

# UNLIREC Newsletter

## Central American States

### United Nations assists the Dominican Republic in the destruction of more than 30,000 firearms and 30 tonnes of ammunition

A series of destruction initiatives in the Dominican Republic resulted in over 30,000 firearms and 30 tonnes of ammunition being destroyed in a collaborative effort between UNLIREC and the Ministry of the Armed Forces of the Dominican Republic. These achievements demonstrate the success in the implementation of a national action plan for stockpile management and firearms and ammunition destruction - jointly developed by UNLIREC and the Ministry of Armed Forces in 2010 - thanks to a grant provided by the Office for Weapons Removal and Abatement at the U.S. Department of State.

Since 2010, UNLIREC has provided the Dominican Republic with pioneering destruction equipment and technical know-how on managing stockpiles and destroying weapons according to internationally-accepted best practices and guidelines. By providing the Dominican Republic with permanent technical and human resource capacity, as well as infrastructure, this State advances one step further toward independent stockpile management and destruction measures plus avoidance of possible re-entry of these weapons into illicit trafficking rings.



When asked to comment on the impact of the destruction measures, Mélanie Régimbal, Director of UNLIREC, commented that “if each firearm and bullet destroyed in the Dominican Republic represents the potential to kill, hurt or threaten someone, then the United Nations, together with the Ministry of Armed Forces, have contributed to preventing tens of thousands of gun-related crimes”. Régimbal praised the proactive participation by two female officials from the munitions depot in their role as technical team leaders in the final phase of the destruction process giving life to UN General Assembly resolution 65/69 on “women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”.

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Over the last three years, UNLIREC has also helped to enhance the security of 40 weapons and ammunition stockpile facilities belonging to the Dominican Army, Navy and Air Force. As well, UNLIREC has trained over 50 officials in stockpile management and destruction

standards and operations. The next phase of UNLIREC assistance to the Dominican Republic, to begin in September 2013, will include specialized training of judges and prosecutors to reduce impunity in cases of illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking.

## *Caribbean States*

### **Close to 400 small arms and one tonne of small arms ammunition destroyed in Antigua and Barbuda with UNLIREC support**



From 22 to 26 April 2013, UNLIREC, in close collaboration with the Police and Defence Force of Antigua and Barbuda, supported the destruction of close to 400 seized and obsolete weapons and one tonne of small arms ammunition and time-expired CS ('tear') gas. All weapons and ammunition destroyed were documented in accordance with UNLIREC's standard operating procedures. UNLIREC also provided training on firearms and ammunition destruction techniques to fourteen law enforcement officials with a view to permanently installing technical

and human resource capacity to engage in independent destructions.

All small arms were destroyed using a set of hydraulic shears provided by UNLIREC to the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, while the ammunition was burned using the UNLIREC-patented Small Arms Ammunition Burning Tank (SAABT).

UNLIREC destruction assistance to Antigua and Barbuda forms part of a wider UNLIREC programme for firearms destruction and stockpile management

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support to Caribbean States aimed at combating illicit trafficking by reducing the risk of theft and diversion from government holdings of firearms, ammunition and explosives.

UNLIREC also undertook a baseline assessment of the country's capacity to destroy weapons and manage stockpiles, which served as an essential step towards the formulation of the country's national

plan of action in this area. Forty international standard padlocks were also provided by UNLIREC – under the umbrella of the same Caribbean Assistance Package – to enhance levels of storage and security at key government stockpiles.

The activities carried out were made possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of the United States of America.

### One tonne of ammunition and over 150 weapons destroyed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines with UNLIREC support

UNLIREC, in collaboration with the Royal St. Vincent and Grenadines Police Force (RSVGPF), facilitated the destruction of 164 seized and obsolete weapons and over 37,000 rounds of small arms ammunition from 20 to 24 May 2013. All weapons and ammunition were destroyed and documented in accordance with UNLIREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Eleven law enforcement officials were also trained by UNLIREC on firearms and ammunition destruction in order to guarantee permanent national capacities in this area.

All small arms were destroyed using hydraulic shears donated by UNLIREC to the RSVGPF in 2012, while the small arms ammunition was burned using the UNLIREC-patented small arms ammunition burning tank (SAABT) delivered to the Caribbean island in 2013. Larger calibre ammunition and time-expired pyrotechnics were destroyed by an open detonation process following established UNLIREC SOPs based on the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG).

