

UNLIREC Newsletter

Caribbean Region

UNLIREC and Jamaica fight crime by destroying thousands of weapons and offering training in the fight against illicit trafficking

(Kingston, February 2012) - As part of the project currently being implemented in the Caribbean, UNLIREC and the Government of Jamaica carried out the destruction of approximately 2,000 firearms. The event, which took place on 7 February at a cement factory in Kingston, was coordinated and executed in conjunction with the Jamaican authorities. . As is the case with all weapons destruction events in which UNLIREC is involved, the process complied with all international requirements for safety and verification. Part of the weapons destroyed were seized during law-enforcement operations. The remainder included obsolete weapons, which belonged to the police and armed forces. Within the coming weeks, UNLIREC will provide the Government of Jamaica with hydraulic shears especially adapted to disable the seized and obsolete firearms until such time as they are destroyed, thus avoiding their possible re-entry into illicit trafficking rings.

Additionally, 12,000 rounds of ammunition were destroyed on 10 February at the Jamaica Police Academy using a tank specifically-designed for the

safe destruction of ammunition while ensuring minimal environmental impact. Jamaica is the third such country to use this tank, which has already been implemented by UNLIREC in Ecuador and Trinidad and Tobago.



A cross-section of the weapons that were destroyed in Jamaica. Photo: JIS Photo

During the weapons-destruction ceremony, Jamaica's Minister of National Security, Peter Bunting, stated that *"the destruction of these weapons will help reduce the risk of diversion to illicit trafficking."* The Minister, in thanking UNLIREC for the assistance being offered to Jamaica, noted that *"The Ministry of National Security considers these actions important first steps towards effectively*

monitoring and regulating the number of firearms available for illicit use. Gun crimes represent a major threat to the safety and security of our society, so we're therefore grateful for the meaningful support to help reduce the availability of firearms and thus help to protect our democracy."

Additionally, as part of this project, UNLIREC conducted an *Inter-Institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Firearms Trafficking (IITC)* which resulted in the training of 60 officers with direct responsibility in the fight against illicit firearms trafficking. As a direct impact, these agents will be better equipped to combat the illicit trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives, prevent legal weapons from entering illicit trafficking rings and reduce the levels of impunity among arms dealers.

Jamaica has one of the highest firearm-related homicide rates in the region. The initiatives undertaken by this island State demonstrate their commitment to the fight against illicit trafficking and reducing armed violence on the Caribbean island. In recent years, the quality of weapons used by criminal groups in Jamaica has been

equal to or has surpassed what the law enforcement authorities possess. This has resulted in an increase in fatal crimes.

Over the past year, UNLIREC has been working with the Government of Jamaica to develop a national action plan on stockpile management and firearms destruction. The project activities outlined in this plan will be carried out throughout the year. The implementation of this action plan, funded by the Governments of Canada and the United States, includes the delivery of tools to improve the security of national stockpiles, develop training courses for combating illicit firearms trafficking and improving stockpile management and firearms destruction. Legal assistance will also be improved so that legislation may be harmonized with the related provisions found in the various international disarmament-related instruments.

Andean Region – Southern Cone

UNLIREC and the OAS make progress in the study on the implementation of CIFTA in the region

(Lima, March 2012) - Within the cooperation framework established between the Organization of American States (OAS) and UNLIREC, a study has been undertaken to ascertain the extent to which the Inter-American Convention Against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition,

Explosives and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) has been implemented. UNLIREC completed a comparative legislative study for 12 States in the region. The studies will be presented at the Third Conference of the States Parties to be held in Washington DC on 14-15 May 2012.



UNLIREC's in-house legal experts reviewing latest legal comparative studies.

Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela all formed part of the study. In the case of Guatemala and Panama, having already participated in the 2010 Central American study, they were updated to reflect the

new national legislation on firearms, ammunition and explosives. The studies on the Central American States were presented by the OAS and UNLIREC in connection with the working meeting entitled "*legislative progress to prevent and combat illicit firearms trafficking in Central America*" in September 2011 at the SICA headquarters in El Salvador.

It is important to note that CIFTA is currently the only legally binding regional instrument for Latin America and the Caribbean, and has been ratified by 31 States in the region. The Convention emphasizes the need for permits or licenses for export, import and transit and the strengthening of checkpoints for exports, among others.

