

**Small Arms and Light Weapons Challenges in Sri Lanka and
options for the way forward:**

**A civil society consultation process to support the establishment
of the National Commission Against Proliferation of Illicit Small
Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (NCAPISA)**

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Summary

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN PoA) provides minimum standards and commitments which all States should adopt to combat proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The UN PoA was adopted at the July 2001 UN Small Arms Conference in New York. States committed themselves to the effective implementation of this instrument. The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has taken a number of progressive steps in line with its commitments to the UN PoA. An agreement was signed between the GoSL and the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA) and the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UNDESA) to establish a National Commission Against the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms (NCAPISA). The Commission will coordinate and implement activities to combat the problem of small arms proliferation in the country.

The National Commission is essentially a government body. However, the inclusion of civil society representatives is important to provide a bridge between the National Commission and relevant sectors of the population, particularly those most affected by the problems of small arms and those who might be in a position to play a significant role in the efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit small arms¹.

NCAPISA is the first National Commission in Sri Lanka that has mandatory positions for civil society representation. It will implement, coordinate and monitor activities in relation to controlling SALW in Sri Lanka. The GoSL, civil society and the UN officials have highlighted the importance of civil society representation in the Commission and have emphasised the need to have a civil society selection process. Based on this, South Asia Small Arms Network - Sri Lanka (SASA Net Sri Lanka) supported by Saferworld, facilitated a civil society awareness and selection process to communicate local problems from district level to national level and contribute to the effective participation of civil society in supporting the National Commission. The civil society consultation process will lead to a national forum where the findings at district level will be communicated to the Commission and contribute to the selection of civil society representatives to the National Commission.

The civil society consultation process was held in 23 districts covering nine provinces. They were Galle, Matara and Hambantota (Southern Province), Colombo, Kalutara, Gampaha (Western Province), Kegalle, Ratnapura (Sabaragamuwa Province), Monaragala, Badulla (Uva Province), Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara (Eastern Province), Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Matale (Central Province), Puttalam, Kurunegala (North Western Province), Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa (North Central Province), Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya (Northern Province)².

This document represents a record and initial analysis of discussions that took place during the consultation process. It was produced by SASA-net Sri Lanka with support from Saferworld. Following the National Civil Society Forum, this document will, where necessary, be revised and then published.

¹ Support to the Establishment of a Commission Against the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms in Sri Lanka – Project Document, July 2003.

² Consultation Meetings in the Northern and Eastern provinces were delayed due to ongoing Tsunami rehabilitation work. The District Consultation Meetings in Killinochchi and Mullaitivu were not held due to unavoidable circumstances.

Civil society perspectives of key issues contributing to small arms proliferation in Sri Lanka

Increase in violent nature of conflicts

- Violence within different social and ethnic groups in the country has increased
- Rapid increase in armed clashes between rival political groups during pre and post election time
- Firearms are issued to politicians when they are elected but they are not monitored regularly and not returned at the end of their term in office

Increase in violent crime

- Increased number of army deserters and their involvement in organized crime
- Escalation in contract killings, rape, robberies, grievous harm and assault
- Proliferation of small arms is closely linked to drug trafficking and illicit liquor brewing

Decline in democracy

- Free and fair elections are affected in all districts in the country as a result of election violence
- Infringement of fundamental rights such as right to life, freedom of expression, freedom of speech and the loss of right to livelihood (Most lands owned by farmers in the Northern and Eastern provinces before the civil war are now marked as danger zones due to landmines. This has left farmers in these areas landless and without a livelihood)
- Lack of respect to uphold the rule of law and weak judicial controls to punish offenders of armed violence and crime

Increased human insecurity

- Economic instability and social disparity in all communities
- Hinders peace and security
- Violence against women and children including child abuse, rape and domestic violence

Environmental degradation

- Destruction of fauna and flora, natural resources and to wildlife

Provincial Overview of Key Findings on Small Arms Issues in Sri Lanka

In the **Southern Province**, the causes for arms proliferation and illegal use of small arms in Galle and Matara is closely linked with organized crime. In Hambantota district the problem is mainly due to the use of firearms to keep wild animals away from crops.

The **Western Province**, which consists of the commercial capital Colombo, has experienced soaring crime rates and armed violence during the past few years. The operation of underworld criminal gangs is a major problem.

Armed violence and crime is prevalent in every village in Kegalle and Ratnapura districts in the **Sabaragamuwa Province** with many of these offences been committed by army deserters.

Monaragala and Badulla districts in the **Uva Province** borders the conflict - affected Eastern Province. The use of arms is high in Monaragala due to illegal felling of timber and illegal growing of cannabis by organized criminal groups. Badulla is reportedly home to a number of underworld criminal gangs.

Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee in the **Eastern Province** are among the strife torn districts in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka. This province has suffered a great deal due to the civil war and the subsequent increase in arms proliferation resulting in violent crime.

In the **Central Province** arms related violence and crime is not as high as in other parts of the country. However, election violence is commonly seen in Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and Matale districts in the Central Province. The most aggressive incidents of murder, grievous hurt, vote rigging and destruction to property are reported from the province during pre and post election period.

Puttalam and Kurunegala districts cover the **North Western Province**. The war – ravaged North borders the Puttalam district. One of the major arms smuggling routes on the Northern coast extends to the North of Puttalam. Kurunegala district is reported to have one of the highest numbers of army deserters resulting in an increase in crime rates and armed violence in the province.

Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts in the **North Central Province** are both bordering the conflict zones. This has been one of the major causes for easy availability of illegal arms and ammunition in the province. Proper record keeping of small arms and light weapons and mechanisms for seizure and destruction of illegal weapons is an urgent need in the province.

In the **Northern Province**, Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya districts were severely affected by the civil war. As a result of the conflict, the province is subject to large quantities of small arms proliferation. Landmines are another cause of concern in the province causing severe security and economic hardships to communities living in these areas.

Chapter 1.

Background to the National Commission Against the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms in Sri Lanka (NCAPISA)

Following are milestones in Sri Lanka since the adoption of the UN PoA in 2001:

- a. In February 2002, the UNDDA led an evaluation mission to Sri Lanka in the context of implementing the UN PoA and to explore potential UN assistance
- b. for national efforts to address SALW issues. The mission report was submitted in April 2002. The report identified several factors that were affected by SALW. They include: the internal armed conflict, political and arms campaigns, arms held by army deserters and criminals, arms owned by private security firms and the deteriorating public safety due to increasing crime.
- c. The UN mission report proposed to set-up a National Commission *“responsible for policy guidance, research, and monitoring of efforts to address the proliferation and misuse of illicit small arms, as recommended in the Programme of Action adopted at the July 2001 UN Small Arms Conference”*.
- d. In 2002 the GoSL took the first steps towards establishing a National Commission on small arms in cooperation with the UNDDA/UNDESA, UNDP (United Nations Development Fund) and the donor community.
- e. A Cabinet Memorandum (No. 01/02/2003) was passed by the Cabinet on 8th October 2003 to establish a National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- f. The UNDDA/UNDESA held a technical assistance workshop to support the development of a Sri Lanka National Commission and a National Plan on SALW in Colombo in June 2003.
- g. In June 2003, a representative from GoSL visited Kenya on a fact finding trip to talk to National Commission members and the small arms national focal point to learn from the Kenyan experience.
- h. Supported by these progressive steps, the GoSL entered into an agreement with the UNDDA/UNDESA in June 2003 to establish a National Commission Against the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms (NCAPISA).
- i. IN September 2004, a roundtable meeting was organised by the GoSL and Saferworld to discuss possible roles of the National Commission. Representatives from governments in the Horn and Great Lakes of Africa and South Eastern Europe attended to provide lessons from their previous experiences.
- j. In October 2004 (17-21) a UN mission from New York visited Sri Lanka and met government officials and representatives from the civil society as part of a process to support the GoSL in establishing the National Commission.
- k. Considering the urgent need for such a Commission and the length of time needed to establish it through an Act of Parliament, the Ministry of Public Security, Law and Order (PSLO) took steps to establish a Commission to deal with arms proliferation through a Presidential decree.
- l. On 5th November 2005, the President appointed a National Commission to deal with the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Sri Lanka in accordance with the UN resolution adopted at the United Nations. It is expected that the Ministry of PSLO will proceed with the process of establishing the Commission through an Act of Parliament simultaneously. (The anticipated duration for the establishment of the National Commission through an Act of

Parliament is approximately 12 months. According to the Sri Lanka Constitution, a Bill should be passed in Parliament after the approval from the Constitutional Council)

Together with the National Commission, civil society members are expected to play an important role to enable and ensure effective and transparent implementation of a National Action Plan (NAP) to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Sri Lanka.

The GoSL, civil society and UN officials have highlighted the importance of civil society representation in the Commission and have emphasised the need to have a civil society selection process.

Based on this, South Asia Small Arms Network - Sri Lanka (SASA Net Sri Lanka) supported by Saferworld, facilitated a civil society awareness and selection process linking to communicate local problems from district level to national level and contribute to the effective participation of civil society in supporting the National Commission. The civil society consultation process will lead to a national forum where the findings at district level will be communicated to the Commission and contribute to the selection of civil society representation in the National Commission.

