

INTERNATIONAL ALERT
Women Waging Peace

INCLUSIVE SECURITY,
SUSTAINABLE PEACE:
*A Toolkit for
Advocacy and Action*

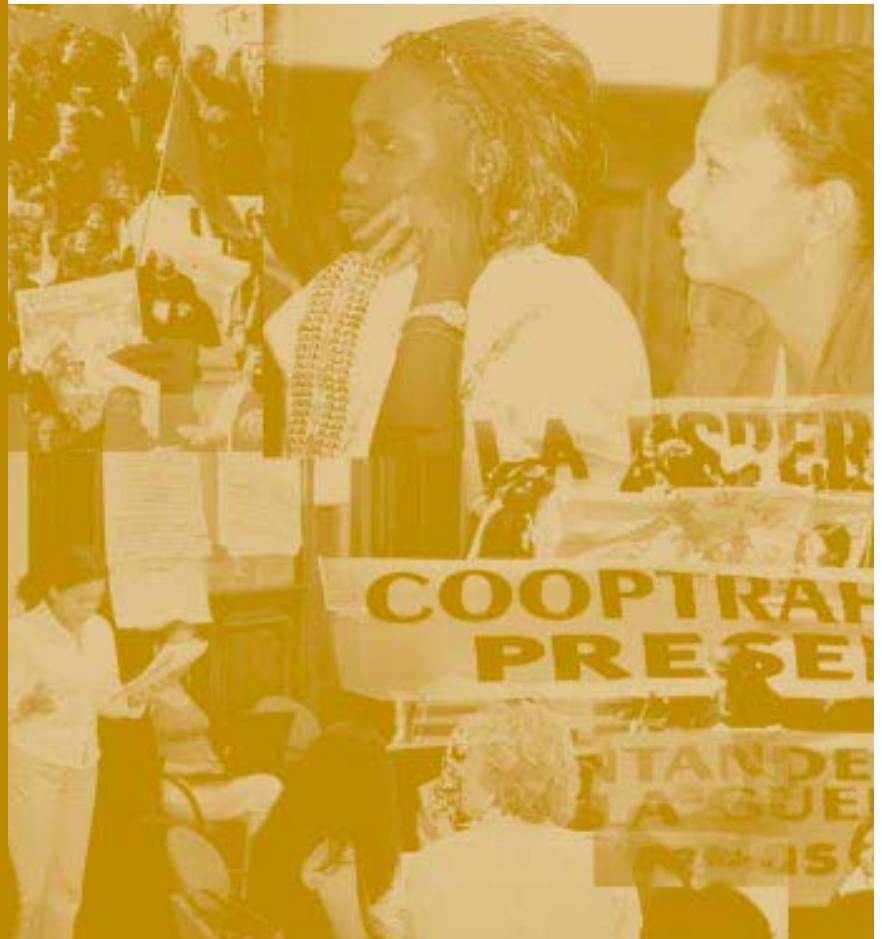
3

Security Issues

Disarmament, Demobilisation • PAGE 1
and Reintegration

Small Arms, Light Weapons and Landmines • PAGE 11

Security Sector Reform • PAGE 31



Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

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When violent conflict erupts, the availability and use of arms and weapons surges. Often, particularly in civil wars and internal conflicts, both combatants and civilians own and utilise weapons. Their presence in society makes peacebuilding a very difficult task, increasing the potential for a return to conflict and a high incidence of violent crime.

The question of how to disarm factions is a key consideration in official peace negotiations, along with the related issue of how to demobilise fighting units, aiding their transition to civilian life. International actors have termed the phase of the peace process that addresses these issues as **disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)**.

In theory, these processes can be described in a rather straightforward way. In reality, the situation is much more complex, as each conflict and peace process holds distinct challenges and opportunities. This chapter attempts to define these terms and processes according to international norms, while demonstrating that women are affected differently than men and offer unique perspectives that can contribute to more successful peacebuilding.

1. WHAT IS DDR?

International policy-makers consider formal DDR to be one of the most important steps in the peace process. The World Bank has defined a successful DDR program as “the key to an effective transition from war to peace.”¹ Donors recognise that an unsuccessful DDR process can threaten the stability of a peace agreement and long-term sustainable peace.

The break up of fighting units, the disarmament and discharge of former combatants, their return to their families and reintegration into their communities is time-consuming, expensive and difficult. For purposes of explanation, the DDR process can be broken down into three separate but enormous components defined below. It is important to note, however, that DDR phases overlap and are interdependent.

Disarmament is defined by the United Nations (UN), as “...the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone.”² In general, physical disarmament occurs in assembly areas predetermined during the peace negotiations, where

fighters are gathered together in camp-like settings, weapons are confiscated, safely stored and eventually destroyed.

“**Demobilisation** is the formal disbanding of military formations and, at the individual level, is the process of releasing combatants from a mobilised state.”³ Discharge of ex-combatants often occurs over a period of time, during which they are usually transported to their homes or new districts and granted small initial reinsertion packages.

Reintegration itself has two phases—initial **reinsertion** and long-term **reintegration**. Reinsertion refers to the short-term arrival period of an ex-combatant into his/her former home or a new community. Reintegration is a much longer-term process with the goal of ensuring permanent disarmament and sustainable peace. It includes assisting the community and the ex-combatant during the difficult transition to civilian life. In this phase, former fighters may enter job placement services, participate in skills training, credit schemes, scholarships or rehabilitation programmes.

In some cases, the international community may refer to a fourth “R” in DDR (i.e. DDRR) representing **rehabilitation**, which encompasses difficult issues such as the need to address the psychological and emotional aspects of returning home, as well as problems that arise in relation to the wider community. Nearly all DDR programmes address rehabilitation in some form, but the most often used acronym for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration is DDR.

2. WHO DESIGNS AND IMPLEMENTS DDR?

A DDR program is generally negotiated as part of the peace accord. National governments are usually directly involved in planning and implementing DDR programmes in partnership with international organisations and donor countries.

The UN, as a third-party intermediary, frequently oversees DDR processes. The UN has conducted programmes for DDR in countries as diverse as Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador and Mozambique.

In some cases, a special peacekeeping mission of the UN is responsible for disarmament and demobilisation as one of its tasks (see chapter on peace support operations). In addition, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) takes part in these initial phases, but is primarily responsible for the reintegration phase, assisting in the design of programmes and coordinating and implementing them as well.

Although the design of DDR programmes is often decided during peace negotiations and written into peace agreements, a variety of actors may provide advice during that process and can be involved with implementation. In addition to the UN, a primary actor is the World Bank, which funds and assists in the operation and evaluation of DDR programmes. Its primary tasks, as denoted by the World Bank itself, are to: (a) give policy advice, (b) lead donor coordination if requested, (c) “sensitise” stakeholders, (d) provide technical assistance and (e) mobilise and manage funds.⁴

Other donors and actors, including foreign governments, provide financial and technical

assistance, particularly with regard to DDR design and implementation. In **El Salvador**, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was a primary actor; in that case and others, USAID may contract with international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including for-profit contractors, to do much of the work in the field. For example, in El Salvador, one of those organisations was Creative Associates, which maintains a presence in San Salvador even today.

International NGOs, including humanitarian groups, are also involved as donors and providers of relief aid, as are various arms of the UN, including the Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The roles of actors vary according to the needs and circumstances present in each conflict situation.

In increasing numbers, local NGOs are being consulted by international actors. Oftentimes, local, community-based NGOs may receive funding to conduct reintegration assistance and provide social services, such as skills trainings and trauma counselling. In terms of its partners, the **World Bank** notes that, “civilian-led institutions should be neutral, specialised and administratively competent.”⁵

3. HOW IS DDR CONDUCTED?

In general, the plan and design for DDR is first discussed in the actual peace accord as a product of negotiations between the disputing parties. Timelines and locations for assembly are usually laid out at that time. There must be a willingness to disarm on the part of all parties to the conflict in order for a DDR process to begin.

Assembly is the first step in the DDR process; this phase is also known as **cantonment**. Typically, in these camp areas, former fighters, or **ex-combatants** are given food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, basic education and orientation programmes. As troops begin to assemble in the designated areas, UNDP and other international actors such as the World Bank and USAID, begin

1. conducting voluntary censuses that will provide information on the former fighters for a registration database;

2. needs assessments to determine the ex-combatants' physical requirements and expectations and plans for their post war life; and
3. issuing documentation to ex-combatants that will serve as their identity papers, proof of demobilisation and eligibility for reinsertion benefits packages.

The primary objective of the assembly phase is to collect weapons and demobilise combatants to their former communities or to new areas. Thus, the above activities are often undertaken as part of physical disarmament and collection of weapons. The stockpiled weapons are generally marked, removed and destroyed. In some cases, however, this last step is not completed and problems arise as a result. In **Sierra Leone**, rebel groups repossessed weapons leftover from earlier conflicts as they renewed war in the spring of 2000.⁶

Research has found that ex-combatants are often restless during the assembly phase and, in fact, may not wish to surrender all of their weapons. In 2003 in **Burundi**, the World Bank noted: "The longer combatants stay in a cantonment site, the more likely it is that problems will arise, both in terms of the provision of assistance and security and the morale of those cantoned."⁷ Thus, an effort is made to minimise combatants' time in the camps and accomplish the above activities as quickly and thoroughly as possible. However, rushing the DDR process may have long-term consequences. If weapons are not effectively collected, a rise in small arms violence and crime can follow the war.

Demobilisation of former fighters and exit from the assembly areas often occur over a long period of time. Ex-combatants are usually transported to their home districts or to new communities. In some cases, former fighters are anxious to return to their homes, or they may fear disapproval or rejection and thus attempt to stall the process. In **Uganda** in the early 1990s, to ease this process, ex-combatants and their dependents were briefed before receiving a "settling-in-kit" of shelter, food, transport, clothing and medical care for a transition period of six months.⁸ Reinsertion assistance such as this is generally provided to former fighters in the form of cash

during the demobilisation phase—either in a "lump sum" distribution or in installments over time. In addition, basic materials are generally provided, such as agricultural supplies, food supplements, or stipends for education. In **El Salvador**, kitchen goods and materials were included in this reinsertion package.

Reintegration refers to the long-term process of re-entry into the community, building livelihoods and returning to a peacetime lifestyle. In general, modest packages of benefits are given to ex-combatants with demobilisation papers. The components of these packages may include vocational training, credit, scholarships, land distribution and employment with a new police or security force. In **Nicaragua**, reintegration programmes also included micro-enterprise management training, health exams and psychological counselling.

International actors work with NGOs to establish workshops and other skills training programmes. Credit programmes are often channelled through banks and local authorities. Scholarships are often few and are usually designated for leaders of armed movements. Land distribution is generally performed in conjunction with government offices and an overall national reconstruction plan. A new police force and a redesigned military are generally open for employment of former fighters from all sides of the conflict.

The entire environment surrounding DDR is political and fragile. There are critical periods between demobilisation and the receipt of reintegration benefits when the situation remains unstable. In addition, the reintegration stage is very sensitive and often is not completed due to problems in funding and other obstacles to implementation. Depending on the nature of the war, communities can vehemently oppose the return of fighters. It may be years before some combatants return home, as in **Rwanda**, where dramatic legal and political changes occurred while fighters were in neighbouring states. Former combatants may find their DDR packages insufficient for their living expenses, thus motivating them to join gangs and commit crimes. In sum, even when the international community deems a DDR programme "successful," the post war reality may be far less than that.

One major side effect of war that occurs in nearly every post conflict state is that of a surge in crime and other forms of violence. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) contribute to instability in the post conflict environment and are often attributed to an incomplete DDR program. In the 2004 DDR process in Liberia, 16,000 ex-combatants entered the program, but only 10,000 weapons—many in disrepair—were collected.⁹ Thus longer-term micro-disarmament projects may be needed even after the completion of formal DDR (see chapter on SALW).

Because women are disproportionately affected by violence in their homes and communities, they have mobilised in countries around the world to rid their societies of small arms. As a World Bank study reports, “poverty, coupled with the erosion of authority of traditional institutions, leads to crime and delinquency. Unemployed, demobilised young men, socialised to violence and brutality during war, are more likely to form gangs... and can pose a constant threat to the security of women and children.”¹⁰

In addition to these challenges, former combatants often pass HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases to wives and families, and the care giving required for those combatants suffering from disabilities, psychological trauma and disease also falls to women (see chapter on HIV/AIDS).

4. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF DDR ON WOMEN?

In general, international implementing organisations have not planned for the inclusion of women’s needs and concerns in DDR programmes. In fact, the impact of returning male fighters on women and even the existence and needs of female fighters have historically been overlooked. This neglect of the many and complex roles that women play during war and peace leads to a less effective, less informed DDR that does not fully extend to the community level and may not lead to long-term or sustainable peace.

WOMEN AS FIGHTERS

Women fighters have made up a substantial number of combatants in recent years in such countries as Eritrea, El Salvador, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe and have participated in many other conflicts as well.

Women ex-combatants often face gender-specific obstacles in the aftermath of war.

In some cases, such as in Sierra Leone, women have not been officially defined as fighters and therefore immediately lose access to DDR programmes, including eligibility for reinsertion benefits. In other cases, such as El Salvador, women combatants were included in the original lists of troops entering the UNDP programmes for DDR, but faced discrimination at other stages, such as access to land and credit at the local level. Yet even in that case, where women were included in the official process, the needs of women in the camps, such as the provision of basic health or sanitary facilities, were not considered. In Mozambique, where some women fighters participated in official DDR programmes, they were offered training only in traditional women’s activities, such as sewing and secretarial work. In Rwanda, the national government funded three years of vocational training for members of the first association of ex-combatant women in the Great Lakes region. The association is composed of representatives from all 12 provinces across Rwanda and all parties to the conflict.¹¹

Interestingly, in Sri Lanka there are reports that women are sometimes more respected fighters than men and enjoy a strong position as combatants. Thus, women are particularly concerned about their potentially subservient roles when the conflict ends. An important step in moving towards a peace settlement, therefore, may be that the needs and concerns of women fighters are addressed. Overall, however, there remains a lack of recognition of the particular concerns of female fighters in DDR and other post conflict plans and programs.

WOMEN AND GIRLS AS ABDUCTEES

In some cases, women, and particularly girls, are forced to become combatants. Abduction or gang pressing¹² for the purposes of enlistment in combat is practiced worldwide, but is most widespread in Africa. Often, these women and girls may be called “wives,” but in fact, they are not formally married and in many cases are abused.

Although this, too, is changing, children are seldom recognised in DDR programs, and girls are marginalised even within that category (see chapter

on children's security). Despite the fact that humanitarian aid organisations work with girl abductees, DDR programs implemented by governments and international organisations have not officially recognised these women and girls so that they might receive benefits. In **Angola**, for example, the DDR program limits assistance to the insurgent National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and government soldiers at the exclusion of women and girls in their camps.

It is often left to initiatives by international organisations and local NGOs to care for women and child ex-combatants. For example, in **Sudan**, UNICEF ran a program to disarm young children—many of whom had been abducted—and reintegrated them into schools. There is increasing recognition of the need to target all children with reintegration assistance. Programmes that benefit the youth in a community as a whole help reduce tensions that may arise between young civilians and their ex-combatant counterparts.

WOMEN AS SUPPORTERS

Women often play supporting roles during war, and thus they, like combatants, must return to their homes and rebuild their lives. Women and girls who have been part of armed movements, serving as cooks, radio operators, messengers, transporters of ammunitions, medical caregivers and logistical supporters are often sidelined in the post war period. The new skills and knowledge of such women are typically lost, as many return to traditional, pre-conflict roles—often referred to as a “loss of social capital.” In **El Salvador**, women represented 30 percent of all combatants in the opposition movement and participated in equal numbers in DDR.¹³ But in most cases, women returned to the traditional role of mother and wife in the home, despite acquiring new skills.

WOMEN AS FAMILY OF COMBATANTS

In many cases, women and families of fighters may have been uprooted to follow their male relatives during war. In cases where the war has been particularly lengthy and fought across a region, male fighters are often found to have two or even three wives and families. In general, as noted above, many DDR programs do not recognise the importance of including the legal or customary wives of fighters in the planning process. A World Bank report notes,

“Demobilisation and reintegration programs often treat the ex-combatant as the sole beneficiary instead of seeing the ex-combatant and his family as a beneficiary unit. Thus, the needs of families are often neglected.”¹⁴ In some cases, such as in **Burundi**, wives of government soldiers receive assistance, but wives of opposition fighters do not. In general, as benefits packages are only distributed to the individual combatant, families do not receive needed support. There is increasing dialogue in the international policy community regarding the idea of community-based DDR in which benefits are not focused solely on the combatant.

WOMEN IN COMMUNITIES

Following a return home from years of war, women and men in communities face a multitude of challenges. The tensions between families and returning ex-combatants can be extreme, and domestic violence is reported to increase in the aftermath of war. In **Rwanda**, laws regarding inheritance and other advances for women's rights have been passed while former fighters remained in neighbouring countries, creating tension in the home when a husband returns. In other instances, war changes the roles of men and women within the home and community. If women have been part of the war effort, they may face a disapproving family upon their return home, as reported in **El Salvador** and **Eritrea**, or may be less likely to accept traditional domestic roles. Women who were not participants in the war but provided for their families, as in **Guatemalan** refugee camps, have also taken on new tasks and decision-making roles—another potential source of post war tension.

Finally, there may be resentment toward male and female ex-combatants returning home with DDR benefits, while the communities—the non-combatants—receive nothing. In **Mozambique**, USAID was concerned that providing assistance to 90,000 former fighters and not to refugees and internally displaced persons would prove an obstacle to sustainable peace.¹⁵

5. HOW DO WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO DDR?

Traditionally, women are not involved in decision-making surrounding security issues or in the design

or implementation of DDR programming. It is important for women's voices to be raised, as actions and decisions on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration have a direct impact on their lives and on the possibilities for achieving a sustainable peace.

Women's organisations throughout the world have begun to take action at various phases of the disarmament and reintegration process, as they have seen a need for their work. The peace process itself is one of the most important points to design a strategy for disarmament and long-term peace. One of the most effective, yet difficult, means to ensure that the needs, concerns and ideas of women—combatants and non-combatants alike—are included in a DDR process is to have women included, and a gender perspective incorporated, in peace negotiations.

Even when women do not explicitly advance a gender perspective in negotiations, their mere presence can mean the difference between women's inclusion and consultation in the DDR process and complete exclusion, as shown in two contrasting cases: In **El Salvador**, women headed armed groups and participated in negotiations. In **Sierra Leone**, women fought alongside men, but were not leaders in the forces. In **El Salvador**, 30 percent of combatants disarmed were women, and most received land and other benefits.¹⁶ In **Sierra Leone**, of an estimated 12,000 girl fighters, only 500 were disarmed or had any access to reintegration benefits.¹⁷ As a result of their exclusion and with no alternative for survival, young girls—many with babies—led riots in Freetown in 2002 and are reported to have joined guerrilla fighters in Liberia.

When women are not at the peace table, they often organise and begin campaigns during the peace process and once disarmament has begun. Women often begin to raise awareness of the importance of effective disarmament for their communities through public announcements and campaigns. In **Albania**, for example, women's groups raised such awareness through local conferences and rallies. There is also a need to inform the population that, in cases where weapons collection has not been thorough, violence has recurred and crime has surged. It is particularly important for women to be involved in these programs, as they may have knowledge of arms routes and caches and may be willing to convince

their family members to turn in their weapons or participate in formal DDR (see chapter on SALW). The Mano River women, for example, exchanged information on guerrilla movements, including arms transfers, within and across borders in **Sierra Leone**, **Liberia** and **Guinea**. Their knowledge allowed them to act as facilitators of negotiations, encouraging individuals and groups to lay down their arms.

WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISARMAMENT

Women's organisations have taken a variety of approaches to enhance practical disarmament.

In **Liberia** in the late 1990s, women pressed for disarmament as a precursor to elections. They advertised for women to join the movement across the country and stationed women at every arms collection point. The women encouraged fighters to hand in their weapons and offered them water and sandwiches. Estimates indicate that some 80 percent of weapons were collected in 1996 prior to the election.¹⁸ Although Liberia returned to war and another peace agreement is currently in place, women remain active on issues of DDR, pressuring Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jacques Paul Klein, to address women's needs and concerns in the program.

In **Albania**, local women's groups worked with UNDP and UNIFEM on disarmament. First, they organised public awareness events and capacity-building workshops for women's organisations to address the specific challenges and concerns that the presence of weapons pose to women. Subsequently, through local conferences and rallies, they appealed to the public to "Stop Guns" and sponsored tapestry design competitions under the slogan "Life is better without guns."¹⁹ In towns where the project was implemented, around 6,000 weapons and 150 tons of ammunition were collected in exchange for community-based development and public works projects.²⁰ Due to the success of the program, similar projects were launched in two other Albanian districts, leading to a total of 12,000 weapons and 200 tons of ammunition destroyed.²¹

In other parts of the world, women have been active in disarmament as well. In **Bougainville**, women's organisations trained women to walk alone in the

jungle to seek out and persuade fighters to disarm. In **Mali**, women were credited with organizing the first public “burning of arms” to launch a successful weapons collection program.

WOMEN’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO REINTEGRATION

Women are particularly important during the reintegration phase. As combatants return home—both men and women—the troubles truly begin. After years of combat and trauma, it is difficult for ex-combatants to return to a “normal” lifestyle, and it is equally complicated for the receiving communities to accept the returned combatants. Women’s organisations have actively assisted men and women to make the transition from war to peace. Without an **exit strategy**—a term used in the international community to mean a plan for withdrawal from a conflict zone—women have a particularly important interest in facilitating the transition to peace.

Because women’s organisations are generally active at the community level, they are particularly aware of the needs of the community and the former fighters and have developed programs to address them. These non-governmental projects have included counselling to address trauma and psychological issues, health and medical assistance and education and skills trainings. In **Mozambique**, demobilised women and men, former soldiers and disabled veterans worked together to form ProPaz, which provides peace education in the community, conducts interventions in violent outbreaks at the local level, and promotes the reintegration of women combatants locally and nationally.²²

Some programs, such as ProPaz, may service all members of the population, but in certain cases, women have also focused on particularly vulnerable groups who have less access to benefits. In **Sierra Leone**, women worked specifically with child soldiers as a group in need of assistance and developed various projects to work with children in their post war adjustment. In **Nicaragua**, women’s organisations reached out specifically to women ex-combatants, providing them with “a safe place to exchange views, to dream, to get organised and to build confidence.”²³

6. WHAT INTERNATIONAL POLICIES EXIST?

The UN and other international organisations have begun to take steps to include women in DDR program design and implementation.

In October 2000, the UN Security Council passed **Resolution 1325** to address the issue of women, peace and security broadly and focus on DDR in particular. The resolution “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants.”²⁴ It also calls upon organisations to adopt “measures that support local women’s peace initiatives... and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement.”²⁵ Women worldwide are encouraged to call upon organisations and agencies designing and implementing DDR programs in their countries to adhere to this international mandate to recognise and include women.

Building upon Resolution 1325, the UN **Department for Disarmament Affairs** released several briefing papers in 2001 on the importance of adopting a gender perspective when working on disarmament issues, including DDR programming. In particular, the Department notes the gender-specific impact of conflict on women, the nuances of women’s roles in war and peace and the need for a holistic approach to DDR that addresses not only combatants but also families and the community. With regard to girl combatants in particular, UNICEF now works with other UN agencies and NGOs to address the needs of children and young women in their DDR planning. Additionally, UNIFEM has launched a web portal to compile information and lessons learned with regard to women and DDR.

Traditionally, women have been considered a “special group” or “vulnerable population.” As a result of Resolution 1325 and increasing visibility of women’s peace-building activities, however, there is increasing acknowledgment that women can be a critical component of successful DDR.

The **G-8 Foreign Ministers** issued a statement on DDR at their 2002 meeting in Canada, noting,

“There is a particular need to recognise the special requirements of women and child combatants.”²⁶ And in 2002 the UN released a study by a **Group of Governmental Experts** that noted, “The successful implementation of peace agreements, including their disarmament and demobilisation provisions, requires targeting disarmament and non-proliferation education and training to the specific needs of diverse target groups...,” including civilian women and children.²⁷

Finally, the **World Bank** has conducted several recent studies that recognise that women must be consulted and involved in the DDR process as former combatants and supporters. They also note the strong capacity of women as facilitators for a peaceful transition.²⁸

While the rhetoric is strong and more research is being done to highlight women’s experiences, there are still very few examples of the successful implementation of these new recommendations.

7. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

1. Coordinate with international organisations and, when possible, with the gender advisor in the United Nations mission to ensure inclusion of women and girls in the official DDR.
2. Monitor demobilisation centres and facilities to ensure that women and girl combatants are in protected areas and that they have access to basic medical and sanitary facilities and materials.
3. Begin campaigns to:
 - raise public awareness of the importance of disarmament and reintegration;
 - prepare communities for the return of fighters; and
 - conduct a survey in the community to assess the needs of former fighters and civilians.
4. Represent the needs of the community to the local and national authorities and to the international agencies financing and implementing humanitarian and reintegration programs.
5. Reach out to all fighters:
 - informing them of the potential changes in their community;
 - addressing their expectations; and
 - noting potential difficulties they might encounter upon their return home.
6. Reach out to women fighters to:
 - raise their awareness about the needs of women in the communities as well as their own role in the peace process; and
 - encourage them to join women’s organisations and help to bridge the divide between the fighters and the community.
7. Design projects and programs for former fighters to:
 - provide community incentives to disarm; and
 - provide skills trainings, income generation, psychosocial counselling, reconciliation programmes or educational sessions.
8. Create community-based networks or centres to help family members of returning ex-combatants cope with the changes.
9. Document your reintegration programs and disseminate the information widely so that international donors are made aware of them.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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ACRONYMS

DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Colletta, Nat, Marcus Kostner, and Ingo Wiederhofer. “Case Studies in War-to-Peace Transition: The Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Ethiopia, Namibia, and Uganda.” *World Bank Discussion Paper 331*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1996. xv.
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Small Arms, Light Weapons and Landmines

CAMILLE PAMPELL CONAWAY

The security environment in nearly every post conflict state is extremely fragile due in part to the continued availability of **small arms and light weapons (SALW)**. In countries as varied as El Salvador, Albania and Mali, the prevalence of SALW contributes to enormously increased crime rates, resulting in some cases with more deaths in a year of “peace” than during war. Whether used to regroup opposition forces, form gangs or commit crimes, the presence of SALW leads to continued violence and instability in post conflict societies.

In addition to SALW, landmines and unexploded ordnance pose a constant threat for years after a war. Although SALW and landmines are different issues with separate constituencies of policy-makers and practitioners, both are addressed in this chapter under the umbrella of practical disarmament. This section highlights how civil society, and women in particular, have mobilised in many communities to rid their societies of these tools of violence.

1. WHAT ARE SMALL ARMS, LIGHT WEAPONS AND LANDMINES?

Small arms refer to the weapons that a single individual can carry and operate. They may include revolvers, self-loading pistols, rifles, carbines, assault rifles, submachine guns, light machine guns and associated ammunition.

Light weapons refer to weapons that can be operated by two or three people. They may include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft and missile launchers, recoilless rifles, small mortars of less than 100mm calibre, explosives, anti-personnel mines and ammunition for all of these.

The International Red Cross defines **anti-personnel landmines** as “explosive device[s] designed to maim or kill the person who triggers it.... They go on killing and maiming soldiers and civilians, men and women, adults and children alike decades after the fighting has ended.”¹ There are approximately 300 types of anti-personnel mines in use around the world in four categories—blast, fragmentation, directional fragmentation and bounding.² They are often scattered in a certain area called a **minefield**. They can be set to explode when triggered (by heat

or movement) or can be set to explode at a pre-determined time. New technology has led to “smart mines,” designed to reduce the chances of being triggered by a civilian.³ A “self-neutralising mine,” for example, defuses itself after a pre-set time without exploding. A new type of landmine, with a computer-tracking device to make it easier to retrieve, is also in development. These “smart mines” are very expensive, however, and some armed actors opt for the cheaper “dumb mines.”

Unexploded ordnance (UXO)⁴ refers to explosives that did not detonate and therefore remain active after the end of armed conflict. UXO includes unexploded bullets, grenades, mortars, cluster bombs, rockets and air-dropped bombs. These and other weapons that fail to detonate or are abandoned pose a threat similar to that of landmines. As with anti-personnel mines, UXO must be located and destroyed, generally as part of a programme to clear landmines.

The international community makes an important distinction between legal small arms and light weapons and illegal or **illicit SALW**. Although both types of weapons are equally lethal, this distinction has allowed policy-makers to avoid dealing with a range of issues associated with the legal trade and focus efforts on their illegal trade and use.

Approximately 56 percent of SALW worldwide are in legal civilian possession, and 43 percent are legally held by state security forces (military, police, intelligence agencies). Non-governmental opposition groups illegally hold less than one percent.⁵ The legal trade in SALW is valued at approximately \$4–6 billion,⁶ of which the largest exporters are the US, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Brazil, and China.⁷ The illegal trade is estimated to be 10–20 percent of the total trade.⁸

USE OF SALW DURING CONFLICT

Small arms, light weapons and anti-personnel mines have been the primary instruments of war in recent years. The estimated number of SALW in circulation worldwide, not including landmines, is 640 million. An additional 230 million landmines are stockpiled worldwide.⁹ Their impact on civilians is severe; hundreds of thousands of people a year are killed by SALW, and millions more are injured.¹⁰ Deaths from SALW occur in armed conflict, but also in so-called “peaceful” countries.

All actors in conflict—government, military, militias, paramilitary units, armed opposition, guerrillas, and civilians—use small arms and light weapons. The Small Arms Survey notes that, “There is a growing body of evidence indicating that even a modest build-up of small arms can lead to disproportionately large increases in armed violence, conflict, and criminality.”¹¹ They continue to be used and have devastating effects on civilians for a number of reasons. SALW are:

1. Cheap and widely available—Some are newly manufactured, while others circulate from conflict to conflict or are left over from downsized militaries. Some countries, such as **Colombia**, in fact, have armed their own citizens against perceived security threats.
2. More and more deadly—In many places, automatic rifles are replacing single-action guns. These automatic weapons are often used to kill people more quickly and on a wider scale.
3. Simple and durable—They require little to no training and last for decades under almost any conditions.

4. Portable—They can be carried by an individual or a small group of people, are easily transferred, and are almost impossible to track or monitor.
5. Used by many actors—Not only the military and police, but civilians have access to SALW, including an expanding private security industry.

Landmines, too, are cheap, durable, and portable. They are often used in war deliberately against civilians—“to terrorise communities, to displace entire villages, to render fertile agricultural land unusable, and to destroy national infrastructures like roads, bridges, and water sources.”¹² They are very difficult to detect and remove following war, particularly the cheaper, older, “dumb” versions that are most likely to be used in internal conflicts. According to the 2003 Landmine Monitor Report, 82 countries are affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance.¹³

Given the combination of extreme poverty, overwhelming social wounds and struggling new governments, it is not difficult to understand how and why violence using SALW continues after war. Contributing factors to increased violence, crime, or a return to conflict include:

- lack of economic opportunities for former combatants;
- a thriving illegal market through which guns can be sold;
- poverty, economic stagnation and disease, as well as the collapse of health and education services;
- unequal access to rights and resources;
- severe damage to the social structure overall, particular family and community cohesion;
- few government programmes and funds for support;
- formation of criminal organisations that may provide some level of security and support to its members; and
- struggling police and security forces and a legal system undergoing massive change.

IMPACT OF SALW ON SUSTAINABLE PEACE

SALW affect all civilians—men, women and children. Yet the majority of SALW victims and carriers are unemployed, uneducated young men.¹⁴ In addition to killing, SALW are used to commit many other human rights violations, including rape, torture, abduction, coerced recruitment, kidnapping, theft, looting, forced displacement, forced marriage and extortion. The impact of such violence on access to infrastructure, employment, healthcare, education, social welfare and development is profound.

Impact of SALW in Medellín, Colombia¹⁵

Homicide is the number one cause of death in Medellín. Sixty-one percent of all deaths in the city are homicides, and 90 percent of them are perpetrated with small arms. In addition, there is a high incidence of rape of girls and young women. Families are displaced. Schools are often closed due to armed confrontations, and other restrictions are imposed on walking, public transportation and group activities.

Despite programmes to disarm all actors following the signing of a peace agreement, SALW continue to undermine efforts at peace and stability long after war. If not collected and destroyed, SALW may be:

- maintained by former combatants and civilians as their only source of security and income generation;
- traded internationally to other governments and/or armed insurgent groups;
- sold to organised crime and other violent groups; and/or
- hidden for future use if war begins again.

A UN report notes, “The proliferation of small arms...affects the intensity and duration of violence and encourages militancy...a vicious circle in which insecurity leads to a higher demand for weapons.”¹⁶ The rate of death by small arms may decrease only slightly following war, as compared to during the war. In fact, in some places, the casualty rate has actually increased; in El Salvador, the homicide rate

increased by 36 percent after the peace agreement was signed in 1992.¹⁷

INTERNATIONAL EFFECTS OF SALW

The effects of continued use of SALW in post conflict countries often spill across its borders. For example, after the peace agreement was signed in Mozambique, weapons used by **Mozambican** and **Angolan** rebels were smuggled back into South Africa, fuelling the rise in criminal violence there. A subsequent regional programme was launched to jointly collect arms along the border (Operation Rachel). In **El Salvador**, the armed opposition, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, stored hidden caches of arms in **Nicaragua** during the peace process. When they were found, the peace process in El Salvador, as well as government relations with Nicaragua, were placed in jeopardy.

IN-COUNTRY EFFECTS OF SALW

In some cases, the continued existence of SALW may facilitate a return to war. To prevent this, the government of **Nicaragua** established a Special Disarmament Brigade to run a weapons buy-back and destruction programme to disarm combatants seen as having the potential to return to violence.¹⁸ In **Sierra Leone**, however, weapons that were collected and dismantled, but not destroyed, during a 1999–2000 disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process were repossessed by rebel groups as the war began anew in the spring of 2000.¹⁹

Extremely high rates of violent crime are a direct impact of the continued use of SALW in post conflict countries. In **South Africa**, 15,000 people were killed in political violence between 1990 and 1998, while 25,000 were murdered in 1998 alone; the majority of weapons used were pistols and revolvers.²⁰ In **El Salvador**, many youth have joined gangs, called *maras*, which use weapons including M-16s, AK-47s and rocket launchers. These are used to perpetrate crimes including kidnappings, robberies and street violence; in fact, minors have contributed to 70 percent of all crime in San Salvador, the capital.²¹ In **Mindanao** in the **Philippines**, 78 percent of violent deaths and injuries have been attributed to automatic weapons and handguns.²²

The presence of landmines in post conflict societies impacts the population for decades following war.²³

Their presence on agricultural land contributes to death and maiming, but also to food insecurity and malnutrition. In **Cambodia**, for example, while 85,000 families were allocated land following the peace agreement, only 2,435 were actually able to use it due to the presence of landmines.²⁴ In **Kosovo**, mines were planted near homes, and as a result 300 people were killed and injured in the summer of 1999 alone.²⁵ Mines laid along roads and railway tracks affect the resettlement of refugees, prohibit the safe delivery of food aid and inhibit transportation to jobs. Landmines may even be used as weapons following conflict, as in **Cambodia** where their availability has led to their use to protect property and even settle disputes.²⁶

Impact of SALW in “Peacetime”²⁷

“Used in almost 40 percent of all homicides, but also in assaults, threats, robberies, sexual offences and suicides, firearms are clearly a common tool for perpetrating societal violence...The impacts of gun violence, however, are not limited to fatal and non-fatal firearm injuries. A wide variety of small arm-related crimes—committed either by individuals or by the state—can threaten a community’s physical, economic, social, political, and cultural security.” By region, 36 percent of all firearm homicides and suicides occur in Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 percent in Africa, and 12 percent in North America and in Southeast Asia.

