

# P@X online bulletin

## VIOLENCE AND SMALL ARMS: THE PORTUGUESE CASE

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### P@X

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## Editorial

This issue presents some of the results of the research project "Violence and small arms: the Portuguese case", which was developed during 30 months, from 2007 to 2010. The idea which gave rise to the project was that the theoretical segmentation between Sociology and International Relations regarding this theme, which expressed an understanding of violence that over-emphasised territorial scale and formal political contexts, should be replaced by a different approach which gives analytical priority to the spiral of violence that put micro and macro social in contact, hence, detaching its analysis from the redactor dichotomy war/peace. We believe that through this different approach can one rigorously analyse the different dimensions of the social reality of firearms violence in formal peace contexts, regardless of their lethal capacity or of their most visible expressions. Our challenge was precisely to question conventional assumptions of conventional studies on small arms. The explicit lack of synchrony between common sense and scientific knowledge has enabled Portuguese society to get in contact with the small arms reality, based on images and representations constructed on the existing ignorance on the

dimensions and real complexity of the phenomena. Two elements have been supporting discourses and policies: on one hand, the idea that we live in a peaceful country, and on the other hand, the social fear waves triggered by individual armed urban violence events. These two elements either minimise the effective importance – quantitative and qualitative – of small arms in Portugal, or assume a reactive and immediate response in face of social unrest.

The invisibility of firearms in Portugal – as well as its circumstantial hyper-visibility in the media – fail to give an adequate answer to the focus of the phenomena: the four main dimensions of the phenomena in Portugal. Firstly, small arms supply: how many legal small arms are there in Portugal? Based on international knowledge and experience, how can we estimate illegal small arms in Portugal? Which flows fuel both markets? Secondly, small arms demand: what kind of motivations support firearms contact, use and possession in Portugal? Are there differences across distinctive groups of population (men and women, youth and adults, etc.)? Thirdly, what are the impacts of small arms in Portugal? Which costs do firearms imply for the Portuguese economy and

society? Who are the direct victims (the dead and the injured) and the indirect victims (the survival, victims relatives) of armed violence in our country? Finally, what kind of public policies, national or international, have been implemented to regulate small arms? To what extent have they succeed regarding prevention of gun violence and regulation of small arms use and possession? Which forms of social activism have proven efficient in the creation of preventive and reactive contra-cultures in armed violence contexts?

*José Manuel Pureza and  
Tatiana Moura*

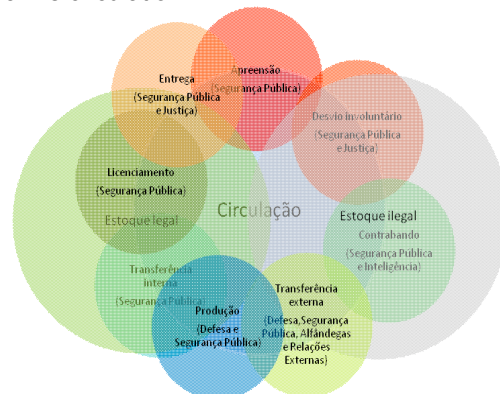
## P@X Theory

### Small arms supply in Portugal: legal and illegal markets

This article intends to examine the role of Portugal in the production and internal and international trade of firearms with the purpose of estimating legal and illegal circulation of this type of firearms among civilians in Portugal.

The analysis included the collection and systematisation of quantitative data concerning: registered small arms in Portugal, number of licenses given, information regarding firearms' diversion and arrest and/or thefts (these data were obtained at the National Department of Arms and Explosives from the Public Security Police) and import and export (data obtained from the COMtrade - United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database - and NISAT - Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers).

Figure1. Set of information used about small arms circulation



Source: Designed by the author

### Small arms circulation in Portugal

Based on the number of registered guns by the national Department on Arms and Explosives it is estimated that, in Portugal, 2,6 million small arms are in the hands of civilians. Of these, 1,4 millions are legal (54%) and 1,2 million are illegal (46%), which means that there are 2,6 small arms to each ten inhabitants.

Data analysis on arms licensing and apprehension tell us that Portuguese people prefer hunting rifles. From a total of 445.360

firearms licenses issued between 2004 and 2008 (89 thousand licenses per year, on average):

- 84,5% concerned hunting weapons (class C and D)
- 4,4% handguns (class B1)
- 0,8% sports' weapons (class F)
- 10,3% home detention licenses

Lisbon, Faro, Santarém, Setúbal and Oporto are the districts with greater levels of license issuing with the following percentages, respectively: 11,1%, 8,1%, 7,6% and 7%.

Data on firearms apprehension (2004-2008) show that these were mostly coming from Belgium, Italy, Spain, Germany and USA. Class D small arms are the most arrested ones – (36%) – it should be taken into consideration that between 2006 and 2008 (after the approval of law 5/2006) there was a 146% increase of firearms apprehensions – followed by class A (18%) and B1 guns (13%). Hunting rifles (46%), pistols (31%) and revolvers (5%) were the most arrested firearms.

Between 2004 and 2007, 5913 guns were stolen or diverted in Portugal – 4 firearms per day, on average. Class D (68%), B1 (20%) and C (6%) were among the most diverted ones. Hunting rifles (70%), pistols (17%) and revolvers (9%) were the most common type of diverted firearms. These were mostly produced in Italy, Spain, Brazil, Belgium, USA and Germany.

Class D (55%), B1 (16%) and B weapons (7%) were the most commonly handed-in to the police. As far as types are concerned, hunting rifles (57%), pistols (19%) and revolvers (5%), mainly originated from Spain, Italy, USA, Belgium, Russia and Germany were the most common ones.

It is also worth mentioning that employees in army and private security as well as police officers rarely own private firearms.

## P@X Theory



Sample of small arms apprehended, Department of Arms and Explosives, Lisbon, March 2010. Photography by Hélio Gomes.

### Portugal and the international small arms trade

As far as international trade is concerned, between 1988 and 2006 Portugal represented 4% of European imports and 3% of European exports, following EU decreasing trends in terms of participation in the international trade on small arms and light weapons. Small arms parts and accessories were the most imported products.

