

# Small Arms, Light Weapons and Landmines

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The security environment in nearly every post conflict state is extremely fragile due in part to the continued availability of **small arms and light weapons (SALW)**. In countries as varied as El Salvador, Albania and Mali, the prevalence of SALW contributes to enormously increased crime rates, resulting in some cases with more deaths in a year of “peace” than during war. Whether used to regroup opposition forces, form gangs or commit crimes, the presence of SALW leads to continued violence and instability in post conflict societies.

In addition to SALW, landmines and unexploded ordnance pose a constant threat for years after a war. Although SALW and landmines are different issues with separate constituencies of policy-makers and practitioners, both are addressed in this chapter under the umbrella of practical disarmament. This section highlights how civil society, and women in particular, have mobilised in many communities to rid their societies of these tools of violence.

## 1. WHAT ARE SMALL ARMS, LIGHT WEAPONS AND LANDMINES?

**Small arms** refer to the weapons that a single individual can carry and operate. They may include revolvers, self-loading pistols, rifles, carbines, assault rifles, submachine guns, light machine guns and associated ammunition.

**Light weapons** refer to weapons that can be operated by two or three people. They may include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft and missile launchers, recoilless rifles, small mortars of less than 100mm calibre, explosives, anti-personnel mines and ammunition for all of these.

The International Red Cross defines **anti-personnel landmines** as “explosive device[s] designed to maim or kill the person who triggers it.... They go on killing and maiming soldiers and civilians, men and women, adults and children alike decades after the fighting has ended.”<sup>1</sup> There are approximately 300 types of anti-personnel mines in use around the world in four categories—blast, fragmentation, directional fragmentation and bounding.<sup>2</sup> They are often scattered in a certain area called a **minefield**. They can be set to explode when triggered (by heat

or movement) or can be set to explode at a pre-determined time. New technology has led to “smart mines,” designed to reduce the chances of being triggered by a civilian.<sup>3</sup> A “self-neutralising mine,” for example, defuses itself after a pre-set time without exploding. A new type of landmine, with a computer-tracking device to make it easier to retrieve, is also in development. These “smart mines” are very expensive, however, and some armed actors opt for the cheaper “dumb mines.”

**Unexploded ordnance (UXO)**<sup>4</sup> refers to explosives that did not detonate and therefore remain active after the end of armed conflict. UXO includes unexploded bullets, grenades, mortars, cluster bombs, rockets and air-dropped bombs. These and other weapons that fail to detonate or are abandoned pose a threat similar to that of landmines. As with anti-personnel mines, UXO must be located and destroyed, generally as part of a programme to clear landmines.

The international community makes an important distinction between legal small arms and light weapons and illegal or **illicit SALW**. Although both types of weapons are equally lethal, this distinction has allowed policy-makers to avoid dealing with a range of issues associated with the legal trade and focus efforts on their illegal trade and use.

Approximately 56 percent of SALW worldwide are in legal civilian possession, and 43 percent are legally held by state security forces (military, police, intelligence agencies). Non-governmental opposition groups illegally hold less than one percent.<sup>5</sup> The legal trade in SALW is valued at approximately \$4–6 billion,<sup>6</sup> of which the largest exporters are the US, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Brazil, and China.<sup>7</sup> The illegal trade is estimated to be 10–20 percent of the total trade.<sup>8</sup>

### USE OF SALW DURING CONFLICT

Small arms, light weapons and anti-personnel mines have been the primary instruments of war in recent years. The estimated number of SALW in circulation worldwide, not including landmines, is 640 million. An additional 230 million landmines are stockpiled worldwide.<sup>9</sup> Their impact on civilians is severe; hundreds of thousands of people a year are killed by SALW, and millions more are injured.<sup>10</sup> Deaths from SALW occur in armed conflict, but also in so-called “peaceful” countries.

All actors in conflict—government, military, militias, paramilitary units, armed opposition, guerrillas, and civilians—use small arms and light weapons. The Small Arms Survey notes that, “There is a growing body of evidence indicating that even a modest build-up of small arms can lead to disproportionately large increases in armed violence, conflict, and criminality.”<sup>11</sup> They continue to be used and have devastating effects on civilians for a number of reasons. SALW are:

1. Cheap and widely available—Some are newly manufactured, while others circulate from conflict to conflict or are left over from downsized militaries. Some countries, such as **Colombia**, in fact, have armed their own citizens against perceived security threats.
2. More and more deadly—In many places, automatic rifles are replacing single-action guns. These automatic weapons are often used to kill people more quickly and on a wider scale.
3. Simple and durable—They require little to no training and last for decades under almost any conditions.

4. Portable—They can be carried by an individual or a small group of people, are easily transferred, and are almost impossible to track or monitor.
5. Used by many actors—Not only the military and police, but civilians have access to SALW, including an expanding private security industry.

Landmines, too, are cheap, durable, and portable. They are often used in war deliberately against civilians—“to terrorise communities, to displace entire villages, to render fertile agricultural land unusable, and to destroy national infrastructures like roads, bridges, and water sources.”<sup>12</sup> They are very difficult to detect and remove following war, particularly the cheaper, older, “dumb” versions that are most likely to be used in internal conflicts. According to the 2003 Landmine Monitor Report, 82 countries are affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance.<sup>13</sup>

Given the combination of extreme poverty, overwhelming social wounds and struggling new governments, it is not difficult to understand how and why violence using SALW continues after war. Contributing factors to increased violence, crime, or a return to conflict include:

- lack of economic opportunities for former combatants;
- a thriving illegal market through which guns can be sold;
- poverty, economic stagnation and disease, as well as the collapse of health and education services;
- unequal access to rights and resources;
- severe damage to the social structure overall, particular family and community cohesion;
- few government programmes and funds for support;
- formation of criminal organisations that may provide some level of security and support to its members; and
- struggling police and security forces and a legal system undergoing massive change.

### IMPACT OF SALW ON SUSTAINABLE PEACE

SALW affect all civilians—men, women and children. Yet the majority of SALW victims and carriers are unemployed, uneducated young men.<sup>14</sup> In addition to killing, SALW are used to commit many other human rights violations, including rape, torture, abduction, coerced recruitment, kidnapping, theft, looting, forced displacement, forced marriage and extortion. The impact of such violence on access to infrastructure, employment, healthcare, education, social welfare and development is profound.