The aim and the objectives of the civil society consultation process are as follows:

Aim

Working together to communicate local problems from district level to national level and contribute to the effective participation of civil society in supporting the National Commission to enable it to take a leading and proactive role in developing measures to tackle the proliferation of illicit SALW in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

- Identify the problem of SALW and possible solutions at district level and then provincial level.
- Identify civil society representatives from different districts to represent at national level in order to³:
 - mandate civil society representatives in the National Commission and take forward the views at district level/ provincial level to national level
 - participate in the selection of civil society members to the National Commission

³ This project is intended to support the related project between the government of Sri Lanka and the UN DDA/DESA to establish a National Small Arms Commission in Sri Lanka.

Chapter 2.

Key findings

Following information represents the perceptions of civil society that were involved in the district and provincial level civil society consultation meetings. This information was gathered and documented directly through the civil society consultation process.⁴

2.1 Civil society perspectives of key issues contributing to small arms proliferation in Sri Lanka

Increase in violent nature of conflicts

- Violence within different social and ethnic groups in the community has increased
- Rapid increase in armed clashes between rival political groups during pre and post election time
- Politicians and their supporters use small arms against their rivals to kill, injure or intimidate.
- Armed violence is used to intimidate voters and immediate family and supporters of rival political parties
- Firearms are issued to politicians when they are elected, but they are not monitored regularly and not returned at the end of their term in office
- The use of arms issued to politicians is not monitored or accounted for
- Armed clashes among different ethnic and religious communities have escalated in the recent past
- Resorting to arms to settle personal disputes (i.e. family, land disputes etc) resulting in violent crime and communal clashes
- Racial disharmony among ethnic communities
- Misuse of legally held weapons by individuals who have received training on the use of firearms
- Hindrance to peace and development
- Institutions and administrative bodies responsible for upholding law and order misusing weapons as a power tool
- Absence of favourable conditions to exercise the rule of law
- Increase spread and use of weapons in rural communities
- Lack of security for informants who provide information in relation to illegal arms proliferation
- Lack of transparency and accountability among security forces and the police

Increase in violent crime

- Increased number of army deserters and incidence of their involvement in organized crime
- Underworld criminal gangs have their easy access to weapons
- Some corrupt politicians provide political patronage to criminal gangs
- Use of arms by security forces outside the theatre of conflict and a lack of effective measures to prevent security forces taking weapons home when off duty
- Ineffective law enforcement in places which results in an increase in the power and authority of armed criminal groups.
- Lack of effective measures to control crime committed by illegal weapons, to arrest, investigate, prosecute and punish fairly and effectively
- Escalation in contract killings, rape, robberies, grievous hurt and assault facilitated by small arms and light weapons
- Decline in social, religious and cultural standards and devaluing of human life

⁴ These views do not necessarily reflect views of individual members of SASA-Net Sri Lanka or Saferworld.

- Proliferation of small arms appears to be closely linked to drug trafficking and illicit liquor brewing
- Lack of efficient civil administration to tackle crime at district and national level
- Glorification of use of weapons and violence in the media driving youth/children to commit crime
- Incidents of weapons issued from government stockpiles to unauthorized / undesirable persons on the instruction of politicians
- Renting of small arms to underworld gangs and thugs by private security guards, police and security forces has become a thriving enterprise
- Children are more likely to engage in crime and armed violence due to use of toy guns

Decline in democracy

- Free and fair elections are affected in all districts in the country as a result of election violence
- General fear of insecurity among all communities due to political violence
- Infringement of fundamental rights such as right to life, freedom of expression and freedom of speech and the loss of right to livelihood (Most lands owned by farmers in the Northern and Eastern provinces before the civil war are now marked as danger zones due to landmines. This has left farmers in these areas landless and without a livelihood)
- Weapons are used by some as a symbol of power and authority
- Recurrent breaches of civil laws and liberties
- Lack of respect in the rule of law and weak judicial controls to investigate and punish perpetrators of armed violence and crime
- Loss of confidence in the legal system and in democracy

Increased human insecurity

- Economic instability and social disparity among all communities
- Destruction of life and property
- Violence against women and children including child abuse, rape and domestic violence
- Physical and psychological trauma due to prevalence of armed violence and crime
- Trap guns laid to kill wild animals and illegal firearms purchased by farmers to keep wild animals away from their crop have resulted in death and serious injury to civilians
- Easy availability of small arms have resulted in a number of suicides
- Recruitment of unskilled persons by private security firms put people's lives at risk

Environmental degradation

- Destruction to fauna and flora, natural resources and wild life
- Illegal felling of timber, hunting and destruction to wild life sanctuaries by armed groups

2.2. Recommendations to the National Commission from civil society organisations participating in the consultation process

