

Introduction

Sustained research and analysis have confirmed that the problem of small arms violence cannot be separated from other aspects of human society and culture. Investigations into gun violence that neglect the social relations between men and women, for example, are now seen as incomplete. Gender-conscious programme design and implementation, long features of the development agenda, are increasingly reflected in efforts to promote security. As our understanding of the small arms problem expands, so too does the potential for new, more effective solutions.

The *Small Arms Survey 2014* contributes to this evolution by seeking to unpack, in its first section, the complex, shifting relationship between women and guns. The second section presents new information and analysis under the broad rubric of 'weapons and markets'. The chapter summaries below present some of the findings emerging from this research.

WOMEN AND GUNS

The first section of this volume examines the relationship between women and guns in a wide range of settings. While women (and girls) bear a substantial part of the overall burden of firearm violence, this is only part of the story. Women are also firearm owners and users, police officers, and combatants. They are increasingly involved in peace and disarmament processes, and in the design and implementation of national gun control policies.

Both chapters in this first section, but especially Chapter 1, highlight the multiple features and consequences of armed violence for women and girls in conflict, post-conflict, and non-conflict settings. They describe that sexual violence, in particular rape, is often used as a weapon of war. Yet violence against women and girls (VAWG) is also pervasive in non-conflict settings, where it is often deeply rooted in the cultural frameworks of otherwise peaceful societies.

Firearms feature in gender-based violence as they do in most other types of violence. VAWG is common within the household; domestic disputes often escalate if a gun is at hand. Every year, approximately one-third of the 66,000 female victims of homicide die from firearm injuries. Rates of femicide—the killing of a woman because of her gender—are particularly high in countries where other forms of violence are widespread, firearms are widely available, and the investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence is weak (Alvazzi del Frate, 2011). Among the different types of firearms used to kill women in the United States, handguns are the most widely used, accounting for about 70 per cent of the victims in 2011 (FBI, n.d.).

Survivors of gun violence—an average of three for every gun fatality (Alvazzi del Frate, 2012, p. 94)—include not only those who survive firearm injuries, but also relatives of those who die or are permanently affected by gunshots. Female survivors therefore include the widows and orphans of victims, as well as the mothers, wives, and daughters of those who suffer long-term disabilities as a consequence of gun violence.

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Women are also owners and users of firearms, although firearm owners worldwide are overwhelmingly male. Among gun owners in European Union countries, for example, there are eight men for every woman (EC, 2013, p. 8). The ratio is similar in the United States, where women hold significantly fewer guns than men and appear to prefer handguns to rifles and shotguns (Hepburn et al., 2007, p. 18). Surveys consistently show a much lower percentage of female firearm ownership in the United States and a decline in ownership rates of around 20 per cent for both sexes since the late 1970s (NORC, 2013).

Most of the available sex-disaggregated data on gun ownership comes from the United States and reflects its unique gun culture. Gun advertising has been targeting women since the 1980s, when many producers began to promote firearms designed for women (Winddance Twine, 2013, p. 8). Among these were guns in appealing colours and shapes, as well as ones small enough to carry in a purse.

In the United States and elsewhere, women's ownership and use of firearms tend to be rooted in strong cultural and social values. To some extent, social norms are shifting—as reflected, for example, in the steady increase in the number of all-female events and competitors in Olympic shooting sports since 1984 (ISSF, n.d.). Notwithstanding its social basis, female gun ownership can also derive from individual preferences and circumstances. While some women argue that owning a gun is 'key to female empowerment, freedom and personal security' (Cordani, 2010, p. 94), others become owners because they inherit firearms that are meant to stay in the family. Some women decide to acquire a gun for self-protection, while others practice shooting as a form of sport.

Some women join the police, now a desirable career for women in many cultures (Horne, 2006; SPECIAL FEATURE). Policing has changed over time, with women police officers increasingly carrying and using firearms as part of routine work in the same way as their male counterparts. Yet the literature also shows that female officers are significantly less likely to use 'excessive' force than men, are less frequently involved in police brutality and misconduct, and—across all types of policing work—use weapons less often than their male colleagues (Lonsway et al., 2002).

The proportion of women in national armed forces is still rather small, varying between 0.4 per cent in Bolivia and 14–15 per cent in countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Uruguay (Donadio et al., 2010, p. 56; Schjølset, 2013, pp. 578–79). Nevertheless, the proportion of female military recruits is increasing in NATO countries (Schjølset, 2013). NATO member Norway recently became the first to make military service compulsory for both women and men (Reuters, 2013). In 2013, the US military lifted a 20-year-old ban on women in combat roles (Bowen, 2013). By the end of 2013, some US servicewomen had successfully completed specialized military training as part of broader research designed to help the Marine Corps and other branches of the US armed forces determine how to integrate female soldiers into front line work (Cox and Hoffman, 2013). Whatever the specific outcomes of this initiative, the increased participation of women in the armed and security forces of many countries is one of the most visible signs of a shift towards greater gender equality.