Among the most imported type of small arms were shotguns (57%), pistols and revolvers (25%) and hunting rifles (10%). During the period of analysis, the sum of these transactions exceeded 390 thousand small arms. The main firearms exporters were Germany, Belgium, Brazil, Spain, USA, Italy and Turkey.

### Conclusion

To sum up, similarities between Portuguese internal small arms circulation and import patterns suggest that part of the illegal small arms market result from firearms diversion from legal markets. Considering that the majority of small arms in circulation in Portugal stem from theft and diversion, the strict distinction between legal and illegal is artificial. Moreover, this situation reveals the existence of a culture of neglect regarding small arms on the part of their owners based on the conviction that legal arms are not a source of problems.

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## P@x Theory

### Small arms demand in Portugal: profiles, uses and motivations

One of the elements which have been underlined by recent literature on gun violence is the lack of analysis of the factors which lead people to get in contact with and use small arms (Cukier, 2001; Kimmel, 2005; Farr et al. 2009). Aiming at inverting this trend, this article tries to answer the following questions:

- Are there any identifiable profiles of (legal and illegal) gun users? Does gun demand have gender and age?
- What are the most common crimes committed with small arms? Are they committed with legal or illegal weapons? Which ones are more commonly used?
- Which are the motivations and incentives (real or perceived) to the ownership and use of legal or illegal small arms?
- What are the representations and meanings of small arms for those making use of it?
- What are the motivations and incentives (real or perceived) behind youth non-involvement with guns?

### Legal and illegal demand by adult population: gender differences

Considering a sample [1] of licenses issuing from 2008 and 2009 (DAE/PSP) it was noticed that the most common profile of legal firearm users corresponds to male individuals, Portuguese nationals, with ages comprised between 40 and 68 years old (58% of the sample). During this period the main licenses issued were use and carry of class D (72%) and C (20%) firearms. The professions with greater representativity in the solicitations, by order, were: farmer, construction worker, retailer, business man, driver, engineer, carpenter, locksmith and auto-mechanic.

In the same manner and according to data about detainees for violent crime referring to 2006 and 2007 (MAI, 2007), the majority of firearms criminal users are man, Portuguese nationals (over 90%).

Amongst the most common criminal uses are armed robberies (in about 87% of the total of robberies in 2006 and 2007); physical offense with resort to firearms (in 45% of the total of physical offenses in 2006; 72% in 2007); attempted murder (in 36% of attempted murders in 2006; 53% in 2007) and murder (in 33% of murders in 2006; 39% in 2007) (MAI, 2007: 265).

Interviews conducted in Coimbra's Correctional Facility, a male facility - which represents 3,8% of the Portuguese prison population (DGSP, 2009b) and where 22% of the inmates serve a sentence for crimes directly related to firearms – confirm this trend of usage of firearms. Beyond that, it reveals some patterns in the motivations and characteristics of its uses. The large majority of interviewees claimed that their first contact with firearms happened amidst his group of friends, during the transition from childhood to adolescence, not being at all uncommon the existence of firearms at their household.

Additionally, a large part of the interviewees which had contact with firearms associate them to values such as protection and defence (of the family, in particular) and, in smaller extent, to perceptions of power and virility.



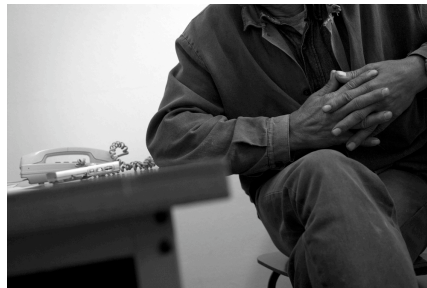
Trainees at the Technical and Civic Course for B1 license candidates, April 2010. Photo by Hélio Gomes.

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Paternity arose, in some interviews, as a reason of rejection relatively to using and carrying firearms, for the danger it represents or for the example which they do not wish to give.

The interviews with female inmates of the Tires Prison Facility, which represent 45,6% of the feminine prison population in Portugal (DGSP, 2009b), and where circa 8% is imprisoned for crimes involving firearms, revealed that the contact with firearms tends to be tardier than that of man, and is usually associated with drug trafficking. When used (effectively or for intimidation), firearms are generally used against a third party; or, in case of being used individually, destined to individual or business protection.

Maternity, the fact of “being mother”, arose, in some cases, as reason to commit the crime for which they were convicted (theft or drug trafficking), so that “they are able to give their children what they couldn’t have”. Simultaneously, it was pointed as the main reason not to relapse. In the words of an interviewee, “I’m imprisoned for five years now. My youngest is three. My sons are growing up without a mother. I don’t want that.”



Inmate at the Coimbra's Correctional Facility, detained by a crime related to firearms use, March 2009. Photo by Hélio Gomes.

A significant part of the descriptions yet gave account of the effective use of firearms in situations of domestic violence, in particular as a form of reaction to a past of abuse of which they were victims.

The majority of female interviewees still expressed mixed feelings in regard to firearms, showing discomfort with their presence, namely in private contexts, underlining, however, their need while insurers of protection against external threats.



Inmate at the Tires Correctional Facility, detained for a crime related to firearms use, February 2010. Photo by Hélio Gomes.

### **Demand for firearms by young population: gender differences**

In Portugal, and according to DGRS (2009) data, 204 youths [2] are serving confinement measures in Education Centres. Of this, 89% are male (181), and 11% are female (23).

Qualitative data collected concerning ways of involvement and perceptions of youths (male and female) with and about firearms, namely in Olivais Education Centre (Coimbra) and Navarro Pais (Lisbon), revealed attraction and refusal dynamics from the youths towards firearms. Despite being less statistically significant (the effective use of firearms tends to be residual), when existent, the involvement with violence and with firearms happens, most of the times, within the group of friends, occurring in schools and surrounding spaces, namely in adjacent neighbourhoods and night-clubs.



## P@x Theory

These contacts and uses are frequently associated to drug-trafficking, both by male and females', being that the majority mentions a mix of sensations on the occasion of the first contact: between fear and the feeling of power.