Legislative review and reform

- Review and amend the Firearms Ordinance
- Increase penalties for offences resulting from arms proliferation and illegal use of weapons
- Introduce legal reforms which enable immediate action against offenders guilty of offences resulting from arms proliferation
- Review and amend existing laws on firearms and criminal offences to expedite punishments
- Review legislation in relation to existing criteria for issuing of firearms licenses
- Formulate a legal framework to hand over illegal weapons
- Introduce tougher laws to curb underworld criminal operations and political patronage
- Expedite trials to offenders guilty of armed violence and crime

Small arms policy and practice:

- Introduce a national small arms policy
- Act as a main decision-making body/authority in issuing firearms licenses
- Introduce effective stockpile management and record keeping systems
- Stricter controls on issuing firearms licences
- Formulate mechanisms for immediate confiscation and seizure of illegal weapons
- Introduce stricter controls on use of weapons by police and military officials
- Impose controls over programmes on electronic and print media which glorify the use of weapons
- Stricter controls on trafficking of small arms at national and international levels
- Restrict the broadcast of programmes that depict the use of weapons linking it to heroism and glamour
- Take initiatives to curb illegal production of small arms
- Strengthen mechanisms for armed forces on record keeping and stockpile management
- Introduce stricter control measures on the sale and exchange of small arms
- Enforce transfer controls to prevent illegal transfer of arms in the event of a post-conflict, ceasefire situation
- Reclaim weapons issued to politicians and disallow the use of armed private security guards for politicians
- Put in place a systemic approach towards identifying and issuing weapons to security personnel, politicians, accredited institutions and individuals
- Formulate a code of conduct for parliamentarians on the use of small arms
- Ban the use of trap guns or impose stricter controls on issuing firearms to farmers
- Introduce a weapon destruction programme with the involvement of the general public
- Put in place mechanisms to protect the identities of informants who provide information in relation to illegal proliferation of small arms
- Publicise through the media penalties/sentences given to those found guilty of causing armed violence and crime
- Introduce a system of reward to recognize those helping to trace illegal arms
- Impose stricter controls over weapon imports
- Declare an arms control day

A National action plan to address the problem of small arms proliferation

- Formulate a national action plan to combat proliferation of small arms
- Put in place mechanisms for its effective implementation

- Ensure follow up actions to all activities implemented by the Commission

Monitoring and collecting data on small arms proliferation

- Conduct a study on small arms issues and the humanitarian impact
- Provide information to divisional secretariats on issuing of weapons to civilians including politicians
- Maintain statistical data on firearms in government stockpiles and in private ownership
- Maintain a registry of firearms licenses issued
- Put in place effective monitoring mechanisms to track down those responsible for proliferation of small arms
- Put in place a database, which carries relevant information on small arms policy and practice, information on issuing of licenses and arms in civilian possession
- Regular monitoring of the use of weapons in possession of politicians and their security personnel

Operate as an independent body

- Establish the National Commission through an Act of Parliament
- Function as the main authority to monitor and control arms proliferation
- Act as an advisory body to the government on small arms policy and practice
- Ensure transparency and accountability in the operations of the Commission
- Fair representation in the Commission and should be free of political intervention
- Promote and protect fundamental rights and uphold the rule of law

Promote civil society engagement on action against small arms proliferation

- Introduce a mechanism at national, provincial and district level to take action against proliferation of small arms and illegal use of weapons
- Give important consideration to suggestions/feedback given by civil society representatives in the Commission
- Engage civil society in the formulation of a national policy on small arms
- Support and cooperate with civil society organizations to lobby for necessary policy changes
- Encourage civil society to provide information on arms proliferation and related issues in confidence and without fear
- Encourage and enhance good relationship between the community and the security forces/police
- Provide training and resources to civil society to support initiatives by the Commission
- Engage civil society to establish mechanisms for community participation for recovery, de-weaponisation and destruction of small arms
- Adapt a participatory approach that ensures wider representation of all communities when implementing activities
- Provide opportunity for civil society to participate in the meetings of the National Commission
- Ensure the safety of organizations and individuals working with the National Commission

Address the problem of army deserters

- Rehabilitation of army deserters and reintegration into civil society
- Take action to investigate and retrieve firearms from army deserters

Implement awareness-raising programmes and campaigns on action against small arms

- Awareness-raising among communities at village level about aims, objectives and activities of the National Commission
- Awareness-raising among the public, school children and politicians on the impact of using small arms
- Promote awareness programmes on human impact of arms proliferation
- Systematic monitoring of these programmes
- Introduce as a subject in the school curriculum the impact of misuse and proliferation of small arms
- Introduce an amnesty which could strengthen the disarmament campaign
- Support and guide relevant organizations/institutions to implement awareness campaigns on action against arms proliferation
- Promote peace and harmony through print and electronic media

