

**Submission from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms on civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights**

**19 February 2019**

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) continues to welcome the Human Rights Council's (HRC) growing efforts to link human rights perspectives and concerns with arms control and disarmament efforts. In this respect, we welcome the HRC's five resolutions since 2013 strengthening the intimate links between the protection of human rights and disarmament<sup>1</sup> and related reports by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.<sup>2</sup>

Our submission reflects our long history of cross-cutting work in the areas of disarmament, human rights, and women, peace and security. WILPF has produced significant research on various negative impacts on human rights posed by different types of conventional weapons, including firearms.<sup>3</sup> WILPF also contributed to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) report on the impact of arms transfers on human rights in 2017,<sup>4</sup> and to the report on the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms in 2016.<sup>5</sup> Based on our experience of over a century of feminist advocacy for disarmament, and because incidents of gender-based violence, and the violation of women's human rights perpetrated by firearms continues to be under-reported and neglected, this submission particularly sheds light on the *gendered* impact of the acquisition, possession, and use of firearms on human rights.

<sup>1</sup> Impact of arms transfers on human rights in armed conflicts A/HRC/RES/24/35, 8 October 2013; Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, A/HRC/RES/26/1, 16 July 2014; Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms A/HRC/RES/29/10, 22 July 2015; Impact of arms transfers on human rights, A/HRC/RES/32/12, 15 July 2016; Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, A/HRC/RES/38/10, 18 July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Impact of arms transfers on the enjoyment of human rights, A/HRC/35/8 3 May 2017; Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, A/HRC/32/21, 15 April 2016.

<sup>3</sup> See for example here for a collection of publications: Challenging the arms trade, Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/research-projects/10738-challenging-the-arms-trade>

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Impact of arms transfers on the enjoyment of human rights, A/HRC/35/8 3 May 2017. See also WILPF's submission here: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/ArmsTransfers/WomensInternationalLeaguePeaceAndFreedom.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Submission by WILPF Cameroon, 10 December 2015, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/CivilianAcquisition/NGOs/WILPF.pdf>

The submission is structured as follows. After an introduction, the submission responds to each question in the questionnaire separately, except for questions three and four, which it responds to jointly. While taken separately, question one on the categories of human rights, and question two on groups of rights holders inevitably are overlapping.

In the following, the term “firearms” will be understood as defined in the High Commissioner’s report of 2016. The terms firearms, small arms, or small arms and light weapons (SALW) will therefore be used interchangeably.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, A/HRC/32/21, 15 April 2016, paragraph 4.

## Introduction

Small Arms Survey estimates that the number of firearms in civilian holdings amounted to 650 million in 2006.<sup>7</sup> In 2017, this amount grew to 857 million in civilian hands.<sup>8</sup> The total amount of firearms currently in the world is more than one billion.<sup>9</sup> Firearm stockpiles continue to grow as millions of new guns are produced each year, and far fewer are being destroyed. With respect to ammunition, the number of cartridges produced each year runs into the billions.<sup>10</sup> Ammunition is inextricably linked to firearms: without the former, the latter would not function. Ammunition is already covered in many existing regional arms trade policies,<sup>11</sup> and the need to equally control and regulate the acquisition, possession, and use of ammunition at a global level is well-recognised, even if politically challenging.<sup>12</sup>

In 2010, Amnesty International highlighted that about 60 per cent of human rights violations it had documented involved the use of small arms and light weapons.<sup>13</sup> Firearms are part of a global armed violence epidemic. Next to armed violence, small arms facilitate sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, and are intimately linked to violent masculinities and the militarisation of communities. As Daniel Mack of Conectas observes: “Guns are more plentiful and impactful than all other types of conventional weapons within the concept of armed violence.”<sup>14</sup> The proliferation of firearms is a key enabler of conflict,<sup>15</sup> and has devastating impacts on socio-economic development,<sup>16</sup> human rights and human development, and impedes progress on Agenda 2030.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Aaron Karp, ‘Estimating Global Civilian-Held Firearms Numbers’, *Small Arms Survey*, June 2018, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Civilian-Firearms-Numbers.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Small Arms Survey reveals: More than one billion firearms in the world, *Small Arms Survey*, June 2018, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/about-us/highlights/2018/highlight-bp-firearms-holdings.html>

<sup>10</sup> Owen Greene, ‘Introduction Ammunition for Small Arms and Light Weapons: Understanding the Issues and Addressing the Challenges’, in *Targeting Ammunition – A Primer*, Stéphanie Pézard and Holger Anders (eds.), June 2006, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/D-Book-series/book-03-targeting-ammunition/SAS-Targeting-Ammunition-Book.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, the EU Common Position on exports of military technology and equipment and the Wassenaar Arrangement Munitions List both include ammunition.

<sup>12</sup> Draft Report of the Third UN Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its aspects, submitted by the President of the Conference, A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, 22 June 2018, paragraphs I(16) and A 1(18).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Killer Facts – The Impact of the irresponsible Arms Trade on Lives, Rights and Livelihoods’, *Amnesty International*, 2010, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/document/?indexNumber=ACT30%2F005%2F2010&language=en>.

<sup>14</sup> D. Mack, ‘Small Arms, Big Violations’, *International Journal on Human Rights*, 12(22), p. 52, 2015, [https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04\\_SUR-22\\_ENGLISH\\_DANIEL-MACK.pdf](https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04_SUR-22_ENGLISH_DANIEL-MACK.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Report of the Secretary-General, Small arms and light weapons, S/2015/289, 27 April 2016.

The Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment also noted that in order to “break the cycle of violence” in Jamaica, the trade of firearms, as one of the root causes of violent crime, needs to be addressed. See Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment A/HRC/16/52/Add.3, paragraphs 34 and 77(k)

<sup>16</sup> See for instance Colin Archer, ‘Warfare or Welfare – Disarmament for Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’, *International Peace Bureau*, 2005.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.174.2498&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>17</sup> ‘A New Development Agenda: Reducing illicit arms flows and Sustainable Development Goal 16’, *Small Arms Survey*, May-June 2016, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/about-us/highlights/2016/highlight-rn-57-and-58.html>.

The High Commissioner's report of 2016 provides a brief but rich overview of major impacts firearms can have on human rights.<sup>18</sup> WILPF seeks to deepen some of these insights in this submission, in particular with a gender analysis.

### A note about arms transfers

Every firearm that is used to commit any form of violence came from somewhere, and in many cases, has been transferred across borders. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the arms trade; the acquisition, possession, and use of firearms; and their impacts on human rights are inextricably connected. As already indicated in WILPF's submission to the High Commissioner's report on the arms trade and human rights,<sup>19</sup> there is been a growing recognition by United Nations human rights bodies, including the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Human Rights Council, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Committee) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), that arms transfers, including firearms, can have a profound impact on the enjoyment of human rights, including civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. WILPF has drawn attention to the impact of arms transfers on human rights and gender-based violence in recipient countries in a number of submissions to human rights bodies.<sup>20</sup>

### Toxic masculinities and firearms

WILPF long has recognised that the possession of weapons symbolises power that stems from a particular and dominant understanding and performance of masculinity. It is based

<sup>18</sup> Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms A/HRC/32/21, 15 April 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Submission from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the impact of arms transfers on human rights, 3 February 2017, pp. 1-2, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/ArmsTransfers/WomensInternationalLeaguePeaceAndFreedom.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> See for instance:

'The impact of the UK's arms transfers and military spending on women's rights', joint submission by Christian Aid, the Quakers in Britain and WILPF to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 72nd session, February 2019, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fCSS%2fGBR%2f33748&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fCSS%2fGBR%2f33748&Lang=en).