Prior to providing this assistance, UNLIREC undertook a detailed baseline assessment of the country's capacity to destroy and manage weapons and ammunition stockpiles, which served as a foundation for the formulation of the country's national plan of action in this area. Forty international standard padlocks were also provided by UNLIREC to enhance levels of storage and security at key government stockpiles. The activities carried out were made possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of the United States of America.



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## UNLIREC assists St Kitts and Nevis with destruction of obsolete and confiscated small arms and ammunition



***“Sound stockpile management practices and the regular destruction of surplus, obsolete and confiscated weapons and ammunition are key measures called for in the UN 2001 PoA on Small Arms for combating proliferation and preventing armed violence.”***

From 27 to 31 May, UNLIREC supported the destruction of close to 400 seized and obsolete weapons and 0.67 tonnes of small arms ammunition and time-expired CS (‘tear’) gas in Basseterre. All weapons and ammunition destroyed were documented in accordance with international standards and UNLIREC’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). UNLIREC also provided training on firearms and ammunition destruction techniques to thirteen officials from the Police and Defence forces with a view to permanently installing technical and human resource capacity to engage in independent destructions.

All small arms were destroyed using a set of hydraulic shears provided by UNLIREC to the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, while the ammunition was destroyed using the UNLIREC-patented Small Arms Ammunition Burning Tank (SAABT). Both destruction processes included independent monitoring and verification by UNLIREC officials.

UNLIREC’s destruction assistance to St Kitts and Nevis is made possible thanks to a grant from the Government of the United States of America.

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## UNLIREC assists Barbados in the destruction of 1,500 small arms and nearly two tonnes of ammunition

From 27 to 31 May, UNLIREC assisted the government of Barbados in the destruction of 1,500 seized and obsolete weapons and 1.9 tonnes of small arms ammunition, time-expired CS ('tear') gas, anti-riot grenades and other explosives.



All small arms were destroyed using a set of hydraulic shears donated to the government of Barbados by UNLIREC, while the ammunition was destroyed using a UNLIREC-designed small arms ammunition burning tank (SAABT). All weapons and ammunition destroyed were documented in accordance with international standards and UNLIREC's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

At the handover ceremony held at the Central Police Station, Barbadian Police Commissioner Darwin Dottin underscored the fact that "... the very high level of violence and criminal use of firearms is promoting violence in [the] region [...]" and praised UNLIREC for donating equipment that would aid the Police Force in the destruction of surplus and obsolete weapons and ammunition.

UNLIREC also provided training to twelve officials from both the Police and Defence forces on the use of the hydraulic shears, while three officials were trained on its maintenance. Ten officials were trained on Small Arms Ammunition (SAABT) and Pyrotechnic Burning Tank (PBT) Operations. The equipment and training were provided in order to ensure that Barbados has the necessary permanent technical and human capacity to destroy surplus, obsolete and confiscated arms and ammunition autonomously in the future.

The activities carried out were made possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of the United States of America.

***"To date, UNLIREC and the Member States of the Caribbean have destroyed more than 40,000 weapons and 57 tonnes of ammunition as part of UNLIREC's Caribbean Stockpile Management and Weapons Destruction Package."***

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## UNLIREC and Government of Jamaica advance disarmament objectives in the Caribbean



From 3 – 7 June 2013, UNLIREC, the Ministry of National Security (MNS) and the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) collaborated in the destruction of 6.8 tonnes of surplus and obsolete small arms and light weapons ammunition. Eighteen Jamaican officials were trained on the safe operation of the UNLIREC-designed small arms ammunition burning tank (SAABT). Additionally, six JDF officials were trained in light weapons ammunition destruction operations in accordance with the UN International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

In December 2010, UNLIREC and the MNS jointly formulated a National Action Plan

for Firearms and Ammunition Stockpile Management and Destruction resulting in the destruction of almost 2,000 surplus, obsolete and confiscated weapons and nearly seven tonnes of small arms and light weapons ammunition. Additionally, as part of the National Action Plan, security was enhanced at government stockpile facilities with the installation of international standard padlocks and the training of 57 officials on techniques to combat illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives.

