

DISARM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE
FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM



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DISARM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
 CONFERENCE REPORT
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 STOCKHOLM SWEDEN

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM
 www.wilpfinternational.org
 www.peacewomen.org
 www.researchingcritical.org
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WILPF's International Projects – the women, peace and security project, PeaceWomen and the disarmament project, *Reading Critical Will – III* – are relevant for local, national and international contexts.

Since its establishment in 1915 WILPF has brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means, promoting political, economic and social justice for all. WILPF is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) with national sections all over the world with an international secretariat based in Geneva - and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations.

MORE GUNS MORE DANGER FOR WOMEN

The presence of guns threatens women's security in both conflict and peace; they facilitate trafficking, forced prostitution and sexual violence. Weapons are often used to kill, threaten or intimidate women in their own homes. In many countries, legal firearms are the most commonly used weapons in domestic homicides. Still, most countries do not mention domestic violence in their gun laws. Thus, disarmament and arms control is strongly linked to women's security.

“Weapons are often used to kill, threaten or intimidate women in their own homes“



FACT BOX THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

UN Security Council resolution 1325 – **UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security** – highlights the importance of women's participation in all levels of decision-making in the sphere of peace and security, as well as the need for an integrated gender perspective in relevant policies and programmes.

UNSCR 1325 has been followed up by several related resolutions, 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960, which together constitute the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. In order for disarmament and arms control initiatives to be successful, this agenda needs to be fully integrated with decisions and policies on weapons.



In the hands of individuals
 About 900 million guns exist in the world today. 25% of the guns belong to the police, armies and other government agencies. The remaining arsenal, around 75% of the world's guns, are in the hands of individuals, which makes the problem of small arms difficult to solve.

Armed violence is strongly connected to a masculine identity, and possession of weapons is associated with manhood

Guns are gendered
 A gun does a lot of damage to your body, and can be used to kill from a distance. The consequence is that the presence of a gun increases the probability of deadly violence; you are 12 times more likely to die if an attack involves a gun. The killing power of a gun is disproportionate to the level of responsibility of the people who most often possess them.

Almost all gun users are male, and most people who are shot dead are male.

TAKE ACTION!

- ▶ Email politicians and other decision makers to let them know what you think
- ▶ Tweet for disarmament
- ▶ Change your facebook status to Disarm Domestic Violence
- ▶ Put the poster on the back of this report on a wall where people **can see it**
- ▶ Hold a protest
- ▶ Hold a workshop

However, since guns are almost never made, owned, bought, sold or used by women, they have a disproportional impact on women's lives.

Guns are not only used to kill women, but also to threaten and to facilitate gender-based violence such as rape as a weapon of war. Furthermore, guns are used as a threat that prevents a woman from leaving an abusive partner. The fact that most guns are in civilian hands leads to increased danger for women.

Meanwhile, it is important to remember that the relationship between women, men and guns is complicated and that women are not only killed, threatened and injured by guns. Women are also perpetrators of armed violence, supporters of the use of guns, and activists for change. It is also necessary to highlight that men and boys are systematically exposed to violence as a direct result of the dominant gender constructions.

Legal and illegal weapons – a false distinction

Gun violence takes many forms, and perpetrators of armed violence include the police, armed forces, non-state armed groups, colleagues, family members and partners. Guns are very mobile and are often used several times on different locations. Furthermore, they are easily diverted from legal to illegal uses. For example, weapons bought

THE SWEDISH FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION
 www.parliamentaryforum.org

The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SwefCR) is a non-governmental organization founded in 1919, working for a world without violence, war and oppression. Non-violence is the founding principle of SwefCR.

SwefCR is a membership organization. It holds trainings in non-violence and conflict resolution, works to prevent violence and to promote disarmament, and it supports local peace initiatives around the world. SwefCR also works closely with religious groups, and promotes dialogue to prevent prejudices and xenophobia.



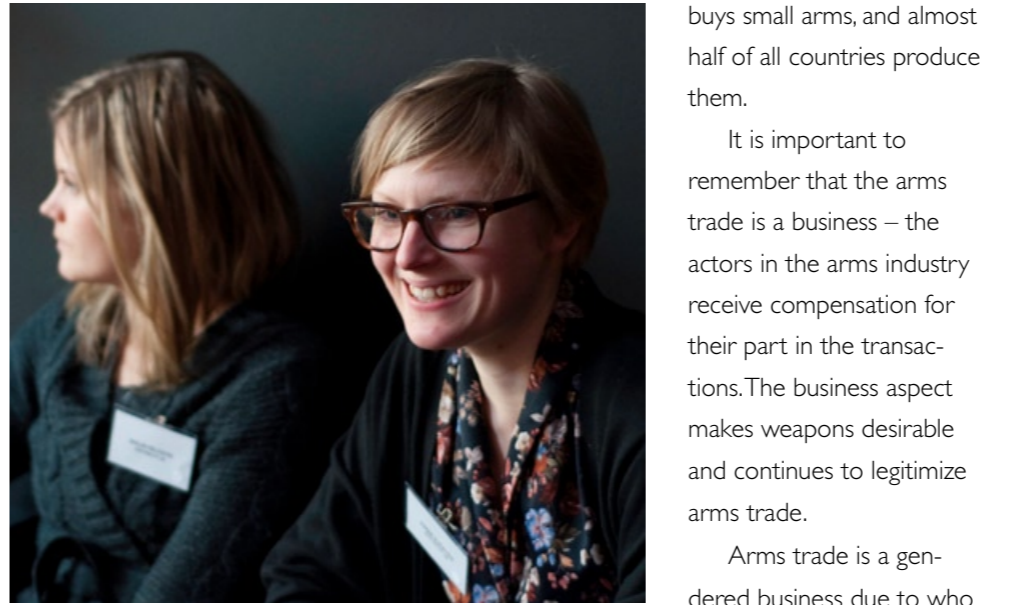
DISARM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In order to decrease the risk of deadly violence against women, domestic violence and firearms laws have been harmonized in different countries around the world. This is a strategy aiming to separate perpetrators of domestic violence from guns. In this way, some country's domestic violence laws include references to firearms possession, and firearms legislation refers to domestic violence.