Beyond the direct effect of the violence of SALW, small arms availability and use also undermines socioeconomic development. Continued instability, in part fuelled by SALW, prohibits the rebuilding of infrastructure, trade and the renewal of large- and small-scale food production. In **East Africa**, armed confrontations are reducing future generations of livestock, even at the subsistence level. Armed blockades, banditry, informal roadblocks and raids on convoys leave civilians without food and access to jobs. National governments are then forced to direct resources toward security rather than development, and social welfare and external investment is less likely in such an environment. In **Colombia**, the economic cost of the violence is estimated to be 25 percent of the country’s gross domestic product.²⁸

SALW also affect the provision of health and education to the population following war, making it even more difficult to recover from years without these services. Long-term effects of a devastated social welfare system include years without education, higher death rates from treatable diseases and closed schools and clinics. It is estimated that in the most affected areas of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** 68 percent of school-age children are not attending classes, and 211 of 228 schools have been destroyed.²⁹ In the aftermath of conflict, there are often few doctors and teachers who have survived the war, and reconstructing educational and health facilities is costly, particularly if armed factions continue to wreak havoc. In **Albania**, primary and secondary enrollment rates are 18 percent lower than before the 1997 crisis; youth cite the abundance of weapons and fear of armed violence as reasons they choose not to attend courses.³⁰

COMMUNITY-LEVEL EFFECTS OF SALW

Following war, communities face incredible obstacles to rehabilitation and reconciliation. The prevalence of SALW can lead to a culture of violence in the community, which “privilege[s] violent solutions to peaceful ones; in which individuals seek recourse to physical protection rather than dialogue and reconciliation.”³¹ Military leaders may be glorified, and some may carry out perceived obligations to avenge past wrongs. Relationships in the home and community are distorted, particularly as armed, traumatised former combatants, including child soldiers, return to their families. Sons no longer defer to fathers, gender relations are affected and resorting to violence can become commonplace. Respect for indigenous practices and traditional institutions also declines. Domestic violence rises. In **Sri Lanka**, there are numerous accounts of deserted soldiers returning home to inflict abuses on their wives similar to those they experienced during the war.³²

2. WHAT AND WHO IS INVOLVED IN PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT?

Practical disarmament, as defined by the UN, is “the collection, control and disposal of arms, especially small arms and light weapons, coupled with restraint over the production, procurement, and transfer of such arms, the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants, demining and

conversion, for the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in areas that have suffered from conflict” (see chapters on DDR and security sector reform).³³

There are three complex steps in practical disarmament, all of which must be addressed in a comprehensive programme:

1. *controlling supply* through regulation of arms transfers and enforcement of restrictions on SALW ownership and use;
2. *reducing demand* by ensuring public safety, enforcing the law, providing economic opportunities and promoting equal political participation; and
3. *recovering stocks* held by the population and destruction of those arms, as well as surplus government weapons.

CONTROLLING SUPPLY

SALW come from a variety of sources. They may be produced within a country, or they may be legally imported through government grants or sales and/or commercial sales. They may also be illegally imported through secret arms exports to governments or insurgent groups, black market arms deals or imports from allied armed insurgent groups in other states. They also may be circulated within a country or region through theft of government stocks, looting of various armed groups and exchanges between armed groups and/or the government.

It is the responsibility of national governments to control the flow and supply of SALW into and out of their countries. Governments have begun to do this by:

- developing border and customs controls to combat illicit trafficking;
- building the capacity of police;
- regulating and restricting arms flows and transfers through export criteria, regulation of brokering activities and prosecution of offenders;
- improving tracing and marking procedures to more easily track arms;
- establishing small arms registries;

- maintaining transparency in legal arms deals;
- opening a dialogue with producers and suppliers;
- developing national legislation and administrative procedures for SALW;
- harmonising and implementing such legislation across a region;
- establishing national commissions on SALW that include civil society representatives; and
- effectively enforcing restrictions on possession and use.

International and bilateral agencies often support governments in these efforts. The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, for example, provides capacity building to national agencies to control the flow and supply of illicit SALW. Governments in arms-producing and arms-exporting countries must also impose tighter regulations and enforcement to prevent illicit arms flows.

REDUCING DEMAND

There are three levels of demand: individual, collective (armed groups) and state/government. Practical disarmament addresses the demand for SALW by individuals and is possibly the most difficult component of the disarmament process. It relies on a comprehensive approach that includes establishing the rule of law, providing economic opportunities and promoting equal rights and political participation. The goal is to eliminate citizens’ perception that they need a weapon. “The demand approach seeks to change the culture of gun possession and gun violence—not an easy task unless the body implementing such policies can also decrease the insecurity that created the problem in the first place.”³⁵

Civil society is a crucial partner in this process. Mechanisms to reduce demand for SALW focus on promoting a “culture of peace” through such efforts as:

- public awareness programmes on the dangers of gun possession;
- de-glamourising child soldiers and providing alternative role models for youth; and
- peace education programmes that advocate non-violent resolution of disputes.

Most often, these efforts are combined with an official government weapons collection programme, described below.

RECOVERING STOCKS

In the context of post conflict peacebuilding, practical disarmament to collect and destroy weapons can be divided into two broad categories:

1. **Disarmament by command:**³⁶ This occurs immediately after a conflict and is generally mandated within a peace agreement. It includes:
 - DDR programmes that offer armed groups a benefits package as an incentive for them to report to authorities and disarm. In these cases, weapons are usually publicly destroyed as part of the process. “DDR considerably reduces the risk of renewed civil war as well as the possibility that former soldiers and guerrilla fighters will turn to armed banditry.”³⁷ (See chapter on DDR.)
 - SSR that downsizes the military, including numbers and types of weapons and formulates new security policies and structures (see chapter on SSR).
2. **Voluntary weapons collection:** These programmes may be operated for years following war and are not based on command, but choice. They offer penalties or rewards—“carrot and stick” tactics—to encourage armed civilians to turn in their weapons.

Voluntary weapons collection programmes are conducted in post conflict and peacetime societies from El Salvador to Mali to the US—in almost all cases, the primary goal is crime and violence prevention. They are occasionally operated by the UN or other international agencies, but are generally conducted by national and local governments, often with the support of civil society. In most cases, those turning in weapons remain anonymous and are immune from prosecution (i.e. on a “no questions asked” basis). Incentives for participation are usually offered, such as amnesty, stipends, toys or food. In addition to rewards, crackdowns may follow the programme, whereby policing is increased, weapons are seized and penalties are toughened. Voluntary

weapons collection programmes are most successful as part of a holistic, comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and disarmament. If those possessing arms are dissatisfied with reconstruction attempts, they will be less likely to disarm. Weapons collection programmes are often part of a long-term education and awareness-raising campaign.

Civil Society and SALW³⁸

“Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are leading the charge and creating momentum on the small arms issue. They are working in post conflict societies to collect surplus weapons. NGOs are developing rehabilitation programmes for ex-combatants. In some countries, such as **South Africa**, NGOs are working directly with governments to develop laws regulating small arms.”

There are many types of weapons collection programmes including buy-backs, amnesty periods, weapons for development, lottery prizes, cash, vouchers for food and goods, scholarships, computers or radios, tools for trade and/or agriculture, housing and construction materials, infrastructure projects and public health services. The main types of voluntary weapons collection programmes include:

Buy-Back: These refer only to cases where weapons are collected in exchange for cash, often at the black market price or the average price of a legal sale. Through a public campaign, prices are established, the type of guns to be collected are announced, a time limit is set and collection points are identified.

- In **Nicaragua**, the government initiated a gun buy-back programme to encourage combatants not to re-arm. Money, food and micro-enterprise programmes were offered in exchange for weapons. From 1991 to 1993, 142,000 weapons were destroyed through the programme.³⁹
- In **Haiti**, the US Army conducted a buy-back programme as part of their stability operation in the early 1990s. The programme provided cash and a “no questions asked” policy to participants and collected 33,000 weapons in 1994 and 1995.⁴⁰

Exchange: In some cases, offering cash for programmes can actually lead to increased value and demand for weapons. In response, exchange programmes have been developed, offering goods to those who hand in weapons.

- In **El Salvador**, civil society, the business community, and the Catholic Church initiated the Goods for Guns programme that conducted 23 voluntary weapons collections projects with international, government and private funding.⁴¹ It collected 4,357 firearms—only 8 percent of the number of arms legally imported during that period.⁴² Even though it did not collect a huge number of weapons, it raised public awareness of the issue. “The several hundred national newspaper articles that have appeared over the last several years covering everything from legislative reform, public opinion and illicit arms trafficking to the impact of these on society provide evidence that collectively Salvadoran society has taken the issue to heart....”⁴³
- In **Mozambique**, the Tools for Arms programme was undertaken by the Christian Council of Churches from 1995 to 2000, collecting weapons in exchange for various tools and machinery. Many of the confiscated weapons were turned into public art and practical objects. Given a lack of will and competence on the part of the government, churches actually ran the project. It collected about 1,000 weapons per year, simultaneously conducting campaigns to advance public support for peace, at a cost of \$350,000 annually.⁴⁴

Amnesty: Some weapons collection programmes offer amnesty as the incentive to turn in weapons.

- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) Stabilisation Force has conducted an ongoing weapons collection programme (Operation Harvest) that ensures anonymity and amnesty for those who turn in their guns. In 2000, 5,081 small arms were collected; 2,642 landmines were destroyed; and 2.7 million rounds of 20mm ammunition were gathered.⁴⁵

Collective Development: Sometimes called **Weapons for Development**, this type of collection programme has evolved in response to calls for incentives, such as infrastructure projects, that benefit an entire community, not just individuals with guns. This is the

new model often advocated for in post conflict countries in order to avoid rewarding individuals who took up weapons, involve those who did not bear arms and address collective demand factors.

- One of the first of these programmes was initiated by UNDP in **Albania**. The Gramsh Pilot Project was conducted from 1998 to 2000; it collected 7,000 weapons and awarded 12 development projects in one district at a cost of \$800,000. Building upon that pilot, UNDP initiated the Weapons in Exchange for Development project from 2000-2002 on a larger scale; it collected 6,000 weapons and awarded 23 projects in two districts at a cost of \$1,800,000. More recently, UNDP conducted the Weapons in Competition for Development project in all 36 districts of Albania, whereby communities competed for small infrastructure and development projects by turning in SALW. It collected 11,864 weapons from 15 districts and awarded 46 development projects in 5 districts at a cost of \$962,000.⁴⁶

International organisations that fund and support weapons collection programmes include the UN and multilateral and bilateral agencies. Within the UN, approximately 40 member countries comprise the **Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures**, mandated by the General Assembly to grant funding to practical disarmament programmes at the national and local level.⁴⁷ In addition, the UN Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures is administered by the **UN Department for Disarmament Affairs** to fund similar projects. UNDP has spent approximately \$10 million in disarmament efforts since 1999.⁴⁸ Finally, the Post Conflict Fund of the **World Bank** supports disarmament programmes worldwide, including demining.⁴⁹

In many cases, international organisations, national and local governments and civil society groups partner to make weapons collection programmes successful. In **Macedonia**, the parliament established an agency to run the programme and with the assistance of civil society, the government began a countrywide public awareness campaign regarding the programme itself as well as the problems related to SALW. Local and national government leaders oversaw the turn-in at collection points, and UNDP offered

lottery tickets to each participant to win a car, television, household goods, textbooks and scholarships. Nearly 6,000 weapons were collected over 45 days.⁵⁰

There are numerous challenges associated with weapons collection programmes. Policy-makers and practitioners have identified several important lessons:⁵¹

- **Prior assessment**—It is important to know the starting point (number of weapons in existence) so that impact can be measured.
- **Coherence**—Parties involved often have varying priorities, objectives, process plans and target actors for programmes, which can create more problems than are solved. It is important to clearly define objectives and maintain transparency throughout the process.
- **Incentives and Sanctions**—Whether to provide incentives or penalties—and which ones—can be a major stumbling block. Particularly controversial is the concern that offering rewards for arms may actually increase their value and demand, causing a host of other problems.
- **Combination with other efforts**—An effective weapons collection programme must be conducted within a comprehensive peace and stability framework.