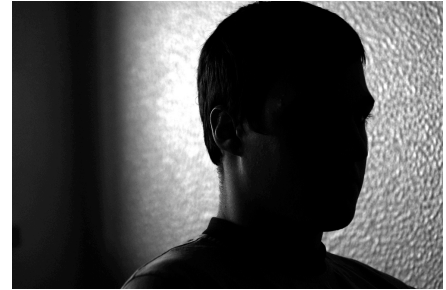
The symbolic function of a firearm whilst form of accessing material goods and status, arose frequently along interviews with male youths. The majority of youths who had contact with firearms (usually pistols and shotguns) associate them values such as power and virility, revealing, in some cases, to be familiarised with operating and the characteristics of these weapons. In the words of an interviewee, firearms guarantee "sneakers, power and girls", indicators of social status amongst peers.

Frequently, however, this desire of visibility and recognition associated to using and carrying firearms (amidst peers, in the community or in the family) is justified by the individual experience of spirals of violence: situations of injustice or abandonment (namely by relatives); having a family member with contact/involved with firearms; not having perspectives of future, allied to a frail family monitoring.

In what concerns females, the majority of youths mentioned that they have never used or handled a firearm, despite the great majority had said to have seen or even felt curiosity to hold one. A large part knew someone, in the family or in their sphere of friends who had been victims of firearms. In the majority of the cases, firearms are considered by female youths, as a central problem in the neighbourhood, in the city, vector of disturbances in the public and private spheres.

But despite the firearm representing "fear", "threat" and "death", some youths identify them with necessities of self-defence and protection. The opinions were unanimous relatively to the male perceptions over firearms: boys feel more attracted to firearms than women, identifying them with adrenaline, courage or even bravery.

When questioned about the fact that some girls felt attracted to firearms, some responded that those are "tomboys", "crazy", and that "guns may



Youth serving confinement measures in the Education Centre of Olivais speaks about his contact with firearms, December 2008. Photo by H lio Gomes.

even suit well on men, but not women". This last point reveals the participation (active or unconscious) of some women in the construction and reinforcement of violent sociability patterns, supporting and encouraging the association between firearms and masculinity.

In fact, and to the resemblance of other international contexts, transverse to contact, carrying and using legal and illegal firearms, we can find the symbolic conceptions built and entrenched in society, which hold to sexualised ideologies, which associate firearms to a type of dominant masculinity. Whether in the sense of providing a greater protection capacity and defence for themselves and their own, whether as a form of obtaining material goods, respect and, in some cases, women.

However, if we look anew to the number of youths who serve confinement measures in Portugal (204), we verify that this number corresponds to only 0,015% of the total youth population residing in Portugal, (1,6% million) and 2% of the total prison population. This reality, similar to other European countries, such as Spain, Germany, France, Malt, Slovenia and Croatia (Killias *et al.*, 2003), corroborates the testimonies gathered, indicating the existence of a much larger percentage of

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youth who choose not to participate in illegal and/or violent practices in our country, specially those who involve using firearms.

Of the many narratives of youths that resist to violence and to the contact with firearms, stand out the stories, on one hand, of those who went through a trajectory which passes from violence to refusal and, on the other hand, of those who chose by not adopting a dominant and violent version of masculinity and by not having contact with firearms.

In the first case, often this option was motivated by paternity, by the personal experience of punishment and for the recognition of the potential negative repercussions of contact/use of firearms; by the support and trust of relatives, friends or by the existence of future alternatives matching their material and symbolic expectations (namely at the level of status).

In the second case, amidst the outlined motivations stand out the existence of positive male role models in their lives; belonging to a peer group equally adverse to violence; access to alternative forms of constructing self-esteem and belonging; personal experience of the negative repercussions inherent to being involved with violence and/or with firearms; and the role of women (mainly mothers) in the construction of alternative perspectives about what it is to be a man.

### Conclusion

The analysis of the contact with, ownership and use of firearms demonstrates the symbolic function of firearms.

In fact, similarly to other international contexts, illegal and legal contact with, use and ownership of firearms is determined by symbolic constructions, deeply rooted in society and linked to gendered ideologies that associate firearms to a dominant type of masculinity able to guarantee the protection and defence of oneself and of the family, but

also as a way to guarantee goods, respect and, in some cases, women. These gender expectations determine the incentives (real and perceived) for the ownership and use of firearms by men and women.



Youth, currently monitor at the Sementes' Project Lisbon, gives an interview about his past of gun use, November 2008. Photo by Hélio Gomes.

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### Notes

[1] This sample corresponds to 45 344 licenses for using and carrying a firearm B1, C, D, E, F, sport shooting and collector, as well as license to retain a firearm at the household issued in the years of 2008 and 2009.

[2] According to the DGRS (2009: 61), of the youths serving socio-educative confinement measures in the country in 2009, 79% had committed crimes against propriety, 6% crimes against physical integrity; 3% crimes against life and 2% crimes related to drug trafficking, 1% crimes against personal liberty, others against people and common peril.

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## P@x Peace Observatory

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## Peace Builders

**Observatory on Small Arms and Light Weapons Production, Trade and Proliferation (OPPCPAL/CNJP)**

<http://www.observatorioal.org/>

The OPPCPAL/CNJP was founded by the National Commission for Justice and Peace in 2004. It began its activities with a brief research on the connections between small arms and light weapons proliferation, urban violence and organised crime in Portugal and world wide. Since 2005, it promotes regular public auditions on the phenomenon of SALW proliferation in Portugal and on the national legal framework of firearms and ammunition. The OPPCPAL

participated in the voluntary disarmament campaign in 2006, through a awareness raising campaign aimed at the owners and users of firearms. In the future, OPPCPAL aims to focus its attention on addressing the factors that lead to SALW demand in Portugal; monitoring the implementation of the national law on firearms and ammunition and pressuring the government to destroy rather than re-use the weapons apprehended, retrieved or redundant.

