

UNLIREC Newsletter

Caribbean Region

UNLIREC conducts expert roundtable on maritime security

(Lima, August 2011) – UNLIREC held an expert roundtable on maritime security and combating illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives in Lima, Peru, on 11-12 August 2011. The purpose of the meeting was to seek input for the development of a training module on maritime border control for the Caribbean region as this relates to illicit trafficking, armed violence and public security. This module will form part of UNLIREC's trademark Inter-institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives (IITC).



Expert roundtable participants at UNLIREC headquarters in Lima, Peru

Representatives from CARICOM, Jamaica, The Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as experts from international and civil society

organizations, shared their experiences on maritime security versus port security and how this phenomenon affects Caribbean economies, including the important tourism industry.

This event came about as result of increased armed violence and high murder rates across the Caribbean region associated with the use of illicit firearms. Caribbean countries face particular challenges in preventing illicit trafficking in firearms associated with organized crime and other forms of illicit activities at coastal borders and between Island States due to vulnerable and porous borders. The prevalence of firearms trafficking has increased in tandem with the growing drug trade. The Caribbean region also remains a transit zone for human smuggling, piracy and other criminal activities where firearms are increasingly used.

UNLIREC will incorporate the views and suggestions provided during the expert roundtable into a specific IITC training module on maritime security to be implemented in 2012 in the sub-regional IITC training course in The Bahamas. The event was carried out within the context of the UNLIREC's assistance package for Caribbean States funded by the Government of Canada.

Trinidad and Tobago and UNLIREC collaborate on firearms destruction and training on combating illicit firearms trafficking

(Port of Spain, October 2011) – The Ministry of National Security of Trinidad and Tobago, in conjunction with UNLIREC, collaborated on two key events in Port of Spain from 10-21 October 2011 to provide on-going project and technical support. UNLIREC’s in-house public security team arrived to Port of Spain to carry out the destruction of surplus, obsolete and confiscated weapons and ammunition and train local counterparts in destruction methodology.

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, together with the Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Agnes Marcaillou, chaired a public event on Friday 14 October 2011 where thousands of weapons and ammunition were destroyed. Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar showed her Government’s support of the process and said that she is *“convinced that our joint efforts will strengthen the capacity of the country’s security forces to combat firearms trafficking and will ultimately contribute to the reduction in armed violence in Trinidad and Tobago.”* Ms. Marcaillou declared that *“destruction is the best, and irreversible, way to ensure that surplus weapons and illicit firearms, including those confiscated from criminals, do not find their way back into the hands of those who threaten the lives of innocent and the security of communities”*.

During this period, UNLIREC also conducted an Inter-Institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Firearms Trafficking (IITC) in collaboration with the Ministry of National Security resulting in the training of 62 mid-level law enforcement officials.



Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar and UNODA’s representative, Agnes Marcaillou, during the event.

These *“first responders”* are now better equipped to combat the illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives; prevent the diversion of legal weapons into the illicit market; and reduce levels of impunity in cases of firearms trafficking. The Provost of the TTPS Police Academy has committed to integrating portions of the IITC manual into the national curricula for all police trainees and in carrying out future training courses.

Throughout the second half of 2010, UNLIREC worked together with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to develop a national action plan for stockpile management and firearms destruction to be implemented during 2011. UNLIREC’s Assistance Package to Caribbean States is made possible thanks to the financial support of the United States and Canadian Governments.

UNLIREC supports Ecuador in consolidation of national proposals for arms control

(Quito, June 2011) – Making headway in the implementation of the Andean Region Project “*Enhancing Public Security through Crime Prevention and Firearms Control*”, UNLIREC carried out a series of activities in Ecuador aimed at strengthening national capacity to combat illicit firearms trafficking.

UNLIREC supported Ecuadorean authorities in the organization of a Seminar on national action plans and baseline assessments, in response to their request for continued assistance in this area. Following the creation of the National Firearms Commission in April 2011, Ecuador has continued to advance in the establishment of mechanisms to combat illicit firearms trafficking. The end result is the strengthening of national capacities to face the illicit trafficking of firearms and improvements in regional cooperation and coordination in this area.

