



SMALL ARMS MONITOR

*Civil society perspectives on the Preparatory Committee for the
Third Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on
small arms*

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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: TROUBLE AHEAD?

Allison Pytlak | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

Trouble may be ahead for the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (PoA) when states meet in June for the instrument's third review conference (RevCon3). The week of preparatory meetings that concluded somewhat abruptly on Friday were on the whole very quiet, but indicative of fault lines that may crack further in June.

The subject of ammunition will—once again—be a major source of disagreement. A majority of states made it clear that it's past time to find a way for the PoA to address ammunition while a minority of others made it clear that this is not up for discussion. Those familiar with the PoA will know that this is not the first time that the subject of ammunition has caused controversy but we are hoping it will be the last. The tone of states wanting to progress action on this seems more resolute and determined than in past PoA meetings. It has also been very constructive. MERCOSUR for example, has suggested establishing a group of governmental experts to consider the issue, which was supported by some other states. This approach has merit because it would avoid any opening of the PoA text at the review conference but does establish a path forward for further discussion on approaches and methods. In its final statement on Friday, the United States reminded the room that it

continues to oppose any effort to include ammunition in either the PoA or the International Tracing Instrument. While the US has not recently articulated the rationale behind its position, historically its argument has been that it's too complicated to regulate ammunition. If the US holds to its position on ammunition and blocks any proposal those states pressing for change do the same, then the review conference could heat up.

The conference chair, Ambassador Brunet of France, identified other issues that he understands to be the most pressing for discussion in June: diversion, new technologies in illicit manufacturing, and effective coordination in international cooperation and assistance, all of which received ample attention from delegates throughout the week. During his final remarks on Friday, the Ambassador said that this is not an exhaustive list and we certainly hope not—particularly as it overlooked the dozens of references to continue improving gender sensitivity of the PoA. His list of instruments with which the PoA has synergy did include the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), references to which in the outcome document of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States was highly controversial and challenging to manage. The chair's closing remarks about the importance he attaches to preserving consensus indi-

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Editorial, continued

cate that he may avoid addressing any of these more difficult issues.

It will be necessary to focus the RevCon in order to make progress in any of the above thematic, but perhaps this is where some of the suggestions made about future working methods could be useful to propel debate forward between RevCon3 and the next meeting. Our News in Brief section has more details on some of these proposals.

As this editorial goes to print, people across the United States and cities around the world are taking to the streets as part of the entirely student and youth-led “March for our Lives”. The dynamism and passion of these young people has been remarkable in rallying Americans and others around the cause of gun control in the face of the shootings in Parkland, Florida and so many other horrific and avoidable massacres before that. When I listen to any of the March leaders speak in interviews, I can’t help but compare their candour and straightforwardness to what we hear in UN conference rooms, and feel increasingly like our discussions there are too far removed from reality, even as they purport to save lives. Finding solutions to the problems caused by small arms and light weapons doesn’t need to be complicated, it just requires a little less apathy, and more courage and commitment. •