### **Amnesty International Portugal**

<http://www.amnistia-internacional.pt/>

AI Portugal is a human rights non-governmental organisation aimed at promoting research and action in order to prevent and combat severe abuses to physical and mental integrity, freedom of expression, and the right of non discrimination. In 2002, together with the organisations *Associação de imprensa missionária* (Missão Press), *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, *Fundação Pro Dignitate* and the agency *Ecclesia*, launched the petition “Unmask the traders of death”, demanding the Parliament to legislate on small arms trade and introduce criteria ensuring greater transparency in international transferences. The petition was signed by over 95 thousand Portuguese people. Since 2003, when the international campaign “Control Arms” was created by Amnesty International, Oxfam and IANSA, AI Portugal has participated in public consultations on the new national law on firearms and ammunition; has collected signatures from the Portuguese parliamentarians in favor of the Arms Trade Treaty; and has promoted campaigns of children disarmament, namely through the campaign “War is not a toy”, which collected over 1500 war toys.

### **Viva Rio**

[www.vivario.org.br](http://www.vivario.org.br)

Viva Rio is a non-governmental organisation based in Rio de Janeiro, whose main objective is to promote a culture of peace and social development through interventions, research and formulation of public policies. Founded in 1993 in the aftermath of on growing violence in Rio de Janeiro, Viva Rio has devoted its attention to urban violence, especially to risk groups such as youth in disinfranchised neighbourhoods, the most exposed to urban gun violence. The organisation works at three levels – community actions, human security and communication. In the realm of arms control, the organisation coordinated research on national and transnational aspects of small arms dissemination (ISER and Viva Rio, 2005, *Brasil: as armas e as vítimas*. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras), awareness raising campaigns on the dangers of small arm; and voluntary disarmament campaigns and public destruction initiatives (for example, the campaign “*Rio Desarme-se*” [Rio, Disarm], was held in 2001, in partnership with the State’s government and the national army, resulted in the greatest public weapon destruction in the country).

## Gun violence in numbers: the dead and the wounded

In order to analyse the impact of firearms presence in Portuguese society it is necessary to quantify and qualify the dead and the injured and their characteristics (numbers, gender and age groups). Comparing the lethal capacity of firearms to white weapons and other external causes it is also important.

The methodology used to identify the number of gun-related deaths and injuries was based on the data gathered through the databases of the *Direcção Geral de Saúde* [1] [the National Health's Department], the *Polícia Judiciária* [Judiciary Police, responsible for investigating gun-related incidents in Portugal] and the *Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal* [the National Institute of Forensic Medicine]. Nevertheless, it is important to mention some difficulties in crossing data and some data divergences.

Each institution gathers and systematises data individually, according to their own set of criteria, which hinders the possibility of making a joint analysis. Accordingly it is difficult to quantify gun-related incidents when there is no organism responsible for the systematic gathering and analysis of data on gun deaths and injuries as well as establish a connection between cause of death and used instrument.

### Gun mortality in Portugal

Between 2003 and 2009, 985 people died as a result of guns in Portugal (PJ, 2010). Of this, 707 (86%) were male and 225 female (24%).

**Table 1 - Firearms occurrences by year and sex (2003-2009)**

Sex/ Year	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Fem	49	32	29	35	21	36	23
Male	113	108	90	150	76	91	79
S/ref [3]	4	10	7	15	9	5	3
Total	166	150	126	200	106	132	105

Source: *Polícia Judiciária*, 2010

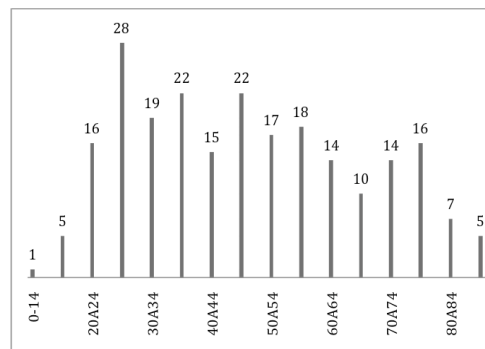
In 2009, 105 gun-related deaths were registered, around 20% less than those observed in the year 2008, which recorded 132 gun-related deaths. The year of 2008 registered representing 26 more victims than in 2006.

Regarding age, women victims of firearms are usually between 30 and 39 years old, while men are between 20 and 29 years old.

Between 2003 and 2008, 229 people were admitted to national hospitals due to suicide attempts or auto-inflicted injuries as a result of firearms or explosives. In 2004 45 victims were registered, in 2005, 43; and in 2006, 46. In 2007, there was a substantial reduction of the number of cases (25 in total), while in 2008 the number increased again to 36 deadly victims.

11% of the 229 victims were women mainly between 25 and 29 years old, followed by women between 35 to 45 and 45 to 49 (DGS, 2010).

**Graph 1 – Suicide by age group**



Source: *Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal*, 2009

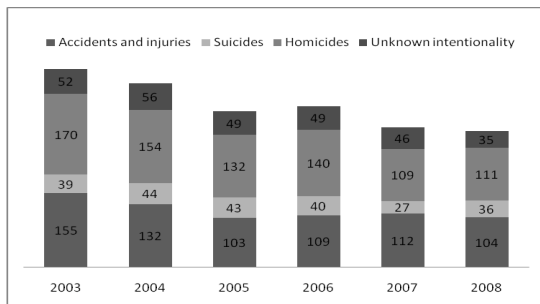
From the analysis of the data, we highlight self-inflicted lesions (14 cases in 2008) and non-specified cases of firearms self-inflicted aggression (11 cases). It is worth to mention that suicide was the main cause of death of all external causes in the year of 2008 (OMS).

### Hospital admissions as a result of gun use

During the same period (2003 – 2009), 2047 victims were admitted to national hospitals due to firearms related injuries (DGS, 2010). Most of the cases were homicides and homicide attempts (816 victims), followed by accident victims (715),

suicides (229) and no identified cause (1017) (DGS, 2010). Homicides and homicide attempts represent 45% of the crimes or incidents involving women.

