

# Recommendations to advance the Women, Peace & Security agenda in Guatemala and Central America

UNSCR 1325, ARMED VIOLENCE REDUCTION



**GAAV & IEPADES Regional Workshop**  
*Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and Preventing and Reducing Armed Violence*  
**24-25 April, Guatemala City**



Contributors



## OVERVIEW

Many countries suffering severely from the burden of armed violence, and some undergoing prolonged post-conflict recovery, do not yet have national plans on UNSCR 1325.<sup>1</sup> This includes countries in Central America affected by violent conflicts and suffering high rates of lethal deaths and gun violence in the aftermath.<sup>2</sup> Structural injustices, negative gender norms, and the proliferation of small arms are all dimensions which perpetuate violence, creating some of the highest femicide rates in the world.<sup>3</sup>

On this basis, the **Global Alliance on Armed Violence (GAAV)** and **Instituto de Enseñanza Para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES)**, a member of **GAAV's Gender and Armed Violence Working Group**, joined together to host a regional workshop on 24-25 April, on *'Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and Preventing and Reducing Armed Violence'*. This forum provided a timely opportunity for dialogue on Guatemala's draft national action plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325/Women Peace & Security (WPS). The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Share experiences from Central America and other regions on ways to tackle gender-based armed violence challenges;
- Explore ways NAPs on UNSCR 1325 can address the continuum of violence against women from conflict to post-conflict periods;
- Explore ways to integrate AVRP provisions within NAPs on the Women, Peace & Security agenda, including small arms control, with a focus on Guatemala's draft NAP;
- Discuss ways to implement the Women, Peace & Security agenda at regional levels in Central America, linking to existing security frameworks; and
- Build knowledge of regional civil society organisations on technical and practical aspects of developing NAPs on UNSCR 1325, and strengthen networks for continued knowledge sharing.

Forty participants took part in the workshop including: civil society groups from the Central America representing El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, as well as stakeholders from South America; national CSOs from Guatemala; an expert member of the GAAV Gender and Armed Violence Working Group from the Philippines; international community representatives from the UN system and Switzerland's Embassy to Guatemala; and national government stakeholders including representatives from Guatemala's Ministries for Security, Justice and Foreign Affairs, the National Civil Police, the Attorney General's office, the Institute for Penal Public Defence and the Presidential Secretariat of Women. At the regional level, representatives from the Parliament of Central America were also present.

Recommendations to advance the Women, Peace & Security agenda in Guatemala and Central America that emerged from the workshop are consolidated in this document.

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<sup>1</sup> See Peace Women for full list of 43 NAPs on UNSCR 1325 <http://www.peacewomen.org/naps/list-of-naps>

<sup>2</sup> For instance, countries not included in the above list; El Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela, Guatemala, and other countries experiencing high levels of lethal armed violence as per the Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011 report summary: <http://tinyurl.com/c8zncmx>

<sup>3</sup> More than half of the 25 countries with high and very high femicide rates are in the Americas: 4 in the Caribbean, 4 in Central America, and 6 in South America, as per Femicide: A Global Problem, Small Arms Survey: <http://tinyurl.com/88gat4n>

## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The **Global Alliance on Armed Violence (GAAV)** brings together 150 actors in 55 countries working to prevent and reduce armed violence worldwide. The vision of the alliance is a world where people and communities are safe from armed violence. Its mission is to provide a global platform that helps to improve the quality, impact and visibility of local, national, regional and international initiatives to prevent and reduce armed violence. GAAV has three pillars of work to meet this purpose: thematic and geographic working groups; knowledge exchange and capacity building; and advocacy and communications.

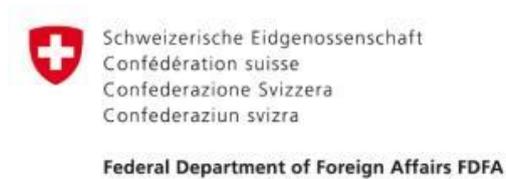
Visit: [www.allianceonarmedviolence.org](http://www.allianceonarmedviolence.org)

**Instituto de Enseñanza Para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES)** is a non-profit civil society organization, founded in January 1990 to promote peace building and democracy in Guatemala and the region. IEPADES is committed to social justice and human security. The organisation previously helped develop a human security model from the *Framework Treaty on Democratic Security of Central America* (1991) and the *Peace Agreements* (1996) in Guatemala. Its work today aims to reduce violence, increase access to justice and strengthen gender equality. IEPADES supports citizen engagement and community self-management through decision-making processes at local, national and regional levels.