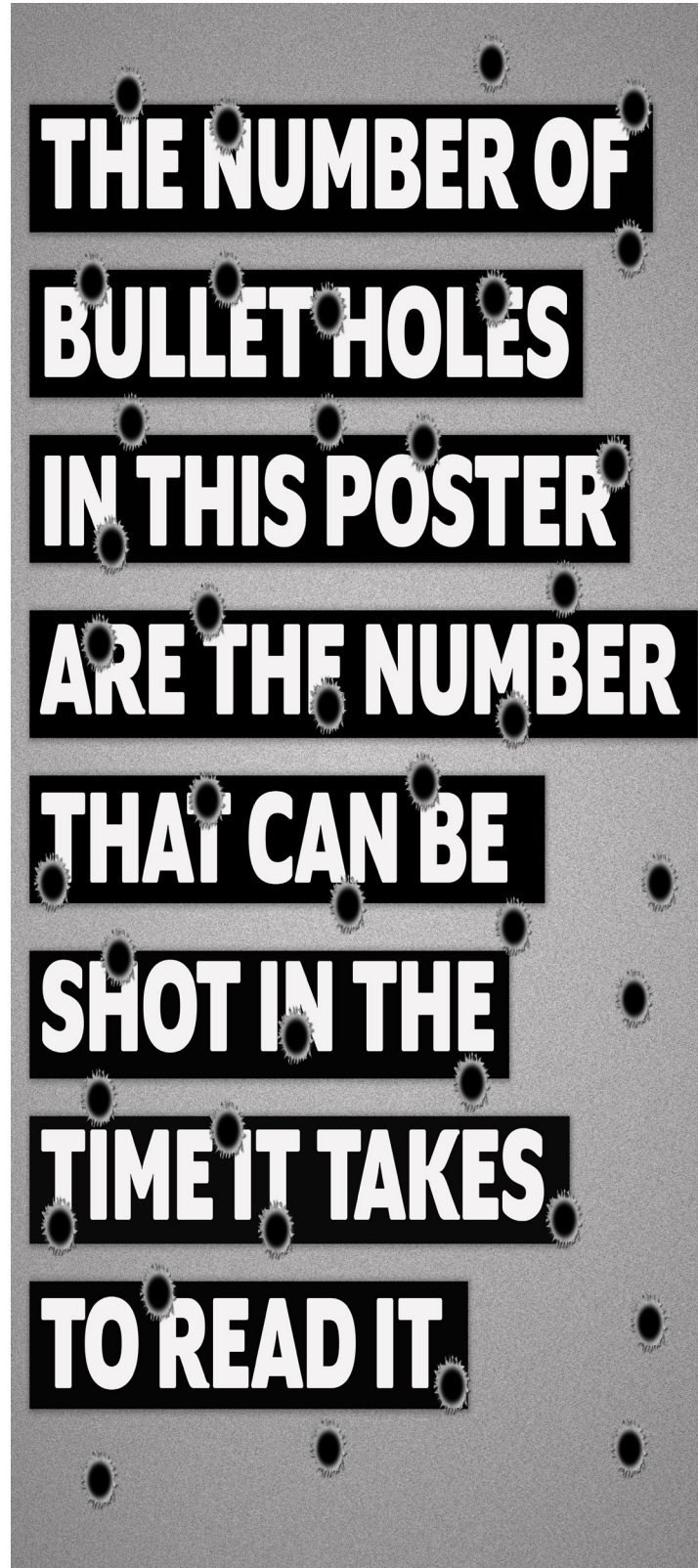


Photo: March for our Lives website

THE PoA AND THE ARMS TRADE TREATY—WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Raluca Muresan | Control Arms Coalition

The importance of links between the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA) and other international instruments, particularly the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is one of the key issues raised by member states this week. Chile, Finland, Argentina, UK, Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Bangladesh, Jamaica, New Zealand, Thailand, the European Union and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) called for the inclusion of the positive synergies between the ATT and the PoA in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference, citing their complementarity nature and the need to avoid duplication and redundancy, particularly in the area of reporting.

Antigua and Barbuda, speaking on behalf of CARICOM, highlighted the necessity to build on these complementarities, particularly in the light of capacity constraints for smaller member states. Echoing this point, Argentina explained that “Synergies should be explored in order to minimise administrative costs linked to reporting required by each instrument (...) and ensure the effective exchange of information and best practices”.

Netherlands stressed that “reporting is crucial as part of transparency, which is an important confidence building measure and thus contributes to peace and security”. While acknowledging that not all PoA member states are part of the ATT, Netherlands detailed the importance of synergies in easing the burden of reporting obligations in the field of conventional arms and urged states to find feasible synergies for reporting obligations under the ATT, UN Register of Conventional Arms, the UN PoA as well as the EU, OSCE, export control regimes as well as to national parliaments.

Focusing on the prevention of diversion, Japan, the President of the fourth ATT Conference of States Parties, reminded states that synergies between the two instruments will strengthen national and international efforts to curb the diversion of small arms and light weapons. Similarly, Australia, Jamaica, UK, and Switzerland stressed the crucial contribution the ATT can make to the effective implementation of the PoA. Australia

noted that “the higher number of States Parties to the ATT the more wide reaching the controls of arms will be”. Ireland’s strong statement in favor of exploring synergies between the two instruments highlighted the contribution the ATT makes to strengthening export controls. Going further, Ireland also stressed the importance of including ammunition in the scope of the ATT, reminding states that “weapons are useless without ammunition”.

