United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

UNLIREC

OAS

Technical Seminar and Regional Dialogue

Small Arms Control and Prevention of Violence Against Women

Towards the Integration of Policy Agendas for the Protection of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

20-21 October 2026 | Lima, Perú

Funded by Canada

CONCEPT NOTE

The United Nations Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace states that: "*Small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are the primary cause of violent deaths worldwide, in both conflict and non-conflict settings. Their proliferation, diversion, and misuse undermine the rule of law, hinder conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, facilitate criminal acts, including terrorist acts, human rights abuses and gender-based violence, drive displacement and migration, and impede development*." [1]

Latin America provides a clear example of this reality. Despite the absence of active armed conflicts, the region records alarming levels of firearm-related violence. While firearms account for 47% of all homicides globally, this figure reaches 75% in the Americas.

The proliferation, diversion, and misuse of firearms generate impacts that extend beyond deaths and injuries. Armed violence deteriorates living conditions within communities, limits access to essential services, weakens trust in institutions, and hinders the full enjoyment of human rights.

However, the impacts of armed violence are not experienced equally across the population. The overwhelming majority of direct victims of armed violence, firearm users, and perpetrators of firearm-related crimes are men, a phenomenon closely linked to social norms and stereotypes associated with masculinity. This constitutes a key factor in understanding and preventing the impacts of violence, particularly on women, girls, and children.

While men are primarily killed in contexts related to organized crime, urban violence, and other forms of criminal activity, women are predominantly killed by current or former intimate partners, family members, or other individuals within their close social environment. In this context, firearms are not only involved in femicides but also facilitate other forms of physical, sexual, psychological, and coercive violence against women.

Consistent with UNLIREC's mandate, the MESECVI Strategic Plan 2024-2029 recognizes small arms and light weapons control as an urgent and strategic issue for policies aimed at preventing and eradicating violence against women. In particular, it states that:

> *"Prevention policies promoted by the Convention of Belém do Pará must address the impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, paramilitarism, and the presence of criminal organizations on territories, women's lives, and their*

[1] United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres (2023), *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief No. 9: A New Agenda for Peace,* available here.

security, as these severely affect their human rights, destroy lives, and constitute an obstacle to the advancement, full realization, and enjoyment of their rights."[2]

In response to this strategic priority and the ongoing dialogue among UNLIREC, the Presidency of the Committee of Experts, and the MESECVI Technical Secretariat, UNLIREC is organizing this Technical Seminar and Roundtable Exchange for members of the Committee of Experts.

The main objective of this meeting is to strengthen the integration of small arms control and violence against women prevention agendas in Latin America and the Caribbean by promoting the exchange of experiences, identifying common challenges, and formulating recommendations for a more comprehensive response to armed violence affecting women and girls.

This initiative is made possible through the support of the Government of Canada under the project "*Women, Youth and Disarmament, and the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap*" and contributes to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16 of the 2030 Agenda, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA), the subregional Firearms Roadmaps, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention).

OBJECTIVES

- Provide context on the impacts of firearms in the region, with an emphasis on the production and analysis of statistical information.
- Present the latest advances and subregional commitments regarding arms control and efforts to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons (Roadmaps).
- Address the necessary linkage between firearm control regulations and legislation aimed at preventing violence against women.
- Identify and formulate recommendations to strengthen the convergence of both agendas through legal frameworks, public policies, and coordination mechanisms at national and regional levels.

PARTICIPANTS

The seminar will bring together members of the MESECVI Committee of Experts, representatives of its Technical Secretariat, regional specialists, and UNLIREC technical personnel with expertise in small arms control, armed violence prevention, and gender-based violence prevention.

[2] *MESECVI 2024-2029 Strategic Plan*, available here.

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AGENDA

DAY 1 | 20 October

09:00 – 09:15	**Registration**
09:15 – 09:45	**Opening Remarks** Group photo
09:45 – 10:00	Introduction and presentation of the agenda.
10:00 – 10:30	**Icebreaker -** Tour de table
10:30 – 11:00	**Coffee break**
11:00 – 11:15	**Keynote speaker |** Arms trafficking and its impact on the lives and security of women and girls.
11:15 – 12:45	**Panel 1 | Dimensions and manifestations of the problem: A statistical and case-study approach [SPA]** Femicide and firearms in the region Questions and discussion.
12:45 – 14:00	**Lunch**
14:00 - 15:45	**Panel 2 | Firearms control legal frameworks and efforts to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the region [ENG]** Basic concepts, global commitments, and subregional initiatives on firearms control (PoA, ATT, Roadmaps) CIFTA and Regional Guidelines for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence Committed with the Use of Firearms in the Americas Caribbean Firearms Roadmap: National implementation perspectives. Questions and discussion.
15:45 – 16:00	**Final Reflections on Day 1**

DAY 2 | 21 October

09:00 – 9:15	**Registration**
09:15 – 9:30	Welcome and recap of Day 1
09:30 – 11:00	**Panel 3 | Towards an integrated agenda: strengthening links between legal frameworks on violence against women and small arms regulation and control policies [SPA-ENG]** Bridging the Gap: Integrating Prevention Measures for Violence Against Women and Firearms Control Presentation of legal studies: The necessary linkage between violence against women legislation and small arms regulation and control frameworks Questions and discussion
11:00 – 11:15	**Coffee break**
11:15 – 11:30	Formation of working groups.
11:30 – 13:00	**Subregional Working Groups** • Caribbean. • Central America, Dominican Republic and Mexico. • South America.
13:00 – 14:30	**Lunch**
14:30 – 15:30	**Plenary Session |** Presentation of working group conclusions
15:30 – 16:00	**Final reflections and closing remarks**