Moreover, in September 2011, UNLIREC’s in-house public security team travelled to Quito to conduct a workshop on “*Disarmament Campaigns against Armed Violence*” organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Security Coordination, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence to assist in designing a roadmap to promote disarmament-related programmes and projects. This initiative seeks to raise awareness among the population on the risk that the possession of illicit firearms represents and to encourage the population to create a society free from violence. The workshop also served as a forum to present international standards for the design and implementation of public awareness campaigns for voluntary weapons collection programmes.



Ecuadorian authorities and UNLIREC’s Public Security Coordinator, William Godnick, during the event

During the workshop, UNLIREC acknowledged the commitment by Ecuador to disarmament in the region and the usefulness of the exercise “*to share the international experience in programs of voluntary weapons collection and to prevent armed violence*”. Drawing from campaign experiences from other States in the region, UNLIREC highlighted that “*in Brazil, more than five hundred thousand firearms, ammunitions and explosives were collected, while in Argentina, more than one hundred thousand arms were collected*”. These campaigns were also useful in raising awareness of the danger and consequences of weapons falling into the wrong hands.

Continuing with the activities included in the assistance package for the Andean region, UNLIREC and Ecuador will be destroying the Army’s surplus ammunition during the month of December with the support of the Government of Canada.

UNLIREC supports Colombia in the development of its baseline assessment on firearms

(Bogotá, June 2011) – During the month of June, UNLIREC, in association with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Conflict Analysis Resource Centre (CERAC), supported the organization of the National Workshop to Support the Implementation of the National Action Plan on Firearms and the Development of its Baseline Assessment in Bogota, in June 2011, in order to validate the 2011 national assessment on firearms, conducted under the leadership of CERAC. The activity was coordinated by the *National Coordinating Committee for the Prevention, Combat and Eradication of Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*, known as the TIA Committee.

The workshop aimed to obtain information on the firearms situation in Colombia to be used in the elaboration of the baseline assessment as part of the national implementation plan on firearms. This baseline assessment will be useful for the inauguration of the new local governments, which will be inaugurated in the beginning of next year. In this sense, UNLIREC plans to continue supporting the Colombian authorities in order to strengthen an integrated approach to firearms control and armed violence prevention and reduction.

These activities form part of UNLIREC's comprehensive assistance package to combat illicit trafficking of firearms in the Andean Community with the support of the Government of Canada.

UNLIREC and the civil society unite in the Global Week of Action against Gun Violence

(Lima, June 2011) – As a part of the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence, sponsored each year by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), UNLIREC joined several civil society organizations in Peru to raise awareness of the problem caused by firearms in the context of the increased armed violence in the country. During 13 to 19 June, and in coordination with the Institute of Security and Human Rights (ISDH) and the National Initiative Group on the Rights of the Child (GIN), several initiatives focusing on children and teenagers were carried out.

The first activity was a lecture at the Ricardo Palma University in Lima carried out by UNLIREC. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, members of civil society organizations, teachers and students gathered to discuss the impact of firearms on human rights, illicit trafficking in the region, public insecurity and the increase of the indiscriminate use of firearms.



Clowns at the Manuel Scorza School in Lomas de Carabayllo, Lima

The second initiative was carried out in the public school Manuel Scorza, located in the north of Lima, where youth between 8 and 16 years of age enjoyed a presentation of clowns on the problems and risks associated with firearms. In a relaxed and playful environment, the clowns performed

various sketches of situations involving firearms and their impact on daily life.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Sergio Duarte, shared his thoughts on the Global Week of Action by reminding us of the *“continuing need to take concrete action, such as putting legislation in place, organizing weapons collection programmes, enhancing border controls, improving stockpile security, and developing community policing initiatives”*. Taking into

account the necessary coordination to guarantee the success of the initiatives, the High Representative called on *“all governments to work with grass roots organizations to reduce armed violence and make the lives of people safer and more secure”*.

UNLIREC and UNASUR continue dialogue on security

(Lima/Quito, June 2011) – With the objective of offering its experience and technical expertise to the South American Defence Council and continuing discussions with the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), UNLIREC was invited to participate in various events organized by UNASUR dedicated to promoting dialogue in the area of security in South America. Throughout these events, UNLIREC had the opportunity to contribute to discussions on issues related to regional security and provide updated information on the technical assistance it provides to States.