Highlighting that both the ATT and the Sustainable Development Goals include gender considerations, both Jamaica and the Netherlands expressed their support for further attention to gender in discussions in the PoA context as well.

Other countries adopted a more cautious tone, with Brazil cautioning that countries “should take into account the wide difference in membership, legal nature and institutional arrangements among such instruments.” Other countries took a sterner position. Cuba, echoed by Syria, Iran, and Pakistan, reminded the plenary of the “profound divergences between the member states in relation to the synergies between the different levels of implementation of the PoA and between relevant global instruments, such as the ATT...” and noted that “the promotion of artificial synergies with different instruments in terms of scope, categories of arms, juridical nature and membership, is unacceptable.” These states urged those states who wish to exploring linkages, to synergise other instruments with the PoA, not vice-versa.

While a wide range of synergies between the ATT and the UNPoA were highlighted throughout the week, there certainly could have been more interventions with stronger proposals on this important topic. Control Arms urges states committed to the ATT to explore constructive solutions to include clear and substantive references to synergies between the two instruments in the outcome document for the third Review Conference. Supportive member states should work closely with civil society to ensure that the ATT does not become another casualty of consensus, as was the case at the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States. •



WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SMALL ARMS CONTROL

Dr. Jasmin Nario Jalace | Center for Peace Education—Miriam College, and the IANSA Women's Network

Gun ownership and violence have been largely a male enterprise. In some cultures, masculinity is defined through the possession of such arms. Guns can be a means of expressing what a “real man” and male power is, in unequal societies. Additionally, arms have been found to facilitate gender-based violence including harassment and intimidation, domestic violence, rape, trafficking, forced prostitution, assault, and sexual violence.

The connotation of the power associated with guns needs reassessment. Limiting the access of these guns and investing in threat assessment and intervention programs are necessary to save lives and reduce human suffering.

The violence triggered by guns requires collective effort from governments, UN agencies, and other international institutions and civil society.

Protection from gun violence in the home has been advocated by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Women's Network through its “Disarm Domestic Violence” campaign. For 15 years IANSA has lobbied for policies and programmes to reflect the gender dimension of gun violence, including links with violent masculinity and the need for women's involvement in decision-making. Women's participation in arms control is important as small arms facilitate and exacerbate violence against women and girls whether in conflict or in peace situations. As well, women make up half of the world's population; our involvement will democratise peace and security processes.

At the Preparatory Committee on the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (PoA), the IANSA Women's Network organised a side event that focused on how governments have fulfilled commitments they have made in international fora, including eliminating violence against women and girls, reducing the proliferation and misuse of firearms, and increasing the role of women in planning, decision-making, and implementation of policies on disarmament and small arms control. The side event also shared initiatives of many differ-

ent women in addressing these concerns. Speakers included Charlene Roopnarine from the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago, Daniel Prins from UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Jasmin Nario-Galace from the Center for Peace Education in Miriam College in the Philippines, Allison Pytlak from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Jackie Rowe-Adams from Harlem Mothers SAVE

The gender dimension of small arms control is a theme that has emerged increasingly in the context of the PoA in the past two years, as a bridge between the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda and the broader disarmament domain.

Many member states of the UN seem to be taking this to heart. The European Union, Mercosur, the Caribbean Community, Belgium, Chile, Ghana, South Africa, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, El Salvador, Bangladesh, Jamaica, Sweden, Morocco, Thailand, Paraguay, United Kingdom, Germany, and Honduras all underscored the importance of incorporating gender perspectives or women's participation in the PoA. It was also heartening to see more women than usual leading delegations and taking the floor. Examples of delegations where women were actively intervening on the floor are Ireland, Bulgaria, India, China, Thailand, New Zealand, France, Romania, Cuba, UK, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Switzerland, Honduras, Ethiopia, Argentina, Netherlands, Argentina, United States and Mexico.

