

UNLIREC Newsletter

Caribbean Region

UNLIREC and the Dominican Republic united in the fight against illicit firearms trafficking

(Santo Domingo, November 2011) – The Ministry of State for the Armed Forces was the scene of UNLIREC's *Inter-institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Firearms Trafficking (IITC)*, in Santo Domingo, held from 21 November to 2 December in response to requests for assistance from the Dominican authorities. In the same context, the international seminar entitled *Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms: Control Measures and Regulations* was also undertaken in the capital city on 24 November. Both activities were carried out thanks to the support of the Government of Sweden.

During the opening ceremony, UNLIREC's Director, C. Mélanie Régimbal, indicated that providing security is necessary to "*promote investment in and the sustainable development of a State*". In this regard she ensured that the strengthening of national capacities through initiatives like the IITC, which has improved the training of more than 3,000 security sector personnel throughout the region, is an effective and safe way to attain this goal. The Chief Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of the Armed Forces, Luis Ramón Payan Areché, believes that one of the greatest advantages of the course is that officers work together in addressing the problem and prepares them to become training instructors in their own institutions.



Director of UNLIREC, C. Mélanie Régimbal, in the inauguration of IITC in Santo Domingo. Photo: UNLIREC

The international seminar organized by the Commission of the Interior and Police from the Chamber of Deputies follows the legal assistance provided by UNLIREC in January 2011 when a legal dictum (*opinion*) was made on the current bill. On this occasion, a delegation of experts from UNLIREC appeared before the House of Representatives to share its knowledge on firearms classification, as well as promote the usefulness of disarmament campaigns and the importance of international firearms instruments. UNLIREC's legal expert, Sonia Fernández, delved into the most important aspects of the legal dictum and emphasized that as a party to various international instruments, the Dominican Republic is responsible for undertaking the necessary measures for their effective implementation.

The Coordinator of the United Nations System in the Dominican Republic, Valerie Julliand, encouraged the representatives to approve a legal framework to better control the possession and bearing of weapons with the aim of improving citizen safety. The president of the Commission of the Interior and Police, Elpidio Baez, said in her speech that both the

legal dictum prepared by UNLIREC and the report from the international seminar will be taken into account in drafting the law on possession and bearing of firearms that the Commission of the Interior and Police is currently considering.

The States of the region participate in the III Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in The Americas

(Port of Spain, November 2011) - The III Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas (MISPA III) was held in Port of Spain under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), José Miguel Insulza. The meeting welcomed delegations from all countries of the region, as well as representatives of sub-regional organizations, such as the CAN, CARICOM and SICA; international organizations; and observers from China, France, Japan, Russia, Spain, and The Netherlands. UNLIREC was invited to participate in its capacity as a regional expert with widespread experience in the field of public security.



Public Security Ministers attending the MISPA III. Photo: The Government of Trinidad and Tobago

Under the leadership of Trinidad and Tobago, the agenda of MISPA III focused on issues such as citizen and community participation in decision-making processes in police management, transparency and accountability, the inclusion of gender perspectives and human rights issues into police activities, mechanisms to support the modernization of police management, and the strengthening of police information systems.

The Secretary-General of the OAS emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation between the States in order to better address the issue of criminal organizations that have gained ground in the region. The delegation of El Salvador highlighted its policy change from a "firm hand", which only showed immediate results without generating greater security, towards a policy aimed at solving the problems in their broadest sense. The representative of Nicaragua emphasized the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into police management, which is essential to ensure the safety of the entire population, while the Delegation of Ecuador underlined the importance of promoting new types of policing, including community policing, which provides more stable relations with the citizens. In a speech on behalf of SICA States, the Secretary-General, Juan Daniel Alemán, presented the joint position achieved by the Central American States in relation to SICA's Security Strategy, which sets

common goals and projects for regional cooperation.

This Meeting of Ministers in the Americas has been held since 2009 with the purpose of strengthening regional dialogue among key stakeholders, promoting effective cooperation and exchanging best practices. As public

security is one of the key issues on the agendas of all States in the region, creating opportunities for exchange and coordination is essential to arrive at comprehensive solutions. UNLIREC participates in these forums and contributes their areas of expertise to the consolidation of a community of practice relating to public security.

Andean region

UNLIREC and the Ecuadorian Armed Forces joined forces in the destruction of ammunition

(Quito, December 2011) - As part of its commitment to promote initiatives in the area of disarmament, on December 7, the Armed Forces of Ecuador, with technical assistance from UNLIREC, destroyed 11,721 munitions decommissioned by the Army. The destruction took place in the east of Quito, in facilities provided by Santa Barbara.