Visit: [www.iepades.com](http://www.iepades.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## OUTCOMES

Via workshop presentations and interactive sessions participants explored how to advance the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda at national and regional levels. Ways to integrate provisions from complementary instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as its General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, and the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2117 on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) were considered.

National level discussions focused on Guatemala's draft national action plan (NAP) on the WPS agenda. Regional level recommendations focused on broader coordination and integration of the WPS agenda via security frameworks in Central America, including the Central American Integration System (SICA).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### National level implementation of the Women, Peace & Security agenda in Guatemala

#### PARTICIPATION

##### **Increase women's representation in political parties and government institutions**

- It was recommended that the State should promote affirmative action to achieve equity in political bodies and government institutions. Legal reforms should include amendments to Article 212 of the Electoral Law for political parties<sup>4</sup>. Institutional policies in the justice and security sectors should include provisions to achieve parity and to mainstream gender perspectives.
- The State must assume its responsibility to ensure the human right to security, and allocate budgets and internal policies which promote the participation of women in all matters related to security.

##### **Strengthen women's participation in local and municipal councils**

- A mechanism should be created in municipal and local councils to promote women's inclusion in the prevention and resolution of community level conflicts and disagreements within governmental bodies. It should also promote the integration of gender perspectives within legal reforms.
- A review of legal frameworks and decision-making structures within the urban and rural development councils is recommended to ensure women's increased participation in security and peace building initiatives.

##### **Increase training on UNSCR 1325, WPS & women's human rights**

- Increase training opportunities available on UNSCR 1325, the broader WPS agenda, and gender and women's human rights. Training programmes should support the development of government and non-government stakeholders' understanding of WPS and the advancement of women's representation at all levels of decision-making for peace and security matters. A governing interagency body such as MIMPAZ should monitor implementation of training programmes.<sup>5</sup>

#### PROTECTION

##### **Integrate Peace Accord commitments within institutions and policy to protect women's rights**

- The implementation of WPS in Guatemala should combine commitments of the Peace Accords with institutions built after the agreements aimed at defending and promoting the rights of women, gender equality and the prevention of violence.

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<sup>4</sup> Article 212 of the Electoral Law refers to the application and registration of candidates. This article should be reformed through quotas for women and indigenous people.

<sup>5</sup> MIMPAZ is the Spanish acronym for the government interagency body in Guatemala tasked with implementing the women, peace and security agenda. Created in 2012, it convenes government departments and ministries working on issues of peace, security, justice and gender and leads engagement with civil society.

## **End impunity for sexual violence during the armed conflict**

- A NAP on WPS in Guatemala should be a productive tool to help end impunity for violence against women committed in both conflict and post-conflict periods. To this end, law enforcement agencies of Guatemala must reject any action that promotes amnesty for those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the internal armed conflict and facilitate access to justice for women victims of sexual violence.
- The NAP on WPS should integrate provisions from CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, which supports Guatemalan women's struggles aimed at ending impunity for gender crimes committed during the armed conflict.<sup>6</sup> CEDAW commitments and implementation should complement the NAP on WPS, tackling gender impacts of the armed conflict and dealing with armed groups in the post-conflict period.
- To end impunity for past crimes and present violations of women's rights it is necessary to ensure the independence of the judiciary. In this regard, deep concerns were expressed about the sanctions against Judge Jassmin Barrios who presided over the genocide trial last year.

## **Access to justice and the right to truth, memory, & compensation**

- Regarding the right to truth, memory, and compensation contained in the draft plan, it is recommended to include the dignity of victims, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition by the eradication of impunity, by strengthening the rule of law and promoting the prosecution of those responsible for the crimes committed in the armed conflict.
- One of the working groups recommended a fifth pillar on the right to truth, memory, dignity and compensation, recommending that the justice system be strengthened via integrating gender perspectives in judicial processes. This pillar should identify injured women and children, who have not been compensated for the damage caused during the armed conflict, and provide support through formal or informal justice mechanisms.
- Policies should be strengthened to provide redress for women survivors of human rights violations during the armed conflict, including the National Compensation Programme, through a comprehensive care programme for conflict affected women. Special measures should be taken to protect privacy and ensure survivors are not re-victimised by such processes.