UNLIREC assistance to the Government of Jamaica is made possible thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of State.

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## **UNLIREC and Government of Guyana begin cooperation on weapons and ammunition stockpile management and destruction assistance**

From 10 – 14 June 2013, UNLIREC and the Government of Guyana conducted a joint national baseline assessment on capacities and needs in the area of stockpile management and destruction. This mission is the first step in the formulation of a national action plan for weapons and ammunition destruction to be jointly implemented by UNLIREC and the Government.



The draft plan will include recommendations for assistance in the areas of stockpile management, firearms and ammunition destruction; legal and policy review and development; and training and capacity-building of law enforcement officials, including Guyanese participation in a Caribbean Regional Armoury Management Training Course.

The assistance provided by UNLIREC will contribute to the combat of illicit trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives and thus to greater security in Guyana and in the region.

UNLIREC assistance to the Government of Guyana is made possible thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of State.

### *Southern Cone States*

## **UNLIREC supports Argentina in the modernization of small arms stockpile management policies and practices**

The newly refurbished and improved main armoury of Argentina's Federal Police was unveiled by the UNLIREC together with the Ministry of Security. Improvements to the Federal Police armoury were carried out based on technical recommendations made by UNLIREC in 2012 following a collaborative baseline assessment of eleven federal facilities and the development of a national action plan for their improved management.



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The overall UNLIREC/Ministry of Security project aims to align stockpile facilities and practices with relevant international standards, such as the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). By building government officials' capacities to effectively manage stockpiles and bolstering the infrastructure of facilities where weapons, ammunition and explosives are stored, the Government of Argentina significantly reduces the risk of theft, loss, diversion and accidents, in addition to improving its own operational efficiency.



In addition to the inauguration of the main police stockpile facility, over 6,500 surplus weapons were crushed and smelted in a public-private partnership with a local metallurgical company. The destruction process was monitored and verified jointly

by UNLIREC and the national firearms register (RENAR) in accordance with ISACS *05.50 Destruction: Weapons*. These efforts supplement the Government's national voluntary disarmament campaign, which has succeeded at removing over 145,000 small arms and more than 1 million rounds of ammunition from circulation.



The UNLIREC/Argentina partnership for the modernization of stockpile management is unique in that the Government of Argentina finances its own technical assistance through a broader United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Framework for improving know-how and capabilities for planning citizen security policies. It is the aspiration of UNLIREC that other Member States in the region will replicate this bilateral funding modality in the years to come.

***“The secure management of national small arms stockpiles is instrumental in curbing small arms proliferation. Poor stockpile security is a prime means through which arms and ammunition are diverted from the legal to the illicit markets.  
Lax security makes theft easy.”***

***(Small Arms Survey - 2013)***



## Andean States

### Governmental Experts from Andean Community meet to discuss the marking of weapons



The Secretary General of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and the Republic of Ecuador, in its role as President Pro-tempore of the CAN, organized the Second Governmental Experts Workshop on the Marking of Weapons, from 27 to 28 May, 2013, in Quito, Ecuador. The workshop aimed to make progress towards the consolidation of a technical and legally-binding proposal

to standardize the marking of small arms and their ammunition in the Andean Region. The event was attended by 46 delegates from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, as well as representatives from UNLIREC who participated in the event as technical advisers. The Regional Centre will continue to lend assistance throughout this ongoing process.

***“The choice of methods for marking small arms and light weapons is a national prerogative. States will ensure that, whatever method is used, all marks required under this instrument are on an exposed surface, conspicuous without technical aids or tools, easily recognizable, readable, durable and, as far as technically possible, recoverable.”***

***(Section III - International Tracing Instrument)***

## Peru and Ecuador strengthen the fight against weapons trafficking in border zones



The security forces of Peru and Ecuador are better equipped to combat the illicit trade in firearms, ammunition and explosives, following the Peru-Ecuador Binational Training Workshop on Controlling Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives in Border Zones, held from 13 -14 June, 2013 in Piura, Peru. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, which presides over the “National Commission against the Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Illicit Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials” (CONATIAF), and with the support of the Regional Government of Piura and the Government of Ecuador.