Previously, the Deputy-Defense Minister, Rosa Pérez, had officially received the tank which was used in the destruction ceremony and which, according to her, *"was built according to high-level technical specifications approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and which is starting to be implemented in other countries, Ecuador being the first nation in South America to have equipment of this nature"*.

The tank can destroy up to one tonne of small caliber ammunition in each session and it does not exert a negative impact on the environment whatsoever, as the waste can be recycled. The Ecuadorian authorities expressed interest in building more tanks with the same characteristics so that they can be distributed across the country, thus allowing for improved management of ammunition destruction.

Following the destruction of ammunition, a seminar on stockpile management was held at

the Ministry of Defense, as part of the procedure of certification and compliance with the United Nations' international technical rules. According to the Deputy Minister, this training *"seeks to strengthen the knowledge already possessed by the Armed Forces personnel in the field of destruction of ammunition and, at the same time, generate appropriate measures that guarantee security and the proper handling of firearms, ammunition and explosives in Ecuador"*.



The Deputy Defense Minister of Ecuador, Rosa Pérez, officially receiving the munitions destruction tank.
Photo: UNLIREC

The Canadian ambassador in Ecuador, Andrew Shisko, emphasized that *"this course is an example of the importance of security for the region"*. The training provided by the Government and UNLIREC contributes to the *"improvement of the security of all citizens of Ecuador"*. The Andean Project advisor of

UNLIREC's Public Security Programme, Camilo Duplat, stated that *"the destruction of stockpiles is essential to prevent seized weapons, ammunition and explosives from being diverted into illegal activities. It is a means of contributing to the destruction of*

surplus weapons and to the prevention of accidents". These activities form part of UNLIREC's comprehensive assistance package to the States of the Andean Community, with the support of the Government of Canada.

UNLIREC carried out its first specialized course for legal practitioners in Peru

(Lima, December 2011) – As part of UNLIREC's strategy to support countries in the region, the first *Specialized Training Course for Legal Practitioners and Judicial Officials on Combating Impunity in the Illicit Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives*, developed by UNLIREC's in-house legal team, was carried out between 5 and 7 December. This course was supported by the Government of Peru, through the National Commission against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (CONATIAF) and the School of the Public Prosecution Office.

The main purpose of the course is to provide knowledge, tools and technical and practical instruments to legal operators in their daily fight against illicit trafficking in firearms and ammunition and explosives. The course also seeks to support the fight against the impunity in these types of cases and to strengthen the coordination and cooperation of legal practitioners working in the field of arms control. One of its strategic objectives is to ensure that public academies incorporate the course content into their curricula with a view to promoting institutionalization and sustainability over time; this has been successfully achieved in Peru, since the School of the Public Prosecution Office announced that the modules of the course will now form part of its academic training programme.



Closing ceremony in Lima, Peru. Photo: UNLIREC

The course brought together 28 members of the Public Prosecution Office, the judiciary, the Peruvian National Police, the General Directorate of Security Services Control, Arms Control, Ammunition and Explosives for Civil Use (DICSCAMEC), the CONATIAF as well as members of Military Court. It should be noted that over 20% of participants were women, showing the increasing role of women in the fight against illicit firearms trafficking. The course culminated in a practical exercise, which simulated a real-life scenario in which the participants had the opportunity to put into practice everything they had learned during the theoretical part of the course.

National and international instructors and representatives from the School of the Public Prosecution office, the DICSCAMEC and the National Institute of Legal Medicine of Colombia, as well as UNLIREC's team of experts participated in this activity, which was made possible thanks to the support from the Government of Canada.

Andean Community Members analyze progress and challenges in the fight against illicit firearms trafficking

(Quito, December 2011) – In celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN 2001 PoA), the seminar *Strengthening commitments to combat small arms and light weapons* was held in Quito. The event was organized by Ecuador's Technical Arms Control Team with the support from the Government of Germany and the cooperation of the organization entitled Global Action to Prevent War. UNLIREC was invited to participate as an expert within the framework of the assistance package provided by the Regional Centre to the Andean Community.



Opening of the seminar by the Ecuadorian authorities and the representative of the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations. Photo: Ministry of State Security of Ecuador

The seminar, which was inaugurated by Deputy Admiral Homero Arellano, the Minister of Security Coordination of Ecuador, Javier Ponce, Ecuador's Defense Minister, and Sabrina Pfiffener from the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations, convened the Andean Community Member States on 12 and 13 of December to analyze the progress and challenges related to the combating of illicit firearms trafficking. The representative of the Ministry of Defense said

that this will be an opportunity to assess the implementation of the programme and other security-related commitments.