'The impact of Germany's arms transfers on economic, social and cultural rights', joint submission by WILPF and the European Center for Constitutional and Human rights to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 64th session, August 2018, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CESCR\\_Germany\\_-\\_Jt-ECCHR-WIPLF-submission-.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CESCR_Germany_-_Jt-ECCHR-WIPLF-submission-.pdf);

'Women, Peace and Security – A Review of Germany's National Action Plan 1325', submission by WILPF to the Universal Periodic Review of Germany, 30th session, December 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Germany-UPR\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Germany-UPR_FINAL_WEB.pdf);

'The impact of Italy's arms transfers on women', submission by WILPF to the CEDAW Committee, 67th session, June 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/WILPF-CEDAW-ITALY-Report\\_Final\\_June\\_17-2.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/WILPF-CEDAW-ITALY-Report_Final_June_17-2.pdf);

'The impact of Germany's arms transfers on women', joint submission by WILPF and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights to the CEDAW Committee, 66th session, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEDAW-Shadow-Report-on-Germany\\_20170130.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEDAW-Shadow-Report-on-Germany_20170130.pdf)

See also: Challenging the arms trade, various publications, Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/research-projects/10738-challenging-the-arms-trade>.

upon gender norms in which ideas like strength, courage, and protection are equated with violence.<sup>21</sup>

In his May 2018 Agenda for Disarmament, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres also recognised that, “concerns relating to arms have clear gender dimensions. The ownership and use of arms is closely linked to specific expressions of masculinity related to control, power, domination and strength.”<sup>22</sup>

Guns are reflective of a culture of aggression and impunity. “Guns do not need to be fired to be effective,” as Michael Ashkenazi of the Bonn International Center for Conversion argues. “The carrying of a gun often symbolises its use, or substitutes of its use far more effectively than does actual use, provided the willingness of the user to actually fire the weapon has been established.”<sup>23</sup>

Weapons are about power, not security. A study by Small Arms Survey confirmed that Liberian men and women both perceive the possession of firearms as threat rather than as a source of security.<sup>24</sup> Guns are about control and dominance, not cooperation or equality. They detract from our collective humanity, facilitating divisions and violence.<sup>25</sup>

These dominant gender norms have distinct impacts on women, and girls, men and boys and non-binary people. Different groups, distinguished by age, sex, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, religion, and other factors, therefore experience the impact of firearms differently.

Men and boys are systematically exposed to violence as a direct result of dominant gender constructs.<sup>26</sup> Men “constitute a massive majority of the owners of small arms,”<sup>27</sup> and young men make up the vast majority of perpetrators and victims of armed violence. In 2016, men

<sup>21</sup> Ray Acheson, Presentation on gender norms and gun violence, Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, June 2018: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/news/latest-news/12587-presentation-on-gender-norms-and-gun-violence>.

<sup>22</sup> UN Secretary-General António Guterres, ‘Securing Our Common Future – An Agenda for Disarmament’, *Office for Disarmament Affairs*, 2018, page 39, [https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda\\_1.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> D. Mack, ‘Small Arms, Big Violations’, *International Journal on Human Rights*, 12(22), 2015, [https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04\\_SUR-22\\_ENGLISH\\_DANIEL-MACK.pdf](https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04_SUR-22_ENGLISH_DANIEL-MACK.pdf)  
See also: ‘Action Against Gun Violence is Action Against Militarism’, *WILPF*, 1 May 2016, <https://wilpf.org/action-against-gun-violence-is-action-against-militarism/>.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Chapter 2: Too close to home – Everyday dangers: Guns and Intimate Partner Violence’, in *Everyday Dangers*, Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> See also: ‘Action Against Gun Violence is Action Against Militarism’, *WILPF*, 1 May 2016, <https://wilpf.org/action-against-gun-violence-is-action-against-militarism/>.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Disarm Domestic Violence’, *WILPF*, 2011, [http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/disarm\\_domestic\\_violence\\_conference\\_report\\_poster\\_2011\\_-\\_web.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/disarm_domestic_violence_conference_report_poster_2011_-_web.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> UN Secretary-General António Guterres, ‘Securing Our Common Future – An Agenda for Disarmament’, *Office for Disarmament Affairs*, 2018, page 39, [https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda\\_1.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf).

and boys accounted for 84 per cent of violent deaths, including homicides and armed conflict.<sup>28</sup>

Women, however, are more frequently the victims of gender-based violence facilitated by small arms. The proliferation of small arms is correlated with an increase in gendered inequality and a generalised culture of violence, against women in particular, as well as against LGBTQIA people.<sup>29</sup> While arms themselves may not always be directly implicated in acts of gender-based violence, they tend to have a negative impact on women's equality and bargaining power within the household, their mobility, and their political participation.<sup>30</sup> Widespread possession and use of weapons tends to prevent women from fully participating in public and political life, and hinders their access to and use of resources, business, and employment opportunities.<sup>31</sup> In many situations, when men are killed or injured, women must take on new or additional roles as income providers, often leading to impoverishment, exploitation and discrimination."<sup>32</sup>

It is important to remember that the relationship between women, men and firearms is complicated and that women are not only killed, threatened and injured by guns. Women are also perpetrators of armed violence, have taken up arms as combatants, and smuggled weapons across borders. Conversely, women—and men—have organised local and national disarmament initiatives. Men can also suffer from sexual violence, however. For instance, a survey in Liberia found that 33 per cent of male combatants and seven per cent of male non-combatants had experienced sexual violence.<sup>33</sup>

Against above backdrop, addressing and preventing the acquisition, possession, transfer and use of firearms necessitates an understanding of gendered root causes of violent behavior, and the recognition that bringing about changes in masculinities and gender norms is an effective tool for the prevention of human rights violations and conflict more broadly.

<sup>28</sup> Claire Mc Evoy and Gergely Hideg, 'Global Violent Deaths 2017 – Time to Decide', *Small Arms Survey*, December 2017, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/U-Reports/SAS-Report-GVD2017.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Submission from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the impact of arms transfers on human rights, 3 February 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/ArmsTransfers/WomensInternationalLeaguePeaceAndFreedom.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Rebecca Gerome, 'Preventing gender-based violence through arms control: Tools and guidelines to implement the Arms Trade Treaty and UN Programme of Action', *WILPF*, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, 'Feminism at the Frontline: Addressing Women's Multidimensional Insecurity in Yemen and Libya', *WILPF*, May 2017, <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/LIBYA-YEMEN-WEB.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 'Securing Our Common Future – An Agenda for Disarmament', *Office for Disarmament Affairs*, 2018, [https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda\\_1.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> 'Converging Agendas: Women, Peace Security, and Small Arms,' in *Small Arms Survey 2014 – Women and Guns*, *Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/?small-arms-survey-2014>

# 1. Categories of human rights

## Right to life

### Homicides

The High Commissioner already noted in his report of 2016 that firearms can violate the right to life.<sup>34</sup> In a joint submission to the Human Rights Committee on Draft General Comment on the Right to Life,<sup>35</sup> WILPF notes that “consideration of the impact of weapons on the right to life involves recognising weapon-specific patterns of loss of life and life-threatening injury. For example, nearly half of all homicides are caused by firearms.<sup>36</sup> They are “the main vector of violent death and injury worldwide”.<sup>37</sup>

Human rights bodies have also expressed concern at high rates of homicides as a result of the use of firearms.<sup>38</sup> For instance, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern at the proliferation of firearms in Guatemala and noted that a very high percentage of homicides committed in the country are a result of the use of firearms.

Daniel Mack of Conectas has noted that “while armed violence is highly concentrated geographically – the 18 countries with the highest rates account for 4 per cent of the world’s population but 24 per cent of all violent deaths – firearms (...) are a major part of the story everywhere.”<sup>39</sup> For example, the United States has been experiencing what Amnesty International described as “a human rights crisis” due to American gun violence.

Violations of the right to life are shaped by factors such as gender and ethnicity. In the United States, following a gun shooting, young men of colour are 20 times more likely to die than white counterparts.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, A/HRC/32/21, 15 April 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Joint submission by Article 36, The Toxic Remnants of War Project and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom to the Human Rights Committee on the Revised Draft General Comment on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Right to life, 6 October 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/GC36-Article6Righttolife.aspx>.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Global Burden of Armed Violence’, Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, 2015, <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence/gbav-2015/executive-summary.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Daniel Mack, ‘Small Arms, Big Violations’, *International Journal on Human Rights*, 12(22), 2015, [https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04\\_SUR-22\\_ENGLISH\\_DANIEL-MACK.pdf](https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04_SUR-22_ENGLISH_DANIEL-MACK.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> See Concluding Observations on Guatemala CCPR/C/GTM/CO/3, 19 April 2012, paragraphs 12 and 14.