Strengths and Weaknesses in Weapons Collection Programmes

“Experience tells us that weapons collection programmes suffer from two critical weaknesses: they do not effectively disarm criminals, nor do they significantly reduce the number of weapons in a specific area...[However,] they aim to influence a change in culture and attitudes towards the role of guns in society...Collection programmes can consolidate relationships between civil society groups and create a model for collaboration in the future...[and they] can effectively support, reinforce, or trigger additional initiatives aimed at improving human security and development in general.” —United Nations Development Programme, 2002⁵²

The success or failure of weapons collection programmes can be measured qualitatively and quantitatively. General indicators of a successful programme include less violence, fewer visible guns, greater freedom of movement, new development projects and a growth in civil society organisations. Quantitative indicators include a reduction in crime as reflected in statistics, an increase in the price of a weapon (indicating fewer in circulation) and “recovery statistics” (a percentage that equals the quantity of weapons recovered divided by the estimated number of weapons in the community).⁵³

MINE ACTION

The destruction of landmines is possibly the most well-known and well-supported form of practical disarmament. Because of the cost in human life, decreased access to land for food production and the impact on infrastructure, the international community has been more willing to recognise the problem and fund solutions. However, for a variety of reasons, landmine clearance is an ongoing, very slow and expensive process.

Mine action includes mine clearance; mine awareness programmes for civilians; rehabilitation services to victims; advocacy; and destruction of stockpiles by national governments as required by international treaties.⁵⁴ A directory of international standards for all aspects of mine action, compiled by the **UN Mine Action Service**, is available at www.mineactionstandards.org.

Mine clearance: Also known as **demining**, there are two major types of mine clearance:

1. **military**—when mines are removed during war as part of military tactics; and
2. **humanitarian**—when mines are removed in the post conflict environment as a strategy to protect civilians.

Demining is an expensive and very slow process; it takes 100 times longer to remove a mine than it does to place one and costs up to \$1,000 to remove a mine that costs as little as \$3 to make.⁵⁵ There are several steps involved in humanitarian demining, which is nearly always conducted by trained personnel with appropriate equipment.

- **Surveying, mapping and marking:** This includes identification of mined areas through “Level One” surveys, information gathering and interviews. “Level Two” technical surveys are then conducted to focus on the mined areas. “Level Three” surveys determine the highest priority areas to begin demining and marking other mined areas.
- **Ground preparation:** In some cases, vegetation and growth must be cut back—very slowly and carefully—in advance of demining.
- **Manual and mechanical clearance:** In pairs of two, manual deminers use hand-held metal detectors, probes and dogs to locate mines. Sometimes mechanical mining devices can be used, but manual work is always required.
- **Deactivation and removal:** In some cases, it is recommended that mines be moved to another location to be deactivated.
- **Destruction:** Most often, mines are destroyed with a small explosive when and where they are found.

Many different actors are involved in demining, including international humanitarian organisations, the UN, bilateral agencies, national governments and civil society. The UN provides support to demining through the **Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** and the **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, which includes a Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance. In **Afghanistan**, the United States provided \$3.2 million to the NGO Halo Trust in 2002 alone, which employs 1,200 Afghan mine clearance specialists.⁵⁶ In **Cambodia**, the UN mission and the government created the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) in 1992 with support from UNDP; as of 1998, it employed 3,000 staff with demining platoons comprising the largest share of staff. As of 2003, CMAC had destroyed 181,659 anti-personnel mines, 750,887 unexploded ordnance and 273,732,034 fragments of weapons.⁵⁷ In **Sri Lanka**, supported by UNDP, the government has conducted mine clearance programmes jointly with the armed opposition Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in conflict-affected areas.

Increasingly, efforts are being made to involve the local community in gathering information about mined areas and determining their priorities for mine clearance and action.⁵⁸ For example, the **Mine**

Advisory Group meets with community leaders—men, women, and children—as a first step in their demining process. In **Angola**, local personnel were recruited and trained, and a community liaison officer was appointed to keep the communication channels open with the population.

Mine Awareness, also called **mine-risk education**: The goal of these programmes is to reduce the risk of civilian injury by landmines through awareness-raising campaigns, education and training, usually at the local level. International NGOs, the UN and national governments often partner to carry out these programmes. For example, in 2004, the **UN Children’s Fund**, the **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, the **Zambian** government and the **Zambia Anti-Personnel Mine Action Centre** partnered to provide mine-risk education programmes in six refugee camps for Angolan refugees and Zambians alike; they included participatory activities, teaching materials and one-on-one education.

Victims’ Assistance: An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people are killed or injured by landmines annually.⁵⁹ The UN has developed guidelines for victim assistance programmes and publishes the **Landmine Survivors and Victim Assistance Newsletter** three times each year. With support from the UN and others, a variety of international humanitarian organisations are devoted to assisting disabled victims. The **Landmine Survivors Network** employs community outreach workers—victims themselves—to empower and support landmine victims. **Save the Children** runs the **Social Reintegration Project** in **Afghanistan** to provide long-term assistance to child victims and their families. The **US Agency for International Development** has established the **Leahy War Victims Fund** to provide prosthetics, wheelchairs and other necessities for those disabled by landmines; NGOs and government agencies can apply for grants from the Fund.⁶⁰

Stockpile Destruction: Since the **Ottawa Convention**,⁶¹ the international treaty mandating the destruction of landmine fields and stockpiles, took effect in 1999, the number of landmine producers has decreased from 54 to 16.⁶² As of July 2004, 143 states were parties to the treaty.⁶³ Of those, 68 had completely destroyed their stocks, and 48 more officially

declared they had no more stocks.⁶⁴ In addition, 37 states have enacted legislation to implement the treaty within their countries, and 26 more are in the process of passing legislation.⁶⁵

Militaries are usually responsible for the destruction of stockpiled landmines, and international organisations support the efforts of national governments in a variety of ways. In fact, Article 6 of the Ottawa Convention states that countries in need of financial assistance for stockpile destruction can appeal to other state parties. In addition, other support is available to governments, such as UNDP regional training workshops to build the capacity of national mine action programmes. The World Bank, in **Sri Lanka** for example, funds mine action capacity-building programmes for the government at national and district levels.

3. WHY SHOULD WOMEN BE INVOLVED IN PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT?

Quite simply, practical disarmament must involve women because they are impacted by SALW on a daily basis and are stakeholders in peace and stability.

WOMEN AS COMBATANTS

As combatants, women are known to carry weapons, including SALW. They have been involved in violent conflict in countries ranging from El Salvador to the Sudan. Often excluded from formal DDR programmes, women and girls may continue to harbour weapons in the post conflict period. Thus, they may participate in weapons collection programmes and other forms of practical disarmament, turning over their weapons to authorities for destruction.

WOMEN AS ARMS SUPPLIERS

In some countries, women may participate in the smuggling and hiding of illegal arms whether through coercion, for money or other rewards or as part of their activities as supporters of a given side in the conflict. Women are often less suspect, so may be used in this way. In **Kuwait**, during the Iraq invasion in the early 1990s, women carried weapons for the resistance fighters under their traditional clothing. Insurgents in **Bangladesh** have used young girls to

smuggle weapons through coercion or for payment. Women may also collect arms informally, holding them for safekeeping until the war is over. In the **Central African Republic**, women often served as “gun collectors” following the flight of mutineers, later turning them in to the UNDP voluntary weapons collection programme in exchange for vocational training. Following war, women may continue to have information on the location of arms caches and routes.

WOMEN AS VICTIMS

Women are victimised by legal and illicit SALW in conflict-ridden areas and “peaceful” societies, and are much less likely to be gun owners than men. During war, guns may be used to kill, but also to facilitate other forms of abuse, including gender-based violence, which disproportionately affects women. Following war, the presence of guns in the home often contributes to more severe forms of domestic violence. In fact, women often view a gun in the home as a risk, rather than a form of protection, an outlook more common among men.

Landmines also continue to affect women following war. Given the division of labour between the sexes, women may be particularly affected by landmines if their tasks include gathering firewood or water, for example, while men may be more affected while walking to jobs along public roads.

If disabled, women may face more difficulty at home and in public than men. Disabled women and girls are often considered a burden by their families, and may encounter cultural, religious or economic obstacles to medical assistance. Disabled women may be faced with divorce and the responsibility for children. The unemployment rate for disabled women in developing countries is nearly 100 percent.⁶⁶

WOMEN AS CARETAKERS

When SALW continue to circulate following war, family and community members may fall victim to gun violence or to landmine explosions. In **Angola**, there are an estimated 10 million landmines and 70,000 amputees, including 8,000 children.⁶⁷ In many cases, it is women who must bear the additional burden of caring for the sick and disabled.

Why Women Work for Disarmament

“Indeed, women are often to be found at the origin of initiatives for reconciliation, mediation and conflict resolution, even if they do not show up at the negotiation table. In peace negotiations, as in declarations of war, men are more numerous than women. This is where the link between women as builders of peace and the struggle against small arms becomes evident. These so-called light weapons have killed more than 4 million people in the last ten years. They have become the instrument of choice in most armed conflicts, and the UN Secretary General has rightly described them as weapons of mass destruction. After wars, they are the tools of banditry, crime and conjugal violence. Hence, women can no longer limit themselves to repairing the damage caused by conflict, as in humanitarian action, demobilisation and reintegration. Today they are obliged to wage an additional battle, the one to eliminate light weapons.” —Christiane Agboton-Johnson, President, Mouvement contre les Armes Légères en Afrique de l’Ouest.⁶⁸

4. HOW DO WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT?

Women have individually and collectively used a variety of approaches to enhance practical disarmament, making their homes and communities safer.

WOMEN AS ADVOCATES

At the international and regional levels, in post conflict and peacetime societies, women have been the primary voices for eliminating SALW, including landmines. They have lobbied for international and national mechanisms to end the proliferation of SALW.

- The **Women’s Network of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)** coordinates organisations that work on issues concerning women and gun violence to promote their participation in international efforts and legislation to combat SALW.⁶⁹ In addition, women fill the majority of positions in the IANSA Secretariat and on the board.
- In 1997, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Jody Williams, then coordinator of the **International Campaign to Ban Landmines**, whose global advocacy and efforts were credited with the adoption of the Ottawa Convention.
- In 1999, women from **Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea** attended a civil society meeting convened by the **Economic Community of West African States** to discuss the recent arms moratorium.⁷⁰ They formally submitted the **Bamako Declaration for Peace by the Women of West African Civil**

Society in which the women “...firmly reaffirm our resolve to contribute to efforts to combat the illicit and controlled possession of small arms and light weapons....”⁷¹

At the national level, women also advocate for legislation and enforcement of laws to end the proliferation of SALW.

- **Maendeleo Ya Wanawawake**, the largest **Kenyan** women’s organisation with over one million members, lobbies for international and national legislation to eliminate SALW as part of their campaign to protect their communities from cross-border cattle raids and increased urban violence.
- **Gun-Free South Africa**, a women-led initiative, raises awareness of SALW, enhances public debate and lobbies for change in the country’s policies. In response, the parliament passed the **Firearms Control Act** in 2000 that imposes stricter controls and regulation.
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, women have demanded disarmament as a necessary first step in the peace process.
- The **Ban Landmines Campaign/Nepal** is operated from within the **Women’s Development Society** and therefore takes a gendered approach to its programmes, including lobbying and advocacy. Since March 2003, they have pushed for inclusion of a ban on landmines in the ceasefire code of conduct between the government and Communist armed groups.

WOMEN AS WEAPONS COLLECTORS

Increasingly, women are playing important roles in weapons collection. Whether informally or in partnership with international organisations and government, their knowledge of the location of arms, the pressure they can put on their families and communities and their organising skills have led to increased involvement in providing security through disarmament.