2.3. The Role Civil Society Can Play in the National Commission

Support the aims, objectives and activities of the National Commission

- Establish district committees linked to the National Commission
- Organize civil society at district and village level to support the National Commission
- Support and cooperate with government security and defence authorities to coordinate and implement action against arms proliferation
- Support the National Commission in monitoring the use of firearms issued to civilians
- Participate in events and activities organized by the Commission and impart skills and knowledge to others
- Identify ways to rehabilitate those in illegal possession of small arms
- Support all local disarmament and awareness-raising campaigns for civil society including action against small arms
- Assist in organizing the district network supporting the National Commission
- Support the Commission in monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan
- Provide input from those who are affected by arms proliferation to support initiatives by the National Commission

Conduct awareness programmes and campaigns on action against small arms proliferation

- Conduct awareness-raising activities on small arms among civil society and among school children
- Discourage parents from buying toy weapons for children by creating awareness about the consequences of arms and the negative impact on the child's mind
- Awareness-raising on small arms policy and practice among the general public
- Campaign against armed violence and crimes committed by small arms
- Campaign against political groups and others who misuse arms
- Lobby for control on media organizations against programs glorifying the use of weapons
- Create awareness among children on impact of arms proliferation through essays, posters and art competitions
- Campaign against all forms of armed violence

Organize and mobilize the public to take action against small arms

- Encourage civil society to contribute and support activities on action against small arms
- Mobilize public support within the district to campaign against illegal proliferation of arms
- Encourage people to return illegal weapons and support activities in relation to weapon destruction programmes
- Encourage and enhance good relationship between the police and the community
- Campaign against politicians who support and encourage the use of arms
- Encourage and support civil society to discuss issues on proliferation of small arms and gather relevant information in a systematic manner
- Share skills and lessons learnt with others and motivate the public to formulate awareness groups on small arms proliferation and misuse
- Encourage the public to provide information on illegal arms proliferation
- Ensure justice and fair hearing to individuals aggrieved by violations of fundamental rights as a consequence of the use of small arms

Provide information on issues related to arms proliferation

- Provide information in relation to proliferation of small arms to relevant government authorities
- Identify external forces that aggravate the problem and feed this information to the National Commission for appropriate action
- Support National Commission to collect information on possession of illegal arms
- Assist in data collection in relation to legal/illegal civilian possession of firearms
- Provide information on illegal possession and use of firearms
- Establish committees at village and provincial levels to gather information on illegal firearms and communicate such information to the National Commission
- Provide information to the National Commission on crimes committed by use of small arms
- Collect data in relation to the human impact of small arms and information in relation to illegal manufacture of firearms
- Help identify sources of small arms
- Set up a database on small arms policy and practice including issuing of licences and civilian possession of arms in the district

2.4. Provincial Overview of Key Findings on Small Arms Issues in Sri Lanka

In the **Southern Province**, the causes for arms proliferation and illegal use of small arms in Galle and Matara differ to that of the Hambantota district. Galle and Matara districts are ahead in development and more urban. Small arms proliferation is closely linked with organized crime in these districts. Hambantota is rural in nature and farming is the livelihood of the majority of the population. Therefore, arms proliferation in this district is owing to the use of firearms to keep wild animals away from crops.

The **Western Province**, which consists of the commercial capital Colombo, has experienced soaring crime rates and armed violence during the past few years. The operation of underworld criminal gangs and organized crime is a major problem. Loss and injury caused to targeted victims of contract killings and civilians caught in the cross-fire is immeasurable. Arms proliferation in the province is also closely linked to drug trafficking.

Politically and geographically, Kegalle and Ratnapura districts in the **Sabaragamuwa Province** are similar. Armed violence and crime is prevalent in many parts of the province, with many of the offences being committed by army deserters. Despite several common concerns relating to crime in the two districts, Ratnapura has a higher crime rate than that of Kegalle. Being the commercial gem capital, the crime rate is noticeably higher in the Ratnapura district. A distinct feature is that, this province is home to several weapon collectors.

Monaragala and Badulla districts in the **Uva Province** is distinct from each other. They differ in many ways including geographically, ethnically and in terms of livelihoods. Moneragala district borders the conflict-affected Eastern Province. The illegal use of arms is higher in Monaragala, where more than 50% of the district is covered by rich flora and fauna, providing fertile ground for growing cannabis and illegal felling of timber by organized criminal groups. Badulla is reportedly home to a number of underworld gangs. The district is a safe haven to many criminal groups who are evading police arrest.

Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee in the **Eastern Province** are among the strife-torn districts in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka. This province has suffered a great deal due to the civil war and the subsequent increase in arms proliferation resulting in violent crime. There is a need to build greater understanding and trust among different communities living in the province. Tension among communities could lead to clashes and armed attacks, causing death and injury to life and property. Batticaloa has experienced several grenade attacks to mosques and public places in the recent past. Safety of communities living in Ampara is also threatened by land mines, which has left many dead and maimed. Clashes among underworld groups in Trincomalee have heightened the incidents of violent crime in the district.

