

UNLIREC Newsletter

UNLIREC is the only UN regional entity specialized in disarmament and non-proliferation in the region mandated to support Latin American and Caribbean States in achieving and maintaining peace and security through disarmament.

Enhancing Firearms Forensic Ballistics Systems in the Caribbean

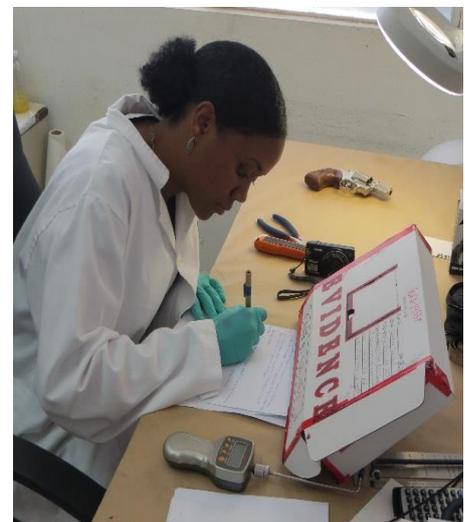
UNLIREC piloted internal testing tool for firearms examiners in St Kitts and Nevis, Belize and Guyana

In October and November, UNLIREC, in collaboration with governmental authorities, carried out a series of forensic ballistics competency testing exercises for police firearms examiners in three countries in the Caribbean: St Kitts and Nevis, Belize and Guyana. This internal testing tool is used to determine staff capacity in key functional areas related to firearms forensic ballistics.



These exercises were developed based on UNLIREC's ballistics-specific standard operating procedures, including issues integral to the day to day work undertaken by firearms examiners, such as examination of small arms ammunition, examination of firearms and their

components, and trigger pull determination. In the medium- and long-term, this internal testing tool will be used by forensic science institutes and laboratories to systematize the continual upgrading of "competencies", as well as allow for modifications in training and sustain an ever-more capable pool of Caribbean forensic ballistics experts. These assessments also support the internal identification of existing gaps in skills, knowledge and procedures within Firearms Units in each State.



These exercises form part of the third round of implementation under the framework of UNLIREC's Caribbean Operational Forensic Ballistics Assistance Package, which is made possible thanks to the support of the US Department of State and the Government of Canada.

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UNLIREC brings Caribbean States together to advance firearms forensic ballistics agenda



On 5-6 December, UNLIREC carried out a *Caribbean Regional Encounter on Forensic Ballistics* in Port of Spain, Trinidad, with the support of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and CARICOM's Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. The regional encounter served as a platform to highlight the importance of quality management systems in laboratories, advance and support the Regional Integrated Ballistics Information Network (RIBIN), and develop formal relationships at the policy/technical levels among Caribbean States.

Approximately fifty participants were present at the two-day regional encounter, which covered three thematic areas pertinent to the firearms examination practice in the Caribbean: quality management systems, information sharing networks, and strategic tools and training. For example, protocols to avoid miscommunication and the unauthorized sharing of ballistic information weighed heavily during the discussions. It was confirmed that test fires were done by firing into sand; yet this is not fit for practice due to the markings caused from the collision between the bullet and the sand, resulting in the reporting of substandard test fire into the database. Here, experts identified mechanisms to protect information and reviewed the benefits of harmonizing best practices for the acquisition of test fire samples.

Participants included Permanent Secretaries, Directors of Civilian Forensic Laboratories, Heads of Police Crime Laboratories, Senior Firearms Examiners and other policy personnel from several states including: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent, and Trinidad and Tobago. Other Institutional Participants included representatives from the ATF, INTERPOL, CARICOM IMPACS and UNLIREC.

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UNLIREC launches study on less lethal weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

UNLIREC PEACE SPOTLIGHT



UNLIREC presented the findings of its exploratory research on the challenges and opportunities related to the use of less lethal weapons in the region at the UN Common House in Lima, Peru, to a diverse crowd of governmental agencies, the diplomatic corps, private security companies, civil society, academia, and officials from the Peruvian National Police.