## **Integrate a gender-based understanding of 'security'**

- It was suggested that Guatemala's draft NAP on Women, Peace and Security does not sufficiently conceptualise the issue of security from a gender-based perspective. A more holistic approach is recommended, beyond the focus on the security sector, which integrates women's experiences and perceptions of security in both public and private spheres.

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<sup>6</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, see: <http://tinyurl.com/pnttz26>

- Given that women often bear the pain and the burden of supporting families and households when male family members die or suffer injuries from armed conflict and armed violence, a NAP should recognise the impacts of conflict and post-conflict armed violence on women, including their economic security.

### **Prevent violence against women and address the continuum of violence from conflict to post-conflict periods**

- The NAP should recognise the continuum of violence against women, from conflict to post-conflict periods, and address the structural injustices and gender inequality which perpetuates violence against women.
- To ensure the protection of women's rights and the prevention of violence in post-conflict periods, a NAP should recognise and strengthen efforts to stop femicide, rape, kidnappings and other forms of armed and gender-based violence against women.
- A NAP should promote the strengthening of security and justice institutions to deal with gender-based crimes and violence against women. For example, the justice sector should be expanded to include specialised courts throughout the country to tackle cases of femicide. The office of the Attorney General has approved a stronger policy on gender equality and gender crimes which should be widely implemented and monitored.
- To reduce VAW, a NAP should promote the implementation of gender policy within the National Civil Police (NCP), since it is the institution to which women most frequently report incidences of violence. Institutional strengthening is also needed, given that the NCP is not currently prepared to meet its obligations in the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women.
- To change social norms which perpetuate violence against women, a NAP should also promote programmes in the education system which address impacts and drivers of VAW, including gender equality.

### **GENDER PERSPECTIVES**

#### **Integrate gender perspectives in peace processes and security and justice sectors**

- A NAP should ensure gender perspectives are accounted for in all institutions for peace, security and justice, so that they are able to implement national and international laws that protect the human rights of women. This requires the participation of representatives of women's organizations in decision-making for institutional reforms.
- Gender should be mainstreamed in various areas of operations in the security sector including recruitment and hiring, people management, training, and workplace facilities.
- It is recommended that the monitoring mechanism of the NAP be strengthened by compliance with the gender classifier through the Technical Department of Finance, Ministry of Finance Guatemala, the Presidential Secretariat for Women of Guatemala, and the Secretariat for National Planning and Programming.

## **PREVENTION**

### **Support women's leadership in conflict prevention**

- It is recommended that the NAP promotes the role of women leaders in the prevention of conflicts and armed violence at community to national levels. Training on early warning and early response (EWER), conflict resolution and mediation should support women's capacities to fulfil leadership roles.
- NAP provisions should also support peace building initiatives by indigenous communities and ensure indigenous women participate in the mechanisms for implementing the Peace Accords, preventing conflict and reducing armed violence.

### **Integrate small arms control in NAPs and strengthen the role of women in disarmament**

- A NAP should recognise that many forms of violence against women in both situations of armed conflict and during 'peace' times, are committed with the use or display of guns. Related laws and arms control policies can therefore help to prevent such forms of violence against women.
- A NAP on WPS should implement provisions in UNSCR 2122 (Women, Peace & Security) and 2117 (Small Arms & Light Weapons or SALW) which call for women's strengthened role in disarmament, small arms control and combatting the illicit trade of small arms. These provisions can be combined in a NAP with provisions of 1325 – calling for women's increased participation in conflict prevention and peace-building – to address the issue of armed violence and gun control, and to create a climate of peace and security.
- Recommendations on ways to integrate small arms control into the NAP, include the following:
  - Measures to facilitate women's full and meaningful participation in policy making, planning and implementation processes to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer of SALWs.
  - Provisions to promote women's rights linked to issues of gun use and violence against women, including armed domestic violence.
  - Provisions to strengthen the role of women in all disarmament-related efforts and arms control locally, nationally and regionally, and monitoring of stockpiles to prevent the illicit diversion of arms.
  - Promote policies to make the security sector more gender-sensitive and supportive of peaceful communities, for instance:
    - To prevent the mismanagement and misuse of SALWs, penalise personnel when weapons are lost, stolen or sold and ensure arms are not taken home or possessed by 'off-duty' security sector employees.
    - Training of the security sector on peace, women's rights and the gender dimensions of armed violence.