#### Impact of SALW in Medellín, Colombia<sup>15</sup>

Homicide is the number one cause of death in Medellín. Sixty-one percent of all deaths in the city are homicides, and 90 percent of them are perpetrated with small arms. In addition, there is a high incidence of rape of girls and young women. Families are displaced. Schools are often closed due to armed confrontations, and other restrictions are imposed on walking, public transportation and group activities.

Despite programmes to disarm all actors following the signing of a peace agreement, SALW continue to undermine efforts at peace and stability long after war. If not collected and destroyed, SALW may be:

- maintained by former combatants and civilians as their only source of security and income generation;
- traded internationally to other governments and/or armed insurgent groups;
- sold to organised crime and other violent groups; and/or
- hidden for future use if war begins again.

A UN report notes, “The proliferation of small arms...affects the intensity and duration of violence and encourages militancy...a vicious circle in which insecurity leads to a higher demand for weapons.”<sup>16</sup> The rate of death by small arms may decrease only slightly following war, as compared to during the war. In fact, in some places, the casualty rate has actually increased; in El Salvador, the homicide rate

increased by 36 percent after the peace agreement was signed in 1992.<sup>17</sup>

### INTERNATIONAL EFFECTS OF SALW

The effects of continued use of SALW in post conflict countries often spill across its borders. For example, after the peace agreement was signed in Mozambique, weapons used by **Mozambican** and **Angolan** rebels were smuggled back into South Africa, fuelling the rise in criminal violence there. A subsequent regional programme was launched to jointly collect arms along the border (Operation Rachel). In **El Salvador**, the armed opposition, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, stored hidden caches of arms in **Nicaragua** during the peace process. When they were found, the peace process in El Salvador, as well as government relations with Nicaragua, were placed in jeopardy.

### IN-COUNTRY EFFECTS OF SALW

In some cases, the continued existence of SALW may facilitate a return to war. To prevent this, the government of **Nicaragua** established a Special Disarmament Brigade to run a weapons buy-back and destruction programme to disarm combatants seen as having the potential to return to violence.<sup>18</sup> In **Sierra Leone**, however, weapons that were collected and dismantled, but not destroyed, during a 1999–2000 disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process were repossessed by rebel groups as the war began anew in the spring of 2000.<sup>19</sup>

Extremely high rates of violent crime are a direct impact of the continued use of SALW in post conflict countries. In **South Africa**, 15,000 people were killed in political violence between 1990 and 1998, while 25,000 were murdered in 1998 alone; the majority of weapons used were pistols and revolvers.<sup>20</sup> In **El Salvador**, many youth have joined gangs, called *maras*, which use weapons including M-16s, AK-47s and rocket launchers. These are used to perpetrate crimes including kidnappings, robberies and street violence; in fact, minors have contributed to 70 percent of all crime in San Salvador, the capital.<sup>21</sup> In **Mindanao** in the **Philippines**, 78 percent of violent deaths and injuries have been attributed to automatic weapons and handguns.<sup>22</sup>

The presence of landmines in post conflict societies impacts the population for decades following war.<sup>23</sup>

Their presence on agricultural land contributes to death and maiming, but also to food insecurity and malnutrition. In **Cambodia**, for example, while 85,000 families were allocated land following the peace agreement, only 2,435 were actually able to use it due to the presence of landmines.<sup>24</sup> In **Kosovo**, mines were planted near homes, and as a result 300 people were killed and injured in the summer of 1999 alone.<sup>25</sup> Mines laid along roads and railway tracks affect the resettlement of refugees, prohibit the safe delivery of food aid and inhibit transportation to jobs. Landmines may even be used as weapons following conflict, as in **Cambodia** where their availability has led to their use to protect property and even settle disputes.<sup>26</sup>

### Impact of SALW in “Peacetime”<sup>27</sup>

“Used in almost 40 percent of all homicides, but also in assaults, threats, robberies, sexual offences and suicides, firearms are clearly a common tool for perpetrating societal violence...The impacts of gun violence, however, are not limited to fatal and non-fatal firearm injuries. A wide variety of small arm-related crimes—committed either by individuals or by the state—can threaten a community’s physical, economic, social, political, and cultural security.” By region, 36 percent of all firearm homicides and suicides occur in Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 percent in Africa, and 12 percent in North America and in Southeast Asia.

Beyond the direct effect of the violence of SALW, small arms availability and use also undermines socioeconomic development. Continued instability, in part fuelled by SALW, prohibits the rebuilding of infrastructure, trade and the renewal of large- and small-scale food production. In **East Africa**, armed confrontations are reducing future generations of livestock, even at the subsistence level. Armed blockades, banditry, informal roadblocks and raids on convoys leave civilians without food and access to jobs. National governments are then forced to direct resources toward security rather than development, and social welfare and external investment is less likely in such an environment. In **Colombia**, the economic cost of the violence is estimated to be 25 percent of the country’s gross domestic product.<sup>28</sup>

SALW also affect the provision of health and education to the population following war, making it even more difficult to recover from years without these services. Long-term effects of a devastated social welfare system include years without education, higher death rates from treatable diseases and closed schools and clinics. It is estimated that in the most affected areas of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** 68 percent of school-age children are not attending classes, and 211 of 228 schools have been destroyed.<sup>29</sup> In the aftermath of conflict, there are often few doctors and teachers who have survived the war, and reconstructing educational and health facilities is costly, particularly if armed factions continue to wreak havoc. In **Albania**, primary and secondary enrollment rates are 18 percent lower than before the 1997 crisis; youth cite the abundance of weapons and fear of armed violence as reasons they choose not to attend courses.<sup>30</sup>

### COMMUNITY-LEVEL EFFECTS OF SALW

Following war, communities face incredible obstacles to rehabilitation and reconciliation. The prevalence of SALW can lead to a culture of violence in the community, which “privilege[s] violent solutions to peaceful ones; in which individuals seek recourse to physical protection rather than dialogue and reconciliation.”<sup>31</sup> Military leaders may be glorified, and some may carry out perceived obligations to avenge past wrongs. Relationships in the home and community are distorted, particularly as armed, traumatised former combatants, including child soldiers, return to their families. Sons no longer defer to fathers, gender relations are affected and resorting to violence can become commonplace. Respect for indigenous practices and traditional institutions also declines. Domestic violence rises. In **Sri Lanka**, there are numerous accounts of deserted soldiers returning home to inflict abuses on their wives similar to those they experienced during the war.<sup>32</sup>

