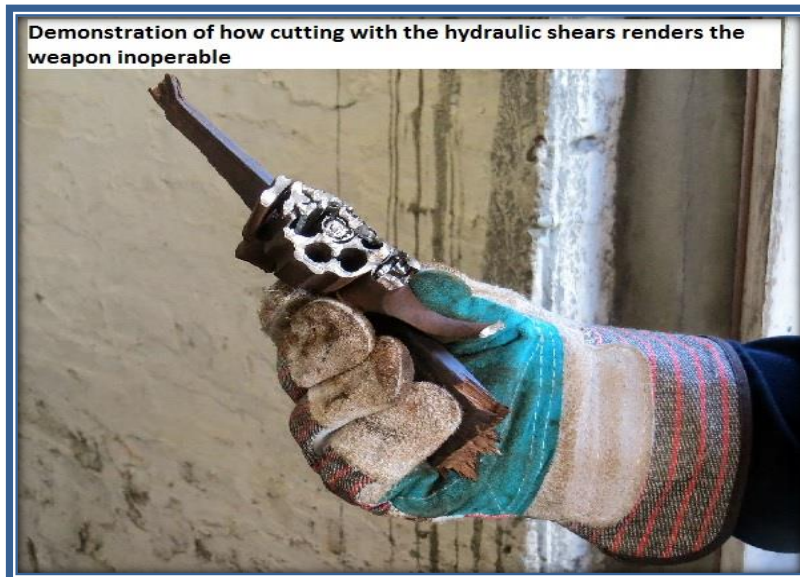


UNLIREC Newsletter

UNLIREC, as the regional organ of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, seeks to advance the cause of practical disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean as part of its commitment to support Member States in their implementation of international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, in particular, the UN 2001 Programme of Action on Small Arms.

Caribbean States

Over 4,000 weapons and almost 3 tonnes of ammunition destroyed in Guyana with UNLIREC support



To boost Guyana's indigenous capacity to destroy small arms, ammunition and explosives on a sustained and regular basis, UNLIREC handed over a set of hydraulic shears and a Small Arms Ammunition Burning Tank (SAABT) to the Government of Guyana on 23 January.

Prior to the official handover of equipment, 25 officials from the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Defence Force were trained in the maintenance and operation of the hydraulic shears resulting in the destruction of 700 surplus and obsolete firearms.

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These specialized destruction tools complement the delivery of 40 padlocks and hasps also provided by UNLIREC to national authorities for enhancing the security of strategic stockpile facilities. More robust stockpile security contributes directly to reductions in theft, loss and diversion of firearms and ammunition to illicit actors and boosts States' ability to combat illicit trafficking in firearms and reduce and prevent armed violence.



A follow-up mission to Guyana took place the following month (3-14 Feb) to conduct training sessions on the use of the SAABT and to support further destruction of weapons, ammunition and explosives.

This mission resulted in the destruction of over 3300 surplus and obsolete weapons

and almost 3 tonnes of small arms ammunition.

UNLIREC's technical assistance included hands-on training of officials from the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Defence Force responsible for leading the destruction efforts. The trainings included the use and maintenance of destruction equipment, as well as technical know-how on managing stockpiles and destroying weapons according to internationally-accepted best practices and guidelines.

UNLIREC will continue to support the Government of Guyana in a variety of areas, including stockpile management, training and capacity-building and legal and policy review.

The donation of this equipment and technical assistance forms part of a wider UNLIREC programme for firearms destruction and stockpile management 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.

This assistance was made possible with the financial support from the United States Government.

The periodic destruction of weapons and ammunition constitutes one of the most effective means of preventing diversion and ensuring that these weapons do not find their way into illicit activities and criminal networks.

Central America

Belizean legal operators better equipped to combat impunity in firearms-related cases



The operational capabilities of Belize were strengthened thanks to a joint initiative by UNLIREC and the Government of Belize in the delivery of a specialized course on combating illicit firearms trafficking through the reduction of impunity and strengthened coordination, communication and cooperation of all relevant legal operators working in this area.

The course targeted 20 practitioners, including judges, magistrates, prosecutors, criminal investigators and representatives from the National Forensic Science Service in the State capital from 3-6 March. Both national and international experts were invited to serve as instructors in sessions dealing with firearms and ammunition classification; firearms proliferation and

armed violence; international firearms instruments and national regulatory frameworks; inter-institutional and international cooperation; crime scene management and forensic ballistics.

The theoretical segment of the course culminated with a practical exercise whereby participants applied the acquired knowledge to a simulated preliminary court hearing involving illicit firearms trafficking and possession. The practical exercise highlighted how the proper handling of the crime scene, respect for the chain of custody, inter-institutional and international cooperation tools and resources, and a suitable criminal legal framework constitute essential elements to combating impunity in the fight against illicit firearms trafficking.