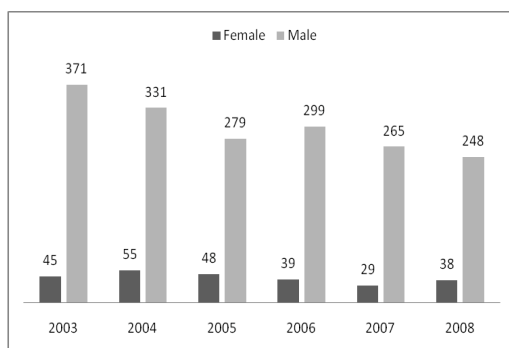
**Graph 1** - Number and type of hospital occurrences related to gun use (2003/2008)



Source: *Direcção Geral de Saúde*, 2009

Analysing by years, we can verify a decrease of gun occurrences since 2006 (338 victims). In 2007 there was a 10% decrease of all occurrences (294 victims), while the year of 2008 registered 286 cases. However, if it is true that gun occurrences have been diminishing, one should note that this trend does not apply to both sexes.

**Graph 3** – Gun-related occurrences by year and sex of the victim



Source: *Direcção Geral de Saúde*, 2009

As far as age is concerned, globally there is a greater incidence between the ages of 20 to 34, which correspond to 47% of all cases. According to the data, 62 children from 0 to 14 years old (8% of the sample of accidents in total) were victims of firearms during this period.

### Victimisation and gun type

The most commonly used firearms in gun-related incidents (accidents, suicides, homicides and homicide attempts) were revolvers and pistols (handguns) (29%), followed by shotguns (15%) and hunting rifles (13%). Globally, the most dangerous weapons for both men and women were handguns (31% of all women occurrences and 28% of all male occurrences).

In the years of 2007 and 2008, pistols and hunting rifles were the most common weapons in gun accidents, assaults, homicides and suicides. In 2008 the number of hospital admissions motivated by gun use was 80 cases, to which were added 31 cases of hunting rifles use, representing around 30% decrease in relation to the year 2007.

### Conclusion

Every week, at least, 2 people die in Portugal as a result of firearms use. In 2002, Portugal registered a rate of 2,13 deaths by firearms per 100 thousand inhabitants (OMS, 2002) and, in 2008, 1,2 intentional murders per 100 thousand inhabitants (UNODC, 2008). According to these figures, Portugal follows the European trend, being ahead of countries such as Spain, Norway, France and Germany.

It is important to underline the difficulties in obtaining rigorous data on gun mortality and morbidity and in particularly information regarding the type of weapon used, the place of the occurrence (for example, if it happened in a domestic violence situation); and if the occurrence resulted in death.

Recognising the importance of the National Health Care System in the generation of relevant data to inform policies of violence prevention and combat, it is imperative to promote the integration of the data on gun mortality and morbidity originating from the Hospitals and the Institutes of Forensic Medicine. Also important is to integrate its analysis as well as promote its adaptation to international regulations, namely those of the International Disease Coding (ICD 10).

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**Notes**

[1] These included the hospitals from Aveiro, Beja, Braga, Bragança, Castelo Branco, Coimbra, Évora, Faro, Guarda, Ilha de S. Miguel, Ilha Terceira, Leiria, Lisboa, Portalegre, Porto, Santarém, Setúbal, Viana do Castelo, Vila Real, and Viseu.

[2] This category assembles data from situations in which it wasn't possible to determine more information due to deficiencies in the data provision of the PJ's database.

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## The costs of gun violence in Portugal: hospital costs, productivity loss and intangible costs associated to the victims

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The article aims at making an estimation of some of the economical costs resulting from crimes and other firearms incidents. Costs associated to the anticipation of the crimes (as, for example, the costs associated to attempts to prevent being victim of crime), the costs associated to the response to the crimes (costs connected with the judicial and prison systems), or costs of a more wider character included in what is usually mentioned, in literature, as being the costs associated to fear of the crime will not be considered.

### Methodological considerations

The data systematised here about gun casualties is based on data from the *Polícia Judiciária* [Judiciary Police], which account for the homicides carried out with firearms. The analysis on non-fatal victims is based on data from the National Health Service, particular from the National Health Department (DGS, 2009). It was not possible to proceed to the quantification of the costs associated to medical-coroners examinations registered by the INML, due to lack of data relative to the classification and costs of such examinations.

### The costs of gun violence in Portugal

In the following table, the estimated costs are presented.

**Table 1.** Intangible costs, productivity loss (PP) hospital costs (CH) related to firearms incidents.

Year	Safety per se	PP: dead victims	PP: wounded	CH.	Total
2003	147 766	90 929	243	1 392	240 330
2004	136 820	81 064	194	1 507	219 586
2005	114 341	62 946	235	1 278	178 800
2006	176 626	103 084	286	1 627	281 622
2007	98 278	52 434	187	1 303	152 203
2008	119 139	65 070	247	1 425	185 880
Média anual	132 162	75 921	232	1 422	209 737
Média diária	362.09	208.00	0.64	3.90	574.62

Sources: Polícia Judiciária (2009) and Direcção-Geral de Saúde (2009)

As it can be seen, the largest part of the costs (circa 63%) concerns *safety per se* [1], including intangible factors such as pain, suffering and loss of quality of life. The lost productivity represents around 36% of the total costs, and hospital costs represent less than 1% (0,7%). The relative distribution of the costs obtained in the current study does not significantly deviate from the obtained by other authors, in studies regarding other countries.

As it can be observed, it is estimated that annually the economic costs incurred as consequence of using firearms correspond to 210 million euros (at 2009 prices).

There were still estimated the average costs per habitant and per victim. In order to estimate the average costs per habitant it was used as an approximate value of the number of habitants in the country, the INE's estimate for the population residing in Portugal on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of 2008, which was 10 627 250 habitants (INE, 2009a).

**Table 2.** Average costs per habitants and per victim

Year	Average cost per inhabitant	Average cost per victim
2003	22.61 €	428 x 103 €
2004	20.66 €	439 x 103 €
2005	16.82 €	406 x 103 €
2006	26.50 €	548 x 103 €
2007	14.32 €	399 x 103 €
2008	17.49 €	478 x 103 €
Annual average	19.74 €	450 x 103 €

These values do not allow identifying a clear trend in the average cost per victim nor it the average cost per habitant. This absence of a clear trend appears from the fact of such tendency not existing in the variation of number of fatalities, which are those who carry the greatest weight in the final numbers.