UNLIREC provides legal firearms assistance to Venezuela

(Venezuela, March 2012) – On 7 March, at the request of the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela, the Regional Centre emitted legal opinions on the State's draft bill of law related to firearms. This legal assistance assessed the level of compatibility between the proposed bill and the obligations found under the various firearms-related international instruments, including the UN 2001 PoA, International Tracing Instrument, CIFTA Convention, and the UN Firearms Protocol. Moreover, the Centre provided a series of recommendations on how to

make this draft legislation more consistent with global and regional legal instruments. By working hand-in-hand with States to revise national firearms legislation, UNLIREC is able to help them build more robust legal frameworks with a view to identifying and addressing legal gaps in legislation and thus avoiding impunity in cases related to illicit firearms trafficking.

This legal assistance to Venezuela complements the support provided to other States in the region, representing the fourth of its kind in the last 18 months.

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UNLIREC and VERTIC join forces in boosting implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention

(Lima, February 2011) – UNLIREC and VERTIC joined forces for the first time in a quest to mutually assist States in the region in their implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). This new alliance consists of raising awareness of the obligations set out under the BTWC and to provide legal assistance in the revision and drafting of national legislation to ensure consistency with the obligations found in the Convention, as well as other instruments related to the non-proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction. In a first instance, UNLIREC and VERTIC will launch its collaboration in the Andean region.

This partnership was borne during the regional seminar, spearheaded by the European Union and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) as part of the Seventh Review Conference of the BTWC. The seminar was held in Peru at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 9-11 November, 2011.

Central American Region

UNLIREC launches its 2012 firearms activities in Central America

(El Salvador and Guatemala, March 2012) – UNLIREC's Director, Ms Mélanie Régimbal, met with national authorities in El Salvador and Guatemala to launch UNLIREC's 2012 small arms control activities. All UNLIREC activities forming part of its "Preventing Armed Violence in Central America through the Combat of Illicit Trafficking in Firearms" are aligned with SICA's Central American Security Strategy. In particular with three of the four security pillars: crime reduction, violence prevention, and institutional strengthening.

To this end, the activities seek to ensure more effective implementation by States of international firearms-related instruments; increase the capacity, expertise and Inter-institutional cooperation of their law enforcement community to prevent illicit firearms trafficking; and strengthen the long-term,

self-sustaining national capacities of policy-makers in combating illicit firearms trafficking.



Photo: UNLIREC.

UNLIREC will continue to maintain close contact with the General Secretary of the SICA and bilaterally, with Central American States to ensure the rapid and effective implementation of the Strategy. In this regard, UNLIREC is implementing a regional project focused on firearms control and prevention of illicit firearms

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trafficking. These initiatives, which include capacity-building for law enforcement and judicial operators, stockpile management, and firearms policy support, are made

possible thanks to the financial contributions of Finland, Germany and Spain.

Guatemala ratifies the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

(Guatemala, January 2012) - Guatemala has reaffirmed its long-standing support for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by ratifying the instrument. The number of ratifications of the Treaty now stands at 157. The instrument of ratification was presented by Guatemala's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Haroldo Rodas Melgar, in a ceremony at the United Nations in New York yesterday afternoon.

Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) stated that, *"Guatemala's ratification of the CTBT is an important building block towards a world free of nuclear weapons. It underlines Guatemala's commitment to outlaw nuclear testing and to enhance non-proliferation and disarmament worldwide."*

As the United Nations Regional Centre for

Peace, Disarmament and Development, UNLIREC warmly welcomes the ratification of the CTBT by Guatemala and encourages other countries that have yet to begin this process to initiate the proceedings necessary for strengthening security in the region.