These are all welcome developments. Indeed, it is imperative that women be fully engaged in planning, decision-making, and implementation of policies related to gun control, small arms regulation and disarmament. It seems like gradually, but certainly, words are being put into action. •



SIDE EVENT REPORT: UNSCR 1325 AND SMALL ARMS CONTROL IN CAMEROON

Eugine Ngalim Nyuydine | Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP)

A side event on Friday 23 March brought together two important UN agendas: women, peace, and security and disarmament. It did so by looking at the national experience of Cameroon and national efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and the Kinshasa Convention.

Cameroon has been a lead country in the region in ratifying and implementing these UN instruments, which serve as a catalyst in promoting women and peace and security. Equally, the government recently adopted a National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. However over the years the Central Africa sub-region has been a theatre of armed conflicts with women and children often the greatest victims.

The nexus between these three instruments is very clear, the speakers affirmed, and as such mainstreaming UNSCR 1325 by universalising and implementing the Kinshasa Convention and the ATT is critical to improving the overall level of peace and security in Cameroon and enhancing the role of women as primary actors in peace-building processes in their communities.

Dr. Emilie Ngo-Nguidjol Songolo, Coordinator of International & Area Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison spoke about the role of women and girls in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Africa. This was complemented by a presentation from Ms. Raluca Muresan of the Control Arms Coalition, in talking about the links between UNSCR 1325 and implementation of the ATT. Mr. Eugene Ngalim Nyuydine described efforts by Cameroon to mainstream UNSCR 1325 through universalisation and implementation of the ATT as well as the Kinshasa Convention.

The speakers concluded that the fact that these three instruments considers women as key actors in the promotion of peace and security, it is important for the implementation process to be jointly tackled for the purpose of a greater impact. The government of Cameroon should be appreciated for taking the lead in the sub region in the ratification and implementation of these instruments. They hoped that the recent adoption of national action plan UNSCR 1325 in Cameroon will be operationalised in the shortest time possible. •



Photo: Courtesy of CAMYOSFOP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Marina Kalliga | *Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*

The positions conveyed here are not comprehensive but intended as overview of state position on key issues discussed during the first half of the PrepCom.

Working methods

- The US proposed having open-ended working groups on specific topics rather than annual meetings related to the Programme of Action (PoA). It suggested using the Biennial Meetings of States (BMSs) to delve deeply into one or two target subjects.
- Iran said the meetings on the PoA are not useful except in some areas, describing them as a “waste of time and resources that have no actual impact.” It hopes that meetings will be “subject-based and results-oriented”.
- Cuba said that the follow-up mechanism of biennial meetings and review conferences has worked well. Cuba welcomes the Chair’s proposal for open-ended meetings of groups of experts to be held every two years, but asks for guarantees that they will not affect the well-balanced, inclusive, and consensual nature of the review mechanism and will not lead to new commitments for states. Cuba stressed the need to work towards efficiency of the current review mechanism.
- India said that the distinct but related nature of current review mechanisms should be maintained. Additional issues can be addressed at biennial meetings. India stressed the need to focus on the core obligations of the PoA and avoid the burden of more reports and more meetings. It suggested that new advances in technology be a topic for a group of governmental experts (GGE) in the intercessional period.
- Japan underlined the importance of the biennial national reports for understanding progress and challenges in implementing the PoA, and said that an online template is an effective approach. Japan called on states to identify priorities for the next six-year cycle, and suggested stockpile management as an issue of priority. Japan expressed the need to avoid redundancy with other mechanisms and reporting fatigue.
- Netherlands supports meeting at least once a year and suggested that the UN Secretariat and member states work on the PoA on a more regular basis.
- Switzerland said that it is important to strengthen the intercessional process and supported holding

annual meetings of various natures, including groups of governmental expert meetings, which it considers extremely important. Switzerland said the third Review Conference (RevCon3) should recognise the complementary nature of such meetings.

