



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.INF/19/09
27 October 2009

ENGLISH only

Chairmanship: United Kingdom

Please be informed that on Wednesday, 28 October 2009,

- Ms Vanessa Farr, Project Manager of Gender and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, UNIDIR

and

- Ms Sarah Masters, Women's Network Coordinator for the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA),

will address the 592nd Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation on 28 October 2009.

Background Information on "Gendered Impact of SALW" (FSC.DEL/194/09/Add.1) and "Being Part of the Process: Women and SALW Control" (FSC.NGO/11/09/Add.1 and Add.2) can be found overleaf and is also available on www.osce.org/gender



“Peace and Security without Women ? SCR 1325 as a means to tackle gun violence”

**Vanessa Farr, Senior Adviser on Gender Issues (UNDP)
2nd Round Table on Gender & Security
Vienna, October 28th 2009**

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and are not to be ascribed to the United Nations

In the early 1990s, at the beginning of the small arms policy and research debate, the humanitarian and human rights side of the received significant consideration. After 1998, as the debate moved into international fora, this concern was slowly eroded until most of the international and regional documents on small arms – the majority crafted after 1998 – failed to specifically mention humanitarian issues at all. Research and policy on the problem of small arms (mis)use, and discussions of the human beings responsible for it, were conspicuously absent. As conversations on small arms and light weapons have continued, however, the voices of non-mainstream actors who question the absence of analysis on the people behind the guns have become more audible, assessments of the problem are becoming more descriptive and complex, and more questions are being asked about why civilian demand for such weapons remains so high.ⁱ Current work on small arms has begun to look beyond simply “counting the weapons” and is, instead, increasingly focussing on the devastating human impact of their misuse.

Nevertheless, until very recently, remarkably little attention was focused on the fact that gun ownership and misuse is a highly gendered phenomenon, and that it brutally reinforces unequal social hierarchies that not only give men dominance over women, but also exacerbate race and class tensions in violence-prone communities.ⁱⁱ Although rates of gender-based violence are universally high, there continues to be a general lack of political interest in the underlying causes of such violence. Rather, there remains a tendency to see “domestic” violence as a problem that can be overlooked because it so often occurs in the private domain, a perspective that often provides impunity for its perpetrators.ⁱⁱⁱ

Nor have the drafters of international agreements on small arms and light weapons (while they may refer in passing to the “devastating” consequences of armed violence on women) made any significant efforts, even to date, to align their work with Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) which calls for the inclusion of women in all aspects of peacebuilding, including small arms control.^{iv} Indeed, as I have observed elsewhere, “[al]though weapons proliferation is often culturally sanctioned and upheld by the manipulation of gender ideologies, gender goes entirely unremarked in all documents which were not explicitly conceived to focus on gender mainstreaming.”^v

In this very new research field, a paucity of specific research on gender has meant an absence of broadly-based surveys and data production from which to draw concrete conclusions. It is only this year that the first significant global survey on the gendered impacts of small arms was published.^{vi} This may be one reason why it continues to be difficult to make incontrovertible claims about how gender roles and social stereotypes about what constitutes appropriate behaviour for males and females in weapons-prolific contexts might direct individual thinking and actions when it comes to small arms possession and use.

Every day, small arms and light weapons (SALW) kill and maim, wound and threaten millions of adults and children, whether combatants and civilians in war zones or gangs and communities in degraded “peacetime” environments that are characterized by large-scale violence. Due to their widespread availability, mobility and ease of use prolific SALW have become central to maintaining social dislocation, destabilization, insecurity and crime in the build-up to war, in wartime and in the aftermath of violent conflict. Small arms are misused within domestic settings, as well as in public spaces, and they affect everyone in the community without regard to sex or age. Although the impacts of these weapons can be vastly different for women and men, girls and boys, a careful consideration of gender and age is rare in the formulation of small arms policy, of planning small arms collection or control, or even in small arms research. To counter the effects of prolific SALW, their role in reinforcing and maintaining gender- and age-specific violence must be more deeply analysed and the results applied at the policy and operational level. This work should be undertaken in war-afflicted



contexts, in societies suffering from elevated levels of social violence and/or severe underdevelopment, and in those tolerant of the presence of individually owned firearms. It is only when we have a full picture of how endemic weapons impact on everyday lives that we shall move towards realising the promise made in SCR1325 – that women, just like men, have the right and responsibility to make informed decisions on how weapons should be controlled.

A large piece of the gender-aware work on small arms and light weapons has been concerned with ‘myth busting’, or disproving popularly held notions, which have tended to filter up to the policy making level, on who are the victims and mis-users of such weapons. One excellent example of such work is the 2007 SEESAC report, *Firearms Possession and Domestic Violence in the Western Balkans: A Comparative Study of Legislation and Implementation Mechanisms*, which is the first piece of research to try to unravel the connections with endemic domestic violence and the very high levels of small arms and light weapons that are both a lasting legacy of the protracted conflicts in that region. While some progress has been made in the region to develop legislation on domestic violence, to the point where it is now recognised as a criminal offence in most Western Balkans states, the study proved that too many gaps continue to exist between legislation and its enforcement; and most shockingly, most countries have failed to see that firearms are an additional risk in domestic violence. The fact that national strategies to control arms and to prevent domestic violence do not speak to each other should not, however, come as too much of a surprise. There are, in fact, a number of gaps in our global collective thinking about the interconnections between gender, violence, and the means by which violence is perpetrated.