Although there are calls to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping missions (WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY), the female presence in peacekeeping, especially the military component, remains low. As of September 2013, women made up only 5 per cent of military experts and 3 per cent of troops (UN, 2013). Approximately 10 per cent of police peacekeepers were women, a proportion that has remained stable over the past few years (UN, 2013).

Very few of the women and girls who use guns use them to commit crime. The overall proportion of female offenders is quite small, and female perpetration of firearm crime is rare. In the United States, only about 4 per cent of all identified perpetrators of firearm homicide from 2000 to 2010 were female, with this figure varying only slightly from year to year. A few of these homicides were deemed 'justifiable' as they resulted from the use of a firearm in self-

defence. In fact, the proportion of ‘justifiable’ homicides, as a share of total firearm homicides committed by women, doubled between 2000 and 2010 (from 2.3 to 5 per cent) (FBI, n.d.).

The lone, gun-toting criminal is a rarity among women. More often, female ‘outlaws’ carry and use firearms as members of gangs and non-state armed groups (NSAGs). All-female or mixed male–female gangs are relatively common in many parts of the world, although female gang members tend to use weapons, especially firearms, less often and ‘with lesser intensity’ than male gang members (Moestue and Lazarevic, 2010, p. 185). There are exceptions, however. In Guatemala, women gang members are increasingly involved in serious crime, reflected in the sharp increase in the number of women arrested in the country and in the size of its female prison population (Rossi, 2012; Tatone, 2013).

Women and girls sometimes furnish much of the ‘manpower’ of NSAGs: nearly one-third of Sandinista troops in Nicaragua, around 30–40 per cent of the FARC in Colombia, and at least one-third of Tamil Tiger combatants in Sri Lanka (Goldstein, 2003, pp. 81–83). While many women join NSAGs freely, others are either forced to join or to fulfil roles at odds with their cultural values, including the use of armed violence. They frequently perform relatively unimportant, even humiliating tasks and may face scepticism, ridicule, outright opposition, or even violence from male combatants. Many women combatants also face greater difficulty reintegrating into society following the end of armed conflict. While experiences vary from group to group, those of women in NSAGs are often very similar to those of women serving in national armed forces (SPECIAL FEATURE).

As acknowledged in UN Security Council Resolution 1325—which fuses the women and security agendas—women also have a role to play in the development and implementation of post-conflict peace processes, and in the promotion of peace generally. Until recently, the Resolution 1325 process was relatively distinct from the UN small arms process, yet the UN Programme of Action’s 2012 Review Conference and the Arms Trade Treaty of 2013 (ATT) have introduced some measure of convergence (WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY).

WEAPONS AND MARKETS

The second section of the *Small Arms Survey 2014* comprises six chapters that involve hardware questions (weapons and ammunition) or examine small arms markets, both legal and illicit. The first chapter in this section, Chapter 3, reviews the main provisions of the ATT and considers its likely future impact. Chapters 4 (Trade update) and 7 (Weapons tracing) in this section—as well as Chapter 2 (Women, peace, and security)—also consider the ATT in relation to issues such as trade transparency, the potential convergence of national arms export decisions, and the evolution of the women, peace, and security agenda.

As noted in Chapter 3, the Treaty’s influence will depend on the extent to which ATT states parties translate their commitments into concrete action. This is equally true of established control instruments, such as the UN Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrate how basic tracing methods—for both weapons and ammunition—can assist in mapping sources of illicit supply to NSAGs in conflict and post-conflict countries.

In considering the potential of new instruments and applications, the existing toolkit should not be overlooked. That includes international standards for the management of ammunition stockpiles, the neglect of which can prove devastating—both to the people living next to ammunition depots and to entire countries, as discussed in Chapter 5. It is equally important to make full use of available information, including police data, which, as Chapter 8 demonstrates, can dispel popular myths about crime guns in the United States and help point policy-makers in new directions.

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Definitions

The Small Arms Survey uses the term 'small arms and light weapons' to cover both military-style small arms and light weapons, as well as commercial firearms (handguns and long guns). Except where noted otherwise, it follows the definition used in the report of the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (UNGA, 1997):

Small arms: revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns.

Light weapons: heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, recoilless rifles, portable anti-tank missile and rocket launchers, portable anti-aircraft missile launchers, and mortars of less than 100 mm calibre.