The study analyzes the approaches to less lethal weapons in the region and their role in maintaining public security. It also identifies the main actors, risks, challenges and good practices, as well as the possibility of States to incorporate less lethal weapons into the equipment of security forces and regulate their use by citizens and security companies, all the while respecting international standards of human rights and the use of force. The objective of the research is to contribute to the debate on the legality, feasibility and impact of using these type of weapons.

Less-lethal weapons are devices designed to generate a specific effect that temporarily neutralizes or incapacitates the recipient of the impact without causing death. These types of weapons are used in numerous countries in Latin America and the Caribbean by actors with an institutional mandate to maintain and monitor public order.

The event concluded with a dynamic debate on the different aspects to consider when improving regulation and training on less lethal weapons. In particular, the need to incorporate the control and regulation of these types of weapons within the national legal framework, identify which entities should authorize the use of these devices, and determine in which situations these weapons can and should be used.

The development of this study has been possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

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Improving small arms control by private security companies in Central America

UNLIREC contributes to strengthening private security sector in El Salvador

From 7-11 November, UNLIREC carried out a mission in El Salvador to advance the implementation of its joint UNLIREC/DCAF [Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces] project aimed at *strengthening oversight and building capacities for small arms control and non-proliferation in the private security sector.*

Since July 2015, UNLIREC and its partner, DCAF, have been providing technical support to the governmental authorities and to the private security sector in El Salvador to promote the regulation and arms control of this sector.



During the mission, DCAF presented the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (ICoCA) to several private security companies in order to share the scope and benefits of this initiative. The ICoCA compiles internationally recognized standards and good practices to ensure the good management and governance of the private security companies that voluntarily adhere to the Code.

Likewise, during its visit to El Salvador, UNLIREC team diagnosed the level of compliance of the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs) in several security companies. Recommendations were made to increase the level of compliance through these guidelines aimed at improving the security of companies to prevent theft, as well as the diversion of weapons and ammunition to illegal actors.

Finally, UNLIREC carried out a two-day technical workshop on international standards for weapons and ammunition stockpile management. This is the second workshop that UNLIREC carries out in this country, addressed to operational staff of the companies providing security services. Participants received a training aimed to incorporate the physical security procedures in their weapons and ammunition stockpiles to minimize risks of weapons diversion into illegality.

This project is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany.

One important aspect of security privatization has been the growth of the commercial security industry. This global industry ranges from major multinational corporations to small-scale local companies. The scope of activities undertaken by these actors is equally diverse. Private security companies around the world play a prominent role in the protection of facilities, goods and persons.

- DCAF website -

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UNLIREC helping to improve stockpile management among private security companies in Peru

From 15-16 November, UNLIREC carried out the second round of technical workshops to promote international standards for improved stockpile management of arms and ammunition among private security companies in the city of Lima, Peru. This training was carried out in collaboration with Peru's National Superintendence for the Control of Security Services, Arms, Ammunition and Explosives for Civilian Use (SUCAMEC).

Thanks to the success of the first technical workshop carried out in 2015, various security companies requested additional trainings aimed at their operational staff responsible for stockpiles, control and custody of firearms and ammunition.

This workshop – resulting in the training of 14 representatives from security companies and SUCAMEC officials – promotes the incorporation of international standards and physical security procedures into daily operations. The standards relate to the facilities where the arms and ammunition are stored in order to introduce comprehensive measures to contribute to a reduction in the diversion of arms and ammunition.



The training workshop dealt with important issues, such as firearms and ammunition classification, stock management, risk assessment, security plans and incident reporting, among others. Throughout the sessions, practical exercises complemented the theoretical knowledge imparted by UNLIREC's Public Security Programme.

This project activity was made possible thanks to the funding provided by the Federal Republic of Germany. The multi-year project aims to promote good governance and arms control within the private security sector and is being implemented in collaboration with the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

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UNLIREC supports strengthening of stockpile management among the private security sector in Costa Rica

From 21-24 November, UNLIREC advanced its project activities related to strengthening the oversight and building capacities for small arms Control and non-proliferation in the private security sector in Costa Rica.