One of the most challenging of these is that the necessary questions on how violence derails development have not been asked in a systematic way at the highest policy making levels. For example, when the Millennium Development Goals were passed in September 2000, they paid no attention to the impacts of violence on the very issues the Goals were designed to address. Can we significantly tackle poverty in situations of extreme, armed violence? Can the goals of promoting universal education proceed when children are too scared to learn? Is gender equality likely when women are being terrorised by armed men in conflict zones and at home? The answer to all these questions is no, and yet, the Millennium Declaration did not take these concerns into account. It is all the more surprising then, that 2000 is also the year in which SCR 1325 was passed. Why were there no attempts to link together two of the most significant pieces of work completed in the United Nations that year? To what extent has the failure to overlap the issues of violence prevention and gender equality slowed our progress?

These questions can only be addressed, and the full impact of small arms on the lives of women, girls, men and boys can only be lessened if researchers and activists:

- Demand that strict controls on firearms are enforced by local, national and regional authorities
- Demand that laws underpinning discrimination and violence against women be repealed
- Insist on collecting gender- and age-disaggregated data on firearm injuries and firearm ownership and use, and on the importance of analysing this data through a gender lens
- Try to understand the diversity of women’s, men’s and children’s attitudes towards small arms: If they support gun-control measures, how do they demonstrate this support? If they support gun ownership, how do they express this? How is gun ownership naturalized in a society so that decreasing numbers of people resist their presence? Do men, women and children participate differently in this naturalization process?
- Carefully ascertain the perspectives and insights of women and children when conducting field research on small arms proliferation and misuse
- Ask standard questions about the supply-side of small weapons from a different perspective, by ascertaining whether, for example, gun-runners also smuggle women and children to do exploitative and illegal work; or whether women are involved in running munitions and weapons, why, and for what profit?
- Pay attention to community perspectives on activities related to small arms misuse
- Ask whether men, women and children are differently affected by small arms proliferation in the aftermath of conflicts. This means discovering what each group thinks would make them secure, how they understand any mechanisms that are in place to protect civilians and demobilized soldiers from easily-available guns, finding out whether a culture of firearm



ownership for self protection has begun to arise, and if so, how each group understands this phenomenon

- Analyze resistance to being drawn into arms ownership and misuse: which social actors say no to guns? Why? How can they supported and protected?

Such questions would help to determine the extent to which a society has adapted itself to living with violent conflict, from which can be ascertained people's sense of whether peace and non-violence is possible and desirable. Such questions also offer a means to identify activities that arise at the grassroots (such as peace groups or volunteer organizations to counsel victims of gun violence), which are frequently overlooked as peacebuilding initiatives but have significant potential with proper support. SCR 1325 focuses on ending women's exclusion from all aspects of peace and security: answering the list of questions presented here is one means to realise that objective.

The rhetoric of 'gender mainstreaming' has permeated international agreements in recent years, but practical strategies for ensuring that the needs of women and men receive equal attention have been more difficult to implement. The pervasiveness of small arms and light weapons, their ease of use, and their lethal impact on everyone from combatants to innocent passers-by makes this problem, however, an ideal platform from which to institute gender-aware policy, research and activism. It is imperative that a shift in approach to the small arms problem avoid the omissions of past disarmament research. There is a serious need to keep gathering data on how different social actors perceive small arms; the tools already exist with which to analyze the effects of gender ideologies on attitudes to, and the misuse of, these arms. As a research community, we are possessed of excellent theoretical frameworks that show us how to take gender into account, have developed techniques that facilitate gender-aware research, and are increasingly able to produce a gender-disaggregated pool of data on the effects of small arms misuse.

Moreover, in the form of the Beijing Platform of Action, the Windhoek Declaration and Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820 and now 1888 and 1889, we have formal avenues through which to hold governments and international agencies responsible for the gender-based violence that small arms underpin.^{vii} All of these resources allow analysts and policy-makers to focus on identifying how ideologies of masculinity and femininity are constructed to support the misuse of small arms in societies that are war afflicted, suffering from elevated levels of social violence and/or severe underdevelopment—or merely highly tolerant of the presence of individually owned firearms.



Gender Section
Office of the Secretary General
Wallnerstrasse 6, A-1010 Vienna
Tel.: +43 (01) 514 36 6927
e-mail: equality@osce.org
<http://www.osce.org/gender>



ⁱ The Small Arms Survey estimates that nearly sixty percent of weapons are in private hands. See *Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the Human Cost*. (Geneva, OUP, 2002).

ⁱⁱ See Emily Schroeder and Lauren Newhouse, *Gender and Small Arms: Moving Into the Mainstream* (ISS Monograph 104, 2004) for a discussion of the lack of analysis of gender in small-arms related UN discussions even up to the 2003 Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action.

ⁱⁱⁱ Several accounts of violence against women with guns that have gone unpunished are recorded in *The impact of guns on women's lives*, a 2005 publication by the Control Arms coalition of Amnesty International, IANSA and OXFAM (The Alden Press: Oxford, 2005; also see www.controlarms.org).

^{iv} Available at http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf.

^v Vanessa Farr, "A gendered analysis of international agreements on small arms and light weapons," in *Gender perspectives on small arms and light weapons: regional and international concerns*, (Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, Brief 24, 2002) p. 17.