## 2. WHAT AND WHO IS INVOLVED IN PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT?

**Practical disarmament**, as defined by the UN, is “the collection, control and disposal of arms, especially small arms and light weapons, coupled with restraint over the production, procurement, and transfer of such arms, the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants, demining and

conversion, for the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in areas that have suffered from conflict” (see chapters on DDR and security sector reform).<sup>33</sup>

There are three complex steps in practical disarmament, all of which must be addressed in a comprehensive programme:

1. *controlling supply* through regulation of arms transfers and enforcement of restrictions on SALW ownership and use;
2. *reducing demand* by ensuring public safety, enforcing the law, providing economic opportunities and promoting equal political participation; and
3. *recovering stocks* held by the population and destruction of those arms, as well as surplus government weapons.

### CONTROLLING SUPPLY

SALW come from a variety of sources. They may be produced within a country, or they may be legally imported through government grants or sales and/or commercial sales. They may also be illegally imported through secret arms exports to governments or insurgent groups, black market arms deals or imports from allied armed insurgent groups in other states. They also may be circulated within a country or region through theft of government stocks, looting of various armed groups and exchanges between armed groups and/or the government.

It is the responsibility of national governments to control the flow and supply of SALW into and out of their countries. Governments have begun to do this by:

- developing border and customs controls to combat illicit trafficking;
- building the capacity of police;
- regulating and restricting arms flows and transfers through export criteria, regulation of brokering activities and prosecution of offenders;
- improving tracing and marking procedures to more easily track arms;
- establishing small arms registries;

- maintaining transparency in legal arms deals;
- opening a dialogue with producers and suppliers;
- developing national legislation and administrative procedures for SALW;
- harmonising and implementing such legislation across a region;
- establishing national commissions on SALW that include civil society representatives; and
- effectively enforcing restrictions on possession and use.

International and bilateral agencies often support governments in these efforts. The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, for example, provides capacity building to national agencies to control the flow and supply of illicit SALW. Governments in arms-producing and arms-exporting countries must also impose tighter regulations and enforcement to prevent illicit arms flows.

### REDUCING DEMAND

There are three levels of demand: individual, collective (armed groups) and state/government. Practical disarmament addresses the demand for SALW by individuals and is possibly the most difficult component of the disarmament process. It relies on a comprehensive approach that includes establishing the rule of law, providing economic opportunities and promoting equal rights and political participation. The goal is to eliminate citizens’ perception that they need a weapon. “The demand approach seeks to change the culture of gun possession and gun violence—not an easy task unless the body implementing such policies can also decrease the insecurity that created the problem in the first place.”<sup>35</sup>

Civil society is a crucial partner in this process. Mechanisms to reduce demand for SALW focus on promoting a “culture of peace” through such efforts as:

- public awareness programmes on the dangers of gun possession;
- de-glamourising child soldiers and providing alternative role models for youth; and
- peace education programmes that advocate non-violent resolution of disputes.

Most often, these efforts are combined with an official government weapons collection programme, described below.

### RECOVERING STOCKS

In the context of post conflict peacebuilding, practical disarmament to collect and destroy weapons can be divided into two broad categories:

1. **Disarmament by command:**<sup>36</sup> This occurs immediately after a conflict and is generally mandated within a peace agreement. It includes:
  - DDR programmes that offer armed groups a benefits package as an incentive for them to report to authorities and disarm. In these cases, weapons are usually publicly destroyed as part of the process. “DDR considerably reduces the risk of renewed civil war as well as the possibility that former soldiers and guerrilla fighters will turn to armed banditry.”<sup>37</sup> (See chapter on DDR.)
  - SSR that downsizes the military, including numbers and types of weapons and formulates new security policies and structures (see chapter on SSR).
2. **Voluntary weapons collection:** These programmes may be operated for years following war and are not based on command, but choice. They offer penalties or rewards—“carrot and stick” tactics—to encourage armed civilians to turn in their weapons.

Voluntary weapons collection programmes are conducted in post conflict and peacetime societies from El Salvador to Mali to the US—in almost all cases, the primary goal is crime and violence prevention. They are occasionally operated by the UN or other international agencies, but are generally conducted by national and local governments, often with the support of civil society. In most cases, those turning in weapons remain anonymous and are immune from prosecution (i.e. on a “no questions asked” basis). Incentives for participation are usually offered, such as amnesty, stipends, toys or food. In addition to rewards, crackdowns may follow the programme, whereby policing is increased, weapons are seized and penalties are toughened. Voluntary

weapons collection programmes are most successful as part of a holistic, comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and disarmament. If those possessing arms are dissatisfied with reconstruction attempts, they will be less likely to disarm. Weapons collection programmes are often part of a long-term education and awareness-raising campaign.

### Civil Society and SALW<sup>38</sup>

“Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are leading the charge and creating momentum on the small arms issue. They are working in post conflict societies to collect surplus weapons. NGOs are developing rehabilitation programmes for ex-combatants. In some countries, such as **South Africa**, NGOs are working directly with governments to develop laws regulating small arms.”

There are many types of weapons collection programmes including buy-backs, amnesty periods, weapons for development, lottery prizes, cash, vouchers for food and goods, scholarships, computers or radios, tools for trade and/or agriculture, housing and construction materials, infrastructure projects and public health services. The main types of voluntary weapons collection programmes include:

**Buy-Back:** These refer only to cases where weapons are collected in exchange for cash, often at the black market price or the average price of a legal sale. Through a public campaign, prices are established, the type of guns to be collected are announced, a time limit is set and collection points are identified.

- In **Nicaragua**, the government initiated a gun buy-back programme to encourage combatants not to re-arm. Money, food and micro-enterprise programmes were offered in exchange for weapons. From 1991 to 1993, 142,000 weapons were destroyed through the programme.<sup>39</sup>
- In **Haiti**, the US Army conducted a buy-back programme as part of their stability operation in the early 1990s. The programme provided cash and a “no questions asked” policy to participants and collected 33,000 weapons in 1994 and 1995.<sup>40</sup>

**Exchange:** In some cases, offering cash for programmes can actually lead to increased value and demand for weapons. In response, exchange programmes have been developed, offering goods to those who hand in weapons.

