



amelie namuroy | First Committee Civil Society Segment
Check against delivery

Thank you, Chair. My name is Amelie Namuroy, and I am the Program Officer for the International Action Network on Small Arms - IANSAs.

IANSAs is a global network of non-governmental organisations working to reduce the human suffering from armed violence. We are also the official coordinator of civil society participation in the United Nations' process on small arms. We gratefully acknowledge the support of UNSCAR and the European Union for this work.

More than 20 years after the adoption of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, small arms and light weapons – SALW – still pose a systemic and pervasive threat to people's lives, fundamental rights and livelihoods. SALW have also played a detrimental role in the surge of sexual and gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. IANSAs, therefore, urges all states to increase their efforts to eradicate the illicit trade of SALW and to prevent armed violence in all its forms. We acknowledge the steps taken by States to this point to reduce the effect of armed violence in accordance with the United Nations and regional instruments. Unfortunately, it has not been enough to stop women, men, and children from being shot – preventable deaths if those instruments were fully and effectively implemented. We also remember that guns are used to intimidate, injure and torture, making its strict regulation a condition for the enjoyment of human rights everywhere.

In that sense, during the First Committee, IANSAs urges delegations to:

- Support resolutions containing gender-sensitive measures to prevent, curb, and eradicate SALW proliferation and violence;
- Support language recognising that SALW and their ammunition are inextricably linked, and that ammunition is what gives SALW their deadly power;
- Recognise that the vast majority of deaths and injuries due to SALW use occur in situations of violence and crime, not in armed conflict;
- Demonstrate their commitment to the full, equal, meaningful, and effective participation of women in the UNPoA process by, at a minimum, ensuring parity in their delegations' leadership and composition, as well as their presentations and;
- Ensure that civil society is able to participate fully in First Committee proceedings by keeping the meetings open.

The eighth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8) on the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons took place this past June 2022 and provided an important opportunity to address armed violence. The final outcome document represented continued progress on many issues, including building on the gender outcomes of the UNPoA's Third Review Conference in 2018 and the seventh Biennial Meeting of States. It has also encouraged States to move forward

on national action plans and national targets for implementing the UNPoA, continued to draw attention to the effects of armed violence on youth and vulnerable communities, and increased attention to the need for sustainable international cooperation and assistance in implementing the UNPoA and the ITI. Yet, despite the evident progress that such language reflects, it needs to be translated into actions.

To achieve this desired progress, IANSA calls on States to work in close partnership with civil society organisations, in particular women and underrepresented groups disproportionately affected by gun violence, to curb the illicit proliferation of SALW and its ammunition, reduce demand for such weapons, improve firearms regulations and strengthen controls on arms transfers.

Beyond First Committee, IANSA urges States to:

- Ensure that they continue to make progress in implementing their commitments from RevCon3, BMS7, and BMS8, and prepare reports in advance of RevCon4;
- Ensure that the future resolution authorising RevCon4 sets a broad mandate for the meeting;
- Develop and carry out plans to act unilaterally or in regional groups to set and meet more ambitious standards for the transfer, export, import, transit, and brokering of SALW than agreed at the biennial meetings or the review conferences;
- Continue to focus on the need to collect and destroy surplus, obsolete, and illegal weapons and their ammunition;
- Implement all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are related to arms control issues rather than limiting efforts to SDG 16;
- Take advantage of and further develop synergies among the UNPoA, the Firearms Protocol, and the ATT. For example, states could apply the criteria, guidelines, and prohibitions in the ATT to help bring more of the international trade in conventional weapons, including SALW, into compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law;
- And finally, move beyond the mere rhetoric of asserting that civil society is an important partner in these efforts, by:
 - o fully integrating civil society representatives into the work to reduce the human costs of armed violence,
 - o ensuring diverse representation from survivors, youth, and other traditionally underrepresented groups; and
 - o providing increased and sustained funding for civil society's work to raise awareness of these issues.

I thank you for this opportunity to address you.