- In the late 1990s, the **Liberian Women's Initiative** pressed for disarmament as a precursor to elections. They advertised for women to join the movement across the country and stationed women at every arms collection point. The women encouraged the fighters to hand in their weapons and offered them water and sandwiches. Estimates indicate that some 80 percent of weapons were collected in 1996 prior to the election.⁷² Although Liberia returned to war and another peace agreement is currently in place, women remain active on issues of DDR, pressuring the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to include women's needs and concerns in the programme.
- In **Bougainville**, women's organisations have trained women to walk alone in the jungle to seek out and persuade fighters to disarm. Similarly, in the highlands of **Papua New Guinea**, women have informally intervened in tribal disputes, offering gifts of money, cigarettes and soft drinks to successfully induce fighters to lay down their arms.
- In **Albania**, local women's groups, supported by UNIFEM, played an important role in the UNDP collective collection programmes discussed above. They organised public awareness events and capacity-building workshops for women's organisations to address the specific challenges and concerns that the presence of weapons poses to women. Subsequently, through local conferences and rallies, they raised public awareness of the importance and need for the initiative, encouraging many to hand over their arms.
- In **Mali**, women were credited for organising the first public burning of arms to launch a successful UNDP weapons collection programme. The arms were burned on March 27, 1996, in Timbuktu in a public ceremony called the Flame of Peace. "The Flame of Peace was a powerful symbol of national

reconciliation. It also highlighted the problems created by the proliferation of small arms and gave rise to several community-based micro-disarmament projects. Finally, it inspired disarmament initiatives in the region, such as the West African Moratorium on Small Arms of 1998."⁷³ An annual nationwide celebration continues to mark the important event and the ongoing policy against SALW in Mali.

WOMEN AS DEMINERS

Given the extent to which women—and their children and families—are affected by landmines, it is not surprising that women have shown initiative in mine clearance. In some cases, however, they are not properly trained and are operating informally, at great personal risk. In other cases, women are part of trained demining teams.

- In 1999, a team of ethnic Albanian women in **Kosovo** underwent five weeks of training in mine clearance provided by Norwegian People's Aid, where childcare was provided. They received protective clothing and appropriate equipment and were paid a monthly salary. The project director noted "the patience and commitment of the women make some of them much better than men at clearing mines."⁷⁴
- In 1996, the Mines Advisory Group began hiring and training women deminers. An all-female mine action team in **Cambodia** provides "a model for the whole of Cambodian society, empowering the women and encouraging strong bonds between them."⁷⁵ A mobile team, the women range in age from 22 to 45 and earn incomes that allow them to support their extended families.
- The first **Sri Lankan** woman deminer graduated from a training course in 2002 and joined a formerly all-male demining team of the Sri Lankan National Mine Action Office.⁷⁶
- In **Afghanistan** in 2001, two women in a rural village began to collect and detonate US cluster bombs—the most dangerous form of unexploded ordnance—following the death of two children. They collected 60 to 70 cluster bombs closest to the village and detonated them nearby at night.⁷⁷

WOMEN AS LINKS TO THE COMMUNITY

There are three important ways that women contribute

to practical disarmament through their role in the home and the community.

1. *Women know the situation, the needs and the concerns of the community and are willing to work with officials to create long-term solutions for stability.*

Women often have important information on numbers and types of weapons within a community and the attitudes toward them. They sometimes know the location of arms caches and routes at the local level, and they are aware of traditions regarding weapons use. They may choose to secretly turn in their family members' weapons, as has been documented in countries as diverse as **Cambodia** and the **Central African Republic**. Women also know the needs of the community and can help determine which type of weapons collection programme would be most appropriate, whom it should be targeted to reach, when it should be conducted and how information about it should be disseminated. Women can also identify mined areas that others might neglect.

- The Mano River Women exchanged information on guerrilla movements, including arms transfers, within and across the borders of **Sierra Leone**, **Liberia** and **Guinea**. Their knowledge allowed them to act as facilitators of negotiations, encouraging individuals and groups to lay down their arms.
- In **Yemen**, male deminers are customarily only allowed to talk to men in the community, which has led to little and often incorrect information, as women are responsible for agricultural production. When female officials from the US embassy spoke to women in the communities, many additional landmines were cleared.⁷⁸

2. *Women informally work for security in the home and community.*

Women often have important influence in the home and community. In many countries, they exert “moral authority” as mothers to encourage their children and families to turn in their weapons. They are most likely to pass on relevant information on the dangers of SALW, especially landmines, to their children and families.

- In **Cambodia**, women raise awareness about the effects of gun violence over the dinner table, noting news stories they have heard about accidents or laws regarding weapons. They also advise their relatives of non-violent ways to resolve disputes.
- There are numerous accounts of women in the Mano River region of **Sierra Leone**, **Liberia** and **Guinea** encouraging their family members and friends to turn in their weapons. Their strategies were effective not only with their relatives, but with rebels and child soldiers they sought out to persuade to disarm.
- **Sudanese** women have noted that, once they joined together as women, they were better able to persuade male leaders. Organisations such as the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace continue to work against the effects of SALW.
- Operation Harvest in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, discussed above, deliberately demonstrated the negative impact of SALW on women as part of their public campaign. Major Jeffrey White of NATO noted that this tactic “resonate[d] very powerfully with women and...even with many men. I would say it is demonstrably the best approach overall to these types of efforts.”⁷⁹

Women also rehabilitate victims of SALW, individually in their homes and as social workers and nurses. They bring victims to the hospital, notify relatives, provide financial support and assist in finding legal restitution. When women themselves are victimised, they need targeted attention for their specific problems.

3. *Women formally work for security in the home and community.*

Women's organisations are active in concrete ways to mitigate the effects of SALW on their communities. They intervene in violent disputes, participate in community forums to provide input into programmes, raise awareness of the violent effects of SALW, educate and train youth and community leaders in non-violent conflict resolution and create buy-in within the community for weapons collection.

- In **Cambodia**, women have physically intervened in local disputes involving weapons. To provide security, they organise night patrols, gather to protest, and notify local authorities.

- In **Bougainville**, the Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency provides sewing machines to communities that turn in weapons.⁸⁰ This generates income to reduce the need for armed crime and reduces the community’s dependence on the production and sale of alcohol as their sole source of income. Alcohol contributes to a very high rate of domestic violence in the country. The innovative strategy of this women’s organisation tackles two important problems simultaneously.
- In **Angola**, the Mines Advisory Group holds women-only meetings to ensure women’s priorities for mine clearance are heard.
- A women’s organisation in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, Collectif des Femmes Actrices du Développement et de Défense des Droits de L’Enfant, Femmes et Mères d’Afrique, runs a sensitisation programme for provincial and district-level leaders on the dangers related to landmines. In 2004, they aim to train and distribute materials to 180 community development specialists.⁸¹
- Women in **Cambodia** are primary participants in weapons collection; at a recent public burning of weapons ceremony, 90 percent of participants were women and children.⁸²

In some cases, women have received local training and other forms of formal education from the government or NGOs. In many cases “women who are very actively involved in micro-disarmament action and awareness-raising simply rely on their common sense, their innate intelligence, their customs and traditional forms of conflict management.”⁸³ The female head of the **Movement Against Light Weapons in West Africa** designed a training proposal for women to take action more formally on SALW, and a woman within the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs was actively proposing a similar project at the time of publication.

5. WHAT INTERNATIONAL POLICIES EXIST?

A global movement involving governments, the UN, international organisations, and 1,400 NGOs led to the 1999 adoption of the **Ottawa Convention**,⁸⁴ also known as the **Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention**

and officially as the **Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and Their Destruction**.⁸⁵ It mandates that all state parties destroy their stockpiles of landmines within four years and clear all landmine fields within ten years. It also requires governments, when possible, to provide assistance to mine clearance efforts, mine awareness, stockpile destruction and victim rehabilitation. Governments issue annual, public reports, known as “Article 7 Reports” to the Secretary-General on their national legislation, stockpile numbers and progress in mine action.⁸⁶

The Ottawa Convention, like other international treaties, is designed for the engagement and signature of states only. It does not contain any provisions dealing with non-state actors, nor does it provide them with the possibility to express adherence. After significant advocacy efforts by organisations such as Geneva Call, as of 2004, 26 non-state armed groups had agreed to a total ban on landmine use.⁸⁷

An earlier, alternate landmines treaty that some governments choose to adhere to because of its weaker language is the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**. Officially known as the **Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**, it was open for signature in 1981, and its protocols prohibit the use of mines against civilians in war and internal conflict.⁸⁸ Neither landmine treaty mentions gender or women. But the 1995 **Beijing Platform for Action** explicitly recognised that women suffer from landmines and urged governments to take humanitarian mine action. The UN Mine Action Service is coordinating **Guidelines for Integrating Gender into Mine Action Programmes** that are scheduled for release in 2004.⁸⁹

In October 2000, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 to address the issue of women, peace and security broadly and also focus on disarmament in particular. The resolution “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants.”⁹⁰ It also calls upon organisations to adopt, “measures that support local women’s peace

initiatives... and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement.” This international law can be an important advocacy tool to ensure women’s participation in practical disarmament initiatives.

Early efforts to forge international policy on SALW include a series of UN General Assembly resolutions⁹¹ and the 1997 Secretary-General’s report on practical disarmament.⁹² In 2001, the **Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition**, also called the **Firearms Protocol**, was adopted as a supplement to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. As the first legally binding international convention on SALW, it provided a system of government authorisation for marking weapons at the point of manufacture, import and transfer.

Momentum continued to build on the small arms issue until the July 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Civil society was a primary participant in documenting and identifying critical issues for the conference agenda, and more than 40 NGOs addressed the conference at a special session.⁹³ Their role was acknowledged in the **Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (also known as the PoA)**.⁹⁴ Although the PoA is incomplete and non-binding, it is now the most useful advocacy tool on SALW issues.

States that are signatories to the PoA have committed to a variety of activities, including the destruction of surplus weapons stock, DDR programmes, the encouragement of arms moratoria, maintenance of adequate records of gun manufacturers and owners and the inclusion of civil society organisations in efforts to prevent small arms proliferation. The document lacks references to women or gender, with one exception in the preamble, noting the “...devastating consequences [of SALW] on children, many of whom are victims of armed conflict or are forced to become child soldiers, as well as the negative impact on women and the elderly....”⁹⁵

The content of the PoA was debated extensively before its adoption. Some states, such as **Norway** and the **Netherlands**, continue to build upon the PoA’s

foundation to advocate internationally for more aggressive restrictions, including regulation of arms brokers and the marking and tracing of weapons, which may eventually lead to binding instruments. Civil society groups are also working to extend existing commitments. **IANSA**, **Amnesty International** and **Oxfam** have launched the **Control Arms** initiative, which promotes an instrument called the **Arms Trade Treaty** to prevent arms transfers to states with poor human rights records. **International Alert** is currently working in partnership with the **UN Department for Disarmament Affairs** to establish priorities for women’s needs and concerns to be integrated into the revisions of the PoA in 2006.

The UN held its **Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms** in July 2003, to follow up on the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference. This meeting was held to assess the national, regional and global implementation of the PoA.⁹⁶ Civil society again played a very active role in proceedings, with NGOs reporting from countries as varied as Armenia, Costa Rica, Kenya and Sri Lanka. The second Biennial Meeting is planned for July 2005, and the UN Review conference—the final meeting to measure the PoA’s effectiveness and to initiate any further UN action on SALW—will occur in July 2006. Civil society and women’s groups in particular are encouraged to participate.⁹⁷

Regionally, various policies have been put in place to control the proliferation of SALW. In 1997, the **Organization of American States** adopted controls on the manufacturing and transfer of small arms,⁹⁸ followed by several subregional agreements including the **Antigua Declaration**⁹⁹ in 2000 in Central America and the **Andean Plan**¹⁰⁰ in 2003. The **European Union** adopted a Code of Conduct in 1998 that restricts arms deals, including landmines, to conflict areas.¹⁰¹ In 2000, the **Organization of African Unity** adopted the **Bamako Declaration**, which provides a common agenda for the continent to combat the proliferation and circulation of SALW.¹⁰² Subregional mechanisms include the 1998 **Economic Community of West African States Moratorium**,¹⁰³ the 2001 **Southern African Development Community Protocol**¹⁰⁴ and the 2004 **Nairobi Protocol**¹⁰⁵ for the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. In 2000, police from all Pacific Island states signed the **Nadi Framework**, which provides a legal framework for a common approach to weapons control.¹⁰⁶

If the mention of women appears anywhere in these regional declarations, it is solely in reference to their victimisation. Much more must be done internationally to increase awareness of the ways in which women contribute to practical disarmament and to ensure their participation.

6. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

1. Educate family members of the dangers of SALW, including landmines, and urge them to turn in their weapons.
2. Begin campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of disarmament and participate in all formal weapons collection efforts.
3. Initiate and/or participate in community forums to ensure that local leaders, representatives of international organisations and others preparing for practical disarmament hear your views and perspectives.
4. Lobby national governments to sign important international treaties on SALW, including landmines, and to implement the requirements of those treaties.
5. Design innovative projects and programmes that provide community incentives for former combatants and women fighters, in particular, to disarm; promote awareness of the dangers of SALW; deliver aid and assistance to victims.
6. When involved in weapons collection and mine clearance, work with trained partners and experts to ensure your safety.
7. Join together with other women's organisations to draw on each other's strengths, exchange ideas, coordinate efforts and enable your projects to be most effective. Consider connecting with the Women's Network of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) as part of this effort.
8. Make your presence and activities known to government authorities and international agencies involved in disarmament; in many cases, they are anxious to partner with local organisations.
9. Seek out funding sources, particularly for landmine victim assistance, as there are many international groups dedicated to supporting efforts in this area.
10. Connect with international organisations including the UN, development agencies and civil society that focus on SALW that might provide training, materials and programme models.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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ACRONYMS

CMAC	Cambodian Mine Action Centre
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PoA	Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

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Security Sector Reform

SANAM NARAGHI ANDERLINI AND CAMILLE PAMPELL CONAWAY

In many conflict-affected countries the security sector—the military, police, secret services and intelligence—often have powers above the law. Sometimes, instead of serving the population, they are used by the state to oppress any form of opposition and increase the militarisation of society. In some places, powerful militaries have destabilised civilian governments. In others, the security sector receives a disproportionate amount of the national budget, in effect, redirecting resources from development to military expenditure. In the reconstruction and transformation of any post war country, security sector reform (SSR) is key.

Reducing the size, budget and scope of activity of the security sector and reforming it to become more transparent and accountable to its citizens is a difficult task in any country. Very few women or even non-governmental organisations (NGOs) enter into the discussions surrounding the security sector, as it is often perceived to be the domain of “experts” in the security arena and is sufficiently mysterious to discourage non-military individuals and groups from entering the debate.

But the nature, size and function of a state security system are critical to shaping the nature of the government and society that comes after a war. So it is essential for civilians, including women, to engage, ask questions and seek solutions.

1. WHAT IS SECURITY SECTOR REFORM?

The **security sector** refers to organisations and entities that have the authority, capacity and/or orders to use force or the threat of force to protect the state and civilians. It also includes the civil structures responsible for managing such organisations. Three components make up the sector:

1. groups with the authority and instruments to use force (e.g. militaries, police, paramilitaries, intelligence services);
2. institutions that monitor and manage the sector (e.g. government ministries, parliament, civil society—see chapter on governance); and
3. structures responsible for maintaining the rule of law (e.g. the judiciary, the ministry of justice, prisons, human rights commissions, local and traditional justice mechanisms—see chapter on transitional justice).

In states affected by armed conflict, the security sector also includes non-state actors such as armed opposition movements, militias and private security firms. Additionally the media, academia and civil society can play an important role in monitoring activities and calling for accountability.

The reform of this sector is important for promoting peace and good governance in the short and long term. In the short term, SSR is needed to ensure that:

- forces do not regroup to destabilise or pose a threat to peace;
- bribery and corruption are eliminated; and
- the sector (including leadership structures) is fully transformed so as to gain credibility, legitimacy and trust in the public eye.

If the security sector is not handled adequately and in time, it is likely that funds will continue to be misdirected, putting a severe constraint on the process of post conflict reconstruction.

In the longer term, SSR is typically understood to have four dimensions:

1. political, primarily based on the principle of civilian control over military and security bodies;
2. institutional, referring to the physical and technical transformation of security entities (e.g. structure of security establishment, number of troops, equipment, etc.);
3. economic, relating to the financing and budgets of forces; and
4. societal, relating to the role of civil society in monitoring security policies and programmes.

Transforming the political dimension begins with overarching discussions about the role of the armed forces in society and how defence policy is made and implemented. This may include public and parliamentary debate as well as input from civil society. In many cases, international donors press for democratic, civilian control of the military and other security forces—including control of their budget—and an independent judiciary.

In some cases, the entire shape and focus of the armed forces can be reformulated during this phase, as a new military doctrine is drafted along with a budget. In such a framework, the government states the nature, roles and intentions of its military forces (e.g. if it will be defensive in nature, or will be gearing up to face a known external threat). In **South Africa**, widespread public consultations resulted in discussions about “What is security?” and “What are the threats to the nation?” This led to a general shift from traditional military notions of security to a political framework that placed human security—development, alleviation of poverty, access to food and water, education and public safety—at the centre of the national security framework.

The institutional dimensions of SSR refer to the physical and technical transformation of these structures so that they meet the international standards expected of a democratic country. This is often the most difficult component of SSR, as powerful military leaders or institutions are often unwilling to give up their control or agree to be

under the leadership of a civilian government. Moreover, since they are often the most qualified personnel to address security issues, their influence remains strong even in reform processes.

Steps to transform security institutions include:

1. transforming the structure of the military and security bodies, including, where necessary, reduction in its size through disarming and demobilising forces (see chapter on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) and/or combining former guerrillas and the military to create a new national service;
2. instituting new recruitment and training policies to “professionalise” and “modernise” the new military and police forces (building their capacity, reorienting their focus and teaching new skills such as respect for human rights);
3. training and supporting reformed judicial and penal systems (ensuring their independence and accountability to civil society); and
4. fostering a cultural transformation so that previously excluded sectors of society (e.g. ethnic or religious groups, women, etc.) are included in security forces and institutions are sensitive to their needs.

The economic dimensions of SSR relate to the finances and budgets of the security forces. This requires the legislature or governmental bodies to determine the tasks of the new security forces and the appropriate level of funding necessary to carry them out. This may require actually increasing the military budget in the short term—e.g. to pay for reintegration benefits for demobilised combatants, retraining soldiers, etc.

The societal dimensions of SSR concern the role of civil society in monitoring the development of security policies and the actions of security services, and ensuring transparency and accountability on all issues. This includes public awareness activities and advocacy efforts by such groups as the independent media, religious organisations, student groups, professional associations, human rights advocacy groups and women’s organisations.

As shown by the many activities listed above, SSR is a complex and lengthy process that involves most ministries and agencies of the government as well as all sectors of civil society. Obstacles to its implementation are many, but the ideal end result is a democratic, civilian-led security structure that is affordable and at the service of and accountable to the people.

2. WHO DESIGNS AND IMPLEMENTS SSR?

The plan for SSR is often laid out in an official peace accord. In some cases the accords are very detailed; in others a broad mandate is issued and specifics are left for post-accord planning.

The national government is the primary actor responsible for the implementation of SSR. Due to the nature of countries in transition from war to peace, or dictatorship to democracy, the military has often been a primary actor in government—receiving a large piece of the overall budget, playing a major role in decision-making in all aspects of governance and maintaining physical control over large areas of the country. It is highly likely in such circumstances that resistance to reform will be strong. Considerable time and resources, along with pressure from donors and civil society, are usually necessary for reforms to take root.

Support from the international community is also important. In recent years, international donors have begun to support SSR in developing and post conflict countries. Their focus, in general, has been on the importance of civilian control and oversight and good governance (transparency, anti-corruption, etc.) in the security sector. Their activities include:

- providing technical advice to governments on issues of fiscal responsibility and oversight;
- offering training programmes for military and civilian leaders in accountability, transparency and human rights;
- strengthening civil institutions, such as the ministries of justice and defence;
- supporting and building civil society capacities to provide input into and monitor the security sector;

- providing professional training for the armed forces and police;
- assisting disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes; and
- launching more in-depth bilateral partnership initiatives (e.g. the Australian Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, which provides funding and technical assistance for SSR).

SSR is increasingly seen as part of the array of activities that contribute to alleviation of poverty and development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID) have become major actors in forging this connection.

There is a growing consensus among policy-makers and scholars that civil society also makes important contributions to SSR, including:

- facilitating dialogue and debate;
- encouraging inclusivity and equal participation of all communities in the discussions, a sense of local ownership of the process and the sector;
- promoting transparency;
- sharing knowledge and providing training on issues ranging from gender to human rights; and
- monitoring reform initiatives.

Advocacy groups, such as human rights and women's organisations, can press for reforms and insist on transparency, while raising awareness of certain issues through the media. For example, in Nepal, women's groups have trained the military in human rights law and related issues that will teach them how to treat the public. In South Africa, NGOs raised concerns about the environmental damage that military activities might cause in certain areas (e.g. depleted weapons systems affecting water or soil).

Community groups such as church organisations, trade unions and neighbourhood associations can represent the interests of their members at particular points, such as the reintegration of former fighters. They might lobby for longer-term resources to

support reintegration efforts or call for more skills training and development assistance. NGOs can also act as “service delivery” organisations, perhaps providing rehabilitation services to demobilised combatants or mobilising for community policing.

Local civil society groups can also be effective in vetting applicants for the police or military service to make sure that balanced representation from different sectors of society, and that former criminals are not recruited. In **Iraq**, for example, local councils offered to assist the US-run Coalition Provisional Authority in recruiting new Iraqi security personnel in 2003. Since they belonged to the neighbourhood, the council members knew who would be appropriate to serve in the police or army.

Yet despite the opportunities that exist, more often than not, civil society and particularly women are excluded or choose to stay away from these discussions. In the 2004 peace talks in **Sudan**, the subcommittee addressing security issues was made up of military commanders; no civilians or women were involved. In **Nepal** in 2004, the National Security Council was comprised of army personnel and representatives from the Defence Ministry and the Prime Minister’s office, but no women were included. Indeed there were no high-ranking women in the police or key ministries of the Nepalese government.

3. WHY SHOULD WOMEN BE INVOLVED IN SSR?

The security sector affects men and women in different ways, given the distinct roles they play during war, peacebuilding, and post conflict reconstruction. During times of armed conflict and unrest, the actions of the security sector have a direct impact on men and women’s lives. While military personnel and those holding guns deliberate security issues, civilians are the first to be affected by the violence and insecurity that prevails. Women, especially those heading households, are most vulnerable when public security diminishes and when security forces that do exist are predatory. Their perspectives should be sought in any reform process.

ABUSE OF POWER

Under military dictatorships and “police states” or other totalitarian systems, regimes ensure that their operatives are pervasive, not only breeding fear and

oppression, but also causing a profound lack of trust within the population. In other words, it is quite likely that people, especially those from marginalised and oppressed populations, fear the police, rather than considering them as providers of basic security and protection.

Inevitably, the secrecy and all-consuming power that security forces wield in some societies can lead to all forms of human rights violations—from the most simple, perhaps harassment, to the most extreme, such as imprisonment without cause or torture. In **Nepal**, state security forces were infamous for abusing and raping women in villages with impunity until local activists took action (see below).

SEXUAL ABUSE AND COERCED PROSTITUTION AS ACCEPTED NORMS

The sexual abuse of women is common during times of conflict and in states where the security services are powerful. Yet there is much silence around this issue, as it touches the very heart of individuals’ insecurity. Often neither women nor their male relatives are willing to protest such sexual misconduct. In the aftermath of conflict, such practices may cultivate a mindset that treats domestic violence and the trafficking of women for the sex trade as inevitable and therefore acceptable. In **East Timor**, political and social violence drastically declined following the peace agreement, yet domestic violence remained the same, accounting for 40 percent of all reported crimes. It led then-UN administrator Sergio Vieira de Mello to label domestic violence a “cancer” in Timorese society.¹

But social taboos that prevent debates about violence against women, as well as women’s marginalisation from political power, mean these problems are easily ignored when SSR policies are developed and implemented. In **Sierra Leone’s** security sector transition, two years after the reform of the Sierra Leone Police began, “there are still complaints of corruption, insensitivity to gender-based violence, and failure to investigate complaints of rape and domestic violence.”²

WHY SHOULD THE SECURITY SECTOR MATTER TO YOU?¹³

PROBLEM	CONSEQUENCES
Government unable or unwilling to control the military and other security actors.	Coup d'etat; democratic, accountable government unable to take root; human rights abuses.
Government unable or unwilling to manage military expenditures and defence procurements effectively and efficiently.	Public money wasted on unnecessary and/or overpriced equipment; corruption; poor level and quality of security.
Government enacts repressive internal security measures for narrow political gain.	Excessive military expenditures; democracy under threat; human rights abuses.
Defence strategy based on unreal or inflated estimate of threats.	Excessive military expenditures; possible inability to deal with wider threats to security.