^{vi} Vanessa Farr, Albrecht Schnabel and Henri Myrntinen. *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*. (Tokyo, UNU Press, 2009).

^{vii} Available at <http://www.undp.org/fwcw/plat.htm>; <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/>

GHARKit/FilesFeb2001/windhoek_declaration.htm.



“Women in the crossfire; Security Council Resolution 1325 and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)”

**Sarah Masters, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)
2nd Round Table on Gender & Security
Vienna, October 28th 2009**

Introduction

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is more than a bureaucratic UN number. It has served as a catalyst for women all over the world in their efforts to achieve equal participation. Women at the grassroots level in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and the Sudan have used this resolution to lobby for their voices to be heard in peace-building processes, in post-conflict elections, and in the rebuilding of their societies. This landmark resolution brought women's participation and gender mainstreaming issues to the forefront of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.

Each operational paragraph relates to a sector of the international peace and security agenda of the Security Council and implies the need for change in how the International Community and the UN do business. The resolution is groundbreaking because of its breadth of coverage - including peace negotiations, decision-making, refugee camps, mine-clearance and sanctions, in addition to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).

Despite some progress, governments continue to find it difficult to translate the resolution into concrete policy and strategic actions in conflict-affected regions, where it is most critical that peace and reconstruction efforts take women's needs and capacities into account. Understanding of how to implement 1325 is limited and the breach between policy rhetoric and actual progress for women is vast.

There is an absence of political leadership at all levels in advancing the women, peace and security agenda. At the national level, this results in responsibility for 1325 being marginalised to under-funded gender ministries, rather than being led by ministries working on peace and security issues. Therefore it is vital that clear lines of responsibility are developed at high political levels for the implementation of 1325.

SALW control entry points

The ultimate goal of the Resolution is to achieve gender equality and to build sustainable peace and security but it has also proven to be a decisive mandate for the field of small arms policy and practice, through the inclusion of women in decision-making, and gender considerations. It contains some specific entry points that are useful to SALW control, policy and strategy development.

In the same way, MC.DEC/14/05 paragraph 2 provides opportunities for the OSCE to identify similar 'entry points' in the area of SALW control especially as the relevant parts of 1325 are to be integrated into the activities of the OSCE. Disarmament and SALW control are part of conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation.

Promotion of peace and security

Article 1 of 1325 relates the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Effective policies and programmes that prevent and respond to armed violence are an essential component of this. In the field of small arms this can be achieved through reform of recruitment policy and practice; implementation of gender-balance requirements; consultation and collaboration with women's organizations; and policy training and education for women.

This is clearly supported in paragraph 3 of MC.DEC/14/05 with recommendations about recruitment policy and practice, to develop national rosters of potential women candidates, and ensure that women are informed and encouraged to apply for positions in the area of conflict prevention and post conflict rehabilitation processes. For example, as a temporary special measure, ensure a quota of at



least 33 percent women in negotiation teams, constitutional drafting committees and national and provincial parliaments; and secondly, provide financial support and training to female candidates in national and provincial elections, as well as training to women across national government administration.

Support for women's initiatives

Article 8 of 1325 relates to measures that need to be taken to support local women's small arms initiatives through increased capacity-building, provision of resources, and funding. The UN Secretary General's 2002 Report acknowledges the role that women's grassroots organizations have in supporting disarmament processes. It notes that women's groups and networks can provide important information regarding perceptions of the dangers posed by the number or types of weapons, the identification of weapons caches and the transborder weapons trade.

This is acknowledged in paragraph 6 of MC.DEC/14/05 which calls for the support and encouragement of training and educational programmes for women and girls, but also projects to involve women's participation in peace building. The empowerment of women's organizations includes workshops and training on human rights and gender, but also working with the media to confirm the importance of women's involvement in political processes.

Local women's organizations are often the first to initiate micro-disarmament projects under the banner of creating peace and security. These projects often include awareness-raising and weapons collection components. In this way women have taken leadership roles in peacebuilding work, violence prevention and education about gun violence, and are using 1325 in their disarmament efforts around the world.

Dedicated budget allocations for 1325 across national government departments are very limited and funding for civil society organisations working on gender, peace and security and women's issues is inadequate. As a result, governments and donors should: 1) tie adequate financial resources to the implementation of 1325 and to gender mainstreaming in broader peacebuilding and development strategies; and 2) ensure special funds are available in each region for civil society organisations working on gender, peace and security-related work.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-Integration (DDR)

Article 13 of 1325 is a response to international assistance operations that neglect the specific needs of women and girls in armed movements as part of the DDR process. Women combatants, supporters and dependents have not equally benefited from services, cash incentives, health care, training, travel remittance, small business grants or housing support that flow to their male counterparts—males with guns—as part of DDR packages.

The terrible irony is that women and girls are not invisible to armed groups, who see them as essential, accessible—and often expendable—military assets. Yet having survived the devastating experiences of war as combatants, sexual captives or military “wives” and slave or willing labourers in the conflict period, these women and girls often become invisible when DDR planning begins.

Paragraph 8 of MC.DEC/14/05 clearly complements Article 13 of 1325 by calling upon States to take into account the important role and the particular needs of women and girls in implementing government policies on protection and durable solutions including voluntary return, resettlement, rehabilitation, (re)integration or repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons in safety and dignity.

