

# Bulletin

## to control small arms

nº 10, January 2003

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### United Nations

#### Security Council Debates Small Arms

In October 2002 the UN security Council debated its role in curbing the proliferation and use of small arms. The session focused on the presentation by UN Secretariat of a report on small arms, that focuses on the aspects of small arms use that most affect the Security Council concerns: peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. According to the report, «The excessive accumulation and easy availability of these weapons have impeded the conduct of peacekeeping operations and jeopardized post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts». The text makes 12 recommendations many of which are based on the idea that arms embargoes are effective but underused tools. Another recommendation is that states should commit to "universal and consistent participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms". United Nations Secretary Kofi Annan asked the Security Council to find ways to enable countries to trace more than 255 million illicit light weapons freely available on the black market.

For further information:  
UN Wire SC/7528

### Africa

#### National body on small arms launched in Uganda

The Ugandan Government has established a national body to combat proliferation of illicit small arms into the country. The Ugandan National Focal Point (NFP) is expected to spearhead the development of national policies as well as to coordinate national activities aimed at reducing the demand and supply of illegal firearms into the country. The NFP was established to fulfil Uganda's commitments under the Nairobi Declaration, an ambitious blueprint signed by 10 regional states in March 2000, to combat the flow of illegal weapons in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes regions. Uganda is the third country of the region -after Kenya and Tanzania- that has established a NFP.

For further information: [www.desarme.org](http://www.desarme.org)

#### New measures against arm's trafficking in Nigeria

The government of Nigeria has adopted new measures to stop the smuggling of arms into Nigeria from neighbouring countries. These measures include improving border patrols, consulting with arms manufacturers and plans to deploy Nigerian customs officials in neighbouring

countries with the consent of their governments. A large number of weapons consignments have been impounded in recent months by Nigerian security officials on the borders with Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, has said that the weapons were not only being delivered to criminals, but were also arming people involved in the ethnic and religious violence that has shaken the country in recent years.

For further information:

IRIN ([www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org))

#### Calls for Ghana government leadership

A UN Disarmament Expert, has called on the Government of Ghana to play a leadership role in the control of small arms in the West Africa sub-region. He stressed that arms proliferation is one of the main problems that jeopardise the stability of the region, which is why he has urged all ECOWAS countries to implement legislation on arms possession and manufacture. He also said that after the efforts, made by Alpha Oumar Konare, President of Mali, to enforce the declaration of a moratorium on importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons, and to stop his countrymen from possessing illegal small arms,



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no other government had taken up the challenge to do so. This prompted him to encourage the government of Ghana to rekindle the inactive.

*For further information:  
Global News Wire*

### **France gives UNDP 1 million Euro for disarmament**

France has agreed to give the UN Development Programme (UNDP) one million Euro (US \$1.5 million) towards the disarmament and demobilisation process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UN Mission in the DRC, known as MONUC, is to implement the disarmament and demobilisation process, which includes the repatriation and reintegration of excombatants into society. The UN estimates that there are 13,000 foreign combatants in the country. "There are about 12,000 Rwandans, the Ugandans are not numerous and the rest are Burundians", said the representatives of the MONUC. He also said that 200,000 euros would be immediately available to the mission for its demobilisation reception centre in Lubero, which opened in December 2002

*For further information:  
IRIN ( www.irinnews.org )*

## **America**

### **Arms Control in El Salvador**

Both the Attorney-General's Office and the Police from El Salvador are willing to exert tighter handgun controls. The police has expressed their concern by the boom of violence caused by the proliferation of light weapons and recommends to introduce

much tighter controls and to even ban carrying arms, although tenure will still allowed. The authorities from El Salvador have stressed that a large number of the crimes and injuries caused by small arms have been committed with arms that were legally registered.

*For further information:  
El diario de Hoy, 23/12/02*

### **Toy replica firearms withdraw in Mexico**

Shops in Mexico DF have begun to withdraw toy replica firearms which are identical to real weapons by initiative of the Public Security Office. The agency has pointed out that many criminal acts have been committed with toy weapons which are a replica of those weapons used by the security forces. Attorney, Bernardo Bátiz, has also indicated that the majority of blood crimes are perpetuated with small arms, as these can be easily acquired. According to the Mexican Judicial Police, most of these arms come from the black market, be it from the illegal traffic in the north border or through Guatemala and Belize as well as from robberies that the police's deposits.

*For further information:  
Reforma, 21/10/02*

### **Disarmament national plan in Argentina**

Grabiell Conte, Under-Secretary of Community Relations with Mendoza, called on the need to create a Disarmament National Plan and to reform the security sector. In his opinion arms recollection campaigns promoted by RENAR (Argentinean National Arms

Register) can only make sense and be efficient in the framework of a long term strategy promoted by the State. To this purpose Conte calls for the establishment of a integral reform plan of the security sector that should promote disarmament, solidarity and peace, and change the security concept arms tenancy based upon.

*For further information:  
Los Andes, , 18/12/02*

### **Arms register campaign in Uruguay**

The Uruguayan Home Office will promote a campaign for the registering of arms with the aim to struggle against arms proliferation. The Government of Uruguay has shown concern about the large number of unregistered arms and for the number of murders and suicides that are committed with small arms. Last June the Government approved a set of measures to control both the carrying and the tenure of arms which included the obligation to prove the lack of criminal records, and to pass a medical certificate for those people that wanted to acquire a weapon.