The Minister of Security Coordination highlighted that *"a more armed society is not a safer society"* and stressed that *"guns cause violence and insecurity that affect the most vulnerable sectors of society"*. Finally, Deputy Admiral Arellano stated that Ecuador is *"a peaceful society with a peaceful territory and that is why it will continue to maintain its policy that bearing arms is not permitted."*

Illicit firearms trafficking constitutes a grave threat to peace, security, governance, stability and the institutional democratic order of countries, and undermines the aspirations of societies to achieve higher levels of sustainable political, economic, social and cultural development. In this context, the Andean Community adopted the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, more commonly referred to as Decision 552, in 2003, in order to translate and implement the UN 2001 PoA in the Andean region in a practical and effective way.

Decision 552 envisages the strengthening of national capacities to regulate aspects ranging from the manufacture, import, export, transfer, marketing and brokerage, transport, possession, concealment, usurpation, carrying and legal use of such weapons, to the establishment of community cooperation mechanisms.

Central-American Region

Central America continues advancing the implementation of its Security Strategy

(El Salvador, December 2011) – On 16 December, Central American Heads of State and Government held the XXXVIII Regular Meeting in San Salvador, El Salvador, where they reaffirmed their commitment to advance regional integration and jointly seek to address the serious problems affecting the region. In this sense, participants expressed their determination to continue working together to implement the Security Strategy.

In the Declaration and Work Plan signed in San Salvador, the Heads of State and Government urged the General Secretariat of SICA to continue negotiations with the “Group of Friends” and international organizations to begin implementing the projects identified as priority, including, inter alia, gun control and armed violence prevention. In this sense, the Work Plan proposes the development of a *roadmap* that clearly and precisely identifies the steps to follow to achieve full implementation of the Strategy.

The 2012 Work Plan also establishes the creation of a Financial Management Mechanism that guarantees the identification of funds and their proper distribution. The Coordinating Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism of the Security Strategy will remain in charge of general coordination.

UNLIREC, one of the international organizations present at the International Conference, expressed its support to SICA’s the General Secretariat in achieving prompt and effective implementation of the Strategy. In this context,

and in response to requests received from Central American States, UNLIREC has developed a sub-regional assistance package focusing on arms control and the prevention of illicit trafficking. Some countries, such as Germany and Australia, have already expressed their interest in the proposal. The implementation of which would be coordinated by the Central American authorities.



XXXVIII Ordinary Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the SICA. Photo: SICA

The Central American Security Strategy has four main themes: combating crime; violence prevention; prison rehabilitation, reintegration and security; and institutional strengthening, all coordinated in a comprehensive manner to better address the problem of armed violence facing the sub-region. The Security Strategy was adopted by the Heads of State and Government of SICA in 2007, which was re-vitalized following the International Conference in Support of the Strategy held in Guatemala in June, which included a large representation of states and international organizations.

Southern Cone States

UNLIREC contributes to the strategic planning of citizen security in Argentina

(Buenos Aires, November 2011) - UNLIREC was invited to participate in the international workshop series on "*Challenges in the Strategic Planning for Citizen Security*", organized by the Ministry of National Security of Argentina and UNDP. UNLIREC provided expert input into the development of the national strategy in the formulation of policy planning for improved citizen security. The workshop, held in Buenos Aires from 29 to 30 November at the headquarters of the National Library, was attended by national and international experts who discussed different initiatives in addressing threats to citizen security, including, inter alia, drug trafficking, youth violence, homicide, and firearms.

UNLIREC's Public Security Programme, William Godnick, presented the types of assistance provided by the Regional Centre to support State arms control efforts and its prevention of armed violence in the context of citizen security. Moreover, UNLIREC emphasized the important of strategic planning as one of the most effective tools that public administration has to efficiently

address the various security-related problems affecting the population. In this regard, it is necessary to initiate an assessment of the situation, identify the key stakeholders working in the area and define objectives and the means that allows the State to achieve these goals.

Mr Godnick went on to emphasize the importance of carrying out results-based initiatives and cited the example of stockpile management and training of public security forces as practical measures that have a real impact on security threats. In this context, the Argentine authorities of the Ministry of Security expressed interest in UNLIREC's advice on how to improve their weapons arsenals, as well as certain aspects of the Inter-institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Firearms Trafficking (IITC), in particular, the module on the use-of-force and the strengthening of trust between the security forces and the citizenry. UNLIREC and the Argentine authorities agreed to carry out the necessary actions to be able to work together during this current year.

UNLIREC participates in a dialogue on the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Resolution 1540 in South America

(Santiago, Chile, December 2011) – In preparation for the Summit on Nuclear Security to be held in March 2012 in Seoul, South Korea, the Global Consortium on Security Transformation, with the support of Norway, organized the seminar "*Beyond the NPT: A South American Perspective on the 2012 Nuclear Summit and the Resolution 1540*", held in Santiago, Chile, last December. The objective of this initiative was to analyze and discuss the core issues of non-proliferation, disarmament and nuclear security from an academic perspective.

