

Women at Work: Preventing Gun Violence

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Bulletin No. 22, April 2010

Canada: Torturers, Guns and Bullets

This article by Jeanne Sarson and Linda MacDonald highlights how parent(s), guardians, spouse and others are among the non-state actor torturers with guns and bullets in their arsenal of tools.

The Torturers

Used to inflict terror and pain to maintain control and domination in their homes and other spaces in the private sphere, these torturers function invisibly and with impunity in Canada where non-state actor torture (NSAT) is not specifically criminalised. This effectively creates sex/gender discrimination and injustice because the private sphere is where women and girls suffer NSAT. Women/girls' powerlessness escalates when their sexualised victimisation is filmed as 'pornography' or when shown such violent images to deepen their degradation and humiliation.

Guns and Terrorisation

Guns are a terrorisation tool. During a web survey of individuals who self identified surviving ritual abuse-torture, a form of NSAT, 89 (71%) of the 126 respondents indicated guns were the main weapons used.[1]

Perpetrator's Tools	Number	%
Guns	9	6%
Guns & pornography	23	15%
Guns, pornography & snuff	57	37%
Pornography, other weapons	19	12%
Pornography, snuff, other weapons	18	12%

Figure 1: Perpetrator's tools



Figure 2: Sara's drawing

One woman, Sara, feeling she could not convey with words how guns were used to torture and terrorise her, drew her ordeal of a gun held to her head, forced into her mouth and into her vagina. (Figure 2)

When the gun trigger was pulled the 'click' sound added an audible dimension of terror, and the perpetrator's laughter and name calling "cry baby" deepened her powerlessness and humiliation.

Bullets and Discreditation

These torturers are skilful manipulators, designing their methods discredit the stories of victimised women and girls so if/when they tell others, these women will sound unbelievable. This happened to Sara. She told of being hit by bullets that were shot at her from hand guns, but she had no wounds. Why?

Sara had several of these bullets [2] but did not realise that these were plastic bullets. The fact that she did not specifically identify the ammunition used against her made her statement about being shot unbelievable to others.

Real or fake guns and bullets devastate women and girls, holding them in a state of on-going terror and captivity. Consideration must also be given to how fake and replica guns are effective weapons of discreditation used against women and girls.

Footnotes

- [1] Sarson, J. & MacDonald, L. (2009, Winter). *Torturing by Non-State Actors Invisibilized, A Patriarchal Divide and Spillover Violence from the Military Sphere into the Domestic Sphere. Peace Studies Journal, 2 (2), 16-38.*
 [2] Speer target 38 plastic cartridge cases manufactured by Omark Industries, Lewiston, ID.

Since 1993, Jeanne Sarson MEd, BScN, RN and Linda MacDonald MEd, BN, RN, have been relationship educators and human rights defenders working with persons who have experienced various forms of relational torture, including ritual abuse-torture.

For more information, see: www.ritualabusetorture.org

Network News

Spain: Seminar on women and peacebuilding

A seminar on UN SCR 1325 and the role of women in peacebuilding was held in Madrid, Spain on 2 February 2010. Over 200 people attended the event, which explored the main achievements and challenges facing the implementation of the Resolution. IANSA Women's Network Coordinator, Sarah Masters, gave a presentation about the role of women in disarmament and security issues.

As outlined in the briefing paper, there is an urgent need for greater support from the Spanish government, the countries of Europe and the United Nations for the women's organisations working on the ground in scenarios of armed conflict and violence.

Admittedly, support for local women has increased since Resolution 1325 was approved, but it is also true that it has fundamentally been the largest and most institutionalised local organisations that have received the support, because of their greater ability to adapt to the requirements of the funding sources and their ways of action.

However, the United Nations and cooperation agencies should also make greater efforts to establish links with a broader spectrum of local actors that work in the gender dimension, as well as adapting themselves to the organisational reality and the day-to-day lives of women in these contexts.

Supporting these women is a sure commitment to a broader, more inclusive knowledge of what is really going on in

conflict areas, as well as of the real needs of the people who fall victim to the violence.

Furthermore, this would represent real impact in terms of strengthening the social fabric, which on many occasions is maintained – albeit in the most precarious form – by local women.

There is also a need for a real, tangible and visible commitment to including women into the decision-making processes.

The absence of women in this area is a result of many factors, but one of the

most important is the lack of political will to promote them.

Without women there can be no gender agenda or political decisions with a gender perspective.

Speakers also analysed the Spanish and Swiss experiences in the implementation of National Action Plans.