The term 'small arms' is used in this volume to refer to small arms, light weapons, and their ammunition (as in 'the small arms industry') unless the context indicates otherwise, whereas the terms 'light weapons' and 'ammunition' refer specifically to those items.

'Armed violence' is defined as 'the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm' (OECD, 2011, p. ii).

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS**Women and guns**

Chapter 1 (Violence against women and girls): Violence against women and girls is a global concern, although its prevalence varies across regions and countries. This chapter examines sexual and domestic violence—two pervasive forms of VAWG—both internationally and through the experiences of two countries emerging from conflict: Liberia and Nepal. It reviews gendered perceptions of guns and pays special attention to the role of social norms as risk factors. By condoning violent behaviour, such as wife beating or rape within intimate relationships, social norms can perpetuate a cycle of violence. Alongside legislative and policy measures, both Liberia and Nepal have launched initiatives to change social attitudes towards VAWG. There and elsewhere, however, more concerted action is needed.

Chapter 2 (Women, peace, and security): A strong international normative framework addressing the impacts of armed conflict on women, and women's participation in peacemaking and post-conflict reform and development, has evolved since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000. This chapter explores how this framework has addressed small arms control and traces the recent convergence of the two agendas. In some countries, the different perceptions and impacts of small arms on women and men are reflected in gun control policy, but rarely in concrete action. Women's networks have played an essential role in identifying the linkages between gender and small arms, and in advocating for appropriate policy and legal responses.

Special feature: The women and girls presented in this collection of illustrated original interviews and group portraits have something in common: at some point in their lives, whether as adults or as children, legally or illicitly, they all became intimately familiar with small arms. The section provides first-hand testimony and impressions from women soldiers who served in Afghanistan and Iraq; rebel fighters from Colombia, Iran, and Syria; a South African prison guard; a Kenyan policewoman; UN peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia; former child soldiers of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda; and an Irish bodyguard. They speak to issues ranging from sexism and the pursuit of gender equality to the practical application of UN Resolution 1325 and slow shifts in the dynamic between men and women.

Weapons and markets

Chapter 3 (Arms Trade Treaty): Negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty was a complex and ambitious undertaking. The text of the treaty, adopted by UN member states on 2 April 2013, reflects the compromises necessary to achieve agreement, but the broad support the UN membership has demonstrated for the ATT suggests that many states see it as a game changer. As the excitement following its adoption subsides, the question becomes: what does the ATT do and what will it change? This chapter reviews the ATT's provisions, situates the treaty within the existing arms transfer control framework, and assesses its potential impact on existing state practice—in particular, its promises of greater scrutiny of arms transfer decisions and of more responsible decision-making.

Chapter 4 (Trade update): This chapter presents updated information on the authorized small arms trade, with sections that identify main actors (top and major exporters and importers), new developments in transparency (the Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer 2014), and global trends from 2001 to 2011 (including the near doubling in the value of the trade). The chapter also considers some of the possibilities—and opportunities—the ATT presents in two specific areas: unauthorized retransfer and trade transparency. Unauthorized retransfer is something of a blind spot for the ATT, although other instruments and good practice guidelines offer useful guidance in addressing it. While the ATT may prove more effective in increasing global trade transparency, this will depend on the extent to which ATT reporting draws on other transparency instruments.

Chapter 5 (Mpila explosions): On 4 March 2012, a series of explosions destroyed several military barracks in the Mpila area of Brazzaville, in the Republic of the Congo (RoC), affecting two densely populated districts of the city. The explosions claimed at least 300 lives, injured more than 2,500, and displaced more than 120,000 people. The broader economic impacts of the blasts were important, long-lasting, and country-wide. The tragedy was preventable yet, two years on, the root cause of the explosions—poor ammunition stockpile management—has not been properly addressed, nor have their broad socio-economic consequences been fully remedied. This chapter unpacks the direct and indirect consequences of the blasts and probes the long-term ammunition procurement and stockpiling practices that led to the Mpila tragedy.

Chapter 6 (Ammunition profiling): This chapter examines the characteristics of small-calibre ammunition circulating in seven countries and territories affected by conflict or post-conflict instability in Africa and the Middle East. It highlights the role that stockpiles of ammunition produced during the cold war continue to play in fuelling armed conflict, underlining the importance of efforts to reduce surpluses. The chapter also reveals the presence of newly produced cartridges in most of the countries and territories under review. While ammunition produced in China and the former Eastern Bloc remains dominant overall, the prevalence of cartridges of Sudanese and Iranian manufacture is noteworthy. The chapter also highlights the circulation in these areas of unmarked cartridges, whose origin is often unknown, raising new hurdles for arms monitors.

