

Disarm Domestic Violence



GUNS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The IANSA Women's Network disarm domestic violence campaign is the first international campaign that addresses one of the most serious aspects of small arms proliferation the deaths and injuries caused by guns in the home. All over the world, in every class, race and caste, in every religion and region, there are men who subject their intimate partners to physical or psychological violence, or both. Family killings are the only category of homicides where women outnumber men as victims. When a woman is killed in the home, it is her partner or male relative who is most likely to be the murderer, often with a prior record of domestic abuse. For every woman killed or physically injured by firearms, many more are threatened. The action of being threatened by a husband or partner is traumatizing for a woman, this trauma is heightened when he abuser has a gun and creates the very real danger of death. It is important to consider the misuse of guns by the security sector, including police officers and soldiers when off-duty. A gun in the home is much more likely to be used to intimidate or physically injure family members than be used against an outside intruder.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed and affected every single person's life. This pandemic has challenged and put many people in danger. An often overlooked situation during the pandemic is the situation of domestic violence. UN Women warns that measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, such as quarantine, isolation or social distancing and restrictions imposed on mobility have increased the violence against women and girls that occurs in homes, as this forces them to stay confined with their aggressors for long periods of time. Furthermore, the presence of firearms in the home increases the risks of violence against women and can be the means of committing femicide. Arms control is a key factor when it comes to preventing and reducing violence against women, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect women confined in their homes with their abusers. The presence of firearms in the domestic sphere is not only a lethal risk factor but also plays a significant role in other crimes and forms of violence, such as intimidation, coercion and threats against women and girls. It is necessary to generate greater awareness of the risks implicated by firearms for female victims of violence particularly in the present context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its social distancing restrictions.

1/3

women are
affected by
domestic violence

Reports of
domestic violence
have increased by

60-70%
since COVID-19

3/4

of all guns are in
the hands of male
civilians

Disarm Domestic Violence Recommendations

1) LOBBY TO CHANGE LAWS: REFUSE NEW GUNS AND DISARM PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

Gun laws should prohibit ownership by domestic violence offenders, and domestic violence laws should require the removal of guns. At a minimum, police should be required to consult the spouse or former spouse before approving a gun license application. Australia, Canada, South Africa, and Trinidad and Tobago are among the countries that have harmonised their legal frameworks on gun licensing and on domestic violence. Laws both shape and reflect values and in this way, small arms control policies and laws can reinforce values of non violence, but they can also make a real difference. Canada tightened its gun laws in 1995 and the murder rate has significantly dropped.

2) TREAT INTIMATE PARTNER AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AS A SERIOUS CRIME AND PROTECT AND SUPPORT WOMEN WHO REPORT IT.

Women often do not report intimate partner violence either because they are too fearful; they lack access to the police or justice system. Governments must ensure that their criminal justice systems encourage women to report violence in the home, provide support for them when they do, and treat domestic violence as a serious offence.

3) REQUIRE ALL GUNS TO BE STORED SAFELY. GUN OWNERS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO STORE GUNS SECURELY AND TO KEEP THE AMMUNITION IN A SEPARATE PLACE.

For example, in Belarus guns must be kept in locked boxes, disassembled and unloaded, with the ammunition stored separately. Some women's groups have also proposed a ban on keeping guns in private homes. Instead they would have to be stored in secure storage facilities, for example at an authorised gun club or police station.

4) TRAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS TO ADDRESS ARMED INTIMATE PARTNER AND FAMILY VIOLENCE.

Local law enforcement officers are often the first to respond to, and intervene in, instances of domestic violence. Police should be trained to respond to such violence sensitively, effectively, and lawfully.

RESOURCES

The Facts on Guns and Domestic Violence, Family Violence Prevention Fund
http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Guns.pdf

Facts on Firearms and Domestic Violence, Violence Policy Center
http://www.vpc.org/fact_sht/domviofs.htm

UNLIREC Preventing violence against women through arms control in Latin America and the Caribbean
<http://unlirec.screativa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UNLIREC-Preventing-VAW-through-arms-control-in-LAC-September-2020.pdf>

UN Women (2013). Annual Report 2012-2013.
<https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/6/unwomen-annualreport2012-2013-es.pdf?la=es&vs=1835>

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, consult:
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/development-agenda/>

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