In the **Central Province** arms related violence and crime is not as high as in other parts of the country. However, election violence is commonly seen in all three districts. The most aggressive incidents of murder, grievous hurt, threat, intimidation, vote rigging and destruction to property were reported from the province. Kandy was severely affected in the 2001 general elections. One of the worst attacks reported was the Udathalawinna massacre of ten Muslim Congress supporters. In Nuwara Eliya, several illegal firearms were confiscated during the 2001 elections. Ethnic clashes are a concern in this district. In a recent incident in Kandapola, injury and severe damage was caused to life and property. In Matale, apart from election-related violence, the district faces problems due to illicit liquor brewing, alcohol and drug addiction, which is linked to armed violence.

The war-ravaged North borders the Puttalam district in the **North Western Province**. One of the major arms smuggling routes on the Northern coast extends to the North of Puttalam. Over the past few years, election violence has been rampant in the province and Puttalam reported the highest number of incidents. Unconfirmed reports estimate around 3000 weapons in police stations that need to be disposed. However, there is no mechanism to dispose such weapons. Puttalam is also known for smuggling of illegal weapons, which is closely linked to organized mafia on drug-trafficking and human trafficking. Use of trap guns is another serious concern in the province. The increase in crime rates in the province can also be attributed to the high number of army deserters. Kurunegala district is reported to have one of the highest number of army deserters.

Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts in the **North Central Province** are both bordering conflict zones. This has been one of the major causes for easy availability of illegal arms and ammunition in the province. There is no information available in relation to the number of arms circulating within the province and there is no monitoring mechanism to gather such statistical data. Police and military lack skilled officers to manage stockpiles. Moreover, the civil war and other para-military action have made it impossible to trace small arms and light weapons within the province. Proper record keeping of small arms and light weapons and mechanisms for seizure and destruction of illegal weapons is an urgent need in the province.

In the **Northern Province** Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya districts were severely affected by the civil war. As a result of the conflict, the province is subject to large quantities of small arms proliferation. Armed violence is perpetrated by army personnel, the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and several unidentified armed groups. Two authorities administer the province: the government on one side and the LTTE on the other. Landmines are causing severe security and economic hardships to communities living in these areas. Large amounts of land are marked as danger zones due to landmines. The de-mining process is on going and the recent Tsunami disaster has made this task even more difficult. The province is also under threat by abandoned grenades and explosives.

2.5. Conclusion

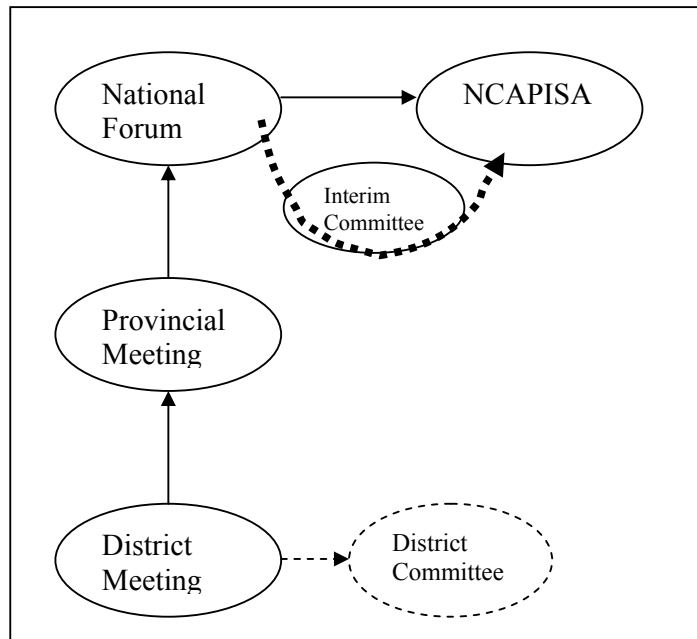
The civil society consultation process gathered information in relation to views of the participants who were involved in the meetings in different districts with regard to the problem of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Sri Lanka. As the next step in this process the situation in relation to arms proliferation needs to be investigated through a National Assessment to gauge public opinion extensively and specifically as well as examining the available data, statistics and other documentary evidence.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

3.1. Civil Society Consultation Process on the Establishment of the National Commission Against the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms In Sri Lanka (NCAPISA)

The methodology adopted for the civil society consultation process comprised of civil society meetings at district level followed by meetings at provincial level. The process is illustrated in the following diagram.