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Taking advantage of its presence in the field, and based upon a request from the Government, UNLIREC held a concurrent legal seminar on 6 March in Belmopan on implementing international firearms agreements. A UNLIREC-led comparative analysis was presented between Belize's legislation and existing international firearms obligations highlighting the progressive elements and cross-checking and referencing against the country's obligations under the various firearms-related international instruments, including the UN 2001 PoA on Small Arms and Light Weapons; UN Firearms Protocol; CIFTA Convention; and the International Tracing Instrument.

Different State agencies engaged in fruitful discussion on firearms legal frameworks and shared information and anecdotes on how the laws are being enforced in practice and what law enforcement agents – who are operationalizing the laws – perceive as the challenges and gaps posed by national legislation (e.g. low penalty charges, insufficient search and seizure powers, and lack of criminalization of certain firearms-related activities, among others).

Overall, this seminar succeeded at strengthening national efforts to implement international agreements in firearms, as well as contributed to accelerating national review and reform processes needed to modernize the national firearms acts and other related legislation. Finally, these types of legal revisions present an opportunity to reduce legal loopholes that can be used by criminals to commit firearms-related offenses. This activity was made possible thanks to the financial support of the United States Government.



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UNLIREC supports Central America in bolstering its investigative techniques in firearms-related cases



UNLIREC, as part of its efforts to support the Central American Security Strategy, is in the process of developing a training guide to help Central American governments better integrate firearms and ammunition evidence management into criminal investigative processes. For this purpose, UNLIREC convened a regional expert consultation in collaboration with the Judicial Police of Costa Rica, bringing together 20 experts from Central American States and neighbouring countries in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 13-14 February 2014.

Regional experts shared national practices and weaknesses, and jointly identified areas where technical assistance is needed in order to incorporate firearm issues into national evidence management procedures. Additionally, this expert consultation constituted a practical scenario to promote regional cooperation among participating countries. To conclude this regional consultation, a visit

was made to the National Forensic Institute where participants had the opportunity to interact with firearms examiners and ballistic experts on the different procedures and testing methodologies conducted on firearms, ammunition and explosives to facilitate tracing and investigations.

As part of the next phase, UNLIREC will work with Central American governments to pilot the training guide within existing national curricula.

This workshop - made possible thanks to the financial contribution of the Government of Germany - forms part of a larger UNLIREC assistance package aimed at preventing armed violence in Central America through the combat of illicit trafficking in firearms, which supports the efforts made by States to improve public security and enhance their implementation of the UN 2001 PoA on Small Arms.

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UNLIREC and Mexico join forces to promote future implementation of new Arms Trade Treaty

On 27 February 2013, UNLIREC and the Government of Mexico convened a meeting of national stakeholders at the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs to discuss various initiatives to promote implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. The meeting was presided by the Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights Juan Sandoval and UNLIREC's Political Affairs Officer, Amanda Cowl. The meeting brought together representatives from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, National Defense, the Navy, Economy, the Office of the Attorney General, Customs and Federal Police to discuss UNLIREC proposals for an ATT implementation training course and a model end user certificate for legal arms transfers in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

UNLIREC presented its draft course manual for training government officials on methodologies to support implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty once ratified. The proposed course, which is being developed with the financial support of Germany, includes modules on technical aspects of conventional arms and their trade, legal requirements of treaty implementation and arms transfer risk assessments aimed at national operators responsible for import/export controls. Mexican authorities made recommendations on course design and offered their experts from a number of relevant fields to serve as instructors in other countries in the region. Additionally, UNLIREC staff and experts presented a proposed model end-user certificate - drawing on best practices

compiled from Latin America, Europe and North America - that will be offered to Member States as a starting point for the development of arms transfer controls by conventional arms importing states.



On 2 April 2013, the General Assembly adopted the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), regulating the international trade in conventional arms, from small arms to battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships. The treaty will foster peace and security by, inter alia, curbing the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the region, which wreaks havoc on citizen security. Additionally, the Treaty aims to prevent human rights abusers and violators of the law of war from being supplied with arms and will help keep warlords, pirates, and gangs from acquiring these deadly tools. Since the beginning of the ATT process almost ten years ago, States in the region have been at the vanguard in supporting the Treaty and its implementation. As of April 2014, 27 Latin American and Caribbean countries have signed the ATT with the following 8 countries having ratified: Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago.

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UNLIREC's technical expertise and assistance sought at multiple international WMD- and small arms-related fora

During the first semester of 2014, UNLIREC's expert guidance and assistance were sought in areas ranging from the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to controlling the legal conventional arms trade. Requests derived from a diverse array of institutions, including federal and provincial governmental entities, academic institutions, partner UN agencies, and Member States, thus attesting to the Centre's know-how and added value in a variety of disarmament-related topics.



In a first instance, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs' Implementation Support Unit for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (ISU-BWC), and the Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) invited UNLIREC in its role as technical legal expert to assist Colombia in its implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) at a March 2014 Seminar in Bogota.