- In **El Salvador**, civil society, the business community, and the Catholic Church initiated the Goods for Guns programme that conducted 23 voluntary weapons collections projects with international, government and private funding.<sup>41</sup> It collected 4,357 firearms—only 8 percent of the number of arms legally imported during that period.<sup>42</sup> Even though it did not collect a huge number of weapons, it raised public awareness of the issue. “The several hundred national newspaper articles that have appeared over the last several years covering everything from legislative reform, public opinion and illicit arms trafficking to the impact of these on society provide evidence that collectively Salvadoran society has taken the issue to heart....”<sup>43</sup>
- In **Mozambique**, the Tools for Arms programme was undertaken by the Christian Council of Churches from 1995 to 2000, collecting weapons in exchange for various tools and machinery. Many of the confiscated weapons were turned into public art and practical objects. Given a lack of will and competence on the part of the government, churches actually ran the project. It collected about 1,000 weapons per year, simultaneously conducting campaigns to advance public support for peace, at a cost of \$350,000 annually.<sup>44</sup>

**Amnesty:** Some weapons collection programmes offer amnesty as the incentive to turn in weapons.

- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) Stabilisation Force has conducted an ongoing weapons collection programme (Operation Harvest) that ensures anonymity and amnesty for those who turn in their guns. In 2000, 5,081 small arms were collected; 2,642 landmines were destroyed; and 2.7 million rounds of 20mm ammunition were gathered.<sup>45</sup>

**Collective Development:** Sometimes called **Weapons for Development**, this type of collection programme has evolved in response to calls for incentives, such as infrastructure projects, that benefit an entire community, not just individuals with guns. This is the

new model often advocated for in post conflict countries in order to avoid rewarding individuals who took up weapons, involve those who did not bear arms and address collective demand factors.

- One of the first of these programmes was initiated by UNDP in **Albania**. The Gramsh Pilot Project was conducted from 1998 to 2000; it collected 7,000 weapons and awarded 12 development projects in one district at a cost of \$800,000. Building upon that pilot, UNDP initiated the Weapons in Exchange for Development project from 2000-2002 on a larger scale; it collected 6,000 weapons and awarded 23 projects in two districts at a cost of \$1,800,000. More recently, UNDP conducted the Weapons in Competition for Development project in all 36 districts of Albania, whereby communities competed for small infrastructure and development projects by turning in SALW. It collected 11,864 weapons from 15 districts and awarded 46 development projects in 5 districts at a cost of \$962,000.<sup>46</sup>

International organisations that fund and support weapons collection programmes include the UN and multilateral and bilateral agencies. Within the UN, approximately 40 member countries comprise the **Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures**, mandated by the General Assembly to grant funding to practical disarmament programmes at the national and local level.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the UN Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures is administered by the **UN Department for Disarmament Affairs** to fund similar projects. UNDP has spent approximately \$10 million in disarmament efforts since 1999.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the Post Conflict Fund of the **World Bank** supports disarmament programmes worldwide, including demining.<sup>49</sup>

In many cases, international organisations, national and local governments and civil society groups partner to make weapons collection programmes successful. In **Macedonia**, the parliament established an agency to run the programme and with the assistance of civil society, the government began a countrywide public awareness campaign regarding the programme itself as well as the problems related to SALW. Local and national government leaders oversaw the turn-in at collection points, and UNDP offered

lottery tickets to each participant to win a car, television, household goods, textbooks and scholarships. Nearly 6,000 weapons were collected over 45 days.<sup>50</sup>

There are numerous challenges associated with weapons collection programmes. Policy-makers and practitioners have identified several important lessons:<sup>51</sup>

- **Prior assessment**—It is important to know the starting point (number of weapons in existence) so that impact can be measured.
- **Coherence**—Parties involved often have varying priorities, objectives, process plans and target actors for programmes, which can create more problems than are solved. It is important to clearly define objectives and maintain transparency throughout the process.
- **Incentives and Sanctions**—Whether to provide incentives or penalties—and which ones—can be a major stumbling block. Particularly controversial is the concern that offering rewards for arms may actually increase their value and demand, causing a host of other problems.
- **Combination with other efforts**—An effective weapons collection programme must be conducted within a comprehensive peace and stability framework.

### Strengths and Weaknesses in Weapons Collection Programmes

“Experience tells us that weapons collection programmes suffer from two critical weaknesses: they do not effectively disarm criminals, nor do they significantly reduce the number of weapons in a specific area...[However,] they aim to influence a change in culture and attitudes towards the role of guns in society...Collection programmes can consolidate relationships between civil society groups and create a model for collaboration in the future...[and they] can effectively support, reinforce, or trigger additional initiatives aimed at improving human security and development in general.” —United Nations Development Programme, 2002<sup>52</sup>

The success or failure of weapons collection programmes can be measured qualitatively and quantitatively. General indicators of a successful programme include less violence, fewer visible guns, greater freedom of movement, new development projects and a growth in civil society organisations. Quantitative indicators include a reduction in crime as reflected in statistics, an increase in the price of a weapon (indicating fewer in circulation) and “recovery statistics” (a percentage that equals the quantity of weapons recovered divided by the estimated number of weapons in the community).<sup>53</sup>

### MINE ACTION

The destruction of landmines is possibly the most well-known and well-supported form of practical disarmament. Because of the cost in human life, decreased access to land for food production and the impact on infrastructure, the international community has been more willing to recognise the problem and fund solutions. However, for a variety of reasons, landmine clearance is an ongoing, very slow and expensive process.

**Mine action** includes mine clearance; mine awareness programmes for civilians; rehabilitation services to victims; advocacy; and destruction of stockpiles by national governments as required by international treaties.<sup>54</sup> A directory of international standards for all aspects of mine action, compiled by the **UN Mine Action Service**, is available at [www.mineactionstandards.org](http://www.mineactionstandards.org).