<sup>39</sup> D. Mack, ‘Small Arms, Big Violations’, *International Journal on Human Rights*, 12(22), 2015, [https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04\\_SUR-22\\_ENGLISH\\_DANIEL-MACK.pdf](https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04_SUR-22_ENGLISH_DANIEL-MACK.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Lois Beckett, ‘A human rights crisis’: US accused of failing to protect citizens from gun violence, *The Guardian*, 12 September 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/12/us-gun-control-human-rights-amnesty-international>.



## Suicide

Data on violence does not include the massive numbers of gun suicides. Including firearm suicides and accidents under the rubric of “armed violence” would further consolidate the disproportional role played particularly by handguns in the broader “epidemic”.<sup>41</sup>

Studies have indicated strong correlations between access to firearms and both the proportion of suicide deaths by firearm, as well as elevated overall suicide rates.<sup>42</sup> “Access to the means of suicide is a strong risk factor for suicide death, especially in relation to firearms. Where suicide is a (...) response to an acute psychological crisis, the availability of firearms and their lethal nature greatly increases the risk of an irreversible, fatal or life-changing outcome.”<sup>43</sup>

In the United States, for instance, more people kill themselves with guns than are killed by others.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Human Rights Committee expressed concern that a large number of suicides in Switzerland are committed with easily accessible firearms and recommended, *inter alia*, restricting access to firearms kept at home in connection with service in the army.<sup>45</sup>

There are gendered causes and patterns of suicide. The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women found in her mission to Turkey that some alleged incidents of women’s suicide in eastern and south-eastern Turkey turned out to be instances of murder or forced suicide. While other suicides did not involve direct criminal responsibility, the Special Rapporteur found that “the suicides are intimately linked to violence emanating from the understanding of [honour],” and patriarchal oppression more broadly. The Special Rapporteur indicated that next to highly toxic pesticides, firearms are the most lethal tools of suicide, and easily accessible in rural areas.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> D. Mack, ‘Small Arms, Big Violations’, *International Journal on Human Rights*, 12(22), 2015, [https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04\\_SUR-22\\_ENGLISH\\_DANIEL-MACK.pdf](https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04_SUR-22_ENGLISH_DANIEL-MACK.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> A. Anglemeyer, T. Horvath, G. Rutherford, ‘The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis’, *Ann Intern Med.* 160(2), 21 January 2014.

See also: M. Siegel and E. F. Rothman, ‘Firearm Ownership and Suicide Rates among US men and Women 1981-2013’, *Am J Public Health*, 106(7), July 2016.

<sup>43</sup> 85 per cent of firearm suicide attempts end in death – a far higher rate than other means. See M. Drexler, ‘Guns & Suicide: The Hidden Toll’, *Harv. Pub. Health*, Spring 2011, [www.hsph.harvard.edu/magazine-features/guns-and-suicide-the-hidden-toll/](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/magazine-features/guns-and-suicide-the-hidden-toll/).

<sup>44</sup> D. Mack, ‘Small Arms, Big Violations’, *International Journal on Human Rights*, 12(22), 2015, [https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04\\_SUR-22\\_ENGLISH\\_DANIEL-MACK.pdf](https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04_SUR-22_ENGLISH_DANIEL-MACK.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Concluding Observations on Switzerland E/C.12/CHE/CO/2-3, 2010, paragraph 19; Concluding Observations on Switzerland CCPR/C/CHE/CO/3, 2009, paragraph 12.

<sup>46</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences Yakin Ertürk, Intersections between culture and violence against women, A/HRC/4/34/Add.2, 17 January 2007, paragraphs 77 and 79.



## Right to health, physical integrity and security - Non-lethal harm

The High Commissioner recognised in his 2016 report that there are far-reaching non-lethal negative impacts of firearms.<sup>47</sup> In the United States for instance, estimates point to three to six non-lethal victims per fatality.<sup>48</sup>

Yet there is less research on, and support for those who survive shootings.<sup>49</sup> Many gunshot victims suffer long-term health consequences.<sup>50</sup> Injuries to the extremities include, *inter alia*, haemorrhages, infections, amputations, or permanent trauma due to joint or bone deformities. Brain and spinal cord injuries can leave irreversible damage such as paralysis, sexual dysfunction, limited movement, seizure disorders, bowel problems, incontinence, and severe facial disfigurements.<sup>51</sup> Being affected by gunshots can also leave permanent psychological damage resulting in post-traumatic stress disorder, flashbacks, anxiety and fear, self-destructive behaviours, low self-esteem, depression, suicidal behaviour, and alienation from friends and family.<sup>52</sup>

These severe complications often require repeated hospital readmission and ongoing medical care, yet many gunshot survivors do not have access to the healthcare they would require.<sup>53</sup> Trauma care in low- and middle-income settings is typically weak and under-resourced, and infrastructure and trauma response systems are often not in place.<sup>54</sup>

The non-lethal impacts for survivors of gun violence are different for women, men, and non-binary people. Women can suffer from gun violence directly and indirectly. Directly, if they are survivors of injuries, intimidation or brutalisation through gun violence. Depending on their context-specific circumstances and the level of gender inequality in their society, they can encounter obstacles in accessing the health care they need, which can further exacerbate their marginalisation in society.<sup>55</sup>

Traditionally, it is women who have a larger responsibility for caretaking within families. Their role as caregivers can put a heightened burden on them if they are injured or live with disabilities and have to continue to care for other family members.

Furthermore, gun violence does not just affect the individual shot or threatened. Women may face “secondary victimisation”, predominantly in their role as caregivers to the gunshot

<sup>47</sup> Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, A/HRC/32/21, 15 April 2016, paragraph 51.

<sup>48</sup> D. Mack, ‘Small Arms, Big Violations’, *International Journal on Human Rights*, 12(22), 2015, [https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04\\_SUR-22\\_ENGLISH\\_DANIEL-MACK.pdf](https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/04_SUR-22_ENGLISH_DANIEL-MACK.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Cate Buchanan, ‘The Health and Human Rights of Survivors of gun Violence: Charting a Research and Policy Agenda’, *Health and Human Rights* 13(2), December 2011.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Small Arms and Global Health’, WHO Contribution to the UN Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons July 9-20, 2001, [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/66838/WHO\\_NMH\\_VIP\\_01.1.pdf;jsessionid=60AD72DA0E9D6DDB95893230482D7C5F?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/66838/WHO_NMH_VIP_01.1.pdf;jsessionid=60AD72DA0E9D6DDB95893230482D7C5F?sequence=1).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, page 53.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, page 61.

<sup>53</sup> Amnesty International, ‘In the Line of Fire – Human Rights and the US of Gun Violence Crisis’, 2018, [https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2018-09/In%20the%20Line%20of%20Fire.pdf?1\\_qqjrC2Mv4H3YTt5TsdLepSKrgjKen0=](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2018-09/In%20the%20Line%20of%20Fire.pdf?1_qqjrC2Mv4H3YTt5TsdLepSKrgjKen0=).

<sup>54</sup> Cate Buchanan, ‘The Health and Human Rights of Survivors of gun Violence: Charting a Research and Policy Agenda’, *Health and Human Rights* 13(2), December 2011.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Women and girls with disabilities, United Nations – Disability, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/women-and-girls-with-disabilities.html>.

survivors with disabilities, or those who are seriously injured.<sup>56</sup> This in turn limits their opportunities for enumerated work, and to participate in public and political life, and therefore poses direct threats to women's economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. When family members can't work due to gunshot injuries, women are often still forced to fulfil both the role of caregiver and breadwinner. Against this backdrop, Cate Buchanan notes that: "In contexts where women provide the bulk of care, households in poverty or financial stress may become more pressured, exacerbated by the unequal earning power of men and women."<sup>57</sup>

## 2. Groups of rights holders

As already addressed above, different groups, distinguished by age, sex, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, religion, and other factors, experience the firearms violence differently. Human rights bodies have expressed concern at the impact of firearms on different groups of rights-holders, such as children.<sup>58</sup> As mentioned earlier, this submission will focus on women as specific group.

