

21 September 2023

UN Human Rights Council, 54th session (11 September to 13 October 2023)

Item 3: General Debate

Statement on the OHCHR report on firearms

The role of both the firearms industry and other industries that contribute to its harmful operations must be confronted as a root cause of human rights violations and abuses, and armed violence. Thus, WILPF welcomes that the latest OHCHR report on the 'Impact of the civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms', presented to the HRC's 53rd session (A/HRC/53/49),¹ sheds light on the role of the arms industry, including its:

- aggressive lobbying strategies to shield itself from any form of liability;
- irresponsible marketing strategies; and
- use of globalised supply chains to locate weapon manufacturing in countries with more permissive arms exports laws.

The report usefully examines the integral importance of other business sectors, such as social media, and the gaming and entertainment industries, for the marketing of firearms. It highlights examples of marketing strategies that encourage demand for firearms including by exploiting gender norms, and sometimes appealing to racist ideologies; these strategies are also aimed to reach new demographics.

WILPF urges all States, the arms industry, and all other relevant actors, including investors, to implement the OHCHR's recommendations. They must end advertising that facilitates militarised masculinities and white supremacy, among other things, and fuels demand for firearms. States must also work to prevent and address violations and abuses linked to firearms' ownership and use.

But ultimately, States and other actors including investors, must end the production, sale and trade of firearms, and invest instead in industries that facilitate social justice and ecological well-being rather than death, destruction, and discrimination.

WILPF's **written statement** to this Human Rights Council's session, titled "[Disarm the Enablers: End the impunity of the Firearms Industry and its Helpers](#)"², presents **additional recommendations on this issue**.

¹ UN Human Rights Council 'Impact of the civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (5 May 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/53/49. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4012464?ln=en> >.

² WILPF, 'Disarm the Enablers: End the impunity of the Firearms Industry and its Helpers', Written Statement to the UN Human Rights Council, 54th regular session, 23 August 2023, < https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HRC54_WILPF-written-statement-on-OHCHR-firearms-report.pdf >.