The main objective of the mission was to improve the management of stockpiles of arms and ammunition for private security companies based on the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs). The implementation of these standards contributes to preventing weapons diversion.



During the mission, UNLIREC assessed the level of compliance of the ISACS and the IATGs in five Costa Rican security companies and made recommendations to adapt their stockpile management of arms and ammunition to comply with such standards.

Likewise, UNLIREC held meetings with government authorities to discuss the incorporation of the secondary marking of arms belonging to private security companies. Marking weapons is one of the most important measures in the arms control field, as it contributes to their traceability and record keeping. Upon request of the Government, UNLIREC will support the secondary marking process from a technical perspective within the current project framework.

This project is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany and is implemented in collaboration with the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

Global, regional and local efforts to regulate the private security sector (PSS), including support in the registration, handling and stockpiling of weapons, combined with more effective national legislation and regulation, form part of a prevention-based approach that can contribute to fewer incidents of armed violence, as well as to greater oversight and accountability of this sector.

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Supporting Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)

UNLIREC and IMO collaborate with Dominican Republic in bolstering its maritime security



A simulation exercise on maritime security was carried out by UNLIREC and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) from 1-2 December, in Santo Domingo. This two-day joint training succeeded at supporting the country in the effective implementation of maritime security measures through active debate on the challenges faced and the “mechanics” of coordinating cooperation between government departments and agencies.

A number of scenarios related to maritime security and issues relating to maritime law enforcement were presented. They addressed issues such as: threats to cruise ships; border security aspects affecting ports, airports and land border crossings; possible incidents involving weapons of mass destruction; maritime safety inspections and handling of illicit drug shipments, as well as illicit trafficking in firearms.

The exercise was organized within the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), which is within the mandate of UNLIREC and within the scope of IMO maritime security measures. The resolution addresses the threat of proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, including illicit trafficking, among non-state actors, as well as their means of delivery and related materials.

This activity was made possible thanks to the contribution of the United States of America and preceded by a series of similar events held in other countries in the region led by UNLIREC and IMO, such as Grenada (2014), Trinidad and Tobago and Belize (2015) and Jamaica (June 2016).

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UNLIREC participates in training for Resolution 1540 (2004) national points of contact from Latin America and the Caribbean Region



From 24-28 October, UNLIREC visited Santiago, Chile, to participate in a training course aimed at focal points in the region responsible for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) and its related resolutions. The course was hosted by the Government of Chile in cooperation with the 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts and supported by UNLIREC's head office in New York, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). The training course was made possible through funding from the UN Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities.

The 1540 regional focal point meeting provided national points of contact with in-depth knowledge about the resolution's obligations and its implementation challenges. In addition, it emphasized the importance of building strong networks and promoting cooperation and interaction between national points of contact. The course was conducted with presentations by members of the 1540 Committee Group of Experts and representatives of different International Organizations including OPWC, UNODC, WCO and OAS. UNLIREC provided logistical support prior and during the training and used this opportunity to strengthen its relationship with key representatives. In addition, UNLIREC took the opportunity to present its assistance package to the region and the work it is carrying out with beneficiary States in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

National points of contact play an important role in the effective implementation of UNSCR 1540 (2004). The training was an excellent opportunity to share national experiences and learn from the challenges each State faces. The training for resolution 1540 (2004) National Points of Contact from Latin America and the Caribbean Region aims to become an annual regional meeting to bolster the network.

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UNLIREC and Trinidad and Tobago unite to combat proliferation financing and finalize country's Voluntary National Action Plan on 1540 implementation

Following on from a previous mission in July 2016, representatives of UNLIREC returned to Trinidad and Tobago in November and December to continue working with government authorities on the implementation of national legislation to address the financing of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation activities.