### Women

The right to health, physical integrity, security, work, and education - Gender-based violence  
The CEDAW Committee has noted that the "proliferation of conventional arms, especially small arms, including those diverted from the legal trade, can have a direct or indirect effect on women as victims of conflict-related gender-based violence, as victims of domestic

<sup>56</sup> Cate Buchanan, 'The Health and Human Rights of Survivors of gun Violence: Charting a Research and Policy Agenda, *Health and Human Rights* 13(2), page 51, December 2011.

See also this publication for an analysis of women's role as caregivers to injured family members: *Gender and Landmines – From Concept to Practice*, Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines, 2008, [http://www.gmap.ch/fileadmin/Gender\\_and\\_Landmines\\_from\\_Concept\\_to\\_Practice/SCBL\\_-\\_Gender\\_\\_Landmines\\_2008\\_rev\\_Sep09.pdf](http://www.gmap.ch/fileadmin/Gender_and_Landmines_from_Concept_to_Practice/SCBL_-_Gender__Landmines_2008_rev_Sep09.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Cate Buchanan, 'The Health and Human Rights of Survivors of gun Violence: Charting a Research and Policy Agenda, *Health and Human Rights* 13(2), page 56, December 2011.

<sup>58</sup> The Committee of the Rights of the Child (CRC) has repeatedly expressed concern at the access to, and threat of firearms to the safety of children. See for example: Concluding Observations on Guinea CRC/C/OPAC/GIN/CO/1, 2017, paragraph 25; Concluding Observations on Malawi CRC/C/OPAC/MWI/CO/1, 2017, paragraphs 20-21; Concluding Observations on Honduras CRC/C/OPAC/HND/CO/1, 2015, paragraph 21; Concluding Observations on Honduras CRC/C/HND/CO/4-5, 2015, paragraph 29(a); Concluding Observations on Venezuela CRC/C/OPAC/VEN/CO/1, 2014, paragraph V; Concluding Observations on Brazil CRC/C/OPAC/BRA/CO/1, 2015, paragraph 26; Concluding Observations on China CRC/C/OPAC/CHN/CO/1, 2013; paragraphs IV and VII.

The CRC expressed particular concern at the access to firearms in military schools and training. See for example Concluding Observations on Estonia CRC/C/OPAC/EST/CO/1, 2017, paragraph 12; Concluding Observations on Brazil CRC/C/OPAC/BRA/CO/1, 2015, paragraphs 20(a); Concluding Observations on the Netherlands CRC/C/OPAC/NL/CO/1, 2015, paragraph IV; Concluding Observations on India CRC/C/OPAC/IND/CO/1, 2014, paragraph IV; Concluding Observations on Russia CRC/C/OPAC/RUS/CO/1, 2014, paragraph IV (a); Concluding Observations on China CRC/C/OPAC/CHN/CO/1, 2013; paragraphs IV and VII; Concluding Observations on Armenia CRC/C/OPAC/ARM/CO/1, 2013, paragraph 10; Concluding Observation on the United States CRC/C/OPAC/USA/CO/2, 2013, paragraph 24(d); Concluding Observations on Azerbaijan CRC/C/OPAC/AZE/CO/1, 2012, paragraph 15; Concluding Observations on Egypt CRC/C/OPAC/EGY/CO/1, 2011, paragraph 19; Concluding Observations on Niger CRC/C/NER/CO/2, 2009, paragraph 68.

violence, and as protestors or actors in resistance movements.”<sup>59</sup> It further observed that the accessibility and availability of firearms heighten women’s risk of exposure to serious forms of gender-based violence.<sup>60</sup>

The presence of guns threatens women’s security in both conflict and peace. Examples of direct small arms violence faced by women during and after war include domestic and sexual violence, injury, and murder.<sup>61</sup> Indirect consequences of armed violence on women include taking on the role of head of household when a partner is killed or taking care of injured family members, and as a result, being unable to access work, education, and health care due to the threat of armed violence.<sup>62</sup>

In non-conflict situations, the accessibility and availability of arms can facilitate or exacerbate gender-based violence and violence against women, and gender-based violence against transgender people.<sup>63</sup> The availability and use or threat of use of small arms further facilitate robbery, trafficking, forced prostitution, displacement, forced marriage, and sexual violence.<sup>64</sup> WILPF’s national section in Colombia, LIMPAL, also notes that in Colombia, firearms are implicated in psychological or sexual violence that threaten the enjoyment of human rights, including socio-economic rights, political participation, access to health, food and life itself.<sup>65</sup>

### *Women affected by Private Military and Security Companies*

The presence of armed private military and security companies (PMSCs) can have various negative impacts on women’s rights, their safety and security. Most PMSC personnel carries firearms. This has been documented, for instance, in civil law suits involving the private security personnel’s shooting of community leaders in Guatemala,<sup>66</sup> in cases of armed

<sup>59</sup> General recommendation No.30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, CEDAW/C/GC/30, 18 October 2013, paragraph 32.

<sup>60</sup> General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, CEDAW/C/GC/35, 14 July 2017, paragraph 42.

<sup>61</sup> V. Farr, ‘Scared Half to Death: The Gendered Impacts of Proliferating Small Arms.’ *Contemporary Security Policy*, 27(1), 24 January 2007.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Converging Agendas: Women, Peace Security, and Small Arms,’ in *Small Arms Survey 2014 – Women and Guns, Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/?small-arms-survey-20144>.

<sup>63</sup> ‘The Impact of Firearms on Women’, *WILPF*, 4 May 2016, <https://wilpf.org/the-impact-of-firearms-on-women/>.

See also: Zach Stafford, ‘Transgender homicide rate hits historic high in US, says new report’, *The Guardian*, 13 November 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/13/transgender-homicide-victims-us-has-hit-historic-high>

<sup>64</sup> ‘Disarm Domestic Violence’, *WILPF*, 2011,

[http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/disarm\\_domestic\\_violence\\_conference\\_report\\_poster\\_2011\\_-\\_web.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/disarm_domestic_violence_conference_report_poster_2011_-_web.pdf).

See also: ‘Written Statement Submitted to CEDAW on the Occasion of the General Discussion on Women in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations.’ FEIM (Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer) et al., 18 July 2011.

[http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/PWandUN/CEDAW/2011/cedaw\\_gr\\_iansajointstatement\\_2011.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/PWandUN/CEDAW/2011/cedaw_gr_iansajointstatement_2011.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> ‘Las mujeres y las armas en Colombia’, *LIMPAL Colombia*, 5 October 2017,

<http://limalcolombia.org/pdf/PASQUIN%201.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> <sup>66</sup> ‘Impact of Canadian Mining Companies’, joint submission by WILPF and Plataforma Internacional Contra la Impunidad to the Universal Periodic Review of Canada, 30<sup>th</sup> session, October 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/UPR\\_Canada\\_WEB.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/UPR_Canada_WEB.pdf)

violence perpetrated by security personnel against civilians in Ecuador,<sup>67</sup> in El Salvador<sup>68</sup> or in Honduras.<sup>69</sup>

The presence of private police is likely to increase the militarisation in society. WILPF documented this in its research about human rights violations suffered by Congolese women in artisanal mining.<sup>70</sup>

Women have been victims of violence in the context of social conflict that exists following the implementation of Canadian mining projects in Latin America. In some cases, the violence has been perpetrated by the employees responsible for providing private security to Canadian mining companies. WILPF raised attention of this in Canada's Universal Periodic Review in 2018.<sup>71</sup>

There have been recurrent and grave acts of violence perpetrated by mining companies' private security guards against communities in Guatemala. Three civil lawsuits initiated by members of the Q'eqchi communities are currently pending before the Canadian courts. Allegations include the killing of Adolfo Ich, a respected community leader and school teacher who was hacked with machetes and shot in the head by mine company security personnel, the shooting and paralysing of German Chub by mine company security personnel, and the gang-rape of 11 women by mining company security personnel, police and military during the forced eviction of their village and families from their ancestral lands.<sup>72</sup> The expected roles of PMSC personnel are tightly embedded within violent masculinities, and their engaging in sexual violence "draws on existing gender norms - but it also intensifies these norms." (...) It helps shape (...) feelings of power and superiority over women and a willingness to inflict violence on anyone deemed inferior."<sup>73</sup>

WILPF also conducted extensive research on the impact of foreign military bases in Djibouti<sup>74</sup> deployed by the United States, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Germany, amongst others. Military and security companies are hired to, *inter alia*, assist with military operations or support services on the military bases.<sup>75</sup> The report notes that the presence of armed foreign militaries and private military and security contractors in Djibouti is a driving

<sup>67</sup> 'El impacto de la minería canadiense en América Latina y la responsabilidad de Canadá', Informe presentado a la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, *Grupo de Trabajo sobre Minería y Derechos Humanos en América Latina*, n.d., page 97.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., page 35.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., page 36.

