

# Arms Trade

Report from the 3rd  
Ecumenical Conference  
Nairobi, Kenya

Editors:  
Peter Brune  
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Christian Council of Sweden's series of booklets, no 13

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# Foreword

This report accounts for an ecumenical conference on the global arms trade, held at the All African Council of Churches in Nairobi/Kenya in November 2007.

In 2001, a new ecumenical initiative was launched to highlight the growing ecumenical concern regarding the increase in transfers of military equipment, primarily to the global south. The end of the Cold War was followed by a decline in the production and proliferation of arms that prevailed until the end of the 1990's. The growth in the arms trade that we have witnessed during the last decade meant a rupture to this positive trend. After a series of ecumenical meetings on regional and national level, a second global meeting took place three years later, again in the city of Gothenburg in Sweden. At this occasion the idea of a "Gothenburg process" was launched in response to this concern, of the Christian churches worldwide.

The 2007 Nairobi meeting represented the third global meeting in the process, the "Gothenburg III" encounter. In this report we have compiled a limited number of the main contributions from the highly distinguished participants at the Nairobi meeting, coming from all over the world, to jointly explore what the faith communities can do in order to further promote disarmament.

The settings for the meetings within the Gothenburg process have been similar. The number of participants has been limited, in order to create an ambience of honest and straightforward discussions. Another characteristic is that the different perspectives impacting on the production and trading in arms should be represented (producers, consumers, controllers, researchers and churches). The intention is to promote dialogue and better understanding among all participants of the complexity of the issue, avoiding simplistic polemics. At the same time the encounter should provide the church related disarmament endeavors with useful insights, networks and tools.

## The Nairobi meeting

The Nairobi meeting was indeed very successful and has laid a good foundation for the coming years. Especially important was the strong participation from African faith leaders, providing the participants with important insights on how the faith communities can promote disarmament on all levels, from the community level as well as on how

to develop an advocacy agenda directed to those who decide on procurements and military doctrines. The need for a long term involvement is becoming increasingly obvious, if we want to achieve sustainable results.

On behalf of the Christian Council of Sweden we would like to express our deep gratitude to the All African Council of Churches for the assistance in making the Nairobi meeting such a success.

*The Gothenburg Process Steering Committee*

# Arms Trade to Africa, a Church Concern

Mr. Arthur Shoo, Director of Programmes  
All African Council of Churches, AACC

Given the continued prevalence of violent conflicts in Africa, it makes sense for us to take a critical view of any form of arms proliferation and transfers. This is particularly so if the destinations of such weapons are prone to violent conflict or unresolved conflicts.

As you are aware, we live in a world where over \$2 million are spent on arms each passing minute despite the fact that 30 children die every minute from preventable diseases. In Africa billions of dollars have been spent on arms while schools and health facilities decay. Accordingly, a former AACC President, the late Most Rev. Professor Kwesi Dickson once commented that if arms were food, no one would starve in Africa.

Despite numerous calls by peace loving communities on the need to rewrite rules governing arms transfers and the UN Security Council embargoes against trafficking of arms across Africa, there seem to have been insignificant decline in the trafficking of arms. Countries such as Bulgaria, Ukraine, and China have found dependable clients in Africa for the supply of arms. This is despite the UN Security Council's declaration on Guidelines for Conventional Arms Transfers, which was adopted in October 1991.

The declaration identified various aspects to be considered during arms transfers. These include whether:

- the proposed transfer will promote the capabilities of the recipient to meet its legitimate self-defence.
- the transfer will serve as an appropriate and proportional response to the security and military threats confronting the recipient country.
- it will enhance the recipient's capability to participate in regional or other collective arrangements consistent with the UN Charter.

With this declaration in mind let us look at China as a case study. China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. On the other hand it is the main supplier of arms to Khartoum government, which were used against South Sudan and currently used in Darfur.

To what extent are such supplies meeting Khartoum's legitimate defence? Which security and military threats are presently confronting Khartoum government to justify the arms exports? Certainly not threats from Darfurians.

It may also ask the extent to which such transfers from China enhance the capability of Khartoum to participate in regional security when the arms have been used by its sponsored militia – Janjaweed – to cause havoc in the neighbouring Chad and the Central African Republic.

The same can be asked of Bulgaria and Ukraine who seem determined to off-load their stockpiles of the Second World War arms to Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo despite the sufferings of the people of these countries and the atrocities they have endured.