## Regional level implementation of the Women, Peace & Security agenda

A regional working group outlined ways to implement provisions of the Women, Peace & Security (WPS) agenda in Central America. Recommendations included the following:

- The Central American Integration System (SICA) should advance the equal participation of women in the regional security sector, and ensure their representation in the Democratic Security Directorate (DSD) of Central America.
- SICA should discourage Member States from enacting amnesty laws which would prevent access to justice for survivors of war crimes, sexual violence and violations of women's human rights.
- SICA should develop effective mechanisms for monitoring indicators of insecurity and violence, and urge countries to collect sex and age disaggregated data on victims and perpetrators, to inform gender analysis of armed violence and shape responses to prevent all forms of violence against women (VAW).
- SICA should promote partnerships with the Council of Ministers for Women in Central America and Dominican Republic (COMMCA) to advance women's meaningful participation in the DSD.
- To support implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on SALWs and other related commitments, the regional body should advocate for countries to have national commissions on small arms including the representation of women's organizations.
- SICA should disseminate information on WPS and best practices for implementing this agenda among regional bodies, to Member States and non-government groups. Regional workshops should be convened, engaging governments and civil society, to share country experiences and programmes on WPS.
- Practical guidelines and training programmes on how to incorporate gender perspectives in policies and security institutions should be developed and advanced. Gender policies should be effectively implemented and monitored across regional and national security bodies.
- The regional system should address the issue of peace not only as the transition from conflict to post-conflict situations, but as a multidimensional endeavour involving all sectors of society.
- SICA should promote programmes and policies across Central American countries which assist victims of armed violence, directly or indirectly affected, taking into account gendered impacts and the burden of care often borne by women.
- Media strategies on disarmament and other community level strategies, such as disarmament in safe public spaces, should be promoted at regional levels with the WPS agenda.
- Transparency and anticorruption mechanisms for monitoring investment in arms and arms sales should be advanced at regional levels. The reallocation of budgets to gender-sensitive armed violence reduction and peacebuilding efforts should be promoted.
- Civil society should strengthen regional coordination on WPS and promote implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other supporting instruments. It is suggested that REDCEPAZ should play a convening and coordinating role for interested groups. Additionally, given that there is a Regional Network for Women's Security, REDCEPAZ and this organisation should combine together to address regional advancement of the WPS agenda, as well as addressing gender dimensions of armed violence and development.

- The CELAC summit, to take place in Guatemala, should be drawn on by civil society groups to advance a regional position on WPS. Other regional fora should also be leveraged by civil society to advance this agenda.

## ANNEX 1

Participants list				
No	Name	Organization	HQ	Email
1	Hazel Villalobos	FUNPADEM	Costa Rica	hvillalobos@funpadem.org
2	Marcela Piedra	GESO (Género y Seguridad)	Costa Rica	mpduran@hotmail.com
3	Reyna Rodriguez	The Nicaraguan network of women against violence /Red de Mujeres Contra la Violencia	Nicaragua	rerop@hotmail.es
4	Nelson Flores	Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD)	El Salvador	nelsonflores@fespada.org.gt
5	Silvia Juárez	The Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA)	El Salvador	<a href="mailto:ormusa@ormusa.org">ormusa@ormusa.org</a>
6	Wilfredo Mendez	CIPRODEH	Honduras	<a href="mailto:wilmendez@hotmail.es">wilmendez@hotmail.es</a>
7	Leyla Díaz	Centro para la Paz y el Desarrollo	Honduras	leyladiaz@yahoo.com
8	Jasmin Nario Galance	We ACT 1325 Philippines, IANSA Women's Network	Philippines	<a href="mailto:jnariogalace@yahoo.com">jnariogalace@yahoo.com</a>
9	Nicola Williams	Global Alliance on Armed Violence (GAAV)	Singapore	<a href="mailto:nicola.williams@allianceonaarmedviolence.org">nicola.williams@allianceonaarmedviolence.org</a>
10	Matthias Nowak	Small Arms Survey	Colombia	matthias.nowak@smallarmsurvey.org
11	Daniela L. Portino González	Asociación para Políticas Públicas (APP) / Red SEHLAC	Argentina	<a href="mailto:dportinogonzalez@estudiopg.com.ar">dportinogonzalez@estudiopg.com.ar</a>
12	Paz Tibiliti	Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina (RESDAL)	Argentina	<a href="mailto:paztibi@resdal.org.ar">paztibi@resdal.org.ar</a>
13	Paul VERMEULEN	Handicap International	Switzerland	<a href="mailto:pvermeulen@handicap-international.org">pvermeulen@handicap-international.org</a>