Within the framework of the VII Latin American Week on Security and Defence, celebrated in Quito, Ecuador, from 7 to 9 June, a seminar entitled *“Concepts and Multilateral Security and Defence Relations in the context of UNASUR”* was held. Academics and experts deliberated on the concepts of security and defence, the new defence agenda in the region and regional initiatives within the framework of a multidimensional approach to security.

During the opening ceremony, Ecuador’s Minister of Defence, Javier Ponce, stated that the new dimension of *“mutual assistance in the region is cooperative security, from which lessons of a profound rethinking of security structures on the continent is envisioned.”* UNLIREC contributed to the debates and reaffirmed its willingness to

continue collaborating with States with a view to improving security throughout the region.

Peru, in its role as President of the Defence Council of UNASUR, and in collaboration with the Government of Germany, organized a seminar entitled *“Consolidating Peace: development and application of measures to promote confidence and security”*, taking place from 27-28 June in Lima, Peru, which included representatives from all UNASUR Member States. The creation and implementation of tools for the promotion of security and confidence within the framework of UNASUR dominated discussions among defence sector participants, favourable to carrying out initiatives with a distinct regional seal; it was also however considered relevant to take into account initiatives promoted by the OAS and the UN in the area of confidence building measures.

The representatives of attending States shared diverse experiences in the exchange of information, compliance and verification measures, and in the elaboration of a standardized methodology to compare military expenditures. UNLIREC had the opportunity to make an innovative presentation, focusing on the control of firearms and expanding the traditional scope of confidence- and security-building measures.

Peruvian Authorities participate in High Level Meeting on Firearms Control Policies



The Director of UNLIREC, C. Mélanie Régimbal, and Andean Project Advisor, Camilo Duplat, in the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs- Photo: Agencia EFE

(Lima, September 2011) – The Torre Tagle Building, Headquarters of the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was the scene of a High Level Meeting on Firearms Control Policies; authorities from regional governments and the Peruvian Executive participated in the design and execution of policies related to the control of firearms. This activity, organized by the National Commission against the Manufacturing and illicit Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other related Material (CONATIAF) and UNLIREC, is part of the initiatives implemented by the Peruvian government to enhance national capacity for greater control of firearms.

The team of experts from UNLIREC presented the latest rates of homicide by firearms in the region, which continues to be the most violent in the world. In the words of the Andean Project Advisor,

Camilo Duplat, *“the rates of violence reach epidemic levels due to the availability and wrongful use of firearms”* especially in countries where homicide rates exceed 20 per 100,000 persons. Moreover, the total cost of the impact of the use of weapons in countries that are not at war, exceed 160.000 million dollars, a figure *“greater than all the international assistance dedicated to development”*

The meeting included the Peruvian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, José Antonio Meier, who highlighted that the illicit trafficking of firearms not only supplied the mafias of organized crime, but stimulates an exportation flow towards the north. In this sense, the Vice Minister reaffirmed the support and adherence of Peru to the international instruments approved within the framework of the United Nations, as well as Decision 552 of the Andean Community for the prevention, combat and eradication of illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. The Director of UNLIREC, C. Mélanie Régimbal, has made the technical capacity of the Regional Centre available to Peruvian authorities in order to support them in this task.

The meeting formed part of an assistance package that UNLIREC is implementing in the Andean Region with the support of the Canadian Government.

UNLIREC Hosts Expert Meeting on Private Security and Rule of Law

(Lima, September 2011) – During the past two decades, private security companies have emerged and multiplied rapidly throughout Latin America and the Caribbean in response to increasing levels of citizen insecurity. According to a study conducted by the Small Arms Survey in

2011, the private security sector employed between 19 and 25 million people in more than 70 countries in the world in 2011. In Latin America and the Caribbean alone, there are close to 3 million private security guards, of which a high percentage work informally and possess and use

between 800,000 and 1,300,000 firearms. These private agencies - operating in parallel to the public security forces - have gained such momentum that it is not possible to discuss public security matters without contemplating their presence and role throughout the region.



States and UNLIREC's representatives during the meeting held in Lima.

In this context and in an effort to spearhead the debate on private security and the rule of law, UNLIREC brought together regional experts from the government, civil society, and the private security sector during a regional workshop in Lima, Peru.