The seminar was organised by CEIPAZ and the Swiss Embassy in Spain with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. For more information see: www.iansa-women.org/node/290



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Compiled by Sarah Masters

Reinforcing disarmament

IANSA women Khoudia Diop of MALAO and Michele Pepe of RASALAO participated in the conference "Reinforcing Disarmament: Combating Illicit Trade in Weapons and Materials Actors – Synergies – Challenges".

It was organised by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and took place from 1-2 February 2010. Khoudia coordinates the Senegalese Network of Journalists for Peace and Security, and Michele is coordinator of RASALAO.

The meeting aimed to create a framework for exchanges between those main actors (civil society, researchers, and the military) engaged in disarmament.

The initiators of the workshop aimed to develop a matrix demonstrating actors, mechanisms and synergies, but also lay out an overview of new challenges, such as new tools, and new actors. The conference provided an overview of new challenges in disarmament. Sessions covered the future role and impact of new technology on disarmament and in combating the illicit trade; how new technologies will help to manage proliferation risks; and developing a realistic scenario of actors and mechanisms.

Network News

Renewed energy for the Control Arms Campaign

The focus on 2012 has begun ... towards an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). IANSA women participated with civil society representatives from 47 countries in a global campaign meeting in Vienna, Austria on 10-11 February 2010. They echoed the message that the world needs an ATT that saves lives.

The meeting was opened by former South African parliamentarian Andrew Feinstein. Feinstein was elected to Parliament in 1997, and while serving on the parliamentary committee on public accounts, he investigated and exposed a massive and corrupt arms deal that implicated officials at the highest levels of government.

He explained how the South African government spent billions of dollars on arms at a time when the country could hardly meet the costs of providing needed Anti-Retroviral (ARV) treatment.

Five and a half million South Africans are HIV-infected – one of the highest numbers in any country in the world - fifty-five percent are women and a large majority in rural areas. The choice between life saving ARVs and arms in the young democracy was shrouded in secrecy and corruption.

Feinstein's efforts to investigate the procurement process resulted in his termination from office. He was forced by his senior colleagues in the African National Congress to resign his seat. The result - billions of dollars spent on arms that are not being used, and millions of HIV affected South Africans dying, and millions more orphaned.

Ambassador Roberto García Moritán was also present and shared his perspectives on the current global 'mood' on the ATT. Ambassador Moritán served as chair of the UN open-ended working group charged with creating a legally binding ATT.

In October 2010, 153 states, including the USA, voted to convert remaining working group meetings into preparatory committee meetings for a 2012 convention that could lead to a new treaty. It was the first time the USA voted to support the ATT process, a move that could increase the chances of concluding the still unwritten pact. Moritán confirmed that most UN member states are committed to the process.

IANSA women ensured that women's human rights were included in discussions, and argued that global standards for the international import, export and transfer of conventional arms and ammunition should prohibit transfers where there is a significant risk that the transfer will be in used to violate women's human rights or perpetuate a pattern of gender-based violence.

They also explained that international law demands linking the norms of an ATT with UN Security Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889, and obligations under international human rights and international humanitarian law.

Participants prepared a civil society statement which was delivered at the governmental meeting on an ATT organised by The UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on 12 February 2010.

The statement was presented by Diego Fleitas from Argentina, and included non-negotiable elements that should be included in the ATT including:

- It must be comprehensive in scope, covering all types of conventional arms and all types of transfers and transactions;
- It must prohibit international transfers of conventional arms on a case-by-case basis if there is substantial risk that these would be used to commit serious violations of International human rights or humanitarian law, or undermine sustainable development, and;
- It must contain clear national licensing provisions to ensure effective implementation.

The Control Arms Campaign is now being restructured and revitalised with more engagement and active involvement from a wide range of organisations, networks and coalitions. To get the strongest possible ATT – one which will help save lives, protect livelihoods and prevent abuses – the campaign is counting on your energy and expertise over the next two years.

The campaign wants to encourage new organisations and fresh perspectives and is seeking a broad range of representation and diversity of areas – geographical, thematic, and of professional expertise. Get in touch if you want to get involved!



CSW: Guns - the unending cycle of violence

"Somewhere in Colombia, a girl is hiding. Somewhere in Colombia, a woman is silently enduring her husband's beatings. Somewhere in Colombia, an adolescent girl is being raped in front of her community. Somewhere in Colombia, a woman's tears are being silenced. What do all these stories have in common? One word. Guns."