<sup>70</sup> Annie Matundu Mbambi and Léonnie Kandolo, 'Life at the bottom of the chain: Women in Artisanal Mines in DRC', *WILPF*, August 2014, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WomenInArtisanalMinesInDRC\\_web.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WomenInArtisanalMinesInDRC_web.pdf).

<sup>71</sup> 'Impact of Canadian Mining Companies', joint submission by WILPF and Plataforma Internacional Contra la Impunidad to the Universal Periodic Review of Canada, 30<sup>th</sup> session, October 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/UPR\\_Canada\\_WEB.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/UPR_Canada_WEB.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., paragraph 10.

<sup>73</sup> D. Vine, 'The United States Probably Has More Foreign Military Bases Than Any Other People, Nation, or Empire In History,' *The Nation*, 14 September 2015, <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-united-states-probably-has-more-foreign-military-bases-than-anyother-people-nation-or-empire-in-history>.

<sup>74</sup> Ray Acheson, 'Remote Warfare and Sexual Violence in Djibouti', *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*, August 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017\\_RemoteWarfareAndSexualViolenceInDjibouti.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017_RemoteWarfareAndSexualViolenceInDjibouti.pdf).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., page 19.

factor in the sexual exploitation of women and girls in the region, including forced prostitution and human trafficking.<sup>76</sup>

WILPF is currently drafting a forthcoming submission to the Working Group on Mercenaries that calls for submissions on gender and private military and security companies,<sup>77</sup> which might also be of interest to the High Commissioner.

### Domestic violence

Weapons are often used to kill, threaten or intimidate women in their own homes. Rates of domestic violence are high during armed conflict and increase in its aftermath, with women suffering the brunt of this form of violence.<sup>78</sup> For example, the increased availability of guns during the conflict in Northern Ireland correlated with more dangerous forms of domestic violence. A similar trend was observed in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011, where during the armed conflict rates of reported domestic violence rose by 43 per cent.<sup>79</sup> WILPF reported that individual small arms in Syria, that have been proliferating since the beginning of the conflict, pose a great threat of growing domestic violence, especially in an atmosphere saturated with tension and external pressures. In light of the low social and economic living standards due to the war (displacement, living in camps lacking basic needs, and poor income), women are usually the most affected by the acquisition of this type of arms.<sup>80</sup> In the absence of armed conflict, the availability and possession of firearms dramatically increases the likelihood of domestic violence and physical abuse and threats.<sup>81</sup> Amnesty International reported in 2016 that 4.5 million women in the United States have been threatened by an abuser with a firearm, and one million of those have been shot and injured or shot at without injury.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., page 30.

<sup>77</sup> Call for submissions: gender and private military and security companies, Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Mercenaries/WGMercenaries/Pages/GenderPrivateMilitarySecurityCompanies.aspx>.

<sup>78</sup> V. Farr, 'Scared Half to Death: The Gendered Impacts of Proliferating Small Arms,' *Contemporary Security Policy*, 27(1), 24 January 2007.

<sup>79</sup> 'Converging Agendas: Women, Peace Security, and Small Arms,' in *Small Arms Survey 2014 – Women and Guns, Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/?small-arms-survey-2014>.

<sup>80</sup> 'Violations Against Women in Syria and the Disproportionate Impact of the Conflict on them,' joint submission by WILPF et al. to the Universal Periodic Review of Syria, May 2016, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WILPF\\_VAW\\_HC-2016\\_WEB-ONEPAGE.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WILPF_VAW_HC-2016_WEB-ONEPAGE.pdf).

<sup>81</sup> D. Wiebe, 'Homicide and Suicide Risks Associated with Firearms in the Home: A National Case-Control Study,' *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 41(6), June 2003.

<sup>82</sup> S.B. Sorenson, and R.A. Schut, 'Nonfatal gun use in intimate partner violence: A systematic review of the literature,' *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 14 September 2016, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27630138](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27630138)  
See also: *In the Line of Fire – Human Rights and the US Gun Violence Crisis*, Amnesty International, [https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2018-09/In%20the%20Line%20of%20Fire.pdf?1\\_qqjrC2Mv4H3YTt5TsdLepSKrgjKen0=](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2018-09/In%20the%20Line%20of%20Fire.pdf?1_qqjrC2Mv4H3YTt5TsdLepSKrgjKen0=).

WILPF's national section in Cameroon reports that the uncontrolled production and use of home-made firearms are the most used weapons when committing acts of gender-based violence, domestic violence or femicide.<sup>83</sup>

### The right to life - Femicides

The CEDAW Committee expressed grave concern at the correlation between the proliferation and use of firearms and femicide,<sup>84</sup> and women's security more broadly.<sup>85</sup> It noted that in Honduras, this is allegedly the second leading cause of death among women of reproductive age.<sup>86</sup> The Committee of the Rights of the Child equally remained deeply concerned that the majority of homicides and femicides in Honduras are perpetrated by firearms.<sup>87</sup>

Firearms are used in a third of all femicides worldwide.<sup>88</sup> In many countries, legal firearms are the most commonly used weapons in domestic homicides. While firearms are more often used to threaten a woman than to actually kill her, when a woman is murdered in an intimate partner homicide, a history of violence often precedes this crime.<sup>89</sup> Domestic homicides are the only category of homicides for which women outnumber men as victims.<sup>90</sup> The presence of guns in a household will increase by five times the likelihood of turning spousal violence into murder.<sup>91</sup>

In countries with low rates of women's homicide, most killings of women occur in the home, and intimate partners account for the majority of perpetrators.<sup>92</sup>

Fatal violence perpetrated with firearms disproportionately affects transgender women of colour. The number of transgender women being killed in the United States hit a historic high in 2015.<sup>93</sup> In 2017, the number of transgender people killed increased further to at least 29 deaths, of which 17 died of gunshots. In 2018, 22 transgender people were recorded to have been murdered, of which 82 per cent were women of colour.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>83</sup> This information is based on email correspondence with staff from WILPF Cameroon, 13 February 2019.

<sup>84</sup> Concluding Observations on Honduras, CEDAW/C/HND/CO/7-8, 2016, paragraph 22(c); Concluding Observations on Honduras CRC/C/HND/CO/4-5, 2015, paragraph 29(a).

<sup>85</sup> Concluding Observations on Eritrea CEDAW/C/ERO/CO/5, 2015, paragraph 8(e).

<sup>86</sup> Concluding Observations on Honduras, CEDAW/C/HND/CO/7-8, 2016, paragraph 22(c).

<sup>87</sup> Concluding Observations on Honduras CRC/C/HND/CO/4-5, 2015, paragraph 29(a).

<sup>88</sup> 'Femicide: A Global Problem', *Small Arms Survey Research Notes*, February 2012, [http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research\\_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-14.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-14.pdf).