In these two countries, UN arms embargo against trafficking of arms has remained in force for some years to-date without success. Analysts attribute the escalating crime rate in Nairobi for instance, to arms trafficking from Somalia. While in the case of Somalia, arms trafficking is considered good business for the war lords, in eastern DRC, arms are the currency of barter trade in minerals particularly diamonds as was the case in Sierra Leone.

## **The responsibility of the suppliers**

I am raising these concerns for two reasons. Firstly because despite the justification to blame recipient countries, I am of the conviction that the suppliers could contribute a great deal to halt arms trafficking if they could find in their hearts some conscience that would compel them to turn the taps off.

Secondly because in regard to the UN guidelines, the arms exporting country remains the final judge of whether or not the recipient country qualifies for arms transfers. This is a loophole, which continues to be exploited because of their inability to balance compliance and desire to boost trade. China for instance is energy hungry and therefore supplies arms to Khartoum government to be assured of oil trade while in the case of former eastern European countries the desire is to earn foreign exchange. Lately Eritrea has joined countries which re-export arms which it imports for a different reason.

Accordingly it has been reported that it is a key supplier of arms to the Islamists of the Somali Courts Union to counteract the support its archenemy Ethiopia offers to the Somalia Transitional Government. This is a new and dangerous trend in Africa.

It also seems that little advocacy campaign targets the suppliers compared to the focus on the recipient countries. Perhaps at this consultation we could deliberate on ways in which attention could also be turned to the supplying countries for focused advocacy.

Then there is the question of status of being a significant weapons supplier country rather than a recipient country, which reflects the superiority of the supplier in terms of aspects such as technological capacity and economic resources.

China is a good example and so is South Africa. Studies have indicated that among the beneficiaries of the South African defence industry are Rwanda, Uganda and DRC. Interestingly, China buys from South Africa and re-routes the arms to Khartoum government to cut down freight costs according to some reports.

UN maintains a register of Conventional Arms, which requires countries to voluntarily provide information to the register. The idea is that such information would make a positive contribution to regional and sub regional confidence building efforts for peaceful relations. This is however hardly attended to by African countries.

We could again at this consultation consider the need and ways to encourage African governments to provide such information at the UN register to eliminate inter-state suspicions.

Be it as it may, there is a general consensus to the effect that there is no moral justification for African countries to deal in arms in the face of massive foreign debts, abject poverty and for some unstable political systems.

Thank you.

# Violent Conflicts in Africa – What is True and Why So?

Ms. Augusta Muchai  
Senior Researcher, Arms Management Programme  
Institute for Security Studies, Nairobi

Violent conflicts in Africa have been a common feature in different parts of the continent but for the purpose of this paper, specific focus and examples are drawn from the Horn of Africa and the Great Lake region. The two sub-regions have been embroiled in intra state, inter-state as well as inter-state conflicts that are triggered by intra-state violent conflicts.

## **Intra-state conflicts**

Intra-state violent conflicts exist only by name and in most instances, the main objective is to safeguard territorial integrity of the affected states. From the end of the Cold War, intra state violent conflicts have continued to manifest major aspects and components of conflicts motivated by: the elite struggling to maintain the status quo; factional politics based on ethnicity and popular movements characterized by the desire to control resources perceived to be on the hands of the ruling class. These components have been the main features of intra-state conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia & Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan.

Several factors have continued to contribute to the violent nature of intra-state conflicts. These contributing factors could be viewed from internal and external perspectives. Easy availability of firearms has been one of the greatest threats to human security in the sub-regions. The thousands of firearms circulating in the sub-regions are mainly manufactured outside the continent with only a small percentage sourced within Africa. The tools of violence have continued to exacerbate conflicts leading to thousands of internally displaced person (IDPs) as well as refugees who seek asylum outside their countries of origin. Consequently, the poverty levels have been worsening in the affected areas as the communities are incapacitated in terms of managing their social-economic and political lives in an environment of spiral violent conflicts.

Tendencies of exclusionary governance styles have continued to drive different ethnic groups into violent conflict as they force inclusion into mainstream politics that might allow them space in sharing the national cake. This coupled with insecurity, has been worsening the scenario of violent conflicts as a large population within the two sub-regions live below the poverty line. Hence, the drive to access resources by whatever methods has continued to exacerbate violent conflicts.