14	Robertha de-Beltranena	Embassy of Switzerland	Guatemala city	
15	Sanne Weber	Impunity Watch	Guatemala city	sanne.weber@impunitywatch.org
16	Marta Miza	Impunity Watch	Guatemala city	sanne.weber@impunitywatch.org
17	Maria Machicado	UN Women	Guatemala city	maria.machicado@unwomen.org
18	Ana Grace Cabrera	UN Women	Guatemala city	ana.cabrera@unwomen.org
19	Karol Ponciano	UN Women	Guatemala city	karol.ponciano@unwomen.org
20	Reyna de León	UN Women	Guatemala city	Reyna.deleon@unwomen.org
21	Carmen Rosa De León-Escribano	Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES)	Guatemala city	<a href="mailto:credeleon@iepades.org">credeleon@iepades.org</a>
22	Estefania Pineda	Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES)	Guatemala city	<a href="mailto:eepcasasola@gmail.com">eepcasasola@gmail.com</a>
23	Alejandra Cruz Galich	Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES)	Guatemala city	alecruzgalich@gmail.com
24	Luz Mendez Gutierrez	Unión Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas (UNAMG)	Guatemala city	luzmeg@gmail.com
25	Maya Alvarado/Norma Herrera	UNAMG	Guatemala city	directoraejecutivaunamg@gmail.com / pnovienciaunamg@gmail.com
26	Francisco Jiménez	Interpeace	Guatemala city	<a href="mailto:tager@interpeace.org">tager@interpeace.org</a> , <a href="mailto:franjime@me.com">franjime@me.com</a>
27	Otilia Lux de Coti	Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indigenas	Guatemala city	<a href="mailto:otilialux@yahoo.com">otilialux@yahoo.com</a>

28	Pilar Padilla	Ministerio Público	Guatemala city	pilar.padilla.rossi@gmail.com
29	Karla Pérez Chacón	Organismo Judicial	Guatemala city	KPerez@oj.gob.gt
30	Eugenia Guzman	SEPREM	Guatemala city	<a href="mailto:eguzman@seprem.gob.gt">eguzman@seprem.gob.gt</a>
31	Flor de María Salvador	PCS	Guatemala city	<a href="mailto:agonzalez@pcslatin.org">agonzalez@pcslatin.org</a> , <a href="mailto:fsalvador@pcslatin.org">fsalvador@pcslatin.org</a>
32	Sub Inspectora Silvia Salvatierra	Departamento de Equidad de Género, PNC	Guatemala city	<a href="mailto:divegpnc@yahoo.com">divegpnc@yahoo.com</a>
33	María Eugenia Solís	Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos	Guatemala city	
34	Jeimy Nairobi Gómez	Ministerio Público	Guatemala city	Nairobi.gc@hotmail.com
35	Myriam Suazo	PARLACEN	Guatemala City	
36	Andres Molina	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores	Guatemala City	amolina@minex.gob.gt
37	Rebecca Peters	International Consultant	Guatemala City	Rebecca.peters@gmail.com
38	Milagro López	IDPP	Guatemala City	milagroje@yahoo.es
39	Flor Castañeda	PNR	Guatemala City	Fcastaneda@pnr.gob.gt