<sup>89</sup> Chapter 2: Too close to home – Everyday dangers: Guns and Intimate Partner Violence', in *Everyday Dangers*, Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<sup>90</sup> 'Domestic Violence and Small Arms, Center for Women's Global Leadership and IANSA Women's Network, <https://16dayscwg.rutgers.edu/downloads/2012-campaign-docs/441-domestic-violence-small-arms-pdf/file>

<sup>91</sup> D. Wiebe, 'Homicide and Suicide Risks Associated with Firearms in the Home: A National Case-Control Study', *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 41(6), June 2003.

<sup>92</sup> 'Chapter Three: Lethal Violence against Women and Girls', *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015*, [http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/GBAV3/GBAV3\\_Ch3\\_pp87-120.pdf](http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/GBAV3/GBAV3_Ch3_pp87-120.pdf),

<sup>93</sup> 'Addressing Anti-Transgender Violence', Human Rights Campaign and Trans People of Color Coalition, 2015, <http://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HRC-AntiTransgenderViolence-0519.pdf>.

<sup>94</sup> 'A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence in America in 2018', *Human Rights Campaign*, 2018, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/a-national-epidemic-fatal-anti-transgender-violence-in-america-in-2018>



In the countries with the highest rates of femicide—which include Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala and Honduras—more than 60 per cent of femicides perpetrated in 2004–09 involved the use of a firearm. WILPF’s national section in Colombia, also reported that between 2009 and 2014, each day, four women have lost their lives. In 61 per cent of these cases, a firearm was used.<sup>95</sup> In a recent submission to the CEDAW Committee, WILPF Colombia has drawn attention to the fact that in the first 10 months of 2016 alone, 54 per cent of murders of women in Colombia were committed with firearms.<sup>96</sup> WILPF Colombia provides further information on this in its separate submission to the High Commissioner.

### Women’s role in disarmament

Women are not only perpetrators and victims of firearms violence, but also have been key players in preventing it.

Small Arms Survey observed in its report on the Women, Peace and Security agenda and small arms: “Women have been at the forefront of many international and national initiatives to remove small arms from their communities (...). For example, in the late 1990s, women in Albania were a strong force in sensitising their communities to the dangers of weapons and mobilising community members to hand in guns (...). Women also play a crucial role in local policy-making and small arms monitoring activities. In 2010, 100 pastoralist women from the frontier Indigenous Network in Kenya submitted a petition and a regional plan on firearms control to the government, listing local arms markets, smuggling routes, and arms traffickers.”<sup>97</sup>

Women who assume leadership roles and push for the disarmament or control of firearms unsettle gender hierarchies and are often “targets of misogynistic threats above and beyond policy differences.” Activists confirm that in every society “ideas about firearms are inextricably linked to ideas about gender,” and therefore cannot address armed violence without the role of gender ideologies.<sup>98</sup> This observation aligns with many feminist peace activists and WILPF partners. Rasha Yarhum, Director of the Peace Track Initiative confirmed that: “Women are addressing peace and security issues, breaking siege, mobilising convoys to ensure supplies, addressing violent extremism. Women identify early warning signs of radicalisation, they are first responders and provide medical support, yet they are not trusted with the necessary space for participation and resources to develop and continue their work.”<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> ‘Las mujeres y las armas en Colombia’, *LIMPAL Colombia*, 5 October 2017, <http://limpalcolombia.org/pdf/PASQUIN%201.pdf>.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda for Sustainable Peace in Colombia’, submission by LIMPAL Colombia to the CEDAW Committee, 72<sup>nd</sup> session, 28 January 2019, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/COLOMBIA\\_WILPF\\_report\\_CEDAW\\_JAN2019.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/COLOMBIA_WILPF_report_CEDAW_JAN2019.pdf).

<sup>97</sup> ‘Converging Agendas: Women, Peace Security, and Small Arms,’ in *Small Arms Survey 2014 – Women and Guns*, *Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/?small-arms-survey-2014>

<sup>98</sup> B. A. Frey, ‘The Gender Implications of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Conflict Situations’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Security*, February 2018.

<sup>99</sup> Katrin Geyer and Isa Romby, ‘How UN agencies and programmes can ensure women’s meaningful participation in their work’, *WILPF*, June 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Booklet\\_2.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Booklet_2.pdf).



### 3. & 4. National regulatory and non-regulatory measures

The 2016 report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights offered a valuable in-depth overview of existing international human rights law,<sup>100</sup> regional agreements and instruments,<sup>101</sup> and national legislation<sup>102</sup> regulating the civilian access to firearms. The section below outlines how to advance a gender perspective in the regulation of the acquisition, possession and use of firearms, highlights aspects of existing regulations, and recommends regulations which WILPF deems particularly important.

#### Women's meaningful participation and the need to include gender perspectives in all disarmament efforts

"All states should incorporate gender perspectives in the development of national legislation and policies on disarmament and arms control, including consideration of the gendered aspects of ownership, use and misuse of arms; the differentiated impacts of weapons on women and men; and the ways in which gender roles can shape arms control and disarmament policies and practices," notes UN Secretary-General in his 2018 Disarmament Agenda.<sup>103</sup>

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also observes in a 2015 report to the UN Security Council that, "Full and meaningful participation of women in policymaking, planning and implementation processes related to combating the misuse and illicit transfer of small arms, in line with the women and peace and security agenda, remains essential."<sup>104</sup>

WILPF reiterates the need to include gender perspectives into any measure that seeks to address and curb the violations of human rights caused by firearms and other weapon systems. This requires the meaningful participation of women and non-binary people, feminist civil society organisations, survivors of armed violence and gender-based violence, and experts on gender and small arms in any policies or education activities that seek to regulate the possession of firearms. WILPF Colombia further recommends to support women's participation in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the regulation of SALW, at the legislative, political and social level.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, A/HRC/32/21, 15 April 2016, paragraph B.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., paragraph C.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., paragraph D.

<sup>103</sup> UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 'Securing Our Common Future – An Agenda for Disarmament', *Office for Disarmament Affairs*, 2018, page 39, [https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda\\_1.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> Report of the UN Secretary-General, Small arms and light weapons, S/2015/289, 27 April 2015, paragraph 36, Recommendation 4.

<sup>105</sup> Las mujeres y las armas en Colombia', *LIMPAL Colombia*, 5 October 2017, <http://limpalcolombia.org/pdf/PASQUIN%201.pdf>.

## Law enforcement officials and private military and security companies

States parties' obligation to "maximise human rights protection for the greatest number of people, both in their own societies and in the international community"<sup>106</sup> entails that state officials must refrain from violations with small arms and that they "must take steps to minimise armed violence between private actors" that impair the right to life.<sup>107</sup> Minimum effective measures that states parties must adopt to comply with their due diligence obligations under the right to life include the criminalisation of acts of small arms violence by private actors that violate the law, the enforcement of minimum licensing requirements, and effective controls over the full lifecycle of small arms and their ammunition so as to prevent their illicit trade, destabilising accumulation and misuse, in accordance with relevant international standards.<sup>108</sup>

Law enforcement officials and private military and security company personnel should also receive training on the full respect of human rights<sup>109</sup> and gender aspects of the civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms. Such training should be in accordance with the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials,<sup>110</sup> and impose sanctions when those principles are not respected. With respect to private military

<sup>106</sup> 'Specific Human Rights Issues, Prevention of human rights violations committed with small arms and light weapons.' Final report by Barbara Frey, Special Rapporteur, in accordance with Sub-Commission resolution 2002/25, A/HRC/Sub.1/58/27, 27 July 2006, paragraph 4.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. paragraphs 6, 9, 40.

<sup>108</sup> Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (BPUFF), 1990; Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, 31 May 2001; UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, A/CONF.192/15, 2001; International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, 2005; Principles on the Prevention of Human Rights Violations Committed with Small Arms, A/HRC/Sub.1/58/27/Add.1, 2006; Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), 2013; International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS).