Chapter 7 (Weapons tracing): What arms and ammunition do rebel groups and tribal militias in Sudan and South Sudan have, and how have they obtained them? Following more than two years of investigation, the Small Arms Survey finds that Khartoum government stockpiles are the primary source of weapons to non-state armed groups of all allegiances in Sudan and South Sudan, primarily through deliberate arming, but also through battlefield capture. Among the newer weapons documented, Chinese- and Iranian-manufactured small arms and ammunition are prominent, as is Sudanese-made ammunition. Information supplied by exporting government agencies, weapons manufacturers, and

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other private companies have assisted in these investigations, whose results show the potential of independent, expert-led, and donor-supported conflict tracing.

Chapter 8 (Illicit small arms): US cities are changing. Crime and poverty persist in some areas, but the vibrancy and prosperity of previous eras has returned to others. Despite these changes, decades-old images of street gangs conducting urban warfare with automatic rifles and machine pistols continue to shape public perceptions of urban violence and criminal guns. This chapter assesses the accuracy of these and other assumptions about illicit weapons in the United States. It analyses records of more than 140,000 small arms and light weapons taken into custody by police in eight US cities and towns, presenting important new information on the weapons acquired by US criminals, in particular felons, drug dealers, and gang members.

CONCLUSION

Full implementation of the women, peace, and security agenda is still some way off, especially where small arms are concerned. In many parts of the world, women (and girls) continue to be killed, maimed, and injured for social and cultural reasons. At the same time, their complete and equal involvement in security promotion often seems more of an aspiration than a reality.

Meanwhile, the effect of the ATT remains to be determined. The treaty's very existence—something many thought unlikely, even impossible, a few years ago—represents an important achievement. But, if it is to have any real impact on arms transfer practices, the ATT will have to jump over the same hurdle that has prevented many established small arms instruments from having full effect—namely, the translation of commitments on paper into concrete action. While the effective implementation of small arms control standards may have significant costs and require sustained political attention, the neglect of such standards can impose human and financial costs that are many times greater—as the Mpila ammunition depot explosions illustrate.

This edition of the *Small Arms Survey* has also demonstrated the value of available, but untapped information, including police data and weapons and ammunition markings in conflict-ridden areas. In aggregate, this data serves to map the types of firearms used by criminals in the United States, as well as insurgent arms supply in Africa and the Middle East.

In short, the 2014 *Survey* casts a light on specific, often persistent threats to the security of women, girls, men, and boys around the world—presenting several tools, methods, and information sources, both old and new, that can improve our understanding of these threats and help us overcome them. ■

—Anna Alvazzi del Frate and Glenn McDonald

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
NSAG	Non-state armed group
VAWG	Violence against women and girls

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A relative shows the photo of a woman who was shot and killed by an unidentified man on her way to work at an assembly plant in San Salvador, July 2013.
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In War and Peace

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

1

INTRODUCTION

While the use of violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a 'weapon of war' has received widespread international attention, researchers have only recently begun to assess its prevalence in peacetime and transitioning societies. The World Health Organization (WHO) finds that 36 per cent of women aged 15–69 worldwide have experienced either non-partner sexual violence or physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, or both (WHO, 2013, p. 20). Analysts have also increasingly documented the role of guns in the context of intimate partner violence against women.¹

VAWG is a global phenomenon, but its prevalence varies depending on a range of individual, family, community, and social factors whose interaction is not well understood. Among the broadest set of influences on VAWG are social norms that inform how men and women regard and interact with one another. Widely held attitudes about the roles of women in the home and community, the acceptability of punishing women who deviate from expected behaviour, and norms surrounding the use of guns and violence as a means of resolving conflict are among the many factors that influence VAWG.

After a brief global survey, this chapter reviews available VAWG rates (including gun-related VAWG), relevant social norms, and programming responses in Liberia and Nepal, two countries emerging from the long shadow of conflict. The devastating civil war in Liberia killed an estimated 250,000 people; the collective activism of women was an important element in its ultimate resolution (Foster et al., 2009, pp. 3, 19). The Maoist insurgency in Nepal (1996–2006), in which women were prominent participants, left some 13,000 dead (INSEC, n.d.). This chapter presents the following findings:

- In Liberia, women are twice as likely as men to find that a husband is sometimes justified in beating his wife, suggesting that many women have been socialized to accept domestic violence.
- Research suggests that guns are present in only a small proportion of VAWG incidents in Liberia, although surveys tend to underestimate the full role of guns in VAWG.
- In Nepal, the caste system, ethnic and economic cleavages, and the profile of the victim appear to influence the type and prevalence of VAWG. For example, women from marginalized groups are at a notably elevated risk of experiencing some type of victimization in their lifetimes.
- Lingering pre-conflict and conflict-era dynamics surrounding VAWG influence the prevalence and types of VAWG in post-conflict environments.
- At the global level, development sector practitioners seek to change social norms that influence VAWG; these efforts are seen as an indispensable step towards improving the security of women and girls over the long term.
- More research is needed to shed light on how guns are used in VAWG and what norms surround them, including in post-conflict and low-income environments, where research has been limited to date.