**Mine clearance:** Also known as **demining**, there are two major types of mine clearance:

1. **military**—when mines are removed during war as part of military tactics; and
2. **humanitarian**—when mines are removed in the post conflict environment as a strategy to protect civilians.

Demining is an expensive and very slow process; it takes 100 times longer to remove a mine than it does to place one and costs up to \$1,000 to remove a mine that costs as little as \$3 to make.<sup>55</sup> There are several steps involved in humanitarian demining, which is nearly always conducted by trained personnel with appropriate equipment.

- **Surveying, mapping and marking:** This includes identification of mined areas through “Level One” surveys, information gathering and interviews. “Level Two” technical surveys are then conducted to focus on the mined areas. “Level Three” surveys determine the highest priority areas to begin demining and marking other mined areas.
- **Ground preparation:** In some cases, vegetation and growth must be cut back—very slowly and carefully—in advance of demining.
- **Manual and mechanical clearance:** In pairs of two, manual deminers use hand-held metal detectors, probes and dogs to locate mines. Sometimes mechanical mining devices can be used, but manual work is always required.
- **Deactivation and removal:** In some cases, it is recommended that mines be moved to another location to be deactivated.
- **Destruction:** Most often, mines are destroyed with a small explosive when and where they are found.

Many different actors are involved in demining, including international humanitarian organisations, the UN, bilateral agencies, national governments and civil society. The UN provides support to demining through the **Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** and the **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, which includes a Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance. In **Afghanistan**, the United States provided \$3.2 million to the NGO Halo Trust in 2002 alone, which employs 1,200 Afghan mine clearance specialists.<sup>56</sup> In **Cambodia**, the UN mission and the government created the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) in 1992 with support from UNDP; as of 1998, it employed 3,000 staff with demining platoons comprising the largest share of staff. As of 2003, CMAC had destroyed 181,659 anti-personnel mines, 750,887 unexploded ordnance and 273,732,034 fragments of weapons.<sup>57</sup> In **Sri Lanka**, supported by UNDP, the government has conducted mine clearance programmes jointly with the armed opposition Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in conflict-affected areas.

Increasingly, efforts are being made to involve the local community in gathering information about mined areas and determining their priorities for mine clearance and action.<sup>58</sup> For example, the **Mine**

**Advisory Group** meets with community leaders—men, women, and children—as a first step in their demining process. In **Angola**, local personnel were recruited and trained, and a community liaison officer was appointed to keep the communication channels open with the population.

**Mine Awareness**, also called **mine-risk education**: The goal of these programmes is to reduce the risk of civilian injury by landmines through awareness-raising campaigns, education and training, usually at the local level. International NGOs, the UN and national governments often partner to carry out these programmes. For example, in 2004, the **UN Children’s Fund**, the **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, the **Zambian** government and the **Zambia Anti-Personnel Mine Action Centre** partnered to provide mine-risk education programmes in six refugee camps for Angolan refugees and Zambians alike; they included participatory activities, teaching materials and one-on-one education.

**Victims’ Assistance**: An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people are killed or injured by landmines annually.<sup>59</sup> The UN has developed guidelines for victim assistance programmes and publishes the **Landmine Survivors and Victim Assistance Newsletter** three times each year. With support from the UN and others, a variety of international humanitarian organisations are devoted to assisting disabled victims. The **Landmine Survivors Network** employs community outreach workers—victims themselves—to empower and support landmine victims. **Save the Children** runs the **Social Reintegration Project** in **Afghanistan** to provide long-term assistance to child victims and their families. The **US Agency for International Development** has established the **Leahy War Victims Fund** to provide prosthetics, wheelchairs and other necessities for those disabled by landmines; NGOs and government agencies can apply for grants from the Fund.<sup>60</sup>

**Stockpile Destruction**: Since the **Ottawa Convention**,<sup>61</sup> the international treaty mandating the destruction of landmine fields and stockpiles, took effect in 1999, the number of landmine producers has decreased from 54 to 16.<sup>62</sup> As of July 2004, 143 states were parties to the treaty.<sup>63</sup> Of those, 68 had completely destroyed their stocks, and 48 more officially

declared they had no more stocks.<sup>64</sup> In addition, 37 states have enacted legislation to implement the treaty within their countries, and 26 more are in the process of passing legislation.<sup>65</sup>

Militaries are usually responsible for the destruction of stockpiled landmines, and international organisations support the efforts of national governments in a variety of ways. In fact, Article 6 of the Ottawa Convention states that countries in need of financial assistance for stockpile destruction can appeal to other state parties. In addition, other support is available to governments, such as UNDP regional training workshops to build the capacity of national mine action programmes. The World Bank, in **Sri Lanka** for example, funds mine action capacity-building programmes for the government at national and district levels.

### 3. WHY SHOULD WOMEN BE INVOLVED IN PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT?

Quite simply, practical disarmament must involve women because they are impacted by SALW on a daily basis and are stakeholders in peace and stability.

#### WOMEN AS COMBATANTS

As combatants, women are known to carry weapons, including SALW. They have been involved in violent conflict in countries ranging from El Salvador to the Sudan. Often excluded from formal DDR programmes, women and girls may continue to harbour weapons in the post conflict period. Thus, they may participate in weapons collection programmes and other forms of practical disarmament, turning over their weapons to authorities for destruction.

#### WOMEN AS ARMS SUPPLIERS

In some countries, women may participate in the smuggling and hiding of illegal arms whether through coercion, for money or other rewards or as part of their activities as supporters of a given side in the conflict. Women are often less suspect, so may be used in this way. In **Kuwait**, during the Iraq invasion in the early 1990s, women carried weapons for the resistance fighters under their traditional clothing. Insurgents in **Bangladesh** have used young girls to

smuggle weapons through coercion or for payment. Women may also collect arms informally, holding them for safekeeping until the war is over. In the **Central African Republic**, women often served as “gun collectors” following the flight of mutineers, later turning them in to the UNDP voluntary weapons collection programme in exchange for vocational training. Following war, women may continue to have information on the location of arms caches and routes.

#### WOMEN AS VICTIMS

Women are victimised by legal and illicit SALW in conflict-ridden areas and “peaceful” societies, and are much less likely to be gun owners than men. During war, guns may be used to kill, but also to facilitate other forms of abuse, including gender-based violence, which disproportionately affects women. Following war, the presence of guns in the home often contributes to more severe forms of domestic violence. In fact, women often view a gun in the home as a risk, rather than a form of protection, an outlook more common among men.