Each conflict is unique and, accordingly, DDR processes are designed slightly differently each time. Nine years after the passage of 1325, very few would dispute that there is still a gender deficit in DDR planning and delivery.

To put this into perspective here is an example from Liberia in 2003 when the process of disarming over 35,000 combatants was led by the UN Mission in Liberia. “Experts” on DDR from Kosovo and Sierra Leone were imported into Liberia. Proposals from women's groups and organizations to the newly established National Commission on DDDR and the mission were rejected as they were not



considered “experts.” In addition, the process was highly militarized. Within 2 days the process was in chaos and failing.

The women were called in by the UN mission to help calm the situation in the camps and seized the opportunity to link their activities to 1325. Over 55 women volunteered and organised their own trips into rebel areas, to disseminate information and spend time with community leaders to explain the DDR process. These women were not given vehicles or money to engage in this work, they wanted to create safer communities and homes. In the process they were recognised and respected by the combatants.

Liberia is a good example of the progressing implementation of SCR 1325. For countries such as Liberia, international support is essential to facilitate the implementation of the Resolution. 1325 really reaches its objectives in countries where it is not only an advocacy tool for civil society, but where it is also becomes part and parcel of the countries formal procedures. Liberia is such a case after the most recent presidential elections.

Paragraph 7 of MC.DEC/14/05 acknowledges the need to develop specific policies to encourage the full and equal participation of women and women’s organizations in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. This also includes measures to encourage and support the sharing of experiences and best practices and, further, to engage with women’s peace initiatives. The success of such an approach is underlined by the Liberian experience mentioned earlier.

National Action Plans on 1325

Resolution 1325 should be implemented at three levels: national, regional and global. At a national level, it involves relevant ministries, departments and agencies; at a regional level it involves organisations such as the EU, OSCE, and NATO; and at a global level it involves the United Nations.

As the Resolution provides a framework for a comprehensive approach for conflict management and violence prevention, there is increasing demand for 1325 specific policies and plans of action. The 2004 UN SG Report on 1325 called for all UN Member States to develop National Action Plans to ensure implementation of the Resolution. These plans link humanitarian, conflict, defence and diplomacy work, all of which are important to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

National Action Plans have different benefits. The first can be considered to be the 'result' which means to have an actual plan in place with concrete and coordinated actions, timelines, budgets, etc. The second benefit, which may be even more important, is the 'process' which means reflecting on security with different stakeholders in a comprehensive way. From this, you can identify the core process, supporting processes such as legislation, human resources, material resources, etc, and processes that monitor and direct the core-process. The overall performance is determined by the performance of the weakest link. 1325 can provide the framework for this reflection, and also for the topic of SALW control by addressing every issue related to SALW control.

So far sixteen countries have heeded the call to develop a National Action Plan (Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Spain, Iceland, Côte D'Ivoire, Uganda, Finland, Liberia, Belgium, Portugal, and Chile). I should add that countries such as Colombia, Israel and Fiji 1325 have integrated 1325 into national policy and legislation rather than develop a separate action plan.

Twelve of these are OSCE member states and not directly affected by conflict. This shows that even countries who are not directly involved in armed conflict will benefit from the adoption of a national action plan, since UNSCR 1325 covers also conflict prevention. The threats and insecurities posed by armed violence have the same roots whether a country is in conflict or at peace. However, these underlying causes are often forgotten or silenced in countries that are considered to be in peace.

Belgium’s Plan includes specific reference to small arms and the specific position of women and children in the context of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It links to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and promotes the proposal of an international treaty on the arms trade. It states that “Such a treaty should contain proper criteria for the export of arms, avoiding that arms could be exported to countries marked by conflicts, internal instability or the non-respect of human rights.”



A number of organisations are calling for 1325 to be interpreted to apply to 'peaceful' States that are plagued by high levels of armed violence such as Brazil and El Salvador. In this way, States would reflect upon the meaning and translation of 1325 in relation to their own context. Possible responses would not lead to military intervention but would require the analysis of armed violence and measures for prevention, and involve disarmament campaigns, more inclusive public security policies and effective programmes on domestic violence.

Resolutions 1820, 1888 and 1889

Resolution 1820 recognises the seriousness of sexual violence as a grave challenge to peace and security. Systematic rape in conflict is considered to be a weapon of war.

Systematic rape and sexual violence is one of the most serious consequences of the widespread availability of SALW in conflicts around the world. SALW perpetuate insecurity and violence against women as can be seen in examples from Eastern DRC. Women have been shot and stabbed in the vagina with rifles. Men have been forced at gunpoint to sexually violate their own daughters, sisters and mothers. The poorly regulated global trade in conventional arms and ammunition facilitates such violence and impunity. The flow of arms to those who flout international human rights and humanitarian law is being ignored by many.

At its session on 30 September 2009, the UN Security Council demanded that all parties to armed conflict take immediate action to protect civilians, including women, from all forms of sexual violence, and urged greater measures by States and the UN to combat these criminal acts. The Security Council adopted two Resolutions (1888 and 1889) on conflict-related sexual violence which build on Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

Resolution 1888 insists on increasing efforts to end sexual violence against women and children in conflict situations. The UN Secretary-General is called upon to appoint a Special Representative on 1325 and 1820, to coordinate a range of mechanisms and oversee implementation of the Resolutions. States are urged to undertake comprehensive legal and judicial reforms in accordance with international law, without delay and with a view to bring perpetrators of sexual violence to justice and to protect victims.