The legislation drafting workshops concentrated on the creation of new offence provisions to criminalize proliferation financing and introduce new penalties for such activities. Focus was also given to the broadening of the function, role and scope of legislative powers required by Trinidad and Tobago's Financial Intelligence Unit to enable regulation of proliferation financing in addition to money laundering and terrorism financing.

Special attention was also given to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions concerning targeted sanctions and restrictions for DPRK and Iran, respectively. Given the timing of the December workshop, the release of the latest DPRK sanctions resolution ([UNSCR 2321 \(2016\)](#)) was a timely reminder that WMD proliferation issues remain of grave concern to the global security environment.

In addition to the workshops on preventing proliferation financing, UNLIREC also seized the opportunity to provide support in Trinidad and Tobago's voluntary National Action Plan (NAP) which articulates the country's plan for implementation of UNSCR 1540 (2004). It is expected that Trinidad and Tobago will submit their NAP in early 2017.



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UNLIREC and Government of Belize hold joint meeting to develop Draft Voluntary National Action Plan to strengthen the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004)



On 9 December, UNLIREC held consultations with the Government of Belize to discuss its Draft National Action Plan on Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (2004). This meeting brought together 12 representatives from eight institutions and agencies (including the Belize Coast Guard, Defense Force, Immigration, Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA), Police Department, National Security Council Secretariat, Customs & Excise Department and Port Authority).

UNLIREC presented summaries of the resolution and its main obligations, as well as of UNLIREC's national legal study and its main recommendations for better aligning 1540 obligations with national provisions. In turn, Belize delivered a presentation on the status of implementation of the resolution in the country to date. CARICOM also provided a presentation on the relevance of the implementation of 1540 Resolution in the region, with special emphasis on Belize.

During the intense one-day workshop, the group identified and established a series of official focal points from each of the stakeholder institutions present, and discussed the content of a Voluntary National Action Plan that is to be presented to the 1540 Committee in the near future. Issues relating to the modernization of legislation, training and equipment needs, as well as assignment of specific roles and responsibilities, were addressed throughout the day. Prior to this workshop, in July 2015, UNLIREC assisted Belize in the preliminary discussions for the drafting of the National Action Plan. This meeting forms part of UNLIREC's 1540 Assistance Package for Caribbean States with the financial support of Canada.

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UNLIREC Agenda (Jan-Mar 2017)

JANUARY

- ✓ *1540 Planning Mission*
Paramaribo, Suriname
- ✓ *Collaborative Exercise Competency Testing - forensic ballistics*
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- ✓ *Roundtable on creation of national authority for ATT implementation*
Guatemala City, Guatemala

FEBRUARY

- ✓ *UNLIREC technical accompaniment to UNMIC – Colombia Peace Process*
Bogota, Colombia
- ✓ *Planning mission: private security project*
Guatemala City, Guatemala
- ✓ *Continue UNLIREC technical accompaniment to UNMIC in the laying down of arms in the context of the Colombian Peace Process*
Bogota, Colombia
- ✓ *Planning Mission and X-Ray Image Interpretation Test*
San Jose, Costa Rica
- ✓ *Launching of UNLIREC's Private Security Project in Guatemala + technical workshop on best practices and international standards on stockpile management for private security companies*
Guatemala City, Guatemala

MARCH

- ✓ *UNLIREC technical accompaniment to UNMIC in the laying down of arms in the context of the Colombian Peace Process*
Bogota, Colombia
- ✓ *Legal assistance 1540 National Action Plan*
Lima, Peru
- ✓ *Collaborative exercise competency testing - forensic ballistics and Bulletrax handover*
Kingston, Jamaica
- ✓ *Interdicting Small Arms in Postal Shipments (ISAPS) Course*
San Jose, Costa Rica
- ✓ *Collaborative exercise competency testing - forensic ballistics*
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- ✓ *1540 mission legislative work session to develop subsidiary regulations to the WMD bill of law*
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- ✓ *Private security multipurpose mission (delivery of equipment, firearms marking, DCAF workshop on private security legal assistance)*
San Jose, Costa Rica

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