Landmines also continue to affect women following war. Given the division of labour between the sexes, women may be particularly affected by landmines if their tasks include gathering firewood or water, for example, while men may be more affected while walking to jobs along public roads.

If disabled, women may face more difficulty at home and in public than men. Disabled women and girls are often considered a burden by their families, and may encounter cultural, religious or economic obstacles to medical assistance. Disabled women may be faced with divorce and the responsibility for children. The unemployment rate for disabled women in developing countries is nearly 100 percent.<sup>66</sup>

#### WOMEN AS CARETAKERS

When SALW continue to circulate following war, family and community members may fall victim to gun violence or to landmine explosions. In **Angola**, there are an estimated 10 million landmines and 70,000 amputees, including 8,000 children.<sup>67</sup> In many cases, it is women who must bear the additional burden of caring for the sick and disabled.

## Why Women Work for Disarmament

“Indeed, women are often to be found at the origin of initiatives for reconciliation, mediation and conflict resolution, even if they do not show up at the negotiation table. In peace negotiations, as in declarations of war, men are more numerous than women. This is where the link between women as builders of peace and the struggle against small arms becomes evident. These so-called light weapons have killed more than 4 million people in the last ten years. They have become the instrument of choice in most armed conflicts, and the UN Secretary General has rightly described them as weapons of mass destruction. After wars, they are the tools of banditry, crime and conjugal violence. Hence, women can no longer limit themselves to repairing the damage caused by conflict, as in humanitarian action, demobilisation and reintegration. Today they are obliged to wage an additional battle, the one to eliminate light weapons.” —Christiane Agboton-Johnson, President, Mouvement contre les Armes Légères en Afrique de l’Ouest.<sup>68</sup>

### 4. HOW DO WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT?

Women have individually and collectively used a variety of approaches to enhance practical disarmament, making their homes and communities safer.

#### WOMEN AS ADVOCATES

At the international and regional levels, in post conflict and peacetime societies, women have been the primary voices for eliminating SALW, including landmines. They have lobbied for international and national mechanisms to end the proliferation of SALW.

- The **Women’s Network of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)** coordinates organisations that work on issues concerning women and gun violence to promote their participation in international efforts and legislation to combat SALW.<sup>69</sup> In addition, women fill the majority of positions in the IANSA Secretariat and on the board.
- In 1997, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Jody Williams, then coordinator of the **International Campaign to Ban Landmines**, whose global advocacy and efforts were credited with the adoption of the Ottawa Convention.
- In 1999, women from **Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea** attended a civil society meeting convened by the **Economic Community of West African States** to discuss the recent arms moratorium.<sup>70</sup> They formally submitted the **Bamako Declaration for Peace by the Women of West African Civil**

**Society** in which the women “...firmly reaffirm our resolve to contribute to efforts to combat the illicit and controlled possession of small arms and light weapons....”<sup>71</sup>

At the national level, women also advocate for legislation and enforcement of laws to end the proliferation of SALW.

- **Maendeleo Ya Wanawawake**, the largest **Kenyan** women’s organisation with over one million members, lobbies for international and national legislation to eliminate SALW as part of their campaign to protect their communities from cross-border cattle raids and increased urban violence.
- **Gun-Free South Africa**, a women-led initiative, raises awareness of SALW, enhances public debate and lobbies for change in the country’s policies. In response, the parliament passed the **Firearms Control Act** in 2000 that imposes stricter controls and regulation.
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, women have demanded disarmament as a necessary first step in the peace process.
- The **Ban Landmines Campaign/Nepal** is operated from within the **Women’s Development Society** and therefore takes a gendered approach to its programmes, including lobbying and advocacy. Since March 2003, they have pushed for inclusion of a ban on landmines in the ceasefire code of conduct between the government and Communist armed groups.

### WOMEN AS WEAPONS COLLECTORS

Increasingly, women are playing important roles in weapons collection. Whether informally or in partnership with international organisations and government, their knowledge of the location of arms, the pressure they can put on their families and communities and their organising skills have led to increased involvement in providing security through disarmament.

- In the late 1990s, the **Liberian Women's Initiative** pressed for disarmament as a precursor to elections. They advertised for women to join the movement across the country and stationed women at every arms collection point. The women encouraged the fighters to hand in their weapons and offered them water and sandwiches. Estimates indicate that some 80 percent of weapons were collected in 1996 prior to the election.<sup>72</sup> Although Liberia returned to war and another peace agreement is currently in place, women remain active on issues of DDR, pressuring the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to include women's needs and concerns in the programme.
- In **Bougainville**, women's organisations have trained women to walk alone in the jungle to seek out and persuade fighters to disarm. Similarly, in the highlands of **Papua New Guinea**, women have informally intervened in tribal disputes, offering gifts of money, cigarettes and soft drinks to successfully induce fighters to lay down their arms.
- In **Albania**, local women's groups, supported by UNIFEM, played an important role in the UNDP collective collection programmes discussed above. They organised public awareness events and capacity-building workshops for women's organisations to address the specific challenges and concerns that the presence of weapons poses to women. Subsequently, through local conferences and rallies, they raised public awareness of the importance and need for the initiative, encouraging many to hand over their arms.
- In **Mali**, women were credited for organising the first public burning of arms to launch a successful UNDP weapons collection programme. The arms were burned on March 27, 1996, in Timbuktu in a public ceremony called the Flame of Peace. "The Flame of Peace was a powerful symbol of national

reconciliation. It also highlighted the problems created by the proliferation of small arms and gave rise to several community-based micro-disarmament projects. Finally, it inspired disarmament initiatives in the region, such as the West African Moratorium on Small Arms of 1998.<sup>73</sup> An annual nationwide celebration continues to mark the important event and the ongoing policy against SALW in Mali.

### WOMEN AS DEMINERS

Given the extent to which women—and their children and families—are affected by landmines, it is not surprising that women have shown initiative in mine clearance. In some cases, however, they are not properly trained and are operating informally, at great personal risk. In other cases, women are part of trained demining teams.