Resolution 1889 reiterates the call for all parties in armed conflict to fully respect international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls. It emphasises the responsibilities of all states to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for all forms of violence against women and girls in armed conflicts, including rape and other sexual violence. This Resolution recommends, *inter alia*, for improving international responses to the needs of women and girls in conflict situations.

IANSA members are calling for a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty to complement all UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security by clearly prohibiting international transfer of weapons and ammunition if there is a significant risk of causing or facilitating sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence, as well as of causing grave and serious violations of human rights and freedoms of civilians, including women.

Evaluation

The impact of 1325 implementation is difficult to establish given the lack of mechanisms to measure, monitor and evaluate progress on women, peace and security. Paragraph 9 of MC.DEC/14/05 recommends regular evaluation of gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention, conflict management and rehabilitation processes. Therefore clear gender-sensitive benchmarks, indicators and lines of responsibility must be integrated into all policies and action plans on peace and security, development, gender equality, women's human rights and 1325.



Conclusion

1325 offers useful openings for those exploring the gender aspects of small arms demand work and its integration into development, security and human rights policies. Through further implementation and the development of national Action Plans, 1325 can continue to be used to enable women's participation in disarmament processes and the development of small arms policy and practice.



Gender Section
Office of the Secretary General
Wallnerstrasse 6, A-1010 Vienna
Tel.: +43 (01) 514 36 6927
e-mail: equality@osce.org
<http://www.osce.org/gender>



“Being part of the process Women and SALW-control”

**Sarah Masters, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)
2nd Round Table on Gender & Security
Vienna, October 28th 2009**

Introduction

There is a lot of work around the world being done on small arms control and violence against women, but the links between them and the impact on women's lives is most often overlooked. Maybe it's because small arms control is considered to be a technical area, or because guns are seen as instruments rather than the fundamental cause of violence against women. Indeed, the OSCE Document on SALW and its Supplementary Decisions almost exclusively focuses on the technical aspects of SALW control, with little consideration given to the social, cultural and gendered context of SALW ownership, display, use, misuse, and possession of arms. A technical approach is necessary for issues such as marking, destruction, or stockpiling but social and cultural contexts need to be considered, as well as patterns of use, and impacts on women and men.

In many of today's conflicts a variety of armed groups take part, and boundaries between civilians and combatants are not always clear. Also, armed conflict may end but guns do not necessarily disappear. From battlefields, they enter the community and homes. SALW control should be considered as part of national security and recovery rather than simply as a technical process of weapons collection.

According to the Small Arms Survey, disarmament has destroyed 40% of existing military arsenals in particular cases and perhaps 20% of civilian weapons. At the global level, at least 76 million military small arms and 120 million civilian firearms could be eliminated. This view is echoed by the OSCE which acknowledges that small arms in civilian hands pose a far greater danger to human security than those held in the stockpiles of respective state security forces. Therefore the issue of small arms forms part of an overall assessment of the security situation of a particular country, and are an important issue in the OSCE security framework as can be seen through the OSCE Document on SALW (2000), the Best Practice Handbook (2003) and the recent OSCE meeting to review the SALW Document in September 2009.

Direct and indirect consequences of SALW proliferation

Although it's very difficult to get figures, in the countries that do have statistics about 80-90% of the people who die by gunshots are male. But much more than 90% of the users of guns are male. Gun violence, which destroys lives and sometimes whole communities, is overwhelmingly a male phenomenon. Young men are the principle direct victims of this violence, but the indirect victims include everyone, especially women. The use and misuse of guns is closely tied to male behaviour, to a certain view of masculinity.

Women very often suffer directly from men with guns. In examples from various OSCE member states we can see how women are specifically targeted in small arms violence through mass shootings at schools and universities. Despite the focus on fatalities we must remember that for every time a gun is used to actually shoot someone, there are likely to be many more times when it is used to threaten. This has specific impacts upon women – resulting in rape as a weapon of war, intimidation at home, or a threat that prevents a woman from leaving a partner who might be abusing them.

Of course women are not only victims of armed violence and the relationship between women and guns is a complex one. Women are not only killed and injured by the use of guns, but also play other roles - sometimes as perpetrators of armed violence, sometimes encouraging the use of guns, but often as peace activists and agents of change that address issues related to conflict and security.



Legal and illicit SALW

It is important that we acknowledge that gun violence involves both legal and illegal weapons. Guns are overwhelmingly owned and used by men, in both contexts of conflict and formal peace. This includes both state and non state actors and structures; people who possess guns for leisure pursuits; and others for reasons of self defence. Criminal activity is also a factor as this often leads to violence and further demand for weapons. The OSCE has recognized this and integrated this aspect in its comprehensive security concept by creating several thematic units that focus on specific types of criminal activities such as the Strategic Police Matters Unit, and the Anti-trafficking Unit. In this way effective SALW-control becomes a crucial component of overall security.

Research confirms that men constitute the majority of perpetrators of gun violence involving those in state and non state structures, and civilians with a range of reasons to justify why they need a gun. The fact that over two thirds of guns are in civilian hands gives some indication about the potential dangers to women and the wider communities they live in. Perpetrators of violence may also include those who are supposed to provide protection and security such as the police and armed forces, or non state armed groups. They can include work colleagues, or family members, and intimate partners they know and love.

