of gun violence.
- Representatives of the arms producing industry and pro-gun lobby also took the floor.

Other issues

- France highlighted the importance of stockpile security in fighting illicit trafficking of arms and tackling the issue of reactivating of previously decommissioned arms. It said there is a need to improve neutralisation practices for decommissioning of arms.
- Russia highlighted the issue of gun production without licences or with expired licences.
- Bulgaria thought this was a matter for intellectual property debates.
- Colombia called for manuals/tools for identifying SAWL to assist customs and police officers in their work. •

UNPoA AND ITI IN THE ARAB WORLD

Araya Wongwan and Alexander Temple | *Nonviolence International*

Promoting PoA and ITI in the Arab World was a side event for the BMS6, hosted by the German Mission and organized by Permanent Peace Movement, on 8 June 2016. It was a successful meeting, attended by participants from eight Arab states, as well as other countries. Nicolas Florquin, from the Small Arms Survey, opened the panel by discussing a brief case study on North Africa and how the Arab nation can use the UNPoA and ITI as relevant instruments to combat diversion. Next, Fadi Abi Allam, from the Permanent Peace Movement, spoke about the challenges civil society organizations encounter when promoting instruments of arms control in the MENA region. Owen Greene, a professor from Bradford University, UK elaborated that the UNPoA is a key global framework for norms, good practices, and co-operation, which should be adapted to each region's specificities. Lastly Fadi Achaia, from the League of Arab States, shared the regional group's ongoing efforts and cooperation to combat the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. Overall the side event was a highly successful event to promote the UNPoA and ITI in the Arab World. The advocacy for stricter control of small arms and light weapons would assist the region towards an increased stability and human security.

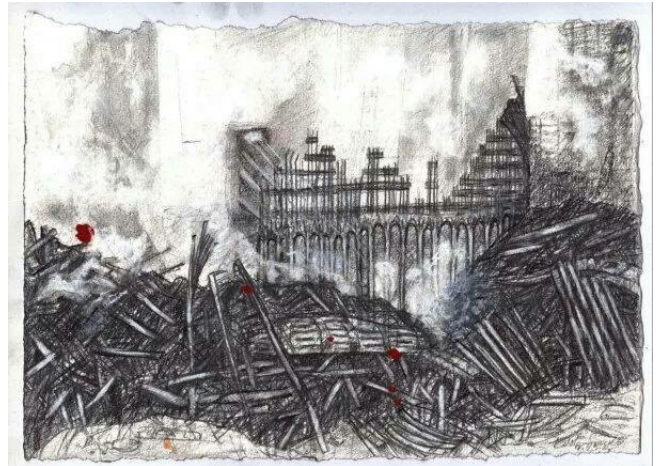


Image © Lin Evola

THE FINAL EDITION OF THE *SMALL ARMS MONITOR* WILL BE PUBLISHED NEXT WEEK

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DEMILITARIZING GUN CONTROL IN ARGENTINA

Martin Angerosa | Argentine Disarmament Network (Red Argentina para el Desarme)

The National Firearms Registry (RENAR) was established in Argentina in the 1970s under the national security doctrine, rather than a law democratically approved by the parliament. The establishing decree's preamble notes that one of its objectives was to outlaw the weapons belong to guerilla groups of that era. The National Firearms Register was placed under military control, directed by a committee consisting of armed forces commanders appointed by the Ministry of Defence. Guns owned by the armed forces were excluded from regulation, and regulating the commercial firearms market became the responsibility of the federal and local police.

As a result of the militarized institutional design, civil society was excluded from policy discussions on gun violence and gun control for over thirty years. Years of dictatorship fostered distrust between government and civil society.

In 2006 the office of the president, responding to a request by civil society, removed the Firearms Register from the control of the Defence Ministry, placing it instead under the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. This opened the doors for engagement by civil society, and we were invited to work with the government on design of the National Disarmament Plan, based on voluntary surrender of firearms. Law No26216 underpinning the Plan was approved unanimously by the Congress. The law also declared guns to be a matter of emergency, created a civil society Consultative Counsel on firearm policy, and required the security forces to make a complete inventory of their arsenals and report to RENAR.