- In 1999, a team of ethnic Albanian women in **Kosovo** underwent five weeks of training in mine clearance provided by Norwegian People's Aid, where childcare was provided. They received protective clothing and appropriate equipment and were paid a monthly salary. The project director noted "the patience and commitment of the women make some of them much better than men at clearing mines."<sup>74</sup>
- In 1996, the Mines Advisory Group began hiring and training women deminers. An all-female mine action team in **Cambodia** provides "a model for the whole of Cambodian society, empowering the women and encouraging strong bonds between them."<sup>75</sup> A mobile team, the women range in age from 22 to 45 and earn incomes that allow them to support their extended families.
- The first **Sri Lankan** woman deminer graduated from a training course in 2002 and joined a formerly all-male demining team of the Sri Lankan National Mine Action Office.<sup>76</sup>
- In **Afghanistan** in 2001, two women in a rural village began to collect and detonate US cluster bombs—the most dangerous form of unexploded ordnance—following the death of two children. They collected 60 to 70 cluster bombs closest to the village and detonated them nearby at night.<sup>77</sup>

### WOMEN AS LINKS TO THE COMMUNITY

There are three important ways that women contribute

to practical disarmament through their role in the home and the community.

1. *Women know the situation, the needs and the concerns of the community and are willing to work with officials to create long-term solutions for stability.*

Women often have important information on numbers and types of weapons within a community and the attitudes toward them. They sometimes know the location of arms caches and routes at the local level, and they are aware of traditions regarding weapons use. They may choose to secretly turn in their family members' weapons, as has been documented in countries as diverse as **Cambodia** and the **Central African Republic**. Women also know the needs of the community and can help determine which type of weapons collection programme would be most appropriate, whom it should be targeted to reach, when it should be conducted and how information about it should be disseminated. Women can also identify mined areas that others might neglect.

- The Mano River Women exchanged information on guerrilla movements, including arms transfers, within and across the borders of **Sierra Leone**, **Liberia** and **Guinea**. Their knowledge allowed them to act as facilitators of negotiations, encouraging individuals and groups to lay down their arms.
- In **Yemen**, male deminers are customarily only allowed to talk to men in the community, which has led to little and often incorrect information, as women are responsible for agricultural production. When female officials from the US embassy spoke to women in the communities, many additional landmines were cleared.<sup>78</sup>

2. *Women informally work for security in the home and community.*

Women often have important influence in the home and community. In many countries, they exert “moral authority” as mothers to encourage their children and families to turn in their weapons. They are most likely to pass on relevant information on the dangers of SALW, especially landmines, to their children and families.

- In **Cambodia**, women raise awareness about the effects of gun violence over the dinner table, noting news stories they have heard about accidents or laws regarding weapons. They also advise their relatives of non-violent ways to resolve disputes.
- There are numerous accounts of women in the Mano River region of **Sierra Leone**, **Liberia** and **Guinea** encouraging their family members and friends to turn in their weapons. Their strategies were effective not only with their relatives, but with rebels and child soldiers they sought out to persuade to disarm.
- **Sudanese** women have noted that, once they joined together as women, they were better able to persuade male leaders. Organisations such as the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace continue to work against the effects of SALW.
- Operation Harvest in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, discussed above, deliberately demonstrated the negative impact of SALW on women as part of their public campaign. Major Jeffrey White of NATO noted that this tactic “resonate[d] very powerfully with women and...even with many men. I would say it is demonstrably the best approach overall to these types of efforts.”<sup>79</sup>

Women also rehabilitate victims of SALW, individually in their homes and as social workers and nurses. They bring victims to the hospital, notify relatives, provide financial support and assist in finding legal restitution. When women themselves are victimised, they need targeted attention for their specific problems.

3. *Women formally work for security in the home and community.*

Women's organisations are active in concrete ways to mitigate the effects of SALW on their communities. They intervene in violent disputes, participate in community forums to provide input into programmes, raise awareness of the violent effects of SALW, educate and train youth and community leaders in non-violent conflict resolution and create buy-in within the community for weapons collection.

- In **Cambodia**, women have physically intervened in local disputes involving weapons. To provide security, they organise night patrols, gather to protest, and notify local authorities.

- In **Bougainville**, the Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency provides sewing machines to communities that turn in weapons.<sup>80</sup> This generates income to reduce the need for armed crime and reduces the community’s dependence on the production and sale of alcohol as their sole source of income. Alcohol contributes to a very high rate of domestic violence in the country. The innovative strategy of this women’s organisation tackles two important problems simultaneously.
- In **Angola**, the Mines Advisory Group holds women-only meetings to ensure women’s priorities for mine clearance are heard.
- A women’s organisation in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, Collectif des Femmes Actrices du Développement et de Défense des Droits de L’Enfant, Femmes et Mères d’Afrique, runs a sensitisation programme for provincial and district-level leaders on the dangers related to landmines. In 2004, they aim to train and distribute materials to 180 community development specialists.<sup>81</sup>
- Women in **Cambodia** are primary participants in weapons collection; at a recent public burning of weapons ceremony, 90 percent of participants were women and children.<sup>82</sup>

In some cases, women have received local training and other forms of formal education from the government or NGOs. In many cases “women who are very actively involved in micro-disarmament action and awareness-raising simply rely on their common sense, their innate intelligence, their customs and traditional forms of conflict management.”<sup>83</sup> The female head of the **Movement Against Light Weapons in West Africa** designed a training proposal for women to take action more formally on SALW, and a woman within the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs was actively proposing a similar project at the time of publication.