During this two-day workshop, experts from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Peru and Venezuela exchanged best practices and lessons-learned on how the public and private security sector co-exist and discussed the practical tools, norms and international standards which should be observed by the private security sector to safeguard the rule of law. The views shared during this symposium provided UNLIREC with invaluable feedback to deepen its understanding of the nexus between the private security sector and firearms.

The workshop concluded with the establishment of a *community of practice*, which will continue to debate and engage in efforts to develop a series of tools, which could include, inter alia, model regulations; guidelines for stockpile management and record keeping; and a catalogue of training opportunities.

This regional workshop forms part of a series of activities organized by UNLIREC, in cooperation with the Government of Spain, to address public security challenges, armed violence prevention and reduction measures.

Women from South America meet in Lima for training on firearms control

(Lima, September 2011) – The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) in collaboration with UNLIREC organized a training workshop on women and firearms control. Women working in civil society organizations from across South America met in Lima to participate in this training to enhance their knowledge of the impact firearms have on the lives of women and to identify how their work on gender and sexual violence can be linked with international firearms instruments and the world campaign against armed violence.

The training, which took place from the 27 - 30 September at UNLIREC's headquarters, was also an excellent opportunity to establish regional links and to share best practices and lessons-learned among participants from Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. During the working sessions, experiences were exchanged on lobbying and campaigns implemented by women organizations to create safer communities.

According to one of the participants, "[thanks to this course I] now feel better prepared to provide information about the impact of armed violence on the lives of women". The participants are

committed to disseminating what they have learned upon their return to their respective organizations and there are already plans to organize conferences and workshops with women's groups, the police, judiciary and law students.

As part of their commitment to promote greater inclusion of women in disarmament matters, UNLIREC considers IANSA's initiative a very positive one as it shows the capacity and added value of civil society organizations in the creation of a society where armed violence is not a daily reality. The next training for women on firearms will take place in Papa New Guinea in November of this year. Previously, initiatives have been carried out in Ethiopia, Mexico and Mali and there are numerous requests from all over the world for 2012.



Training course participants at UNLIREC's headquarters in Lima, Peru

Central American Region

UNLIREC highlights the importance of controlling firearms among young people in the region

(Lima, May 2011) – For the second consecutive year, UNLIREC participated in the Workshop for Model UN Organizers, convened by the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Mexico. Young people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean were able to participate in the event via an online forum.

The Model United Nations is an academic simulation of the General Assembly and other multilateral deliberative bodies of the United Nations. Model UN is an educational activity in which young people, apart from being trained on issues in international politics and the functioning of the United Nations, acquire a global vision of the world. This exercise encourages young people to understand the concerns and aspirations of citizens from different regions of the world, concrete aspects of how the UN can improve their

lives, as well as useful tools to strengthen international cooperation. Model UN has become one of the most efficient and creative ways for younger generations to learn about the system and the need to strengthen ties among people.

In this context, UNLIREC outlined the challenges caused by firearms proliferation and armed violence in Latin America and the Caribbean and their impact on everyday life, especially among young people. Demographically, both victims and perpetrators are mostly young men between 15-29 years. The lack of investment to improve educational and employment conditions for these young people make them a particularly vulnerable group. The proliferation of youth gangs or *maras* in Central America is one example. Firearms are undermining the most valuable resource that the region has: its youth.



The workshop was carried out by videoconference at the UNIC premises in Mexico to the entire region – Photo: UNIC Mexico

The workshop addressed many issues such as sustainable development, disaster mitigation and violence against women, among others, and included the participation of the Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA), and UN Women.

Following their respective presentations, the young participants were able to ask questions and make comments to the audience, both through their direct participation and through an online forum designed for that purpose, thus establishing sustained dialogue on different topics of interest. Following its presentation, UNLIREC received numerous questions on the link between armed violence and development and were thanked for their contribution.

Guatemala and UNLIREC unite against illicit firearms trafficking

(Guatemala City, May 2011) – In response to the request for assistance from the Government of Guatemala, UNLIREC held an Inter-Institutional Course on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives (IITC) and assisted in the area of stockpile management and firearms destruction.

The first IITC in Guatemala trained over 57 law enforcement officials from the police and military, as well as intelligence officers, customs agents, prosecutors and legal investigators. The course was undertaken - thanks to the support of Spain and Sweden - in cooperation with UNDP's Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean and its Country Offices in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The course was also carried out in full collaboration with national authorities, in particular with the Technical Secretariat of the National Security Council, which enabled considerable progress in improving inter-

institutional cooperation. The participation of the Institute for Teaching on Sustainable Development (IEPADES) and the Public Defender's Office was also seen as an effort to incorporate experts with ample experience in small arms control and armed violence prevention.