This is quoted from Joint submission by Article 36, The Toxic Remnants of War Project and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to the Human Rights Committee on the Revised Draft General Comment on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Right to life, 6 October 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/GC36-Article6Righttolife.aspx>

<sup>109</sup> Concluding Observations on Thailand CCPR/C/THA/CO/2, 2017, paragraph 22(f); and Concluding Observations on Mozambique CRC/C/MOZ/CO/2, 2009, paragraph 46.

<sup>110</sup> This is a non-exhaustive list of human rights bodies' recommendations: Concluding Observations on Honduras (2017) CCPR/C/HND/CO/2, 2017, paragraph 25 (c); Concluding Observations on the Republic of Korea CAT/C/KOR/CO/3-5, 2017, paragraph 14(c); Concluding Observations on Lebanon CAT/C/LBN/CO/1, 2017, paragraph 49 (b); Concluding Observations on Bangladesh, 2017; CCPR/C/BGD/CO/1, 2017, paragraph 20(b); Concluding Observations on Thailand CCPR/C/THA/CO/2, 2017, paragraph 22(f); Concluding Observations on Cabo Verde, CAT/C/CPV/CO/1, 2017, paragraph 35 (c); Concluding Observations on Burkina Faso, CCPR/C/BFA/CO/1, 2016, paragraph 26; Concluding Observations on Burundi, CAT/BDI/CO/2/Add.1 2016, paragraph 21(c); Concluding Observations on Honduras CAT/C/HND/CO/2, 2016, paragraph 34(b); Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to the United States 2016, paragraph 100; Concluding Observations on Ghana CCPR/C/GHA/CO/1, 2016, paragraph 22; Concluding Observations on Israel CAT/C/ISR/CO/5, 2016, paragraph 33(a); Concluding Observations on Turkey CAT/C/TUR/CO/4, 2016, paragraph 16(b); Concluding Observations on South Africa CCPR/C/ZAF/CO/1, 2016, paragraph 27(a); Universal Periodic Review of Nepal A/HRC/31/9, 2015, paragraph 122.44 (Switzerland); Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon A/HRC/31/5, 2015, paragraph 132.99 (Switzerland); Report of the Working Group on Mercenaries, Mission to Honduras A/HRC/4/42/Add.1, 2007, paragraph 73(d); Report of the Working Group on Mercenaries, Mission to Chile A/HRC/7/Add.4, 2008, paragraph 72(f).

and security company, training should be given on the “notion of equity in order to ensure the accessibility of security as a public good to the entire population.”<sup>111</sup>

There is no coordinated set of international guidelines regulates PMSCs and the hiring and training of private armed guards. States instead each make their own rules. There are currently no mechanisms to hold private contractors accountable under national or international law.

WILPF therefore recommends, *inter alia*, for states that host companies operating abroad and employing PMSCs, and for military contracting PMSCs, to:<sup>112</sup>

- Strengthen legislation governing the conduct of corporations under its jurisdiction in relation to their activities abroad, including by requiring those corporations to conduct gender, human rights and environmental impact assessments before making investment decisions;
- Adopt measures to facilitate access to justice for women who are victims of human rights violations committed by businesses and ensure that judicial and administrative mechanisms put in place take into account a gender perspective;
- Ensure that companies, including those working transnationally, respect the legitimate role of human rights defenders, and refrain from actions that undermine the capacity of human rights defenders to operate free from hindrance and insecurity, including women human rights defenders;<sup>113</sup>
- Ensure credible and effective mechanisms for reporting and prosecuting sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence by PMSC personnel;
- Ensure training to PMSCs personnel to ensure they are aware about what constitutes gender-based violence and refrain from committing such acts;
- Ensure that real investigation and accountability mechanisms are in place;
- Place all civilian contractors under the same regulations as military personnel through status of forces agreements.

### Gender-based violence, domestic violence and femicides

As long as firearms exist, legally or illegally, they will pose a threat to human rights and women’s rights. As shown above and reiterated by the CEDAW Committee, the accessibility and availability of firearms heighten women’s risk of exposure to serious forms of gender-

<sup>111</sup> Report of the Working Group on Mercenaries, Mission to Chile A/HRC/7/Add.4, 2008, paragraph 72(f). The Human Rights Committee also addressed private military and security companies in its Concluding Observations to South Africa: “Ensure that prompt, thorough, effective, independent and impartial investigations are launched into all incidents involving the use of firearms and all allegations of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers, as well as the potential liability of the Lonmin Mining Company for the Marikana incident, prosecute and punish perpetrators of illegal killings and provide effective remedies to victims.” See Concluding Observations on South Africa CCPR/C/ZAF/CO/1, 2016, paragraph 27 (c).

<sup>112</sup> These recommendations are based on Ray Acheson, ‘Remote Warfare and Sexual Violence in Djibouti’, Reaching Critical Will of WILPF, August 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017\\_RemoteWarfareAndSexualViolenceInDjibouti.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017_RemoteWarfareAndSexualViolenceInDjibouti.pdf); and ‘Impact of Canadian Mining Companies’, joint submission by WILPF and Plataforma Internacional Contra la Impunidad to the Universal Periodic Review of Canada, 30<sup>th</sup> session, October 2017, [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/UPR\\_Canada\\_WE](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/UPR_Canada_WE)

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., paragraph 23.

based violence.<sup>114</sup> States should therefore aim to progressively reduce firearm stockpiles. As a start, authoritative assessments estimate that some 40 per cent of military firearms in the arsenals of state armed forces can be considered surplus and should therefore be priority items for destruction.<sup>115</sup> Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon further observed that, “the real value of small arms and light weapons depends on the availability of ammunition. Effective measures to stem the illicit use of small arms and light weapons must include, or may even focus on, efforts to prevent the supply of ammunition.”<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, the CEDAW Committee stressed that conflict prevention includes the robust and effective regulation of the arms trade, in addition to appropriate control over the circulation of existing and often illicit conventional arms, including small arms, to prevent their use to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence.<sup>117</sup> Hence, the Committee recommends to address the gendered impact of international transfers of arms, especially small and illicit arms including through the ratification and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.<sup>118</sup>

Despite the undeniable correlation between domestic violence and femicide and the presence of guns, most countries do not mention domestic violence in their gun laws.<sup>119</sup> However, some states have sought to address this. To decrease the risk of deadly violence against women, domestic violence and firearms laws have been harmonised in different countries. This strategy aims to separate perpetrators of domestic violence from guns. In this way, some countries’ domestic violence laws include references to firearms possession, and firearms legislation refers to domestic violence.<sup>120</sup> For instance, in South Africa both the Firearms Control Act and the Domestic Violence Act give women the power to take action against domestic violence by requiring police or court officials to confiscate firearms or other dangerous weapons when a domestic violence complaint involving a gun or other weapon is made. Further positive examples of this include law reforms in Canada or Australia, “Less than ten years after Canada reformed its domestic violence and firearms laws in 1995, the overall gun murder rate had dropped by 15 per cent, and gun homicide against women dropped by 40 per cent. The same is visible in Australia, where gun murder dropped by 45 per cent five years after law reforms. Like in Canada, the effect was even bigger for women victims, with a drop of 57 per cent.”<sup>121</sup>

In other countries however, preventing domestic violence and femicide poses more challenges. Most recently, Brazil’s new president introduced a new decree loosening

<sup>114</sup> General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, CEDAW/C/GC/35, 14 July 2017, paragraph 42.

<sup>115</sup> Report of the UN Secretary-General, Small arms and light weapons, S/2015/289, 27 April 2015, paragraph 16.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, CEDAW/C/GC/30, 18 October 2013, paragraph 29.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. paragraph 33(e).