It is also apparent that the annual average cost per inhabitant is significantly low, especially if we take into consideration the average values

per inhabitant registered in some studies on the US reality.

The differences in the findings result to a large extent from the differences between the two realities, namely regarding productivity and wealth, number of firearms in circulation, and the percentage of the population victim of firearms incidents. Finally, differences are also result of the data used: whereas studies in the US consider all victims of firearms, the present study only takes into account homicide victims registered by the Judiciary Police and victims of injuries registered by the National Health Service. For these reasons, a detailed comparison between the findings of the present study and other studies was not conducted.

**Table 3.** Comparison of the number of victims and costs associated to firearms incidents and white weapons use.

Average annual rates	Firearms	White weapons
Deaths	147	53
Severe injuries	270	370
Mild injuries	48	110
<i>Safety per se</i> (10 <sup>3</sup> €)	132 162	60 636
Productivity Loss: vítimas mortais (10 <sup>3</sup> €)	75 921	27 198
Productivity Loss: Wounded (10 <sup>3</sup> €)	232	184
Hospital costs (10 <sup>3</sup> €)	1 422	1 442
Total costs (10 <sup>3</sup> €)	209 737	89 461

The results are in line with the findings obtained by E Miller e Cohen (1997) in the United States. In their study, the number of incidents with white weapons is far superior than those of firearms, but the costs associated to white weapons incidents represent only 36,5% of all costs associated to firearms occurrences.

### Conclusion

The limitation of the data, and the necessary caution for double accounting not to happen, led to some approximations having been

made which led to an under-estimate of the real social costs of firearms incidents. Thus, the results presented, and in particular the indicated value for the annual average cost of 210 million Euros, should only be seen as an inferior limit of the totality of this social costs which are supported by the country.

Also, the findings do not corroborate a significant variation in the evolution of the average costs per inhabitants in the years after the approval of the Portuguese law on guns and ammunition (Law 5/2006).

The comparison with the reality of white weapon incidents corresponds to the initial expectations: while white weapons are responsible for a greater number of incidents, they result in fewer deadly victims. Thus safety per se costs and productivity losses associated to deadly victims are much inferior.

Once white weapons incidents result in greater number of injuries, one can conclude that hospital costs are superior in the case of firearms.

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### Notes

[1] Refers to the value that an individual will be willing to pay in order to reduce the probability of premature death or injuries in other individuals, due to family ties, altruistic feelings, or others. (Ludwig e Cook, 2001).

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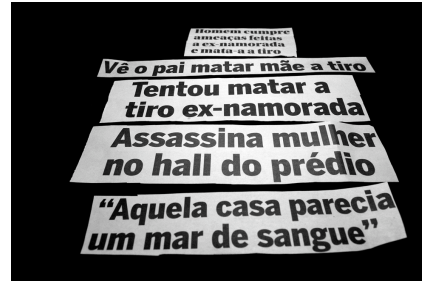
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## Domestic violence and firearms in Portugal

Despite the fact that women are not the majority of the (direct) victims of gun violence, they are affected in a variety of ways. Several studies concerning firearms have called attention to their role in perpetuating violence against women, either in the household, or in public spaces, revealing that they tend to be particularly dangerous when present in the private context, regardless of who is the owner of the firearm, of its (i)legality, and of its motivations (Hememway *et al.*, 2002; Vetten, 2006; Moura, 2007).

In the year 2006, according to data from the *Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna/RASI* (MAI, 2006: 149), 66 firearms were used in situations of domestic violence (36 handguns and 30 hunting firearms), corresponding to a total of 1% of registered domestic violence incidents (11 638 in total) and 11% of the total of domestic violence incidents involving all sorts of weapons (firearms, white weapons and others) (617). In 2007 the number of firearms used in these circumstances decreased to 49, having been registered 30 cases of handling of handguns in situations of domestic violence and 19 hunting firearms, amounting to 0,7% of the total cases of domestic violence (13 050) and 7% of the total of domestic violence incidents registered with resort to arms (696) (MAI, 2007: 206). Whereas in 2008, 81 cases of firearms use in situations of domestic violence were registered, which corresponds to 0, 5% of the total cases of domestic violence reported (17 648) and 37% of the total universe of firearms use in situations of domestic violence in that year (218) (MAI, 2009: 169).

According to the most recent data from the *Direcção-Geral da Administração Interna* concerning the occurrences reported to the police forces GNR and PSP (DGAI, 2010, 2009), 16,3% of the denounced owned and/or used a firearm in 2009, similar value to that verified in 2008 (16,5%) and 2007 (15,7%).



Headlines of Portuguese newspapers on armed domestic violence. Photo by Hélio Gomes.

However, this data does not allow outlining more in-depth conclusions regarding armed domestic violence, remaining some limitations in the way data are gathered and disclosed [1].

In an investigation of the cases of femicide in contexts of domestic violence registered by Homicide Section of the *Polícia Judiciária* in Lisbon between 2000 and 2008 (Almeida *et al.*, 2010), it was verified that isolated femicide was the most frequent (59,2%), being the most common victims women with ages comprised between 28 and 49 years old and the aggressors, men, spouses (52%), in their majority equally between 28 and 49 years old. The most commonly used instrument in these incidents was the firearm (57,1%), mostly shotguns and hunting rifles (30,6%), followed by white weapons (26,5%) and physical force (10,2%).

The work carried out by the *Observatório das Mulheres Assassinadas* [Observatory of Murdered Women] [2], an initiative of the feminist organisation UMAR – *União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta*, deserves special highlight in this analysis. Since 2004 that this organisation gathers data about murdered women as a result of violence against women or gender violence, carrying out an analysis of homicide and attempted homicide as a result of gender violence published in the Portuguese press.

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This data reveals a much more worrying reality than that presented by the Reports on reported occurrences by the Security Forces: if between 2007 and 2009 GNR and PSP registered 33 deaths by domestic violence, the collection of UMAR points out to 95 murdered women by their (ex) spouse, (ex) companion or (ex) boyfriend in equal period of time. Moreover, since that the NGO has begun this project of data gathering about spousal homicide, in 2004, it has identified 250 cases of murdered women already (data 2004-2009).