As an expert in stockpile management, UNLIREC was invited to an inter-agency activity organized by the National Commission for the Prevention of Violence and Promotion of Social Peace in Guatemala to share its technical knowledge on firearms, including firearms classification and international regulations on stockpile management of firearms and ammunition. UNLIREC highlighted the importance of carrying out stockpile management of firearms in line with the highest quality standards.

SICA Member States unite to address insecurity in the region and present the Central American Security Strategy

(Guatemala City, June 2011) – United by the common goal of addressing the insecurity plaguing the Central American region, SICA Member States and the Secretary General of said entity held the *International Conference to Support the Central American Security Strategy* in Guatemala City from 22 - 23 June 2011. The main objective of the event was to present and obtain support for the Security Strategy developed by Central American States to strengthen the security of its citizens and their property in order to allow for the attainment of human development goals in a coordinated manner with the common objective of strengthening regional integration.



International Conference overview – Photo: MFA Panama

The Heads of State and Government of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama renewed their commitment and determination to make Central America a safer region for its citizens, with real conditions for development. In the presence of more than 50 international delegations, the presidents of Colombia and Mexico, the Secretary of State of the United States of America, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, along with representatives of international organizations and civil society, the Secretary General of SICA, Juan Daniel Alemán, presented the Security Strategy as “a regional instrument that guides our joint actions, complements our

national efforts and projects us as a region committed to democratic security”.

In its address to the delegations, UNLIREC highlighted the predominant role played by firearms in relation to the violence faced by the region, and reaffirmed “*its strong commitment to continue supporting Central American States in combating the scourge of illicit firearms trafficking vis-à-vis concrete assistance to translate the commitment of States for a safer Central America into practical measures.*” In this context, UNLIREC presented a series of initiatives to support the implementation of the Security Strategy that aim at contributing to the prevention and reduction of armed violence through firearms control measures.

UNLIREC has developed a comprehensive assistance proposal that can be implemented independently or in a coordinated manner, which includes capacity-building of the law enforcement community in combating illicit firearms trafficking, improving national capacity to deal with the issue of firearms use by private security companies, and preventing firearms proliferation in schools.

For its part, the Group of Friends, consisting of Germany, Canada, Colombia, South Korea, Spain, USA, Finland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway and the European Union, expressed its strong support to SICA States, acknowledging that addressing the threat of organized crime is a shared responsibility, and congratulating Central American governments for the responsibility shown in formulating and implementing policies to combat citizen insecurity. The group of delegations pledged a significant amount of funds to begin execution of the Security Strategy, acknowledging that it is “*necessary to act on the root causes of crime and insecurity, including poverty and lack of access to employment and education by the most vulnerable sectors of society.*”

El Salvador incorporates UNLIREC's IITC material into its national curriculum to strengthen the combat against illicit firearms trafficking

(San Salvador, July 2011) – The main impact of UNLIREC's Inter-institutional Course on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives (IITC) in July 2011 in El Salvador, was the endorsement of the contents of the manual by the academic council of the National Public Security Academy (ANSP) and the fact that its contents will now form part of its on-going training. Moreover, officers of the National Civilian Police (NCP) of El Salvador who successfully complete the course will receive credits towards NCP's internal promotion system.

The course was attended by more than 60 law enforcement officers, including police and armed forces officials, intelligence officers, customs agents, and judges and prosecutors, who demonstrated a high level of commitment to learning and working to combat the illicit trafficking of firearms, especially in making the link with citizen security. In addition, a positive environment of inter-institutional cooperation was witnessed throughout the course. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that El Salvador has good mechanisms in place for inter-institutional cooperation, in particular between the NCP and the defense sector, which were strengthened even more thanks to the IITC course.

The course, carried out in response to a request for assistance by the Government of El Salvador, forms part of the strategic priorities of the Central American Security Strategy and was made possible thanks to the support of the Governments of Spain and Sweden. The course was undertaken in coordination with the UNDP Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean and the UNDP Country Offices in El Salvador and Guatemala.