- Chile suggested exploring new review mechanisms, in particular peer review mechanisms.
- Mexico stressed the importance of having concrete review mechanisms and said it valued the proposal for a peer review initiative. Mexico called for a mechanism to review the scope of the PoA, with the aim of adding ammunition to it. Mexico hopes that this proposal will be included in RevCon3’s outcome document.
- MERCOSUR invited states to consider the regulation of ammunition as one of the issues to be addressed by a group of governmental experts to be convened as a follow-up to RevCon3.
- Brazil supported continuing the Biennial Meetings of States and wants to identify substantive issues for in-depth discussions. It supported MERCOSUR’s proposal of a group of governmental experts open-ended meeting on ammunition with the aim of states reaching consensus on this issue.
- Ghana said that RevCon3 is an important platform to discuss the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the PoA and expects the issue of ammunition to be reflected in the outcome document. Ghana also stressed the important role NGOs play in the PoA process and recommend that NGOs be allowed to make substantive contributions in the RevCon.

International Tracing Instrument (ITI)

Implementation of the ITI

- Mexico said RevCon3 is a good opportunity to evaluate the ITI. It suggested that states establish national points of contact on the implementation of the ITI and include information on the ITI in their national reports. Mexico expects these points to be reflected in the RevCon3 outcome document. It also expects RevCon3 to address the issue of the provision of technical, financial and other assistance to strengthen national capacities in regard to marking, tracing, and legislation efforts.
- Cuba recognised the importance of information exchange, but recalled its voluntary and confidential nature. Jamaica said that information exchange must be inclusive of firearms, components, and ammunition.



News in brief, continued

- Belgium will provide the Chair with the specific language on these issues it wants to see reflected in the outcome document, based on the working paper it has submitted to the PrepCom with Austria and Germany.
- Sweden stated that the ITI can make a valuable contribution to tracing weapons in conflict-affected areas, which would help provide early warnings, map diversion, and improve monitoring of arms embargoes.
- The US pointed out that in the thirteen years since the adoption of the ITI, the number of governments that trace and mark weapons is modest. The US said that it provides equipment and training on marking and record-keeping of SALW to states in Africa, South America, and Central America, and emphasised that international assistance and cooperation is making a difference.
- Jamaica recommended the use of centralised smart databases that link ballistic signature information with marking information and general firearms information. It intends to submit a paper on its marking regime as a possible tool for other states to utilise.
- Brazil stated that it is going beyond the marking requirements under the ITI by marking ammunition with a number at the base of each cartridge, in a manner that reduces the ability to remove or alter the number. Brazil claimed that this measure facilitates the traceability of ammunition, contributes to proper management and security of stockpiles, and is an important deterrent against diversion.

Implications for the ITI from developments in manufacturing technology and design

- The UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) referred to the UN Secretary General's report from 2016 on the issue of developments in manufacturing, technology and design, and drew attention to a number of challenges they pose to the implementation of the ITI, including the challenges to marking posed by polymers and modularity, and the new practice of marking called micro-stamping.
- France said that technological developments present new challenges to marking, but also open prospects to strengthen control of weapons throughout their life cycle. It stressed the need for states to consider this very important issue.
- India expressed support "in principle" to the adoption of new technology in efforts to improve implementation of the ITI, but remains concerned with the financial burden this could place on developing countries.
- Cuba suggested an in-depth debate among experts to evaluate the technical and economic impact of adopting new technologies in marking and other ITI implementation efforts, and said that new strategies should not require technical standards that are prohibitive for developing countries

Proposal of a technical annex to the ITI

- The non-paper by the UN Secretariat included the recommendation that states may wish to negotiate a supplement to the ITI, such as a technical annex, which would reflect the implications of present-day technology on marking, record-keeping, and tracing of small arms.
- Belgium proposed that RevCon3 establishes a group of governmental experts mandated to prepare an additional annex to the International Tracing Instrument on marking, to be adopted, ideally, at the seventh biennial meeting of States in 2020. This endeavour should involve states, civil society, and the arms manufacturing industry.
- Australia proposed reaching an agreement on a draft annex to ITI during this meeting, so that it can be prepared further by informal consultations and adopted at RevCon3. This was supported by Japan, Austria, and Republic of Korea.
- UK expressed concern about modular weapons and agreed that additional guidance is required in regards to new technologies under the ITI.
- Brazil stated that any discussions to update the ITI to account for recent technological developments should be consensual and they should avoid imposing restrictions on the transfer and exchange of technologies.
- US believes that considering an annex to the ITI at this point would be premature, although it would be willing to consider a way forward on emerging technologies. •