Whatever the context – conflict or peace - or immediate cause of the violence, the presence of guns invariably has the same effect: more guns mean more danger for women. Violence against women in the family and community, and violence against women as a result of state repression or armed conflict, are part of the same continuum. Guns fuel violence against women – in times of conflict and peace. For example, the presence and use of guns facilitate and perpetuate trafficking, forced prostitution and sexual violence. With men almost always the bearers of guns, power imbalances between men and women are further distorted. Armed violence and conflict also remove society's normal restraints on men and in addition, the absence of rule of law allows security forces to perpetrate abuses with impunity.

In South Eastern and Eastern Europe, SEESAC, the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons has developed a comprehensive Gender Policy which acknowledges this, and recommends that small arms control must be improved and clearly linked to domestic and other sex and gender-based violence prevention to increase the protection of women. SEESAC actively builds partnerships with women's organizations in the region and disseminates gender-disaggregated data on the ways in which small arms impact women in each country.

Despite the emphasis among law enforcement on illegal small arms and crime, legal firearms are the primary weapons used in domestic homicides in many countries. A gun in the home is much more likely to be used to intimidate or physically injure family members than be used against an outside intruder. Also, the guns in a post-conflict 'setting' can migrate to areas where the economy is stronger and therefore where crime pays better. In such cases, guns from 'post-conflict' areas are ending up fuelling crime and domestic violence elsewhere. Most countries have no mention of domestic violence in their gun laws, and no mention of guns in their domestic violence laws either, even though that combination is very, very dangerous in a household.

Canada is among the handful of countries that have harmonised their legal frameworks on gun licensing and on domestic violence. This means the gun law prohibits ownership by domestic violence offenders, and the domestic violence law requires the removal of guns. Canada tightened its gun laws in 1995. By 2003, the gun murder rate dropped by 15 per cent overall, and by 40 per cent for women. Despite this, few countries have followed this example. More women will be protected if other countries respond in a similar way with gun laws that take domestic violence into account.

A 2007 study by SEESAC on domestic violence and small arms legislation and implementation mechanisms in the six countries of the Western Balkans and Kosovo successfully involved and engaged women and women's organisations. As a result, proposals for changes to legislation have been presented to the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and training curricula for police, judges and prosecutors has been developed.

SEESAC's research was the catalyst for the 'Disarm Domestic Violence' campaign, the first international campaign to protect women from gun violence in the home. The main goal of the



campaign is to ensure that anyone with a history of domestic abuse is denied access to a firearm, and has their license revoked. Women's organisations from OSCE member states including Canada, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, the United Kingdom, and the USA are already involved and collecting information about the phenomenon in their countries.

Measures undertaken to date

There is growing recognition that more accurate gender analysis leads to more effective disarmament initiatives, weapons control processes and violence reduction in general. Appreciation of gender dimensions has consequences for the way awareness is raised; design and funding of interventions; monitoring and evaluation of weapons control programs; and in formulating long-term strategies to combat the global small arms crisis.

The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms (PoA) contains only one reference to gender, in paragraph 6 of the Preamble where States express grave concern about the devastating consequences of the illicit trade in small arms for children "as well as the negative impact on women and the elderly." However, at the 2006 Review Conference on Small Arms it was clear that a large number of States supported the addition of a reference to gender to the PoA despite disagreement on other aspects. States still have an opportunity to consolidate this progress on recognition of gender issues in the next phase of the UN small arms process and are strongly urged to continue to move forward on this.

In 2006, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations launched the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), a comprehensive set of policies, guidelines and procedures covering 24 areas of DDR, with the aim of enhancing implementation of DDR programmes in peacekeeping. One of the 24 areas addressed in the IDDRS was the topic of Women, Gender and DDR. As part of efforts to address continued challenges DPKO has initiated a review on how gender considerations have informed recent DDR programmes, and identify effective strategies to strengthen this work in peacekeeping missions.

All of these initiatives focus on comprehensive DDR-programmes like those implemented in countries such as Liberia and Sudan (amongst others). Although the OSCE has not been involved in DDR programmes/projects akin to those at the UN level, its SALW-control programmes are guided by the same principles and can benefit from lessons learnt.

UN entities such as UNDP and SEESAC have explicitly developed gender policies which aim to address the particular elements that normalise and perpetuate pro-gun and pro-violence behaviours. Through such policies there is recognition of how SALW proliferation relates to, and affects, both men and women, and the aim to support human security and sustainable development for families and broader communities by minimising the extent and impact of SALW misuse.

The UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) has embarked upon developing international small arms control standards (ISACS), just as the UN system has done with landmines and DDR. Ultimately gendered aspects of SALW control programming will be incorporated in all modules of the Standards, while the specific module on gender should establish specific principles. It is intended for policy makers and practitioners who do not necessarily have a strong interest in gender, and will advise on gender-aware and gender-specific interventions and actions that should be considered and implemented to ensure that SALW programmes are effective.

Building the case for Gender Sensitive disarmament in the OSCE area

Women themselves have a role to play in disarmament, and until recently have been largely absent from the decision-making process within the security and judicial sectors, usually seen as exclusively male domains. However women have an important role to play in the security debate, including the question of SALW reduction and domestic controls. In addition, this is an important step towards gender equality.