UNLIREC opened the workshop with a presentation on the proliferation of firearms and armed violence, and on its impact on citizen security. Likewise, UNLIREC addressed the issue of arms control, providing details on practical measures for border control. The event was attended by representatives of the armed forces, the police, customs, the judiciary and the Public Prosecutor’s office of both countries.

UNLIREC promotes border cooperation, exchange of information and training of law enforcement as fundamental concepts to prevent and combat the illicit trade in firearms, ammunition and explosives in border zones.



## In the Spotlight

### UNLIREC and Trinidad and Tobago inaugurate Regional Armoury Management Training Centre for improved SALW stockpile management

On 28 June 2013, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the Minister of National Security, Senator the Honourable Emmanuel George, and the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), Ms. Mélanie Régimbal, inaugurated the Caribbean Regional Armoury Management Training Centre.

Secure stockpile management represents an excellent safeguard against the diversion of weapons into illicit channels, while safer storage facilities also result in fewer accidental stockpile explosions that can harm innocent people living in close proximity to stockpile facilities. It is in this context that UNLIREC and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago joined forces to establish the Regional Armoury Management Training Centre with a view to creating long-term human resource capacity for technical armoury management across the entire region. This initiative forms part of a wider UNLIREC Caribbean Firearms Assistance Package, which has trained more than 3,500 government officials in the combat of illicit trafficking. This component was made possible thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for International Security and Non-Proliferation.



The Centre, which is expected to service more than 100 regional armourers from various security forces in the coming years, is housed at the Police Service Academy at St James Barracks, Trinidad and Tobago. The Police Academy was chosen based on its high standard of excellence for training due in large part to the capacity of Academy personnel and the quality of its infrastructure.

UNLIREC held the first national armoury management course from 17-28 June. The 12 Trinidad and Tobago participants increased their ability to manage, store, secure, inspect, maintain, repair and destroy small arms and ammunition in keeping with internationally-accepted norms. UNLIREC will work with this twin-island State in delivering a regional course for 13 countries across the Caribbean in November 2013. Additional courses in which armourers trained in 2013 will have a chance to share their knowledge and expertise with future course participants the following year giving life to the 'training-the-trainers' concept. This phased approach to armoury management training will result in a pool of professionals responsible for securing the storage of weapons and weapons accountability at a regional level, thus contributing to reducing the risk of proliferation.

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**UNLIREC congratulates the 22 states in Latin America and the Caribbean that became signatories of the Arms Trade Treaty since its opening in June, and encourages them to ratify the treaty as soon as possible.**

*"I urge everyone here to make every effort to achieve universality of this Treaty and ensure robust and effective implementation. And, together, we can achieve peace, security and development for people around the world."*

*Secretario General de la ONU, Ban Ki-Moon*

As of 30 June, 74 States have signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since it opened for signature on June 3, 2013 in New York. Thus, a significant number of states have committed to adhere to an agreement which establishes minimum international standards and controls over the international arms transfers of conventional weapons.

Among the 74 signatories, 22 are States from Latin America and the Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, México, Panamá, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay), representing 67% of the States of the region. This high percentage reveals the importance of the ATT for the authorities in the region. Moreover, the ATT is considered an essential part of the forthcoming measures to be taken in the next years to enhance public security in these countries.

To become party to the ATT, once the Treaty is signed, States must formally declare its consent to be bound by the Treaty in accordance with its national legislation and elaborate a ratification, acceptance, or approval instrument that must be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The ATT will entry into force 90 days after the 50th state deposits instruments of ratification at the UN. However, if the state is not among the first 50 states that ratify it, it would enter into force 90 days after its ratification instrument is deposited.

Within the Latin American -Caribbean context, a quick ratification process and an early entry into force would make a positive impact in thousands of lives. It would imply an enormous step towards establishing an effective instrument to combat illicit arms trafficking, increase levels of security, and reduce the number of armed violence victims, especially those caused by firearms. Not in vain, the American sub-regions suffer the highest homicide rates by firearm in the world (South America, Caribbean, Central America, and North America), and other indicators such as victimization, femicide or feelings of insecurity remain at very high levels.



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## ***UNLIREC Agenda (July – September 2013)***

### ***August***

- ✓ *Technical assistance in weapons destruction and stockpile management*  
**Paramaribo, Suriname**

### ***September***

- ✓ *Specialized Training Course for Legal Operators (STC)*  
**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

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