## 5. WHAT INTERNATIONAL POLICIES EXIST?

A global movement involving governments, the UN, international organisations, and 1,400 NGOs led to the 1999 adoption of the **Ottawa Convention**,<sup>84</sup> also known as the **Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention**

and officially as the **Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and Their Destruction**.<sup>85</sup> It mandates that all state parties destroy their stockpiles of landmines within four years and clear all landmine fields within ten years. It also requires governments, when possible, to provide assistance to mine clearance efforts, mine awareness, stockpile destruction and victim rehabilitation. Governments issue annual, public reports, known as “Article 7 Reports” to the Secretary-General on their national legislation, stockpile numbers and progress in mine action.<sup>86</sup>

The Ottawa Convention, like other international treaties, is designed for the engagement and signature of states only. It does not contain any provisions dealing with non-state actors, nor does it provide them with the possibility to express adherence. After significant advocacy efforts by organisations such as Geneva Call, as of 2004, 26 non-state armed groups had agreed to a total ban on landmine use.<sup>87</sup>

An earlier, alternate landmines treaty that some governments choose to adhere to because of its weaker language is the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**. Officially known as the **Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**, it was open for signature in 1981, and its protocols prohibit the use of mines against civilians in war and internal conflict.<sup>88</sup> Neither landmine treaty mentions gender or women. But the 1995 **Beijing Platform for Action** explicitly recognised that women suffer from landmines and urged governments to take humanitarian mine action. The UN Mine Action Service is coordinating **Guidelines for Integrating Gender into Mine Action Programmes** that are scheduled for release in 2004.<sup>89</sup>

In October 2000, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 to address the issue of women, peace and security broadly and also focus on disarmament in particular. The resolution “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants.”<sup>90</sup> It also calls upon organisations to adopt, “measures that support local women’s peace

initiatives... and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement.” This international law can be an important advocacy tool to ensure women’s participation in practical disarmament initiatives.

Early efforts to forge international policy on SALW include a series of UN General Assembly resolutions<sup>91</sup> and the 1997 Secretary-General’s report on practical disarmament.<sup>92</sup> In 2001, the **Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition**, also called the **Firearms Protocol**, was adopted as a supplement to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. As the first legally binding international convention on SALW, it provided a system of government authorisation for marking weapons at the point of manufacture, import and transfer.

Momentum continued to build on the small arms issue until the July 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Civil society was a primary participant in documenting and identifying critical issues for the conference agenda, and more than 40 NGOs addressed the conference at a special session.<sup>93</sup> Their role was acknowledged in the **Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (also known as the PoA)**.<sup>94</sup> Although the PoA is incomplete and non-binding, it is now the most useful advocacy tool on SALW issues.

States that are signatories to the PoA have committed to a variety of activities, including the destruction of surplus weapons stock, DDR programmes, the encouragement of arms moratoria, maintenance of adequate records of gun manufacturers and owners and the inclusion of civil society organisations in efforts to prevent small arms proliferation. The document lacks references to women or gender, with one exception in the preamble, noting the “...devastating consequences [of SALW] on children, many of whom are victims of armed conflict or are forced to become child soldiers, as well as the negative impact on women and the elderly....”<sup>95</sup>

The content of the PoA was debated extensively before its adoption. Some states, such as **Norway** and the **Netherlands**, continue to build upon the PoA’s

foundation to advocate internationally for more aggressive restrictions, including regulation of arms brokers and the marking and tracing of weapons, which may eventually lead to binding instruments. Civil society groups are also working to extend existing commitments. **IANSA**, **Amnesty International** and **Oxfam** have launched the **Control Arms** initiative, which promotes an instrument called the **Arms Trade Treaty** to prevent arms transfers to states with poor human rights records. **International Alert** is currently working in partnership with the **UN Department for Disarmament Affairs** to establish priorities for women’s needs and concerns to be integrated into the revisions of the PoA in 2006.

The UN held its **Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms** in July 2003, to follow up on the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference. This meeting was held to assess the national, regional and global implementation of the PoA.<sup>96</sup> Civil society again played a very active role in proceedings, with NGOs reporting from countries as varied as Armenia, Costa Rica, Kenya and Sri Lanka. The second Biennial Meeting is planned for July 2005, and the UN Review conference—the final meeting to measure the PoA’s effectiveness and to initiate any further UN action on SALW—will occur in July 2006. Civil society and women’s groups in particular are encouraged to participate.<sup>97</sup>

Regionally, various policies have been put in place to control the proliferation of SALW. In 1997, the **Organization of American States** adopted controls on the manufacturing and transfer of small arms,<sup>98</sup> followed by several subregional agreements including the **Antigua Declaration**<sup>99</sup> in 2000 in Central America and the **Andean Plan**<sup>100</sup> in 2003. The **European Union** adopted a Code of Conduct in 1998 that restricts arms deals, including landmines, to conflict areas.<sup>101</sup> In 2000, the **Organization of African Unity** adopted the **Bamako Declaration**, which provides a common agenda for the continent to combat the proliferation and circulation of SALW.<sup>102</sup> Subregional mechanisms include the 1998 **Economic Community of West African States Moratorium**,<sup>103</sup> the 2001 **Southern African Development Community Protocol**<sup>104</sup> and the 2004 **Nairobi Protocol**<sup>105</sup> for the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. In 2000, police from all Pacific Island states signed the **Nadi Framework**, which provides a legal framework for a common approach to weapons control.<sup>106</sup>

If the mention of women appears anywhere in these regional declarations, it is solely in reference to their victimisation. Much more must be done internationally to increase awareness of the ways in which women contribute to practical disarmament and to ensure their participation.

## **6. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?**

1. Educate family members of the dangers of SALW, including landmines, and urge them to turn in their weapons.
2. Begin campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of disarmament and participate in all formal weapons collection efforts.
3. Initiate and/or participate in community forums to ensure that local leaders, representatives of international organisations and others preparing for practical disarmament hear your views and perspectives.
4. Lobby national governments to sign important international treaties on SALW, including landmines, and to implement the requirements of those treaties.
5. Design innovative projects and programmes that provide community incentives for former combatants and women fighters, in particular, to disarm; promote awareness of the dangers of SALW; deliver aid and assistance to victims.
6. When involved in weapons collection and mine clearance, work with trained partners and experts to ensure your safety.
7. Join together with other women's organisations to draw on each other's strengths, exchange ideas, coordinate efforts and enable your projects to be most effective. Consider connecting with the Women's Network of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) as part of this effort.
8. Make your presence and activities known to government authorities and international agencies involved in disarmament; in many cases, they are anxious to partner with local organisations.
9. Seek out funding sources, particularly for landmine victim assistance, as there are many international groups dedicated to supporting efforts in this area.
10. Connect with international organisations including the UN, development agencies and civil society that focus on SALW that might provide training, materials and programme models.

## WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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## ACRONYMS

CMAC	Cambodian Mine Action Centre
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PoA	Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

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