OSCE Ministerial Council Decision MC 14/05 states that '...the knowledge, skills and experience of both women and men are essential to peace, sustainable democracy, economic development and therefore to security and stability in the OSCE region,' (OSCE, 2005, 1). It cites the importance and utility of the OSCE Decision on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict



Rehabilitation (2005) which integrates UN Security Council Resolution 1325 into all OSCE activities and calls on participating States to ensure women's full participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. This includes the essential aspect of disarmament. However, the Decision does not contain guidance on how to do this in practice.

However, there are some examples which provide recommendations which can inform weapons collection initiatives in OSCE member states. One such example comes from a study of voluntary weapons collections in Kosovo which developed concrete recommendations to inform future initiatives being planned by the Kosovo Government to accompany the introduction of the new law on weapons.

These include a comprehensive assessment which maps the attitudes and perceptions of those who may possess SALW in order to address issues of demand; the involvement of civil society including women's organisations; the creation of a national network of civilian actors to plan and implement the collection; and support for local and national actors in the design of the campaign. This will ensure that all groups in Kosovo are included and informed about the process which will, in turn, help to mobilise the public to participate in the surrender of weapons and become advocates for SALW control.

Gender-responsive disarmament: specific gender considerations in disarmament and SALW-control

Women's participation in planning and organising disarmament and SALW-control operations is critical particularly in relation to post-conflict contexts and civilian possession. Gender responsive planning and organising allows a differentiated approach in all phases of disarmament and SALW-control programmes.

Women are active in many areas, from grassroots actions, to campaigning, to policy development and research. Some are involved in the development of gun laws, whilst others are working to strengthen existing laws in their country. Some have particularly good relationships with the security sector or judiciary and use these contacts to raise awareness of the issue of gun violence against women. Some of those in conflict or post conflict settings are using UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in their work on disarmament. Others are involved in the international campaign on armed domestic violence. They have a wide range of skills, contacts, and knowledge and priorities which complement each other.

Weapons collection

For the best results, disarmament processes should include all of the community – women and men, young and old. Most efforts prioritise armed groups as they present the greatest risk of violence, but this should be followed by weapons collection schemes that involve the rest of society. In addition, there is often an emphasis on number of guns collected and would be better to put the emphasis on gun free homes created – focus back on family, community and peer group. This would remove it from a simplistic exercise of counting guns, to reinforce the message of providing safe communities.

Weapons collection programs should not be directly tied to monetary benefit as this can increase the value of weapons and draw more small arms into the area. Albanians were successfully offered collective benefits for community development, such as improved roads and irrigation. In Macedonia a 'lottery incentive' was successful and these initiatives also benefited women.

Traditional leaders and community, religious and women's groups can provide essential local knowledge and legitimacy in post-conflict contexts. The same principle applies to peacetime weapons collection. NGOs and churches collected some of the weapons in Brazil's successful firearms buyback, because people trusted them more than the police. Although small arms are more likely to be owned by men, women play a vital role in creating gun-free communities. Women's campaigns in Argentina, Brazil and Sierra Leone show how women can contribute to disarmament efforts.

A gender sensitive approach to voluntary weapons collection often allows for better planning and organization in disarmament and SALW-control. In an example from Argentina, last year's gun buyback was an enormous success. 70,000 weapons and 450,000 rounds of ammunition were



collected, and over 50,000 destroyed. What did we learn about the role of women in this? That despite the lack of a gender perspective in policies to address the small arms problem, women led the way. Despite the fact that 95% of gun owners are male in Argentina, 50% of people who handed in weapons were women. This suggests that many guns owned by men were actually handed in by wives or partners. Why?

Some explanation emerges from an earlier national opinion poll on attitudes towards guns which showed that more women than men consider that having a gun in the home is dangerous; and more men than women think that a gun provides security. This explored patterns of possession and ownership in the community, specifically targeted at the civilian population and prepared sectors of the population for disarmament activities. Women's perceptions of the danger posed by guns and their attitudes towards certain weapons were explored, as was their interest in becoming involved in disarmament programmes.

This example shows how to be most effective in removing weapons from communities, firearm amnesties should be strictly anonymous. Taking the personal details of the persons handing over firearms reduces the chance of collecting guns that could be reused in crime. While anonymous gun amnesties have been criticised for allowing criminals to hand over their guns with impunity, governments should explain clearly to the public that reducing the risks of continued illicit small arms use is likely to prevent future small arms violence

IANSA women work on attitudes, challenging the link between guns and masculinity and making use of the power that women do have in many situations. Campaigns use humour and images to project the idea that women can make decisions and there are alternatives to violent masculinity.

A campaign by Viva Rio in Brazil used the fact that 'gun' is a feminine noun in Portuguese, as part of their strategy. They developed the slogan, aimed at boyfriends and husbands, 'Choose her [the gun] or me.' In many societies women do have a very large degree of power in the domestic sphere of the home, so some campaigns appeal to those women. For example, in Uruguay there is a campaign based on the slogan, 'If you have a gun, you have a problem', which highlights the danger that a gun in the home creates for everyone who lives there.

These are just a few examples of the roles that women have played in SALW control and disarmament initiatives. The success of such initiatives depends on the clarity of the message and for women that is proven to be that women are safer in a gun free home.

Stockpile management

Between 1998 and 2008, there have been at least 34 explosions at ammunition storage areas worldwide, killing and injuring thousands of people. Surplus ammunition stockpiles have been the focus of a UN Group of Governmental Experts, which produced recommendations in the 2008 report 'Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.' States should include a risk assessment of their ammunition stockpiles within their National Action Plans on small arms.