4. HOW DO WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO SSR?

There are few documented examples of women's contributions to SSR—the major case being in **South Africa**.³ Models of women's potential activities in this area are detailed below.

WOMEN IN SECURITY FORCES

Women in opposition groups, military, police forces and intelligence services are in a unique position to affect SSR from the inside. It is important for women—especially in leadership positions—to bring a gender perspective to the discussions on security issues during the negotiations process. In **South Africa**, women from the Umkonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC), drew on their own experiences of harassment and discrimination and fought hard to ensure democratic representation in the new security structures, including the establishment of policies to ensure women's inclusion and equal status and participation.

Women combatants—members of rebel groups or government forces—can participate in aspects of SSR, including as part of the new institutions, but they have been given limited opportunities. Increasingly there is attention given to women in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes (see chapter on DDR). Yet in many cases, they are denied access to benefits,

including education and employment. Typically, women participate in the new forces in far fewer numbers than their male counterparts. In **El Salvador**, women constituted less than six percent of the post war police force,⁴ and in **Afghanistan** there were only 40 female recruits in the first class of 1,500 in the Kabul Police Academy.⁵ Female police officers are typically assigned to dealing with “women's” issues, such as responding to victims of domestic violence or the arrest and search of female prisoners. Women are often given lower-status positions, such as clerical duties. In **Sierra Leone**, despite the hiring of women and gender training for the lower ranks, “female police officers are sometimes expected to do little more than cook lunch for the male police officers.”⁶ Yet in many instances—particularly where women are part of a broader liberation struggle—they have skills and understanding of issues that can benefit the security institutions as a whole, especially with regard to the forces' relations with the community.

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

As parliamentarians, women can play a key role in demanding accountability and transparency from the security services; determining budgets and policies to ensure that military expenditures do not take away resources from developmental issues such as education, the environment, social services and healthcare; including the public in debate and dialogue on these issues; and ensuring democratic representation in the new security structures.

Security and Terrorism

The declaration of the “War on Terror” in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks in the US has led to increased militarisation in many countries across the world. As a result, in some conflict-affected countries, laws and policies against “terrorism” have been used to justify government crackdowns on all forms of dissent. This, in turn, has had a detrimental impact on the work of some NGOs and civil society peace activists, as certain governments have sought to co-opt them. Some governments have demanded that civil society groups provide information and aid or have conditioned their own assistance on cooperation against “terrorist” actors. In **Nepal**, for example, the army has blocked medical care and provisions to villages where they suspect Maoist activities. Across the world, civil society activists are not only denouncing these policies, but revealing that heightened militarisation is creating increased insecurity for many civilians. Women’s groups in countries as varied as **Colombia** and **Nepal** are attempting to find alternative ways of dealing with the constraints.

In **South Africa**, women parliamentarians promoted public participation in the reform process by including NGOs when formulating new policies. They also took a stand, pleading for honesty and transparency when an arms deal was concluded without public debate and allegations of corruption were rampant. Women also criticised the government for spending scarce funds on arms instead of alleviation of poverty, and one key female parliamentarian resigned in protest over the deal.⁷

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

The leadership of women in governmental positions, such as ministers and other high-level decision-makers, can also impact the process and substance of SSR. Promoting women in decision-making positions at national and local levels is crucial to maximising their contributions to SSR.

In **South Africa**, as part of the establishment of transparent, civilian authority over the armed forces, a Quaker woman was appointed to the post of Deputy Defence Minister. Among other initiatives, she has convened an annual Women’s Peace Table seminar that brings together women from the military and civil society to discuss issues such as the security needs of the country and the conduct of soldiers. Under her guidance, other initiatives in the Department of Defence—including a gender focal point, gender-sensitisation programmes and specific policies to remove barriers for women and promote their equal participation in security structures have been launched.

WOMEN IN CIVIL SOCIETY

NGOs and community activists have a vital role to

play in security sector transformation, serving as expert advisors to the process, pressuring for reforms, representing the interests of their communities and providing much-needed services to fill the gaps in official work. Moreover, the involvement of the public is, in itself, one of the most important aspects of SSR.

Feminist and anti-militarist academics and experts have also offered important insight into the SSR process. In **South Africa**, they played a key role in shaping policies and monitoring for transparency and accountability. There are still few women, relative to men, with expertise in military security issues. But in many conflict areas, women peace activists have initiated efforts to include training on gender, human rights and rule of law in programmes for the security forces.

In **Colombia**, since 2003, women’s groups have questioned the militaristic notions of security and have been working through their networks to redefine security based on humanitarian needs. In **Nepal**, since 2003, a women’s organisation has engaged with the military, providing training to some 200 senior commanders on international human rights and conventions relating to women’s and children’s rights. Through interactive programmes involving senior military personnel and villagers, they highlight the impact of the military’s harassment and violence and seek to promote protection of life and explain how the military’s actions violate international norms. By 2004, a Steering Committee including representatives from **Save the Children**,⁸ the armed forces police the general police, and the prime minister’s office had been created to monitor

progress and support the creation of a training manual for military personnel in the field.

In southern **Sudan**, following advocacy efforts by women's groups in 2002, a series of meetings was organised between traditional leaders, women's groups, civil society and the civilian authorities to explore the role of the security sector in promoting peace. As a result of the discussions, judges and the police force entered into new training programmes designed to increase their understanding of human rights laws. New job descriptions were developed with particular reference to upholding and implementing international human rights norms in the context of policing and the judiciary. Women leaders at the grassroots level are also being trained to understand the relevance of security issues.⁹

Civil society can monitor the government's plans and pressure for reforms. In **Sierra Leone** in 1998 NGOs reacted against the government's plan to include men who had mutinied in the new armed forces, leading to a national dialogue on the role of the armed forces in the country. In **Fiji**, women's NGOs working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs met with the Fiji Government's National Security and Defence Review Committee (NSDR) as part of its review process in 2003. The meeting included discussions about how the review process was being conducted, who was being consulted, the issues being identified as security threats and how international standards and norms (including Resolution 1325) were being incorporated into the defence programme. As a result, women's groups made two submissions to the NSDR including recommendations for the permanent appointment of the Minister for Women on the National Security Council and representation of women on provincial and district-level security committees.

In the **Georgian** and **Abkhaz** conflict, women's groups drew on discussions around "human security" to develop common areas of concern. They found that for many internally displaced Georgians, security would increase by returning to their homes in Abkhazia; in contrast, Abkhazians found the return of Georgians to be a threat to their security as it implied a potential return to violence and revenge. To overcome fears of retribution, women activists on both sides are lobbying governmental authorities to

pass resolutions on the non-resumption of armed conflict as a confidence-building measure.

Examples of civil society and government partnerships for SSR are increasing. In **Guatemala**, FLACSO (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales), a security-focused NGO, convened civil society, government representatives and members of the security sector in a consultative process to develop solutions to specific SSR challenges. In **Malawi**, civil society organisations contribute to the effectiveness of their community policing units through information gathering on crime and small arms, public awareness-raising activities and advocacy for legal reform.

Women are also very familiar with the needs of their communities and can advocate for budgetary shifts away from military to social expenditure. In 1997, in a petition signed by 99,000 women and presented to the UN General Assembly, there was a call for a reduction of 5 percent in national military expenditures globally and a redistribution of those funds to health, education and employment programmes over the following five years.¹⁰

At the local level, women's knowledge of community needs emerged at a conference of **Iraqi** women in November 2003. Their recommendations to improve security included: "Immediately ensure street lighting."¹¹ They noted that in dark streets burglaries, theft, kidnappings and other forms of violence were more common. This was a cause of great concern for the community. While the provision of street lights does not address the more complex causes of insecurity in such circumstances, it does help limit lawlessness and enable neighbourhoods and communities to regain some level of basic security.

Women can also be effective in community policing. In several post conflict states in response to a lack of security and an increase in violent crime, policing by community members has become a means of providing basic safety and security. The **UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** has sponsored women's groups in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Cambodia** that have conducted training for leaders of community policing to better respond to the needs of women, making the units more effective at enhancing security throughout the community.¹²

5. WHAT INTERNATIONAL POLICIES EXIST?

Very little attention has been paid to the issue of women's involvement in SSR. While **Resolution 1325** of the **UN Security Council**, for instance, mandates the inclusion of women in peace processes and post conflict reconstruction, formal statements from the UN and other organisations have not yet specifically addressed the inclusion of women and gender perspectives in the transformation of the security sector.

In both governmental and non-governmental spheres, studies have addressed the importance of civil society to these issues, although few mention women specifically. **UNIFEM** and the **Secretary-General's office** have issued reports that briefly discuss the role of women in SSR. Much more is needed to advance this issue.

6. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

1. Network with mainstream civil society groups and think tanks specialising in security issues to exchange knowledge and strategies and build capacity within your organisation to address these issues.
2. Educate women and men on SSR—its mechanisms, frameworks and policies, with specific focus on how to address the particular security needs of women.
3. Convene public meetings to determine the security concerns of the population and possible solutions:
 - raise awareness at the community level of the importance of engaging with the security sector;
 - utilise the media to initiate a public dialogue on the issue of SSR; and
 - publish findings of consultations and use them to advocate for broader public participation in security-related debates.
4. Identify and engage with key governmental and military actors involved in the process and present civil society concerns.
 - pressure all parties to include women and other civil society actors in security-related discussions; and
 - urge the government and parliament to consider the community's needs, concerns and input.
5. Work with and strengthen the capacities of women in official positions to engage in security issues. Ensure that they have a gender perspective in their deliberations and encourage them to meet with civil society groups.
6. Monitor governmental and international discussions regarding SSR. Comment and offer solutions through press releases and publications.
7. Monitor the budget, expenditures and procurement practices of parliament and the department of defence to ensure transparency and accountability.
8. Lobby for affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies to ensure equal participation of women in the military.
9. Lobby for and provide gender awareness and human rights training for those branches of security institutions most likely to come in contact with civilians (such as the police).
10. Convene women from the military, parliament, and civil society to discuss women and security issues, create a common agenda and strategise on steps to ensure women's perspectives are included in policymaking on defence and security.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
MK	Umkonto we Sizwe
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDR	National Security and Defence Review Committee of Fiji
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

ENDNOTES

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- ² “Sierra Leone: Promotion of Human Rights and Protection for Women Still Required.” *Refugees International* 18 March 2004. 25 August 2004 <<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/949/>>.
- ³ For more information on South African women’s involvement in security sector reform, see Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. *Negotiating the Transition to Democracy and Reforming the Security Sector: The Vital Contributions of South African Women*. Washington, DC: Women Waging Peace, 2004. 1 September 2004 <<http://womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/SouthAfricaSecurityFullCaseStudy.pdf>>.
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- ⁵ Sedra, Mark, Ed. *Confronting Afghanistan’s Security Dilemma: Reforming the Security Sector*. BICC Brief 28. Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2003. 2 May 2004 <<http://www.bicc.de/publications/briefs/brief28/brief28.pdf>>. 33.
- ⁶ Refugees International “Sierra Leone: Promotion of Human Rights and Protection for Women Still Required.”
- ⁷ Preggs Govendar was the MP who resigned.
- ⁸ The International Save the Children Alliance in Nepal is represented by Save the Children branches in the US, UK, Japan and Norway.
- ⁹ Workshop on the toolkit, conducted by International Alert and Women Waging Peace, London, July 2004.
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- ¹³ Table extracted from: United Kingdom Department for International Development. *Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform*. London: DFID, n.d. 8.

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The agencies above welcome and encourage the utilisation and dissemination of the material included in this Toolkit.

Picture credits clockwise from top left: Thousands of Colombian Women Protesting in Bogotá, July 25, 2002, PHOTO BY REUTERS, COURTESY OF WOMEN WAGING PEACE. Achol Cyer Rehan, Women's Association Chairwoman for Bhar El Ghazal Region, South Sudan and Suzanne Samson Jambo, Coordinator, New Sudanese Indigenous NGOs Network, PHOTO BY VICTORIA STANSKI. Alma Viviana Pérez Gomez, Consultant, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia, PHOTO BY VICTORIA STANSKI.

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