

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



Statement released 11 February 2013

Distinguished Committee Members,

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) would like to express our concerns about the apparent extreme rates of violence facing women of Pakistan today, in light of the Government of Pakistan's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to address violence against women and particularly domestic gun violence.

In 2011, the Awaz Centre for Development Services (Awaz CDS), supported by the International Action Network against Small Arms (IANSA), performed a survey in five districts of South Punjab, focusing on women who bear small arms violence at home.

Its most relevant findings are as follows:

Out of all respondents of the survey performed, sixty percent reported women to be the primary person at threat with the presence of a gun in the home, while forty-one percent of victims of domestic gun violence reported this to happen to them 'very often'.

The report further demonstrates that of the guns used to commit violence against women, most are either rifles or handguns, whereby rifles are also commonly used for beating and whipping. Sixty-five percent of women who reported to be victims of domestic gun violence noted the gun used was illegally owned by their husbands.

WILPF welcomes the Committee's Statement on the Need for a Gender Perspective on the text of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which emphasizes the specific factors relating to armed conflict, which hinder the enjoyment of substantive equality for women and reiterates the necessity for a general and complete disarmament. We also thank you for your expertise providing that conventional arms, especially small arms, including diverted arms from the legal trade, can have a major direct or indirect effect on women as victims of domestic violence, conflict-related sexual violence, and also as protestors or actors in resistance movements.

Appropriate control over the circulation of existing and often illicit small arms, used for gender-based violence that affect women disproportionately, is therefore a crucial element in safeguarding security, gender equality and development.

In the context of Arms Trade Treaty negotiations, the support and expertise from the Committee is highly valuable for those of us working to prevent the facilitation of armed gender-based violence through the arms trade, such as women's organisations and others with a gender perspective. Such

a statement has been useful in our advocacy work and has enhanced our arguments through the expertise of the Committee. WILPF encourages the Committee to closely follow the negotiations and to provide further expertise and input as the negotiations evolve, including informed positions on the drafting of the text, in particular concerning the references to gender-based violence.

Regarding the case of Pakistan and given the appalling findings in this report, WILPF recommends the Committee interrogates the delegation of Pakistan on the issue of small arms flow and its relation to violence against women. We hope the Committee will consider recommending the delegation of Pakistan to ensure the strict regulation and control of internal and across-borders trade and sales of small arms as they increase the insecurity of women in and outside the household and increase the fatality of violence against women.

We further acknowledge that the traditional justice mechanisms of the Qisas and Diyat provisions, allowing for a compromise or a pardoning of the killer by the heirs of the deceased, maintain structural gender inequalities in the home. This increases the instances of honour killings against women, including those performed using small arms.

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