Stockpile management of SALW and ammunition is very closely linked to choosing appropriate locations and facilities while minimizing the risks. Risk assessment should include the exposure to the consequences of explosion. Women can be more exposed to this than men by their more frequent presence in certain places (markets, roads that lead to water, etc).

However, there is another dimension to this. After an explosion immediate concerns tend to be reconstruction, economic aid, and employment but little thought is given to other ways in which people are affected. The explosions of military ammunition near Tirana on 15 March 2008 killed 26 people and injured more than 350. Over 400 houses were completely destroyed, ten times more were damaged and 4,000 residents were evacuated from the area.

The ammunition explosion had a profound effect on those who were injured, but also on relatives, survivors and witnesses. It challenged many people's beliefs about the stability and safety of their world. Many continued their daily activities as before, as if nothing had happened, but were displaying symptoms including disorientation; difficulties in concentration; aggressiveness; sleep disorders; fear and irritability; and flashbacks. The long term trauma also extends to their way of life. Many of them



are now homeless, unemployed, and shocked by the unexpected and harsh change to their lives. Their immediate needs have taken priority over their mental health. This example demonstrates the need to assist survivors who are dealing with trauma because we should not only count the deaths of this tragedy, but count all of those who have been affected by it.

Destruction

Although there are numerous methods of destroying SALW, most fall into one of three categories: crushing, burning or cutting. To date, there has been no global process on the disposal or destruction of SALW and/or ammunition. However, the UN and OSCE have developed technical guidelines for destroying weapons, and the OSCE and its member states have made substantial contributions to this issue by establishing best practice for both the identification of and destruction of surplus SALW.

Public destruction events, whether they are with surplus, confiscated, voluntarily surrendered weapons or any combination can involve a range of government and civil society actors. Experiences in Albania, Brazil, Cambodia and Mozambique among many others demonstrate that civil society and the media can participate in public destruction events by assisting in their planning and promotion, as well as organising civic activities and awareness-raising activities, using the destruction of small arms as a tool to focus the public's attention.

Destruction of ammunition or rocket fuel (so-called melange), can lead to chemical exposure with varying effects depending on the length of exposure. Women and vulnerable groups may be at higher risk. It may be necessary to raise awareness of the effect on human health and on the environment. Participation of women and vulnerable groups in policy-development and decision-making processes can help to reduce the risks. Chemical pollution may have different implications both socially and economically on men, women and children.

SALW demand and Security Sector Reform (SSR)

Security Sector Reform (SSR) aims to create a secure environment that is conducive to development, poverty reduction, good governance and, in particular, the growth of democratic states and institutions based on the rule of law. Men generally obtain guns to protect their family, especially if they believe that the security sector will not provide that protection. So SSR is essential to producing a responsible and well-resourced security sector. This helps reduce demand for small arms. SSR opens a window of possibility to transform security policies, institutions and programmes, creating opportunities to integrate gender issues.

The OSCE has partnered with other organisations to develop the Gender & Security Sector Reform Toolkit which integrates gender as a key to operational effectiveness, local ownership and strengthened oversight. For example, increasing the recruitment of female staff, preventing human rights violations, and collaborating with women's organisations contribute to creating an efficient, accountable and participatory security sector, which responds to the specific needs of men, women, girls and boys.

Civil society can provide complementary security and justice services, and help to build the capacity of security sector institutions through training, research and expert advice on gender issues. In addition, planners of SSR should pay attention to women as a resource base for improving all aspects of human security in the post-conflict period. It is especially important not to lose the experiences and public standing acquired by those women who played peace-building roles.

As well as training in how to prevent the misuse of their own guns, law enforcement officials should be trained in how to intervene to stop armed violence, particularly gender-based violence. Private military and security services often have access to large quantities of small arms, and enforcing appropriate standards for the use of these weapons should also be considered.



Recommendations on what to include in OSCE-documents

1. An important first step would be to ensure that future agreements on small arms incorporate gendered language and affirm the full and equal participation of women in the small arms process, while recognising that men need special programmes to help them reject armed violence.
2. States should take practical steps to ensure that women are fully involved in decision-making and other activities to inform security policies at national, regional and international levels, including changes to national gun laws, disarmament processes and development activities. Greater gender parity in security decision-making can be achieved by using a variety of mechanisms, including rosters of female security experts, consultative committees, and more deliberate recruitment processes.
3. There is an urgent need to fully address the community dimension within the OSCE Document to underscore and support the importance of local initiatives, many of which are led by women. States should promote local voices and solutions by building on the disarmament and peacebuilding activities of grassroots civil society groups, particularly women's groups.
4. Given the particular role of legally owned guns in the murder, injury, and intimidation of women and children in the home, several countries have instituted screening mechanisms to prevent acquisition by people who have a history of family or intimate partner violence, even if they do not have criminal convictions. Key principles include: information exchange between responsible agencies; barring access to weapons for convicted offenders or those under restraining orders, and giving police the authority to confiscate guns on the basis of likely threat. National measures to prevent intimate partner and family violence should be integrated into national and regional measures to effectively implement the Document.



Gender Section
Office of the Secretary General
Wallnerstrasse 6, A-1010 Vienna
Tel.: +43 (01) 514 36 6927
e-mail: equality@osce.org
<http://www.osce.org/gender>