“Law reforms have had positive consequences in several countries”

Law reforms have had positive consequences in several countries. Less than 10 years after Canada reformed its domestic violence and firearms laws in 1995, the overall gun murder rate had dropped by 15%, and gun homicide against women dropped by 40%.

The same trend is visible in Australia, where gun murder dropped by 45% five years after law reforms. Like in Canada, the effect was even bigger for female victims, with a drop of 57%.



buys small arms, and almost half of all countries produce them.

It is important to remember that the arms trade is a business – the actors in the arms industry receive compensation for their part in the transactions. The business aspect makes weapons desirable and continues to legitimize arms trade.

Arms trade is a gendered business due to who it involves; almost all buyers, sellers and (mis)users are men. This also includes the arms industry, media advertisers for weapons, state weapons producers, private weapons producers, gun dealers, brokers, and transporters.

Meanwhile, it is important to know that women can be active in the arms trade, especially in the transfer and trafficking of weapons. The underlying reasons for the prominence of men in the small arms trade rest on gendered understanding and portrayals of strength and power, and

TAKE ACTION!

- ▶ Find out what the domestic violence and firearms laws are in your country.
- ▶ Engage in activities asking for harmonization of domestic violence laws and firearms laws.
- ▶ Write a letter to your government representative and let her/him know what you think about the ATT.

the connection between masculinity, weapons and militaries.

Arms Trade Treaty
 The international arms trade today is poorly regulated. However, negotiations of an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which will constitute a global regulation of international arms transfers, is now taking place at the United Nations.

There are different ways of including relevant language on women, peace, and security in the ATT process. For example, it is important to recognize the involvement of conventional weapons in facilitating violence against women, including sexual- and gender-based violence.

For the ATT to be successful, it is also important to include all types of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and ammunition, and to include all types of transfers. Since the process is ongoing, it is necessary that civil society organizations and progressive states

work together to make sure that the ATT becomes a successful treaty.

The information in this report is based on speakers' presentations at the conference "Disarm Domestic Violence", 31 March 2011 in Stockholm (for more information, visit www.ikf.se). The views expressed are not necessarily those of the mentioned organizations.

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AMPARO GUERRERO
 WILPF COLOMBIA

Colombia's armed conflict has negatively impacted the lives of Colombians for a very long time. Among other things, the armed conflict has created a militarized state dependent on firearms. In this militarized society based on a very violent form of masculinity, women have few rights and governmental minimal protection. When the government loses control in a militarized society, people lose control and use arms widely and indiscriminately.

This is how a militarized society results in armed violence against women. Too often victims of domestic violence in Colombia are killed by a partner former partner with a weapon. Colombia has no unified system of registering statistics about domestic violence. It has no systematic means of protecting women. It is important to change attitudes that tolerate armed civilians and use of armed violence in the domestic space.



EMMA ROSENGREN
 WILPF SWEDEN

Sweden is often looked upon as a peaceful country, and we often talk about our nation as progressive when it comes to gender equality. However, domestic violence is a huge problem in Sweden, and more than 180 women have been murdered since 2000. In all these cases, the perpetrator was someone the victim knew. Given that 20 % of these homicides were committed with firearms, it is not difficult to imagine how many women are being threatened with weapons. In order for the deadly violence against women to stop, law reform, information campaigns and victim support is necessary.



ADILIA CARAVACA
 WILPF COSTA RICA

Recent history in the region and figures in the country make it evident that the impact of more small and light weapons have a dangerous and lethal effect on women, in families and in the society as a whole. The killing of women is the most extreme manifestation of violence against women. Women's organizations in Costa Rica look at the complexity of domestic violence, rooted in gender structures, and conclude that even in a society proud of its pacifist tradition, it is as pervasive as in most societies, cutting across socio-economic status, and affecting many aspects of women's lives.



SARA MASTERS
 IANSA WOMEN'S NETWORK

There is a lot of work around the world being done on violence against women, but the aspect of weapons is overlooked – maybe because it's too technical, or because it's just an instrument and not the fundamental cause of violence against women.

The IANSA Women's Network is the only international network focused on the connections between gender, women's rights, small arms and armed violence.

We bring women into the field of small arms control and the issue of small arms to the women's movement. We make the links between violence against women and the tools often used to facilitate and commit such acts, guns.