*For further information:  
El País, 25/09/02*

### **Arms Destruction in Peru**

On 5 December 2002 a total of 2,573 arms were destroyed in Lima, Peru. The ceremony of destruction took place in the framework of the project "Desafio de Lima 2003" (Lima's challenge 2003) promoted by the Peruvian Government and UN-LIREC. During 2002 other arms destruction ceremonies have been undertaken in the region with the support of UN-



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LiREC. For example, between July and August 2002 2,800 arms were destroyed in Mendoza (Argentina), and more than 10,000 were also destroyed in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

*For further information:*

*UN-LiREC (United Nations Regional Center for the Peace, Disarmament and Development of Latin America and the Caribbean) [www.unlirec.org](http://www.unlirec.org)*

## *Asia – Pacific*

### **Illegal firearm amnesty in Australia**

An amnesty to allow illegal firearms to be surrendered or licensed was introduced in Queensland Parliament in October 2002. This measure is aimed to ensure community safety. In the last amnesty that took place in Australia 130,000 weapons were surrendered in Queensland, while 650,000 were surrendered nationally. Premier Peter Beattie told Parliament that his government would support federal proposals on handgun control, but he also said that increased federal funding was necessary to enable greater customs monitoring of illegal firearms into Australia.

*For further information:*

*The Australian News, 29/10/02*

### **Japan provides aid to help Cambodia's small arms management**

The Japanese government extended aid up to 3.6 million US dollars to enable Cambodia to implement the "Peace Building and Comprehensive Small Arms Management Program in Cambodia". The aid is aimed to further strengthen friendly and cooperative

relations between Japan and Cambodia and will continue the work initiated in two pilot projects in Pursat and Kratie provinces. The new program will focus on four components: weapons reduction, destruction, safety and registration, and public awareness. In Cambodia, a number of small arms and light weapons remain in civilians' hands due to the long history of civil war.

*For further information:*

*Eastern Time, 13/01/03*

## *Europe*

### **HRW calls on the need to keep up the pressure for arms trade reforms in candidate countries to the EU**

Human Rights Watch has stressed that the European Union (EU) should continue to press candidates from Central and Eastern Europe to improve arms trade controls. Several candidate countries in Central and Eastern Europe have a track record of supplying arms to human rights abusers, areas of violent conflict, and clients suspected of diverting weapons to unauthorised destinations, and such practices have continued.

Human Rights Watch said that, in addition to raising standards among candidate countries, EU member states should exercise the utmost caution in national arms trade decisions, in strict compliance with the EU Code of Conduct.

*For further information:*

*Human Rights Watch, Arms division. ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org))*

### **Arms amnesty in Israel**

Israeli army began in October one month of amnesty for those people who return army equipment. Most Israelis undergo compulsory army service at the age of 18, men for three years and women for two. Many men and some women continue doing reserve duty until they are in their 40s. So, although storing army equipment at home is illegal, it is not uncommon. Among the equipment returned were two Katyusha rockets, 500 grenades, 130 firearms, and more than 200,000 rounds of ammunition. Israeli army officials said that the equipment returned was worth about US \$1 million.

*For further information: Associated*

*Press, 15/11/02*

### **NATO invites Fund for Peace to supervise an arms destruction in Ukraine**

The Fund for Peace (FfP) is the first NGO invited to participate in a NATO team of experts working for demilitarisation. The team was convened to assess the feasibility of destroying 1.5 million small arms and light weapons and 133,000 tons of munition in Ukraine. FfP is cooperating with the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies (The Razumkov Centre), which is based in Kyiv, to create a communications strategy and action plan with the following objectives among others: to promote transparency, to strengthen Ukrainian civil society, and to encourage Ukraine and other countries in the region to undertake defence reforms and defence conversion.

*For further information: Newswire Press Releases, 13/12/02*



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## Firearms amnesty to tackle surge in gun crime in UK

A national firearms amnesty is to be held in 2003 to tackle the growing menace of gun crime. New laws to outlaw carrying replica firearms and a minimum five-year jail sentence for being caught with a gun are also expected to be announced and a national guns database and tracing agency are to be set up. The guns amnesty, agreed by Britain's chief constables, is planned for April, May and June. It will follow similar schemes held after the 1996 Dunblane and 1987 Hungerford massacres and reflects the growing state of alarm about the escalating gun threat on Britain's streets.

More than 60,000 weapons were handed in during the two amnesties but the police believe hundreds of thousands of guns are still circulating.

Deputy Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police said that «the UK has in circulation about 150,000 deactivated weapons and «millions» of replica, air guns and blank-firing guns ».

Gun owners will be asked to hand over weapons to the police or drop them in special protective bins.

*For further information:*

*The Independent, 27/12/02*

## Bulletin edited by:

Càtedra UNESCO sobre Drets Humans i Cultura de Pau  
Escola de Cultura de Pau  
Edifici G6 - Campus de la UAB  
08193 Bellaterra  
(Cerdanyola del Vallès)  
Barcelona. Spain  
Tel: 34--935812414  
Fax: 34-935813294  
E-mail: unescopau@pangea.org  
www.pangea.org/unescopau/

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## News in brief

### Wassenaar Members Adopt Small Arms Initiative

In a meeting held in Vienna in December 2002 the 33-member Wassenaar Arrangement approved a document setting out nonbinding guidelines for exporting small arms and light weapons. The arrangement calls upon members to subject small arms and light weapons to national export controls. The UK made a proposal to identify "best practices" for exporting small arms and specified criteria to be used when assessing a possible sale and situations in which export should be refused.

*For further information:*

*Arms Control ( www.armscontrol.org )*

### International conference aimed at strengthen export controls of small arms

In 14 and 15 January 2003 the British Government held an international conference with delegates from 60 countries which produce or export small arms, and with representatives of non-governmental organisations. The conference that took place in London hoped to find ways of implementing the United Nations Programme of Action agreed in 2001 to tackle the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons.

*For further information:*

*The Guardian 15/01/03*

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Daniel.Luz@uab.es

The UNESCO Chair will also appreciate any information related to small arms control.