To a packed audience, Rebecca Gerome of The Advocacy Project, opened the event *In Harm's Way: Girls in Settings of Endemic Armed Violence* organised by the IANSA Women's Network, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the Mission of Norway to the UN.

Chaired by Clare Hutchinson of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations/PBPS, the event highlighted the impact of armed violence on women and girls, violence which is particularly brutal in many conflict zones, as well as countries where it has reached a chronic level, including many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.



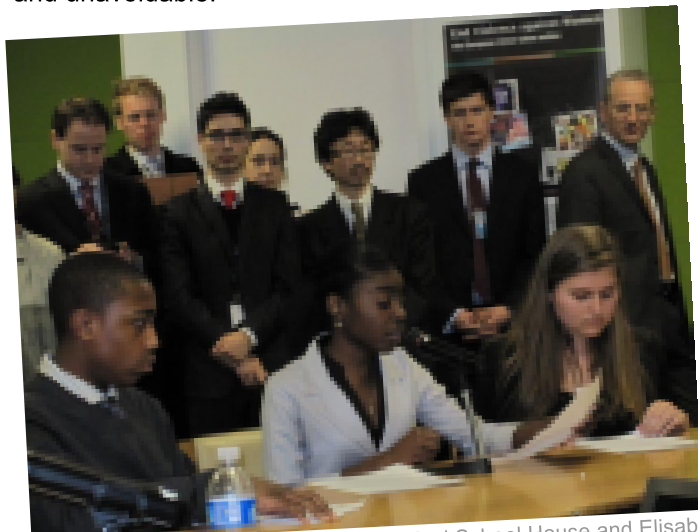
From left to right: Clare Hutchinson and Rebecca Gerome

Ambassador Mona Juul, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, reaffirming her government's commitment in dealing with armed violence, outlined how the burdens caused by armed violence are simply unacceptable – both from a moral, humanitarian and legal viewpoint. She called for greater understanding about what feeds armed violence, and the reasons why people pick up arms.



Mona Juul. Photo: Norway-un.org

In a striking example of how gun violence affects all countries and communities, Samantha, Phoebe, and Niles, Eighth Graders at the Little Red School House and Elizabeth Irwin High School in New York City, shared their experiences. They have met with survivors and campaigners working to reduce and prevent gun violence, and questioned why gun violence is portrayed as normal and unavoidable.



Middle School students from the Little Red School House and Elisabeth Irwin High School

Using statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention they shockingly revealed that 3,184 children and teens died from gunfire in the USA in 2006 alone. Samantha explained that this means one young life was lost every two hours and 45 minutes, almost nine every day, 61 every week.

They talked of meeting families and individuals that have been affected by guns, and showed videos of women such as Devina Perez of the 'Put Down the Guns' organization. Devina was shot at point blank range in a New York City train station, targeted as part of a gang initiation; Yvette Forehand, mother of a murdered son, explained how she started the Rory A. Forehand Foundation in his memory, to provide educational and recreational activities in a safe environment; and Gloria Cruz who established the Bronx Chapter of the Million Mom March after her niece was shot and killed at a Labour Day picnic.



Glynis Alonzo-Beaton, YWCA of Guyana

In her speech, Glynis Alonzo-Beaton of the YWCA – Guyana, linked the issue directly to the Beijing Platform for Action. She commented on how familiar we are with the most obvious consequences of armed violence –

death, injury and disability – but how the impacts are far reaching and go beyond the victim involved to his or her family, friends and wider community. In addition to physical risk and harm, the presence of guns encourages violent rather than peaceful resolution of problems; exacerbates community tensions, and increases the threshold of violence;

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negates measures to build confidence and security; is an obstacle to development; discourages investment and tourism; and contributes to human rights violations.

Although this all seems insurmountable, Glynis reminded everyone that the change starts with us. This is why the YWCA is responding to the impact of gun violence on girls and young women through programmes and initiatives to empower them and support their role as peace educators within their families and communities.

Bibiane Aningina Tshefu of Women as Partners for Peace in Africa in the DRC put it bluntly, "It is clear. Guns facilitate the destruction of more than 50% of the Congolese population." She made concrete suggestions on immediate action to stem the flow of weapons into the country.



Bibiane Aningina Tshefu

She called upon government forces to stop selling guns to non-state armed groups; that the soon to be negotiated Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) must stop supplies from entering countries bordering the DRC so that they cannot be diverted to the country; and that an ATT must not allow international transfers of weapons and ammunition where there is a significant risk of sexual and gender-based violence, or grave violations of human rights.