The meetings took the form of discussion forums. The participants discussed and analysed problems related to illicit proliferation of SALW in their districts/provinces and discussed possible solutions. Then they identified their expectations from the National Commission to deal with the proliferation of illicit SALW. Finally, they identified ways to support the Commission for its effective operation. The findings from the meetings have been compiled into a brief report on a district and provincial basis. These findings will be communicated to the National Commission at the National Forum.

The district consultation meetings were represented by a cross-section of civil society organizations/groups and individuals in each district. The findings of each district consultation meeting were compiled into a report.

Representatives for the provincial meetings were selected from each district meeting. The district level findings were reviewed and collated at the provincial meetings. District representatives were identified at the provincial meetings to ensure wider participation of civil society organizations/groups and individuals at the National Forum.

Orientation of Facilitators for District Consultation Meetings

A group of district level facilitators were trained to convene, coordinate and conduct district consultation meetings. Twenty-five facilitators were trained during a one-day training workshop. They were responsible for guiding this process from district to provincial level and to national level in cooperation with SASA-Net Sri Lanka and Saferworld project staff, throughout the duration of this project. Participants from a wide range of organisations at local, provincial and national level attended.

Training Objectives:

1. To explain the background, the purpose, the context and the major actors of the National Commission on SALW
2. To orient the participants on the civil society consultation process, methodology, expectations, and the way forward

Based on a request by the participants, further training was given to an additional six individuals to act as content providers at district consultation meetings. Training was provided on the following themes:

1. Introduction to the UN PoA
2. Introduction to major actors involved in establishing the National Commission
3. Identified roles and responsibilities of the Commission
4. Importance of civil society representation in the Commission
5. Establishing links and communicating local problems related to proliferation of SALW from local to national level
6. Importance of linking local issues of community safety within the National Commission action plan

3.2. District Consultation Meetings

Twenty-three district level civil society consultation meetings were organized. The National Commission was introduced and roles and responsibilities were discussed. The participants were invited to discuss arms related problems and potential solutions that can be taken at district and national level. Participation from a wide range of district level organisations was encouraged at these meetings.

Objectives of the district consultation meetings:

1. To explain the National Commission, its context, content and the major actors
2. To identify:
 - the problem of small arms and light weapons and possible solutions at district level
 - expectations from the National Commission to address these issues
 - the role of civil society at district level to support the effective operationalisation of the National Commission

3.3. Provincial Consultation Meetings

Provincial consultation meetings were held to consolidate the findings of the district level meetings and identify problems and solutions at the provincial level. Three to four civil society representatives from each district meeting represented the respective districts at the provincial meeting.

Objectives of the provincial consultation meetings:

1. To consolidate the findings of the district consultation meetings
2. To identify and address gaps in the findings of district meetings

3.4. The National Forum

A National Forum will be organized to communicate issues identified at the district and provincial level meetings, to the National Commission. Three-four representatives will attend the National Forum from each province, representing a wide range of district and national level organizations. The National Forum will also provide a platform to select civil society representatives to the National Commission.

The National Forum is expected to lead to the formation of a National Civil Society Forum to ensure that a wider group of civil society organizations are able to link to the Commission. The National Civil Society Forum is expected to act as the civil society representative body that will meet periodically with the National Commission to give/receive input, updates and coordinate support from civil society to the National Commission.