The results of the Argentine Disarmament Plan were better than expected. So far, more than 175,000 guns have been destroyed, along with 1.5 million bullets. Counting the destruction of weapons from court vaults, the figure reached 300,000 guns removed from circulation.

In 2013 the plan for voluntary surrender of guns and ammunition won the Future Policy Award for the best public policy on disarmament. The award citation particularly highlighted the active participation of civil society in the design and implementation of the plan.

Lastly, in 2015 the Argentine parliament approved law 27.192 disbanding RENAR, creating instead a robust new federal agency for control of arms, ammunition and explosives named ANMAC (National Agency for Controlled Materials). The formation of this agency had been proposed 10 years earlier by the Argentine Disarmament Network – a long process toward the goal of stopping gun violence and saving lives.

The new agency has the ability to work on policies to prevent gun violence. 20% of the budget is assigned to a National Fund for Promotion of Policies to Prevent Armed Violence. Its objectives include:

- Research on gun markets, gun use and its consequences, and other relevant topics
- Activities of the Consultative Council on gun control policies
- Implementing policies on armed violence prevention
- Programs to reduce gun use and proliferation, prevent gun accidents and violence, raise awareness on the risks associated with gun possession and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts; and
- Training and capacity building for all kinds of institutions.

Our hope is that the new agency will pursue effective control of the legal gun market and step up prosecution of the illegal market; but its most important function will be to reduce armed violence. •

When	What	Where
10:00-11:00	Consideration of the draft final document	CR 4
13:15-14:30	SALW proliferation and sustainable development: assessing the contribution of SALW proliferation on fragility, poaching, and cattle rustling in the African Great Lakes Region (Rwanda and Netherlands in cooperation with RECSA, African Development Bank, and Bonn International Center for Conversion)	Mission of Netherlands, 666 Third Ave, 19th Floor
15:00-18:00	Consideration and adoption of the report of the meeting	CR 4



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

THE PEACE ANGELS PROJECT

Lin Evola | Contemporary Swords to Ploughshares

Inspiration, rather than legislation, has the capacity to curb the epidemic of violence that we continue to experience in our neighborhoods and among our nations. When hearts are touched, room is made for a change in habits. In my mind, it is violence, rather than just weapons, which is the real driver behind the killings of innocents. As an artist, it became very clear to me that creating city-sized monuments out of destroyed weapons would not only reduce the actual numbers of the weapons themselves, but would more importantly inspire us to take another look at what we are allowing to happen to ourselves as human beings.

When I came up with the concept for the Peace Angels Project, the mission was clear - remind others of the worldwide epidemic of violence, shine a light on the value of human life and inspire us all to stand united in creating a better world for ourselves and our children.

In nations all over the world, we know that legislation abounds relative to the control of arms. From guns to automatic weapons to nuclear weapons, we humans have raced towards arming ourselves against one another. And, we have done a very good job of it as weapons worldwide have grown in number and intensity. The problem is that our ability to manufacture instruments of violence has superseded our sense of responsibility to conserve life.

For over twenty years I have researched societies and the prevalence of gun violence across the world. I have worked with law enforcement, elected officials and local communities to collect firearms, automatic weapons, ammunition and weapons of mass destruction. Melting down the stainless core of these decommissioned weapons, I have molded them into thought-provoking images of peace.

From gun metal inked paintings to life-sized Peace Angel sculptures, my artwork serves to awaken the viewer to rise above violence and help build a life-affirming legacy of peace in our time.

As our world continues to be plagued by gun violence, the mission of the Peace Angels Project is far from complete. I am calling upon our nations' citizens and elected officials across the world to join me in the collection of guns, ammunition, nuclear missiles and land mines to build Peace Angel monuments across the globe, beginning with New York City and Los Angeles.

These monuments, each of which will absorb one million weapons, will serve their communities and the world as symbols of peace and unity.

The Peace Angels Project is committed to reducing weapons in our world and uplifting humanity, reminding us that we make the weapons and we make peace. It is up to us to change the course of this epidemic. We ask that you join us. •

