



UNLIREC

Specialised course on
firearms investigations
from a gender perspective
(FIGP)

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GENDER
EQUALITY



16

PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS





Specialised Course on Firearms Investigations from a Gender Perspective (FIGP)

The alarming rates of femicide (the killing of a woman or girl on account of her gender) in Latin America and the Caribbean have placed prevention and eradication of violence against women (VAW) at the centre of public attention. VAW has a huge impact on societies at the social, community and economic levels. VAW occurs not only in public spaces, but also in the private sphere, where it is perpetrated by intimate partners, former partners and other family members. The presence of firearms at home increases the risks of VAW and its fatality, as these may be used not only to commit femicides, but also as coercion tools to facilitate sexual, physical and psychological violence. The link between VAW and firearms (including those that are legally owned) is oftentimes ignored at the societal level, as well as in policy and programmatic responses and in police investigations.

**The fact that
firearms
facilitate
violence against
women is often
ignored**

The levels of impunity for crimes in which women are victims of violence are exacerbated by errors in managing and processing the crime scenes and the evidence found there, as well as poor practices in dealing with victims, and with the existence of deep-seated preconceived ideas and stereotypes about women. Likewise, the lack of evidence in cases involving VAW has resulted in many femicides remaining undefined or ending up being typified as simple homicides, thus making VAW invisible.

The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UN 2001 PoA) mentions the negative effects that illicit firearms trafficking has on women and recognizes that its eradication is an essential part of the fight against VAW. Likewise, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls (SDG 5.2), as well as the reduction of all forms of violence and illicit arms flows (SDG 16.1 and 16.4).

Overview

The FIGP course aims to support participants in their efforts to raise awareness of the importance of considering gender perspectives in firearms-related crimes, and to strengthen the technical knowledge involved in the scientific method of investigating them. It also attempts to bolster inter-institutional cooperation in these areas. The course may be taught on-site or virtually. The FIGP course is aimed at professionals responsible for managing, processing and investigating crime scenes involving firearms and ammunition and for prosecuting these crimes, as well as at prosecutors and staff working in specialised areas in VAW criminal investigations.

Modules

Module 1

Firearms and violence against women (VAW)

Module 2

Basic elements of criminal investigations from a gender perspective.

Module 3

Incorporating gender perspectives into firearms-related criminal investigations.

Module 4

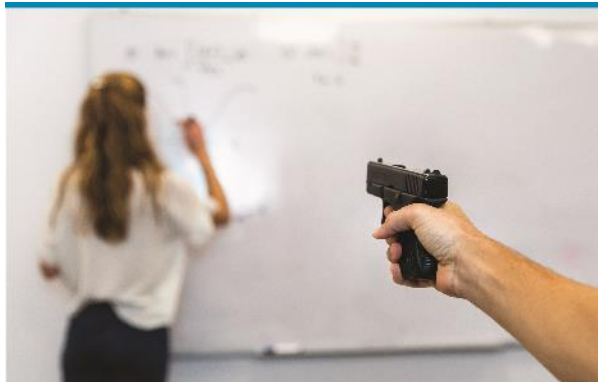
Management of firearms and ammunition evidence.

Module 5

Practical exercise

Module 1

Firearms and violence against women (VAW)



This module presents a regional overview of firearms proliferation, as well as armed violence and its impact on Latin American and Caribbean States with a focus on femicides and other forms of VAW in which firearms are present.

Module 2

Basic elements of criminal investigations from a gender perspective



This module develops the scientific, epistemological, legal and technical bases in incorporating gender perspectives into criminal and forensic investigations. The arguments by which these bases can be used, not only as methods of analysis, but also as complementary and consistent approaches to the scientific method are also examined.

Module 3

Incorporating gender perspectives into firearms-related criminal investigations



This module is aimed at providing the technical basis for gender-based criminal and forensic investigations in cases in which the crime was committed using a firearm. The focus of this module is to share a series of technical tools applicable to cases of femicide, sexual violence and family or domestic violence.

Module 4

Management of firearms and ammunition evidence



This module presents basic techniques to identify, collect, package, and record firearms and ammunition evidence in an appropriate manner at the crime scene. The module is presented in both a theoretical and practical manner. Emphasis is placed on the need to scrupulously maintain a chain of custody, to preserve the evidence collected whilst providing transparency as to who handled the evidence. The module also seeks to highlight that this process provides safeguards against evidence tampering.

Module 5

Practical exercise



This module puts into practice all the theoretical knowledge taught during the previous modules. Drawing from a wide range of real-life scenarios, participants will be divided into working groups to apply the main techniques involved in the investigation of gender-based crimes committed with firearms.

In this module, participants must:

- Properly secure and document the crime scene;
- Process evidence found and conduct a proper analysis;
- Apply the chain of custody system to the scene of investigation and evidence management processes; and
- Apply a gender perspective throughout the entire investigation.

Finally, a simulated exercise is carried out by participants whereby the evidence gathered is submitted to different forensic laboratories.