In his closing remarks, Daniel Prins of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs stressed how a people-centred view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability with the participation of women as a key component.



Daniel Prins

Despite the different countries and contexts of the speakers, their words paralleled each other in describing how armed violence in the home and community, armed conflict, and the availability and misuse of guns feed each other in an unending cycle.

The speakers stressed how these are not simple issues with easy solutions but that this cannot justify apathy, silence, and inaction.

They identified ways forward including data collection on gun possession and its links to violence against women in

order to formulate and implement successful public policies to address the phenomenon.

They are also demanded action to end impunity for armed violence against women and girls; and gun violence prevention through a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty.

Finally, they agreed that gender equality and empowerment of women - the third Millennium Development Goal – cannot be achieved without eliminating gun violence against women.

By Sarah Masters, originally published by openDemocracy, 12 March 2010



Resolutions adopted

On 12 March 2010 the CSW adopted seven resolutions relating to:

- Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS;
- Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts;
- The situation of and assistance to Palestinian women;
- Women's economic empowerment;
- Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women;
- Strengthening institutional arrangement of the UN support of gender equality and the empowerment of women by consolidating the four existing offices into a composite entity;
- Ending female genital mutilation.

For more information, see: www.iansa-women.org/node/334

Network News

Central Africa: Recent activities

On 28-30 January 2010 The Center for Justice Studies and Resolution 1325 organised a workshop about the participation of Congolese women in peace processes and security in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

Participants examined a study about the draft National Action Plan on UN SCR 1325, heard feedback from an international meeting on monitoring and evaluation. Sessions covered the links between small arms control and women, peace and security, and included government officials, members of Parliament, the security sector and women's organisations.

On 12- 13 March 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya, Christine Abdoul from the Active Women of Central Africa Network (REFAC), an IANSA member and part of the informal coordination group for the creation of the Central African Action Network on Small Arms (CAANSA), participated in the independent experts meeting for the review of the preliminary draft legal instrument on small arms control in Central Africa. Christine emphasised the need to include gender perspectives in discussions, and highlighted the role of civil society in supporting the implementation of the legal instrument. She also drew attention to the strong link between UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, and small arms.

Meeting Margot Wallstrom



Margot Wallstrom

On 10 March 2010, Congolese IANSA women Bibiane Tshetu of 'Women as Partners for Peace in Africa' and Jeanine Ngungu of 'Campagne Nous Pouvons' met Margot Wallstrom, the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Ms Wallstrom was particularly interested in meeting with members who have knowledge of the DRC to prepare for her upcoming visit to the country.

Ms Wallstrom outlined her agenda for action and strategic vision which includes punishment of perpetrators, ending impunity, justice for survivors as well as the protection and empowerment of women and girls living in conflict-affected environments.

She also identified strong partnerships with civil society and the research community as a crucial basis for properly targeted interventions and evidence-based policy.

She seeks to further empower ongoing efforts at the UN level to address sexual violence in conflict by strengthening political commitment and leadership at the highest levels.

Announcements

Gender and Security Sector Reform Training Resource Website

DCAF is pleased to announce the launch of the Gender and Security Sector Reform Training Resource Website. The website is meant to provide a user-friendly, online access to the complete Gender and SSR Training Resource Package, as well as a place of exchange for all those involved in Gender and SSR Training.

The Gender and SSR Training Resource Package is designed both for people providing SSR training, education and capacity building, and for those delivering gender training to security sector policymakers, practitioners and personnel.

The training resources have been developed to suit a wide range of training audiences, including Ministries of Defence, Justice, Interior or Foreign Affairs; security and justice sector institutions; security sector oversight bodies; parliamentarians; civil society organisations; development agencies; and international and regional organisations.

The Gender and SSR Training Resource Website provides online access to the complete Training Resource Package, including key messages, exercises, discussion topics, examples from the ground, and links to additional resources on the following topics:

- Security Sector Reform and Gender
- Police Reform and Gender
- Defence Reform and Gender
- Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
- Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
- National Security Policy-Making and Gender
- Justice Reform and Gender
- Security Sector Reform Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Border Management and Gender
- Penal Reform and Gender

Go to the resource at: www.gssrtraining.ch

Events

World Health Day

7 April 2010: *International*
IANSA calls for more research into the impact of gun violence on health. Such information, as well as prospective injury surveillance, would assist with the monitoring and evaluation of preventative interventions. This day provides an opportunity for public health officials, physicians and peace activists to link armed violence with health and development indices.
www.who.int