In relation to the objects used by the murderers, in the period of 5 years were identified 59 situations where the press makes reference to the use of firearms, having the organization identified 28 short firearms, 28 long firearms (shotguns) and 3 altered/modified firearms (alarm pistols and closed barrel hunting rifles) [3]. From this it is inferred that, in 24% of the identified cases, the firearms were the cause of death; in 11% were the use of bladed objects and, in the remaining, were varied causes (such as strangulation, beating or immolation) or unknown causes.

Unlike what the data from the security forces points out, spousal homicide with resort to firearms is higher than that which occurs with resort to white weapons. A brief note to safeguard that UMAR only gathers data which has as consequence the death of women by (ex) partners, while official data concerns total occurrences. Still, it is inferred the growth of lethal potential when resorting to firearms.

In order to comprehensively understand this data, a nationwide survey was conducted, to examine the impact of firearms in violence against women, between October 2009 and March 2010, in partnership with International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and *Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima* (APAV). In total, 101 questionnaires were spontaneously filled out by women who denounced domestic violence.

Of the 101 women who appealed to this Association and that agreed to answer the questionnaire, 37% mention that the responsible by the assault owns/has access to firearm(s).

Also revealing is the percentage of denouncers who claimed *not knowing* if the intimate partner had a firearm at home (39%). Not knowing means having to deal with that doubt and, therefore, with the eminence of discovering their existence. And it means that, above all, in order to maintain and perpetuate a relation of dominance and power, the weapon does not necessarily need to be used, or even seen.

Through the inquiry it was further concluded that the threat of using the firearm was the most common form of intimidation, inclusively superior to exhibiting or aiming the firearm at the victim.

As already alerted by studies and international campaigns (IANSA, 2009; OFS, 2006; Wiebe, 2003; Kwing Hung, 2000), the presence (or suspicion of presence) of firearms increases the probability of being used, and diminishes the capacity to react by those who are threatened by weapons. In the inquiry applied, some data corroborates this idea: in 50% of the reported cases the fact that the aggressor owns/has contact with firearms hindered physical response from the victim, and in 27% hindered verbal response. 15% of the interviewees still claims to “like to put an end to the relation, but doesn’t do it from being afraid that he uses the firearm”.



Firearm within the private sphere. Photo by Hélio Gomes.

The overwhelming majority of assaulters keeps the firearm at home (80%), increasing the possibility of using it in situations of domestic violence.



Therefore it shall not be surprising, that 77% of the respondents said that they would feel much safer if the sale of firearms was forbidden to civilians in Portugal, mainly when considering that in 38% of the cases are legal firearms, almost twice as much as illegal ones.

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## Notes

[1] Nowadays, the scarce existent data about armed domestic violence incidents (namely in the *Relatórios Nacionais de Segurança Interna* of 2006, 2007 and 2008, as well as in those of *Direcção-Geral da Administração Interna*, of 2008, 2009 and 2010) consider in an aggregated form the direct victimization by firearms and usage of firearms while instruments of intimidation and threat, not detailing the universe of the two occurrences specifically, in particular murders committed with resort to firearms in situations of domestic violence and assaults with resort to use and/or threat of using a firearm.

Beyond that, when the thematic is ownership or usage of firearm, the current data in the several official documents do not usually include reports made in all the security forces: in the case of RASIs it includes only information whose source is PSP (MAI, 2006: 149; MAI 2007: 204-206; MAI 2008: 169), while in the case of *Relatórios da Violência Doméstica* from DGAI (2008 and 2009) the data only concerns GNR, not being known the values found by PSP. In a similar way, the scientific research conducted in this domain (Lisboa *et al.*, 2003; 2005; 2006; 2008), despite offering a valuable contribution in identifying economic, social and health costs, lacks a specific analysis on the role of firearms in situations of family violence. Once this

question is safeguarded, firearms tend to be thought of in an aggregated form to white weapons.

[2][http://www.umarfeminismos.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=90&Itemid=26](http://www.umarfeminismos.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90&Itemid=26)

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## The legal framework of Firearms and Ammunition in Portugal: between advances and risks.

**P@X Studies**

The current national legal framework of firearms and ammunition, approved by the Law 5/2006, results from the harmonisation of existing national legislation, dispersed in several diplomas and decrees, and the compliance with international commitments in the realm of organised transnational crime, namely the United Nations Additional Protocol Against Organised Transnational Crime regarding the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts, Components and Ammunition [1] and the European Directive 2008/51/CE, of 21 May 2008.

The law change of 2006, subsequently altered in 2009, represents a major advance in the systematisation of a set of diverse laws and regulations, some dated from 1949. It also represents a significant change in terms of the criteria for obtaining firearms licenses, revealing on the one hand a concern for preventing and combating illegal firearms ownership and on the other hand preventing the misuse of firearms.

The drafting process of the new legal framework resulted from a long period of law proposals and different legal commissions [2]. Civil society took part in the process through non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International and the Portuguese Association for Victim Support and the National Commission for Justice and Peace [3] (CNJP), through its working group the Permanent Observatory on Small Arms and Light Weapons Production, Trade and Proliferation.

It is worth mentioning that this legal framework covers firearms production, assemblage, repair, transference, import, export, storage, stock management, circulation, trade, acquisition, detention, transport, use and bear, excluding from its scope weapons and ammunition destined to national armed forces and police as well as military weapons.

Amongst the most important aspects of the current legal regime are:

1. The detailed classification of weapons by class (from A to G) [3] according to danger, function and permitted use;
2. The disincentive to individual possession of firearms, by instituting more demanding criteria for legal possession and use;

3. The denial of granting licenses of the detention, ownership and use of firearms to candidates with an history of domestic violence; and seizing firearms in the event of domestic violence (article 107º, no. 1, al. b e no. 2);

4. The revocation of licenses of firearms detention, possession and use whenever the licensed is convicted for domestic violence or is under security measures (article 108º, no. 1, al. c);

5. The establishment of stricter sanctions for possession and use of illegal firearms and broadening the range of responsibilities for firearm owners regarding bearing, use and storage;

6. The improvement of the regime of firearms storage, including the mandatory requirement of a non portable safe for the owners of more than 2 weapons of class C and D;

7. The reinforcement of control and monitoring processes over trading activities;

8. The obligation of contracting a civil responsibility insurance of 100.000 € (minimum).

9. The conduction of a voluntary disarmament campaign regulated by the Regulation MEAI/71/2006, aimed at citizens wishing to hand their weapons or legalise its status, without any penal consequences.