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This chapter begins with a brief review of the key aspects of VAWG at the global level, paying particular attention to the influence of social norms. It then describes findings from recent research in Liberia and Nepal, presenting data on the prevalence of VAWG and relevant norms. The following discussion touches on some of the challenges in responding to VAWG and reshaping underlying social norms in post-conflict environments. The chapter concludes with a recap of the main arguments and findings.

VAWG IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

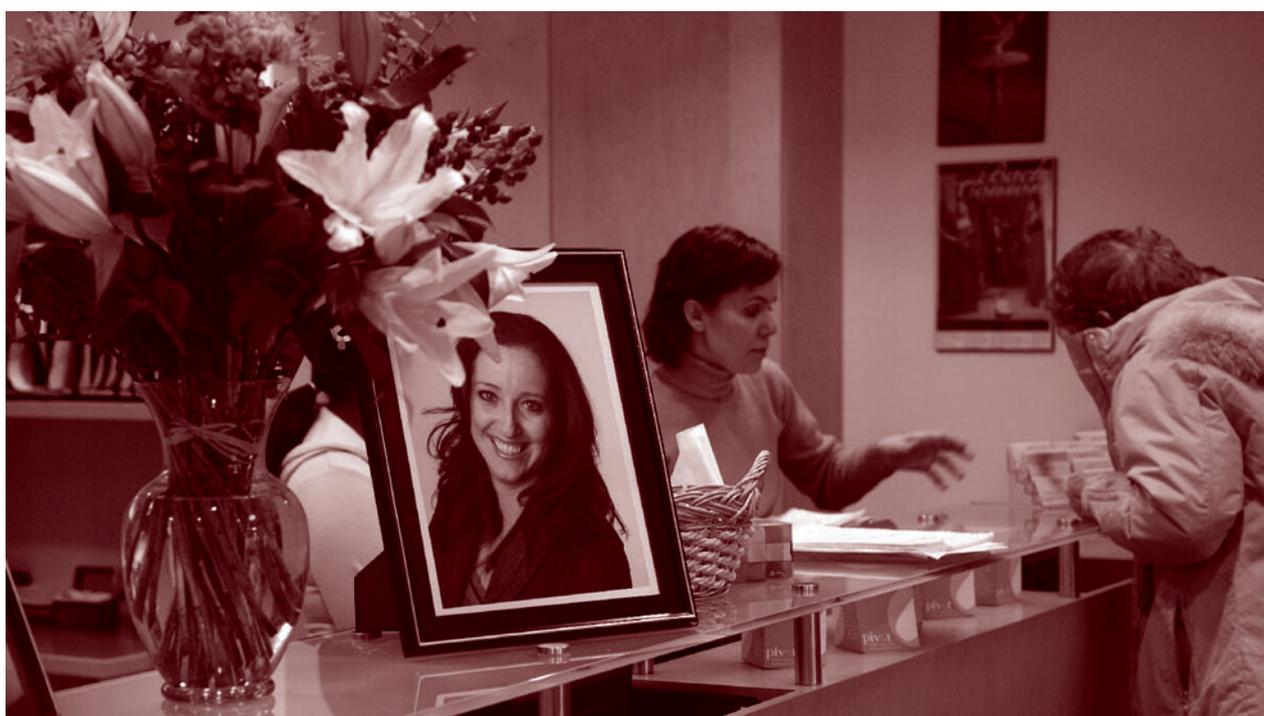
Key terms and concepts

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines *violence against women and girls* as:

any act of gender-based violence² that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UNGA, 1993, art. 1).

This definition encompasses physical, sexual, and psychological violence that occurs in the family or community or is perpetrated or condoned by the state.

VAWG has emerged as a focus area for research and policy-making in recognition that gender-based victimization of women is widespread, follows some identifiable patterns, and is deeply rooted—in the sense that it may be condoned or acceptable according to prevailing social norms. These gendered and normative considerations are built into the term *violence against women and girls*.



The photo of a victim of a double homicide, targeting her and a second woman, is displayed at the reception of her former workplace.
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