UN Crime Congress

12-19 April 2010: *Salvador, Brazil*
The Twelfth Crime Congress will bring together the largest and most diverse gathering of policymakers and practitioners in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. It will highlight the role of the criminal justice system in development, and The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition was adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/255 which entered into force on 3 July 2005. The objective of the Protocol, which is the first legally binding instrument on small arms that has been adopted at the global level, is to promote, facilitate and strengthen cooperation among States Parties in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and

trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.
www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime-congress/crime-congresses.html

New Security Challenges, ACUNS Annual Conference

3-5 May 2010: *Vienna, Austria*
Citizens, governments and international organisations are confronted with an array of security challenges, including unregulated flow of small arms, nuclear technologies and illicit goods, and fragile and failing states. These security dilemmas require innovative thinking beyond traditional national security approaches. This conference will bring together a diverse group of academics and policy practitioners to examine these 21st century challenges and explore responses.
www.acuns.org

Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence

10-16 May 2010: *International*
Each year activists around the world use the week to raise awareness, campaign for better gun laws and push for stronger regulation of the global arms trade.

World Refugee Day

20 May 2010: *International*
Not only is almost 1 per cent of the world's population designated as either internally displaced or refugee, but small arms intimidation represents a critical

factor inhibiting sustainable repatriation or resettlement. Most refugees and IDPs appreciate the persuasive power of a single weapon. Agencies such as UNHCR note that 'armed conflict is now the driving force behind most refugee flows.'

Africa Day

25 May 2010: *International*
Africa Day 2010 will focus on 'Peace and Security in Africa'.

UN Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) on small arms

14-18 June 2010: *UN Headquarters, New York, USA*
Governments will meet to review progress on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms.

Global Gun Destruction Day

9 July 2010: *International*
All around the world guns will be destroyed by survivors of gun crime, families of victims, governments and arms campaigners.

Arms Trade Treaty Preparatory Committee (PrepCom)

12-23 July 2010: *UN Headquarters, New York, USA*

Resources

Funding a Women's Movement Against Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo: 2004-2009

Global Fund For Women
An in-depth study of the underlying causes of violence in the region and how Global Fund support has helped women's groups to promote women's leadership, peace, justice, and respect for human rights. Over five years, we supported 70 groups with over \$880,000 in grants as they implemented innovative community-based strategies. The report shares 10 case studies and recommendations for donors. The report is authored by Muadi Mukenge, Program Director for Sub-Saharan Africa, Caitlin Stanton, Senior Development Officer and Aimée Mwadi Kady, GFW Advisor and National Director of SWAA-Congo. The report is available in English and French.
www.globalfundforwomen.org

Small Arms and Light Weapons: Africa

Religions for Peace, 2010
This resource guide is intended to support religious leaders in their efforts to cooperate to reduce the threats of small arms and light weapons. It includes practical information about the

proliferation and effects of these weapons across Africa. It also highlights the links between them and other problems such as poverty, the abuse of children and gender based violence. It places in the hands of religious leaders some of the major agreements that govern the trade and use of small arms. The guide provides concrete examples of multi-religious cooperation that have helped to make a difference.
<http://religionsforpeace.org/initiatives/violent-conflict/disarmament/arms-control.html>

Somalia: International Military and Policing Assistance should be Reviewed

Amnesty International
This briefing note details existing and new information about recent arms supplies, training and other assistance to the security forces of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG). It summarises Amnesty International's concerns about the lack of international human rights standards and effective accountability with regard to this international military and policing assistance, given the dire human rights situation in Somalia.
www.amnesty.org

The International Arms Trade

Rachel Stohl and Suzette Grillo, Polity Press, 2009
The authors carefully lay out the rationale for the legal trade in arms, providing extra details on the export control systems of key states. They also tackle the illicit arms market, noting the difficulties that incomplete data create but nonetheless reaching conclusions about the impact of legal and illicit trade on national and human security.

Final chapters focus on efforts and recommendations for controlling arms trade at international, regional, national, local, and nongovernmental levels.

The concise text, which makes a good introduction and reference guide, is supplemented by nearly 60 pages of notes and bibliographic information for readers who would like to dig more deeply.
www.armscontrol.org/act/2010_04/BooksofNote



The IANSA Women's Network (WN) is the only international network focused on the connections between gender, women's rights, small arms and armed violence. It was established in 2001 as a women's caucus at IANSA events but has formally existed since 2005. It has grown to link members in countries and communities as diverse as Fiji to Senegal, Argentina to South Africa, Canada to Sudan.

We are grateful to the Government of Norway for its support.