The States in the region have always been at the forefront of disarmament issues. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, for example, in 1967, established Latin America and the Caribbean as the first Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) in a densely populated area even before the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was approved. Furthermore, the region has also been declared free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), which is an important step and serves as an example to follow to achieve a safer world.

In this context, the Political Affairs Officer of UNLIREC, Amanda Cowl, shared with participants some reflections on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) and the challenges related to its implementation. Ms Cowl highlighted the fact that the measures that States are called on to adopt to effectively implement Resolution 1540 are similar in nature to the measures necessary to implement other non-proliferation treaties, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), while Resolution 1540 goes further in specifically addressing the risk of non-State actors in acquiring WMDs. The effective implementation of this latter Resolution brings with it many advantages, since in addition to protecting society from the danger of WMDs in the hands of non-state actors, its implementation would benefit the entire non-proliferation regime.

UNLIREC is in a position to support States in their implementation of Resolution 1540 through advocacy measures concerning the need to put into action the provisions of the resolution; legal assistance to facilitate harmonization of national legislation with the provisions of the Resolution; the drafting of national reports; as well as support for the creation of national commissions; and the training of its security sector personnel to prevent the illicit proliferation of WMDs. Moreover, UNLIREC is in a position to adapt its trademark training methodology used to combat illicit firearms trafficking to the area of WMDs.

Considering that the threat of WMDs is global and its danger knows no borders, the representative of UNLIREC appealed to participants to strengthen regional cooperation as an effective measure to improving security in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Other Relevant Activities

Message of the UN Secretary General to the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

(Geneva, November 2011) – The following message was delivered by Mr. Jomart Tokayev, General Director of the United Nations in Geneva, on behalf of United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, in Geneva, Switzerland, last November 2011.



General View of the Human Rights Council at the UN Palace in Geneva, Switzerland. Photo: United Nations

In its 31st year, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons continues to serve as a pillar of International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian action.

It remains a flexible and dynamic framework, making a tangible difference in the lives of people caught in the cross-hairs of conflict.

I welcome the focus of this Review Conference on addressing the horrendous impact of cluster munitions. The UN family of agencies, in its wide-ranging work on the ground, has come across many types of cluster munitions. This experience sends a clear message that cluster munitions used to date cause unacceptable harm to civilians. I urge you to keep this in mind when discussing the balance between military needs and humanitarian

concerns, which remains the cornerstone of the CCW framework.

Looking beyond the Review Conference, let me mention two fields in which the United Nations would highly value further progress: First: anti-vehicle mines. These weapons continue to cause many casualties, increasingly among civilians. They restrict the movement of people and aid, make land unsuitable for cultivation, and deny citizens access to water, food, care and trade. Second: we are increasingly alarmed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which

leads to profound suffering among civilian populations.

At the same time, accelerating progress on CCW universalization and ensuring its full and effective implementation continue to be high priorities.

Progress in all these areas would be a significant advance in international humanitarian law. I call on all States, international organizations, and civil society to continue the quest for solutions in diminishing the burden of conflict on civilians. I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Ban Ki-moon: “We Cannot Rest Until We Destroy All Chemical Arms”

(The Hague, November 2011) - Following is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message delivered to the sixteenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, delivered by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, in The Hague, 28 November:

As the International Year of Chemistry comes to a close, your Conference can add meaning to our commemorations by carrying forward work on the Chemical Weapons Convention, one of the greatest achievements in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation.

By ensuring the destruction of these deadly and indiscriminate arms and preventing their re-emergence, this treaty is a fundamental pillar of international peace and security.

The Convention has near-universal membership, with 188 States Parties covering all but 2 per cent of the global population. Under the supervision of the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), over 70 per cent of declared chemical weapons have been verifiably destroyed.

This is welcome progress, but we must continue to press for universal adherence. I call on those

States that have not yet done so, to join the Convention and be part of the effort to build a world free of these indiscriminate arms.



OPCW Head quarters in The Hague, The Netherlands. Photo: PressTV

Despite significant investments in human and financial resources, two possessor States will not meet their destruction deadline next year. I count on the Convention’s States parties to find a constructive and forward-looking solution to this matter, building on the OPCW’s excellent record of consensus-based decision-making. I am also satisfied that, despite the crisis situation in Libya, the declared chemical weapons stockpiles remained secure, as recently verified by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The spectre of chemical warfare is receding thanks to your diligent work. But, we cannot rest until we destroy all chemical arms and eliminate the possibility that this nightmare scenario will ever be realized.

Your efforts also help to foster international cooperation for peaceful purposes in the field of chemical activities. There could be no better way to close out this International Year of Chemistry than to achieve solid progress in advancing your agenda. In that spirit, I wish you a most successful Conference.

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