



Guns in the Home: Women Must Have Their Say

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London/Stockholm: The fatal shooting of Kristin Kjelstrup by her former partner in Tromsø last week is a tragic example of how women are exposed to danger when their intimate partners have access to a firearm, said IANSA, the global movement against gun violence.

Current legislation in Norway does not require that partners or spouses are consulted by the police when deciding whether to grant a license to own a firearm.

Sarah Masters, a campaigner for women's safety in gun laws for IANSA said:

“National gun laws must recognise the danger that is created for women when their male partners or relatives have access to a firearm. Access to a lethal weapon makes so-called ‘crimes of passion’ far too common around the world. One third of Norwegian households contain a firearm, yet women do not currently have a say in this.”

The IANSA Women's Network is currently launching an international campaign to harmonise domestic violence and firearms laws, with provisions to separate perpetrators of domestic violence from guns. So far these laws have been harmonised to greatest effect in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and Trinidad and Tobago.¹ The governments of Scandinavian should review their laws in accordance with best practice to keep women safe.

Sarah Masters added: “Recent events have shown us that Scandinavian countries are not immune from gun violence. Although men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators and victims of firearm homicides, the shooting of eight female students and two men in a catering college in Finland last September reminds us that women all too often bear the brunt of male rage.”

Sarah Masters will be speaking at an Expert Seminar on Global Security Trends on Wednesday 28 January at the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation in Stockholm. For further information please contact **Annika Flensburg** on +46 (0)733 609 125, annika.flensburg@kvinna.till.kvinna.se

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¹**Australia:** The 1996 National Firearms Agreement requires the removal of guns from domestic violence offenders. The 1994 Violence Against Women Act states that if a Domestic Violence Order is taken out against a gun owner, the police must confiscate all guns immediately.

Canada: The 1995 Firearms Act requires a licence for possession, and acquisition, with screening and licence renewals every 5 years. Reports of domestic violence automatically trigger a review of a gun owner's licence. Current and previous spouses (past 2 years) will be notified of an individual's intention to acquire a firearm licence. Spousal consent is not required for acquisition, however if a spouse has concerns, it will trigger a secondary review of the application. The Criminal Code (1985 revision) defines domestic violence offences, and includes those involving weapons and imitations.

South Africa: The 2004 Firearms Control Act specifies that a gun licence will be refused to anyone with a record of domestic violence. The 1998 Domestic Violence Act includes provisions to seize firearms from offenders.

Trinidad and Tobago: The 2004 Firearms (Amendment) Act places restrictions on domestic violence offenders holding a Firearm User's Licence or a Firearm User's (Employee's) Certificate. Any person convicted of an offence under the Domestic Violence Act (1999) is disqualified from holding a licence for a period of five years from the date of conviction. If a licence holder is convicted of an offence, the licence will be suspended for a period of five years from the conviction date.