<sup>119</sup> ‘Disarm Domestic Violence’, *WILPF*, 2011, [http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/disarm\\_domestic\\_violence\\_conference\\_report\\_poster\\_2011\\_-\\_web.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/disarm_domestic_violence_conference_report_poster_2011_-_web.pdf)

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

firearms.<sup>122</sup> Women’s rights activists are now gravely concerned that this new measure will lead to more women being threatened by violence, and they have called for a review of the decree.<sup>123</sup>

WILPF Colombia reports that out of 34,571 femicides between 2006 and 2016, there were only 3,658 convictions,<sup>124</sup> pointing to a glaring lack of accountability for these crimes. WILPF Cameroon informed that the legal framework to regulate the “manufacturing, introduction in the country, export, sale, acquisition, transit, transport, traceability, possession and carrying of arms and ammunition” was improved in 2016, replacing legislation passed in 1973. The new law includes several updates that includes weapons and ammunition are now classified into eight categories instead of four, and penalties for breaking the law are heavier. It also sets out several checks that are intended to make it more difficult for civilians to acquire weapons. Weapons in the possession of civilians are often used during traditional ceremonies. This tradition is considered in the new legislation, but it is advised to use weapons with sound effects so to protect Cameroon’s traditions and protect civilians from the use of firearms. While these new laws have considerable improvements, the government is not taking appropriate measures to popularise and apply the law.<sup>125</sup>

At the regional level, Cameroon is party to the Kinshasa Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (2010), yet it also fails to adequately implement the Convention. For instance, there is no National Commission on Small Arms to follow up on its implementation. Other instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA) are also not sufficiently implemented. The example of Cameroon indicates that while good legislation may be in place, there is a need to effectively implement them.

Based national experience, WILPF Colombia and WILPF Cameroon recommend the following actions to prevent firearms-related gender-based violence, particularly against women:

- Create awareness about the impact of how media reports on violence against women and the perceptions this creates, such as by calling femicides “a crime of passion;”
- Facilitate learning for men, women and non-binary individuals about the impact of armed conflict on women in their region and elsewhere, and about strategies and mechanisms overcoming armed conflict that were successful in other countries;
- Collect disaggregated data about the magnitude, and the causes and consequences of gender-based violence and violence against women that is to be public and easily accessible;
- Develop a robust record that identifies and relates the death of women to acts of violence against women, including femicides;

<sup>122</sup> J. Griffin, ‘We are afraid’: Brazilian women alarmed at relaxation of gun laws’, *The Guardian*, 28 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/jan/28/we-are-afraid-brazilian-women-recoil-jair-bolsonaro-relaxation-gun-laws-domestic-violence>

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> ‘Las mujeres y las armas en Colombia’, *LIMPAL Colombia*, 5 October 2017, <http://limpalcolombia.org/pdf/PASQUIN%201.pdf>

<sup>125</sup> This information is based on email correspondence with staff from WILPF Cameroon in February 2019.

- Ensure awareness raising and training on existing legislation among actors involved in the chain of implementation of the laws, and the general public;
- Establish a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of legislation regulating firearms;
- More consideration to the possibility of femicide should be given when exploring the circumstances of a woman's death by considering the factors associated with femicide.<sup>126</sup>

### Addressing the non-lethal impacts of firearms

Cate Buchman provides a comprehensive overview of measures to address gun violence survivors and their caretakers.<sup>127</sup> She rightly notes that women and girls require particular attention because of disproportionate rates of sexual and gender-based violence involving firearms, and because of women's disadvantaged socio-political status in most societies, direct and indirect effects of firearms use are gendered.

Buchman's suggested measures include

- In-depth training of first responders to prevent the risk of grave injuries and disabilities;<sup>128</sup>
- To involve families in rehabilitation to broaden the support base for the individual, as well to support the well-being of caregivers through the provision of skills;<sup>129</sup>
- To increase awareness among personnel in law enforcement agencies, health services, and social services of the gendered and differential needs of women, girls, men, and boys, and non-binary individuals;<sup>130</sup>
- To quantify the number of people impaired due to gun violence to more reliably inform, develop, and monitor public policies;<sup>131</sup>
- To minimise negative impacts, such as secondary injuries, illnesses, and re-victimisation. This includes ensuring that rehabilitation services, psycho-social support, employment assistance, trauma counselling, urban and transport design, and planning are accessible, empowering, and people-focussed;<sup>132</sup>
- To enable individuals to reach an optimal level of functionality, while supporting families through certain adjustments (for example, dwelling adaptation, caregiving skills, and support). These adjustments can include infrastructure and devices to assist with the impairment, which can facilitate readjustment into communities and societies;<sup>133</sup>

<sup>126</sup> For additional comprehensive recommendations for the effective investigation of femicides see for example 'Recommendations for the Effective Investigation of the Crime of Femicide', Oficina de Derechos Humanos. Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, May 2014, [http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Publicaciones/Documents/2014\\_FEMINICIDIO.pdf](http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Publicaciones/Documents/2014_FEMINICIDIO.pdf).

<sup>127</sup> 'The Health and Human Rights of Survivors of gun Violence: Charting a Research and Policy Agenda', *Health and Human Rights* 13(2), December 2011.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., page 54.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., page 56.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., page 55.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., page 53.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., page 55.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., page 54.

- To ensure the equalisation of opportunities, which refers to the process by which society makes health and social services, the environment, cultural life, as well as leisure, educational, and work opportunities equal to all its members.<sup>134</sup>

## Children

Following suggestions are based upon a non-exhaustive review of human rights bodies' recommendations with respect to children and firearms. These recommendations include, *inter alia*, to reduce the number of weapons in circulation by adopting relevant laws,<sup>135</sup> confiscate illegal firearms that are in circulation,<sup>136</sup> strengthen the legislative framework regarding the possession of firearms by civilians,<sup>137</sup> ban military training involving the use of firearms for children under 18 years,<sup>138</sup> tracking the use of firearms,<sup>139</sup> and marking firearms in accordance with the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing or and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.<sup>140</sup>

## Suicides

The restriction of the circulation of firearms in civilian hands has been shown to correlate with a decrease in suicides. "Legislation restricting firearm ownership has been associated with a reduction in firearm suicide rates in many countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom,"<sup>141</sup> observes the World Health Organisation. Specifically for Switzerland, the Human Rights Committee recommended to, "review its legislation and practices in order to restrict the conditions of access to, and legitimate use of, firearms and (...) and create a national registry of privately-owned firearms."<sup>142</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights urged Switzerland to "undertake measures restricting access to firearms kept at home" (...).<sup>143</sup>

The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women also recommended to Turkey to, "improve the control of lethal means used in suicides, including firearms."<sup>144</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., page 54.

<sup>135</sup> Concluding Observations on Honduras CCPR/C/HND/CO/2, 2017, paragraph 21.

<sup>136</sup> Concluding Observations on Malawi CRC/C/OPAC/MWI/CO/1, 2017, paragraph 21.

<sup>137</sup> Concluding Observations on Honduras CEDAW/C/HND/CO/7-8, 2016, paragraph 23(c); Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon A/GRC/31/5, 2015, paragraph 132.100 (Uruguay); Universal Periodic Review of Rwanda A/HRC/31/8, 2015, paragraph 135.25 (Uruguay); Concluding Observations on Guinea, CRC/C/OPAC/GIN/CO/1, 2017, paragraphs 26(a) and (b).

<sup>138</sup> Concluding Observations on Latvia CRC/OPAC/LVA/CO/1, 2016, paragraph 13; Concluding Observations on Peru CRC/OPAC/PER/CO/1, 2016, paragraph 16.

<sup>139</sup> Report by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/HRC/11/2/Add.2, 2009, paragraph 84.

<sup>140</sup> Concluding Observation on Belarus CRC/C/OPAC/BLR/CO/1, 2011, paragraph 20(b).

<sup>141</sup> 'Preventing suicide – A global imperative', *World Health Organisation*, 2014, page 34.

<sup>142</sup> Concluding Observations on Switzerland CCPR/C/CHE/CO/3, 2009, paragraph 12.

<sup>143</sup> Concluding Observations on Switzerland E/C.12/CHE/CO/2-3, 2010, paragraph 19; Concluding Observations on Switzerland E/C.12/CHE/CO/2-3, 2010, paragraph 19; Concluding Observations on Switzerland CCPR/C/CHE/CO/3, 2009, paragraph 12.

<sup>144</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences Yakin Ertürk, Intersections between culture and violence against women, A/HRC/4/34/Add.2, 17 January 2007, paragraph 79.