El Salvador has formally requested to host UNLIREC's sub-regional IITC course in 2012 for female law enforcement officers from Central American States that, similar to the IITC course held in November 2010 in the Andean Region, will help to close the gender gap in the training of Central American officers. UNLIREC positively acknowledges the government's request and is now in the process of identifying resources to be able to respond positively to this request.

UNLIREC recommends the establishment of an IITC course schedule to ensure continuity in the training of Central American officials, and to begin programming border courses between neighbouring States as a means of increasing cooperation at border areas.

UNLIREC and the OAS present studies on Firearms Legislation in Central America

(San Salvador, September 2011) – In the spirit of inter-institutional cooperation and in an effort to improve the assistance provided to States in the region, UNLIREC and the Organization of American States (OAS) officially presented comparative legal studies on the level of compliance of the national legislations of the Central American Integration System (SICA) States on firearms, as they relate to obligations established in the Inter-American Convention Against Illicit Manufacturing of and

Trafficking in Firearms Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA).

The presentation of the legal studies on Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama was conducted within the framework of a working meeting entitled "*Legislative advances to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking of firearms in Central America*", organized by the OAS and SICA on 28 September

in San Salvador, El Salvador. The meeting was attended by representatives from all Central American States and the Secretary General of SICA, as well as experts from international organizations and observers from Spain and the United States.



Panoramic overview of the workshop in El Salvador – Photo: SICA

One of the conclusions of the studies that was highlighted during the working sessions was the need to establish a training system for justice officials, particularly judges and prosecutors, on aspects related to firearms. In this sense, UNLIREC highlighted the development of a new course aimed precisely at these officials in combating impunity in cases of illicit firearms trafficking. In recent years, UNLIREC

has conducted studies and reports on legislative projects that have resulted in the passing of new laws that are more harmonized with international instruments and regional legislation. The existence of adequate legal frameworks is fundamental to supporting policies that favour arms control and armed violence prevention and reduction.

The development of studies carried out by UNLIREC at the request of the OAS is in accordance with the priorities identified on SICA's Democratic Security Agenda; it is intended to be a valid tool for States when harmonizing national laws with international regulations. Beyond reviewing the provisions of CIFTA, UNLIREC updated its regional comparative study on the compliance of states with international instruments, including the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (2001), the Firearms Protocol and the International Tracing Instrument. The OAS and UNLIREC will continue with this international cooperation and are already preparing legal studies for South American States.

Other Relevant Activities

UNLIREC reports on the assistance to States in 2011 at the General Assembly

(New York, October 2011) – Within the framework of meetings carried out by the General Assembly's First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, UNLIREC's Director C. Mélanie Régimbal reported on the most significant assistance provided to Latin American and Caribbean States, resulting in more than 40 activities, during the current year and outlined the priorities for 2012.

In the area of enhancing national capacity, the Director highlighted the training of 550 officials

from law enforcement in nine States in the region, as well as a sub-regional course for female officials from Andean States which took place in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. In the area of training, UNLIREC asserted that the standardization of training methodologies is the best way to guarantee efficient and homogenous measures that, once adapted to the realities of each State, provide concrete results in combating illicit trafficking.

The Director went on to speak of the irreversibility of weapons destruction, which represents the best way to ensure that surplus weapons and illicit firearms, ammunition and also explosives, including those confiscated from criminals, do not find their way back into illegal circuits. At the same time, adequate stockpile management, including the maintenance of registries, marking and tracing, is the best guarantee against the diversion of arms into illicit activities. The implementation of these activities along with the development of national disarmament campaigns help to prevent and reduce the deadly effects of armed violence. During the current year, UNLIREC provided stockpile management and weapons destruction assistance to Caribbean States, and Guatemala, to enhance their national capacity in these areas.

The development of legal frameworks is essential to combating the illicit trafficking of firearms. The harmonization of national legislation with international instruments is necessary to ensure an adequate legal response to the problem at hand. Consequently, UNLIREC carried out 10 legal studies and assisted various states in the region in

the preparation of new firearms laws. As well, UNLIREC assisted various States in the region in strengthening their national firearms commissions and defining and executing their national action plans. .

Looking ahead to 2012, UNLIREC will continue its ongoing activities and expand their training initiatives by developing a specialized training course on firearms for judges and prosecutors, as well as a course on controlling the trafficking of explosives and the implementation of bi-national courses at borders. Moreover, UNLIREC will follow up on the needs identified by States to develop tools to face the growing phenomenon of private security as this relates to firearms.