A large population in the Horn of Africa and to a lesser extent, the Great Lakes Region are nomadic pastoralist. While in search of dwindling resources particularly water and pasture that are affected by harsh climatic conditions, the pastoralists acquire firearms with which to protect their livestock and livelihood. Such firearms circulating amongst pastoralists easily get trafficked into urban and rural settlements. The illegal firearms ends up on the hands of criminals who cause untold suffering amongst communities and in the process condemn them to poverty and insecurity. While replenishing stock, the communities engage in spiral violent conflicts leading to proliferation of the firearms.

## Inter-state conflicts

Inter-state violent conflicts within the sub-regions have not been a common occurrence. Apparently, from mid 90s' to the year 2000, there were only two violent inter-state conflicts, which are the infamous Ethiopia-Eritrea war and the international war in DRC that embroiled Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi against DRC. Their intervention was motivated by the determination to root out militia constituting former Rwanda Army and *Interahamwe* Hutu militia perceived to be responsible of the 1994 genocide. The Congo war (DRC), was a culmination of the intra-state conflict that began in 1996 to oust the former president, the late President Mobutu Sese Seko under the military leadership style of the late Laurent Desire Kabila.

To a large extent, the Ethiopia-Eritrea war; and the Congo war involving Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi on one side and Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia in support of Kabila, was anchored on political issues driven by competing personal and national interests. Secondly, the existence of factors and groups that attract external military support from the two sub-regions as well from outside the continent, contributed to the internationalisation of these two wars. Essentially, each of the actors in the Congo war were involved in an effort to uproot militia

groups opposed to the sitting governments while operating from the neighbouring state e.g. Lords Resistance Army that operated from the border with Southern Sudan; Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) that had some base in Northern Uganda. Indeed, the existence of militia groups to a large extent, contribute to inter-state violent conflicts and in the process exacerbates intra-conflicts.

## Internationalisation of violent conflicts

One of the primary contributing factors of violent conflicts in Africa is involvement of players who remain in the background but fight by proxy either directly or indirectly. Within the sub-regions, this mainly occurs through military or financial support provided by a neighbouring state to a faction opposed to its government. For example, the apparent weakening of the Derg regime in Ethiopia which supported the establishment of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) saw Sudan subsequently supporting the rebel movements in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The war in DRC had similar overtones where Rwanda got involved in the belief that the *Interahamwe* were launching attacks with the support of the late Kabila. By extension, the genesis of some of these conflicts date back to the colonial era and the failure governance by the governments that took over after independence. In the process, the involvement and links with former colonial powers spell out a dimension of internationalization of armed violent conflicts in Africa.

The other dimension of internationalisation of conflicts could be viewed in structural rivalries in which certain African states, having achieved a certain degree of consolidation of power, attempt to extend their influence outward in regional terms, and even beyond by dictating power relations. This has been a common feature in the Horn of Africa with Ethiopia being viewed as a powerful state in a rather troubled sub-region. The war with Eritrea could be interpreted from power-relations perspective.

With regard to both intra and inter-state armed violent conflicts, there is a dimension of the epicentre of the war. An example could be drawn from the Congo war which was an epicentre of an internationalized war involving the sale of different resources from that country and the sub-region to different parts of the world. In the Horn, the Sudan conflict has remained as the epicentre for a long time, while drawing in actors from within and outside the continent.

The other dimension is the involvement of the international com-

munity that has been involved in disarming ex-combatants in an attempt to restore order and governance in states involved in both intra and inter-state violent conflicts. While as the intention is noble in most instances, some ex-combatants move among countries to receive more money in exchange for their weapons depending on epicentre of the conflict zone. On the other hand, some international peacekeepers have been accused of sustaining armed intra and inter-state conflicts in exchange of minerals.

## Several steps need to be followed

The proliferations of SALW have continued to claim thousands of lives in the continent every year. Increased insecurity has also been contributing to poverty in Africa as local and international investors shy away to the sub-regions. Hence, well regional coordinated disarmament initiatives need to be supported by governments in view of reducing the number of firearms in circulation. The collected firearms and armouries should be well protected to ensure that they will cease in circulation. Indeed, proper planning of disarmament processes is needed to prevent future violence.

In some instances, the international community makes intervention without having sufficient understanding of intricate issues in a given violent conflict. Also, there is a tendency by the international community to import learned experiences into conflict situation without due consideration of the uniqueness of each country and epicentre of the conflict due to over-reliance on media reports that focus on the visible causes. The need to appreciate all actors and underlying root causes of the conflict is pertinent to alleviating the suffering of innocent people affected countries.