Guatemala's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Haroldo Rodas Melgar, depositing the instrument of ratification.
Photo: CTBTO

Regional Activities

Latin America and the Caribbean celebrate 45 years as the first nuclear weapon-free zone

(Mexico City, February 2012) - On 14 February 2012, Member States of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) celebrated the 45th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco at a ceremony attended by many

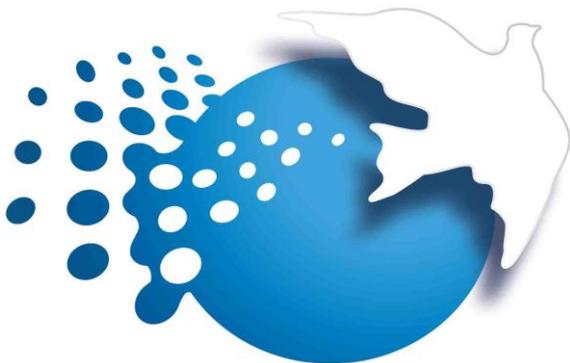
dignitaries in the region. Chief among those in attendance were Ambassador Sergio Duarte, former High Representative of the United Nations for Disarmament Affairs; Mr. Yukiya Amano, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the

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Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization; and the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda. As Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda, made reference to the resounding success, which the signing of the Treaty presented in the 60s and encouraged other regions to create their own nuclear weapon-free zone, joining a global initiative for a safer and more secure world.



The logo of the 45th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Photo: OPANAL

According to Ambassador Ubeda, *"2012 is a year for renewing the commitment of State Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and for the continued preservation of the Nuclear Weapon-Free*

Zone which will lead us to a point that we have yet to achieve, but is possible to build through partnership: "A world without nuclear weapons."

In his speech, the former High Representative, Ambassador Sergio Duarte highlighted that *"The Treaty of Tlatelolco has earned international recognition as one of the most historic achievements in the history of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts,"* and highly valued the consensus reached in pioneering the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in such a densely populated region. According to Ambassador Duarte, securing the signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in the midst of the Cold War contradicted the dominant paradigm that nuclear weapons were essential to maintaining security. These important achievements were, in the words of the former High Representative, *"the product of an unprecedented level of cooperation among states at the regional level, encouraged by the support from the world community and in particular, the United Nations"*.

UNLiREC participates in the First Seminar on the Operational Control for the Transfer of Sensitive Weapons and Technologies

(Madrid, February 2012) - From 6-9 February, the *"First Seminar on the Operational Control for the Transfer of Sensitive Weapons and Technologies"* took place in Madrid. Its main objective was to share Spain's experience as both a manufacturer and exporter of weapons in the implementation of export control

mechanisms. This initiative was a collaborative effort between Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean.

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Palacio de Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz Palace), Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC) of Spain. Photo: MAEC

The meeting, involving representatives from Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Portugal, was mainly of a practical nature and included instructors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the leadership of the Guardia Civil (Spanish police) from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and UNDP. During the

seminar, UNLIREC's Legal Programme Coordinator, Sonia Fernandez, shared with the participants the work that the Regional Centre carries out in Latin America and the Caribbean in promoting the effective implementation of international instruments on firearms.

During the four days of the seminar, participants had the opportunity to conduct a number of simulations and practical exercises on arms transfer controls, as well as dual-use substances. To this end, the Spanish experts shared information with the participants concerning the listings of sensitive substances and the checks and balances performed to ensure that these substances are not used in the manufacturing of any type of weapon.

UNLIREC bids farewell to RDB Chief and UNODA High Representative and welcomes new High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

(New York, February 2012) – In February 2012, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) bid farewell to Ambassador Sergio Duarte who for the past five years served as the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Ambassador Duarte, a Brazilian diplomat who was largely linked to disarmament issues, was appointed in 2007 by the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, to further the UN issue of disarmament.

On 8 March, the Secretary-General selected Angela Kane of Germany as Ambassador Duarte's successor. Ms. Kane served as the Under-Secretary-General for Management since 2008. She brings to the position over

35 years of experience at the United Nations, including responsibility for activities of the World Disarmament Campaign, which was an effort to bring Member States together to advance the disarmament agenda through meetings, round tables, publications and other outreach efforts.

UNLIREC also bids *adieu* to UNODA's Regional Disarmament Branch Chief, Ms Agnès Marcaillou, and wishes her the best on her new appointment as the Director of the UN Mine Action Service in the DPKO Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions. Ms Marcaillou's leadership skills were an ongoing asset to the Centre and to the Regional Disarmament Branch and she will be missed.