Finally, UNLIREC would like to thank the governments of Canada, Spain, the United States, and Sweden for their generous contributions, which make the assistance to States possible. Similarly, UNLIREC would like to highlight the support received by the governments of Colombia, Guyana, Panama and Peru, which have also contributed to the progress of the Centre.

Violence against women and firearms: a deadly link

(Lima, November 2011) – Violence against women and girls is the most common and virulent violation of human rights and the one most likely to remain unpunished. According to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon's campaign "Say NO – UNITE to End Violence against Women" up to 70% of women suffer physical or sexual violence by a man in their lifetime, mostly by their husbands, boyfriends or acquaintances.

There are many ways of exercising gender violence against women and girls: domestic violence in the home, sexual harassment at work, abuse against girls in school, femicide or rape, either by the husband or in a refugee camp as a tactic of war. In many of these crimes, firearms

are used to subdue women, as a means of threat or death. Weapons and masculinity are closely linked with weapons in the hands of violent men becoming a lethal tool that dramatically affects women, reducing their capacity to defend themselves, but also increasing the severity of the assault. Femicide is possibly one of its most extreme manifestations.

It is estimated that approximately 875 million firearms circulate in the world, of which three-quarters are in civilian hands. Every year, more than 520,000 people die as a result of the violence related to armed conflicts and criminal offenses of both a greater and lesser scale. Most of these deaths, approximately 396,000, occur in conflict-free countries. Between 50% and 60% of world

trade in firearms is legal, but very often some of these weapons end up being illicitly trafficked, destabilizing states and causing damage that directly affects the development and opportunities of millions of people.



IANSA's logo campaign to disarm domestic violence

Latin America and the Caribbean is the world's most violent region. These countries have a firearms-related homicide rate of almost 78 per 100,000 inhabitants; the global average is barely 3.1. Although both victims and perpetrators are mostly young men between 15-29 years of age, women and girls are doubly affected by firearms. They are not only attacked and threatened with them; they also suffer the negative effects of having to deal with firearms-related death or disability of their family members and the burdens involved. It is necessary to keep in mind that not only women and girls killed by a bullet are victims but also those who are assaulted and intimidated by firearms.

In this context, promoting greater firearms control is an effective measure to combat gender violence and create spaces in which women and girls can feel safe and fully develop their abilities. For this purpose, States may set up a series of measures, in compliance with international instruments, to ensure that weapons are not used for criminal purposes. Among these measures, voluntary disarmament campaigns or legislative reforms for the licensing of guns could be considered. Both measures may be implemented with a strong emphasis on gender. In the case of disarmament

campaigns, women's organizations may participate as strategic agencies in advocacy work, by showing the risks of firearms ownership in the households and the danger this poses to the community as a whole.

In terms of legislative reforms on the licensing of firearms, restrictions could be put in place for men with a history of gender violence, as well as the immediate removal of weapons from those men with a reported history of violence against women.

Civil society organizations around the world working on the topic of ending violence against women have identified the deadly link caused by firearms. In this context, UNLIREC encourages civil society organizations in the region to continue their efforts and make their voices heard in order to create safer communities. In this regard, several starting points have been identified to facilitate the work:

- Conduct research and data collection that enables the establishment of a base line on this issue;
- Strengthen the capacity of women and their organizations to influence firearms control policies. In this respect, UNLIREC collaborates with IANSA in the organization of their "Women only Training Institute on women, gender and small arms", seeking to increase knowledge on this subject and position women in a solid way to facilitate dialogue with governments;
- Support awareness campaigns on firearms with women as the focus; and
- Build and strengthen women networks working in the area of firearms. In this regard, the work carried out by the IANSA Women's Network, both globally and in the region, should be highlighted.

Disarmament is a strategic area in international relations and women are called to participate therein, as recognized by the General Assembly in its recognition of "the essential contribution of



women to practical disarmament measures in the field of prevention and reduction of armed violence and conventional disarmament and arms control". UNLIREC works to ensure that firearms

stop being a source of violence against women and promote adequate firearms control to ensure the safety of all citizens.

***United Nations Regional Centre on Peace, Disarmament and Development in
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