Appendix 1. District and Provincial Consultation Meeting Agendas

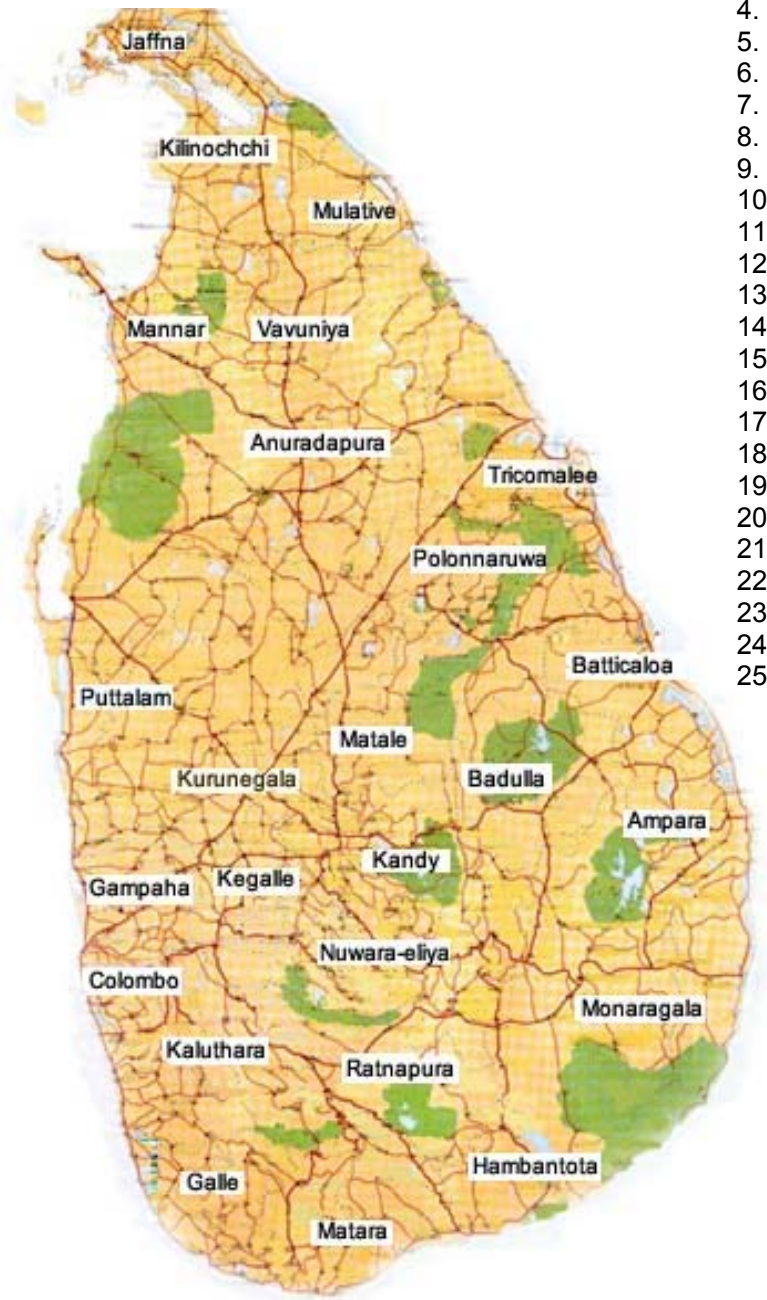
District Consultation Meeting Agenda

	Session Title	Methodology/Notes
1.	Welcome	
2.	Introduction to the Objectives and agenda	Presentation
3.	Introduction of participants	Self -introductions
4.	National Commission on SALW and Civil Society	<p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Introduction to UN PoA -Introduce major actors in establishing the National Commission -Identified roles and responsibilities of the Commission -Importance of civil society participation in the Commission -Linking to communicate local problems from district to national level and to the National Commission -Importance of linking local issues of community safety within the National Commission action plan
5.	Identify issues arising from proliferation of illicit arms in the district	<p>Group activity</p> <p>Brain Storming Session – 5 participants per group</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you see evidences of proliferation and misuse of small arms in your district? 2. What impact do you see on individuals and Institutions (personal + social)? 3. What are the causes?
7.	What are your expectations from the National Commission to address these identified issues?	<p>Group activity</p> <p>Brain Storming Session –5 participants per group</p> <p><i>Finding solutions to address the identified issues</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.What should be the specific roles of the National Commission? 2.How it can ensure effective implementation of policies and take action to address issues on proliferation and misuse of small arms?
8.	What is the supporting role which you/CSOs can play in this regard? What Support you /CSOs can extend towards effective operationalization of the National Commission?	<p>Group activity</p> <p>Brain Storming Session – 5 participants per group</p> <p><i>Finding space for participation and representation</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.What are the specific roles/activities that the civil society organizations can play in order to formulate/implement a National Action Plan? 2.What support can you extend? 3.What support do you expect?
9.	Group presentations	<p>5 minute presentations</p> <p>(If there are any queries make a note on the output sheet and include in the report)</p>
10.	<p>Planning for the provincial meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Date -List of participants 	<p>Select 2 participants from the district to represent the provincial meeting upon consensus. Suggested criteria</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Active participants 2.Volunteers 3.Members of other national networks 4.Participants with previous experience on this issue or related issues

Provincial Consultation Meeting Agenda

Activity	Methodology/Notes
Welcome and brief introduction to the National Commission on SALW	Speech
Presentation of findings of the District Consultation Meetings	15-20 minute presentation
Discussion	Review findings at the district level Key Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the gaps that need to be filled? 2. What are the common features of SALW problem in the province based on the findings at district level? 4. What are the district specific issues?
Identify district civil society representatives to participate in the national forum upon consensus	Note contact information of the selected representatives (Three –four participants)

Appendix 2. Map of Sri Lanka



1. Galle
2. Matara
3. Hambantota
4. Colombo
5. Kalutara
6. Gampaha
7. Kegalle
8. Ratnapura
9. Monaragala
10. Badulla
11. Trincomalee
12. Batticaloa
13. Ampara
14. Kandy
15. Nuwara-Eliya
16. Matale
17. Puttalam
18. Kurungala
19. Anuradhapura
20. Polonnaruwa
21. Jaffna
22. Mannar
23. Vavuniya
24. Kilinochchi
25. Mullaitivu