



22 September 2020

Statement to UN Human Rights Council 45th session (14 September – 7 October 2020)

Item 3: promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. General debate

Statement on the impact of arms on human rights

WILPF has submitted a written statement relating to the High Commissioner's report on the impact of arms transfers on human rights.¹ In that statement (A/HRC/45/65)² we highlight the many positive elements of the report and flag some areas for further research or action, such as the importance of ammunition control and the nexus between the arms industry and business and human rights frameworks.

Some of the analysis from that report is particularly relevant to the negotiations at this session for a new resolution on the human rights impact of firearms. The High Commissioner affirms the findings of the UN Secretary General in his Agenda for Disarmament by noting that "ownership and use of arms relate closely to specific expressions of masculinity, power and control that further gender-based discrimination against women and girls," and highlights that "addressing gendered root causes of violence is essential."³

The High Commissioner concludes, *inter alia*, that addressing the human rights impact of arms "requires an understanding of the gendered root causes of violent behaviour. Bringing about changes in gender norms and attitudes can help prevent human rights violations and conflict more broadly."⁴

These are essential elements that should be reflected in HRC's deliberations on firearms.

¹ "Impact of arms transfers on human rights, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights" to the 44th session of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/44/29, 19 June 2020), available at:

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/44/29>

² Available at https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/45/NGO/65 as well as on the WILPF's website, at https://www.wilpf.org/wilpf_statements/hrc45-written-statement-on-the-gendered-impact-of-arms/

³ A/HRC/44/29, page 1. See also paragraph 18.

⁴ A/HRC/44/29, paragraph 41. See also paragraph 19.