This regional exchange allowed for a productive back-and-forth of best practices involved in the process of creating inter-governmental commissions

and/or national authorities responsible for monitoring and promoting national implementation of the BTWC. In this context, UNLIREC was called upon to present the main findings of its 2013 working paper on global experiences in its creation, including the design, formation and responsibilities assigned to such an entity. Ensuing discussions were particularly relevant given that Colombia is advancing legislative efforts for the implementation of an institution of this nature. UNLIREC stands ready to continue supporting Colombia in this quest.



UNLIREC was also invited to present its new 3-year Caribbean-wide portfolio of activities aimed at boosting regional implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540(2004) to participants attending a Mexico-Spain 1540 Seminar in Madrid (27-31 Jan). The purpose of which was to deliberate on existing and appropriate WMD legal frameworks and response mechanisms in the event of a WMD threat or attack. In a similar vein, the US Department of Energy invited UNLIREC to co-host a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNe) Commodity Identification

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Training (CIT) course in Lima, Peru (12-14 Feb), and present its new pan-Caribbean UNSCR 1540 project with participants at a second round of CIT training in Miami, USA (25-27 Feb). The US demonstrated interest in partnering with UNLIREC in the design and development of practical WMD-related field exercises.



In the field of small arms control, UNLIREC's guidance was petitioned to showcase its proposals for an ATT implementation training course and a model end user certificate for legal arms transfers in the Latin American and Caribbean region during the ATT Network Needs Assessment Workshop organized by the Geneva Forum (7 Feb, Geneva) and during the CARICOM/IMPACS Workshop on ATT Implementation – co-organized by the MFA of Trinidad and Tobago, OXFAM, and the Caribbean Coalition for

Development and Reduction of Armed Violence (CDRAV) (17-18 Feb, Port of Spain).



Finally, UNLIREC experts were called upon to present UN standards and regional best practice for small arms control and armed violence reduction to a seminar directed at governmental and civil society participants throughout the province of Santa Fe, Argentina (16-19 Mar, Santa Fe). This thematic presentation was extended to encompass civilian disarmament campaigns and government-led destruction processes at a technical workshop – organized by the UNHCHR – aimed at supporting Guatemala in its elaboration of a national disarmament campaign (25-26 Feb, Guatemala City).

“Disarmament cannot be considered in isolation from other global challenges. The world spends more on the military in one month than on development all year.”

- Excerpt of speech by UNSG Ban Ki-moon, Monterey, California (USA), 18 January 2013 -

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In the Spotlight

Call to participate in UNLIREC publication highlighting women as “Agents of Change”

Commemorating International Women’s Day (7 March 2014), UNLIREC launched its call for remarkable women to recount their experience in contributing to the implementation of UN General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The first UNLIREC publication of this kind, entitled “Forces of Change: Profiles of Latin American and Caribbean Women, Combating Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms”, promoted women as agents of change in the combat against the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, in particular in their contribution to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms. This document was met with overnight success following its presentation during an event organized by Trinidad and Tobago on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, held on the margins of the 67th session of the General Assembly, in New York in 2012. This publication can be downloaded in full at [http://www.unlirec.org/documents/women_in_Fame.pdf].

There is now a demand being made to repeat this publication featuring the experiences of a diverse group of women in the implementation of resolution 65/69 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2010 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

THE CALL: *UNLIREC invites policy makers, diplomats, security forces, justice officials, and civil society representatives who are promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict to participate in this second edition.*

If you are interested in being featured in the publication, please send your biography outlining your job and qualifications (approx. 150-200 words on your experience and a personal quotation) accompanied by two high resolution photos (one headshot and the other showing you during the course of your duties) to [solomon@unlirec.org] and [fouchard@unlirec.org]. Also, if you wish to recommend any exceptional women working in the field of disarmament, please send along their contact details.

“Gender equality and women’s empowerment have been a top priority for me from day one. And I am committed to making sure that the UN walks the talk.”

- UN commemoration of International Women’s Day: Speech by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon -

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UNLIREC Agenda (Apr-May 2014)

April

- ✓ *National Armoury Management Course*
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- ✓ *International Regional Organization Week on UNSCR 1540*
Vienna, Austria
- ✓ *Group of Experts Meeting on International Ammunition Technical Guidelines*
NY, USA
- ✓ *National training and technical assistance on International Ammunition Technical Guidelines*
Lima, Peru

May

- ✓ *Specialized training course for legal operators on combating illicit firearms trafficking*
Georgetown, Guyana
- ✓ *UNSCR 1540 national roundtable*
Georgetown, Grenada

June

- ✓ *UNSCR 1540 national roundtable*
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (TBC)
- ✓ *Caribbean – Regional Armoury Management Course*
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- ✓ *Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the PoA (BMS5)*
New York, USA

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