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Featured Article

Second Nuclear Security Summit - Seoul 2012

*Article by Dr. Park Hee-Kwon, Ambassador
of the Republic of Korea to Peru.*

When you think about the safety of your own, you take extra care in ensuring their well-being, even taking precautionary measures to prepare for the worst case scenario. This is why the governments of the world see nuclear threats as a potential risk which has since gained ground after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

A terrorist with a nuclear bomb could cause such destruction that it would make any terrorist attack from the past seem insignificant. Currently it is estimated that about 1,600 tons of enriched uranium and 500 tons of plutonium are stored around the world. This is enough to build 126,500 nuclear weapons.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Database on Illicit Trafficking, over 2,000 cases of theft or loss of nuclear and radiological materials have been reported worldwide between 1993 and 2011 of which almost 60% were never recovered. In addition, the 9/11 Commission highlighted Al Qaeda's desire to purchase nuclear materials. It is well known that groups like Aum Shinrikyo have also attempted to get their hands on them.

As a response to this situation comes U.S. President Barack Obama's initiative: the first Seminar on Nuclear Safety which took place in 2010 in Washington D.C. During this seminar, 47 countries and 3 international organizations met to engage in serious efforts to achieve a safe and

secure world without any nuclear materials. Latin America and the Caribbean as a region made an early step in ensuring that they remained free of nuclear weapons. Signed and ratified by all 33 countries in the region, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco) prevents Latin American countries from buying or possessing nuclear weapons, even restricting the storage and development of such weapons by other countries within this territory. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) supports the security arrangements outlined in the agreement. Considered a pioneer for nuclear safety, the Treaty serves as an excellent example of regional efforts to achieve nuclear safety.



Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Peru, Dr. Park Hee-Kwon, in his office in Lima. Photo: Embassy of Korea

The baton has been passed to the Republic of Korea who will now host the second Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul on March 26 and 27. This is a reflection of the high international standards displayed by Korea

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and an increase in the confidence of the community when it comes to carrying out nuclear activities through peaceful means. This summit will feature a greater number of countries being represented in relation to the last one. This clearly illustrates that an increased awareness has developed over the seriousness of this matter. It is hoped that by the end of the summit, the great political will and determination of leaders from around the world will be further strengthened and thus make an important step towards achieving a world without nuclear terrorism.

This edition in Seoul will work on the vision and commitments agreed upon under the previous summit as expressed in the "Washington Communiqué" and the Work Plan. This Plan contains 50 specific cooperation measures in 11 areas, including minimizing the use of enriched uranium, the ratification of international agreements, such as amendments to the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials Convention (CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the establishment of Centres of Excellence to provide adequate training.

Based on the advances made in Washington, new goals and practical ways

to achieve them will be introduced, all of which will be detailed in the "Seoul Communiqué". One of the key issues will be interfacing and the synergy between protection and nuclear safety. This has gained importance after the Fukushima nuclear accident last March. Also to be discussed will be "radiological terrorism", which uses even more primitive "dirty bombs". These discussions are expected to help restore and renew our confidence in nuclear energy, an issue that has once more gained our attention.

As the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon highlighted, "Nuclear terrorism is one of the most serious threats of our time. Even one such attack could inflict mass casualties and create immense suffering and unwanted change in the world forever. This prospect should compel all of us to act to prevent such a catastrophe".

With over 50 world leaders gathered in Seoul to participate in discussions on nuclear issues, the summit will also serve to send a message about the vital importance of peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and also contribute to the same.

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Agenda

- ✓ *Inter-Institutional Course on Combating Illicit Firearms Trafficking (IITC) – UNLIREC, Port of Spain – Trinidad and Tobago, April 2012.*
- ✓ *Destruction of Explosives and Ammunition from Small and Light Weapons – UNLIREC, Port of Spain – Trinidad y Tobago, April 2012.*
- ✓ *Preparatory Meeting - United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms – CAB/UNODA, Kingston – Jamaica, April 2012.*
- ✓ *Delivery of Destruction Equipment and Training of Personnel – UNLIREC, 8 Caribbean States, May 2012.*
- ✓ *Stockpile Management Assistance – UNLIREC, Buenos Aires – Argentina, June 2012.*
- ✓ *UNLIREC Expert Roundtable II: Combating Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons through Strengthened Maritime Border Controls – UNLIREC, TBD, June 2012.*

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