This campaign, one of the most promising and innovative aspects of the Law in terms of arms control and violence prevention, was scheduled to 23 February to 20 December 2006, but it was in fact held from August to December.

Despite the partnership between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the CNJP, this campaign was poorly publicised and participated and thus its pedagogical potential was not fully seized. The campaign resulted in the surrender of 6 496 firearms by the police forces, the majority of which were hunting rifles. Around 60% of the weapons surrendered were later on legalised.

On 14 July 2009, PSP destroyed firearms and white weapons, including those surrendered voluntarily in 2006 and firearms apprehended by the police in 2008. In this occasion, 1 1005 firearms were destroyed, 89 of which from class A (military weapons, forbidden for civil use), 231 from class B1 (handguns) and 785 from classes C and D (hunting rifles).

#### Recent changes in the legal framework: Law 17/2009

The Law 5/2006 was reviewed in 6 May 2009 (Lei 17/2009), due to some of evident technical pitfalls and pressure from society groups, such as hunting associations.

We highlight the following elements:

1. The toughening of sanctions in the cases of forbidden firearms ownership and use and gun crimes.
2. The institution of mandatory updates for firearms ownership and use licenses (for class D firearms, every 10 years; in the case of B class firearms, every 5 years);



Destroyed firearms in July 2009. Photo by Hélio Gomes.

3. The creation of a mandatory gunfire test, in order to set up a firearms database in Portugal and enable weapon tracking in the future;
4. The inclusion of article 108º, no. 1 c) and d), which broadens the possibility of license revocation and weapon apprehension whenever the user faces judicial inquiry suspension for a crime related to domestic violence or whenever he/she is under restraining orders for the same crime.

Among the limits of the 2009 revision are the reduction of the minimal age for class D firearms ownership and use licenses from 18 years old

to 16 years old whenever there is parental supervision of hunting activities (article 19, A).

#### Conclusion

The new legal framework introduces significant limitations to the granting of firearms licenses and to the disciplining of the transport, storage and use of these weapons. Trade and production activities are also more strictly controlled and sanctions adjusted.

One of the most controversial elements of the legislation is the change of the minimum age limit for candidates of class D licenses, which was decreased from 18 years old to 16.

One should note that since the legal framework is recent it is not possible to identify all the difficulties and repercussions in terms of increasing or decreasing firearms demand as well as on crimes practiced with firearms.

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#### Notes

[1] United Nations Additional Protocol Against Organised Transnational Crime regarding the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts, Components and Ammunition, 21 May 2001. The Additional Protocol was signed by the European Union in 16 January 2002 and by Portugal in 3 January 2002. The signature of the Protocol provoked the change in the Directive 91/477/CE.

[2] Law proposal 121/IX/2, presented by the XV Constitutional Government and law proposal 152/IX/3 presented by the XVI Constitutional Government.

[3] The *Comissão Nacional Justiça e Paz* (CNJP) is an organism of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference, founded in the early 80s to promote justice and peace in Portugal ([www.cnjp.ecclesia.pt](http://www.cnjp.ecclesia.pt)).

[4] Class A includes military weapons; Class B defense weapons (pistols and revolvers); Class C and D hunting rifles; Class E, teasers and aerosols; Class F, white weapons, firearms replica and collecting weapons; and Class G, veterinary weapons, soft air arms and compressed air weapons (for sporting purposes).

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**NOVEMBER**

**NEP/ Observatory on Gender and Armed Violence** (OGAV/CES) organised the photo exhibition “**Sex(ed) Pistols: 16 portraits on violences against women**”, CES-Coimbra, Coimbra, 25th November-10th December.

The **Observatory on Gender and Armed Violence** (OGAV/CES) participated in the Conference of the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, with the communication “**The UNSCR 1325 in non-war scenarios: focusing on violence and guns**”, Instituto de Defesa Nacional, Lisbon, 8th November.

**JULY**

**NEP/CES** organised the international seminar “**Global Interventionism: Critiques and Resistances**”, School of Economics, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, 12-15 July.

**JUNE**

**Freire, Maria Raquel; Lopes, Paula Duarte;** Cavalcante, Fernando; Gauster, Markus; Lucianetti, Livia; Pereira, Pascoal; Vuorisalo, Valtteri; Brito, Rafaela (2010) presented the communication “**Mapping research on European peace missions**”, the International Conference on “New Challenges of Peacekeeping and the European Union’s Role in Multilateral Crisis Management”, COST Action IS0805, Hotel Mercure, Brussels, 11 - 26 June.

**MAY**

**NEP/CES** organised the final seminar of the project: “**Violência e armas ligeiras: um retrato português**” [“**Violence and small arms: the Portuguese case**”, CES-Lisboa, Lisbon, 20th May.

**NEP/Observatory on Gender and Armed Violence** (OGiVA/CES) and Action for Justice and Peace (AJP) organised the seminar “**Silences of gun violence. Women and armed violence in Portugal, Mozambique and Brazil**”, in celebration of the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament “All my Independent Women”, Casa da Esquina, Coimbra.

2011 - 2014 - "Consolidação da paz e a sua sustentabilidade: as missões da ONU em Timor Leste e a contribuição de Portugal", co-ordinated by **Maria Raquel Freire**, funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).

This Project, which was recently approved, reflects on the ongoing debate about peace missions contribution to peacebuilding within the United Nations. East-Timor was the case chosen to illustrate this discussion. It aims at understanding the multidimensional nature that the different peace missions mandates have been consequently adopting, as well as the implications those continuous changes have had on the way Portugal has positioned and articulated itself.