Some donors address short-term goals as opposed to addressing underlying root causes; e.g. US-Sudan cooperation in the area of terrorism while countries in the region are all moving cautiously to improve their relations with Khartoum. The USA – ‘Africa command’ is a move that threatens to weaken national and regional efforts at capacity building that is based on the African experience

Deliberate violations of the arms embargo by Chad, Eritrea (Darfur) and by Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti (Somalia) in Rwanda after the genocide DRC, China, South Africa, France & Seychelles violated UN embargo need to be subjected to serious penalties to violating states by UN and AU in view of sustainable peace.

# Human Security in Africa

## “The Changing Roles of the Armed Forces in Africa”

Lt. Gen. Lazaro K Sumbeiywo (Rtd)  
Africa Peace Forum, Kenya

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank God with great humility for this opportunity to share, discuss and exchange views with you on human security in Africa. As you will agree with me, this is a vast subject and therefore I chose to break it into clusters. We will examine the changing roles of the armed forces during the colonial era, their role in post-independent Africa, their role during the Cold War period and the post Cold War, and lastly their present role.

A paper written by Edwin Lieuwen on the same subject matter in South America, he states that society is in a state of upheaval; politics is being revolutionalized; the economy is undergoing a fundamental transformation; new institutional forms are reshaping the environment. As we analyze this subject we will see how these African armed forces have undergone changes, however, they have not all taken a particular pattern in their developments.

### Colonial period

During the Colonial Period, the armed forces in Africa served the wishes of their Imperial masters. Their role then was to solely support the interests of these powers. The interests of their citizens were not a priority. The colonial powers supported the forces and supplied them with the necessary arms and equipment to advance their territorial control.

According to a paper written by Shawn Gregory on the French military in Africa past and present; he discusses what is reflected in the rest of Africa sighting how in the post Cold War era, and particularly since the events in Rwanda in 1994, French military policy in Africa has been in transition.

## The post-independence period

The armed forces in post independence Africa mainly responded in two demeanors mainly due to the uncertainties left by the colonial powers. In some countries they were instruments of instability where they carried out coup d'états taking over the political and economic control of their newly independent countries, causing untold suffering to their citizens. Conversely in other lucky countries they were a source of security for their newly found democracy.

## The Cold War period

During the Cold War period, the role of Armed Forces in Africa became very prominent as they received training and supplies from either of the super powers involved in their countries and that of their allies. I choose to describe this period also as the Extravagance period, because the African Forces managed to obtain much in terms of the support received from the Super powers involved in the Cold War. The Armed Forces in Africa besides technical and doctrinal training, received sophisticated armaments, at the expense of developing infrastructure and human resource in their own countries.

At this period also, African forces were encouraged to physically fight their neighbours if they did not subscribe to similar ideologies of those of their supporting superpower.

## The post Cold War period

After the Cold War, there was a complete change of doctrine and perception by the African armed forces. Once again left with uncertainties but this time with highly trained and supplied troops, it gave way to a new situation of intra and inter conflicts in the African states.

Some of the countries had to deal with inter state conflicts including Somalia/Ethiopia and Ethiopia/Eritrea during the Cold War and in the case of the later after the Cold War. The armed forces in these countries felt that their control was being eroded and hence felt the need to create situations where their relevance would be appreciated.

Some of the countries that had to deal with intra state conflicts include: Angola, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.

In most of these countries, the conflicts arose out of the need for control of power and resources, while in a few cases it was a question of actual misuse of the armed forces and outright bad governance.

We must also be aware that in this period there were excessive forces to the requirements of most countries, thus competing for the meager resources.

## **The present**

The several conflicts experienced in the post Cold War period sets stage for the role played by the forces in the present world. At this time, we find that the role of the armed forces is linked to and working under the umbrella of diplomacy. Many African armed forces now find themselves heavily focused on human security and are involved in peace keeping and peace enforcement.

The configurations of these new forces are organized in the regions to deal with regional conflicts under the auspices of the AU particularly under the African Security Council. In addition to the support of the concerned western powers in peace support training. They have also supported various countries to have standing forces in their own countries to be used to form part of conflict resolution forces within the African continent i.e. East Brig., West Brig., North Brig and South Brig.

## **Conclusion**

The roles of armed forces in Africa have kept on changing depending on situations in the region and outside the region; the right for each country to protect themselves give legitimacy to maintain an armed force and this will change even further with the advent of terrorism on the menu.

Thank you.

# Arms to Africa – Facts and Concerns

Mr. Pieter Wezeman, Senior Researcher,  
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI  
(This version is slightly shorter than  
the presentation at the seminar)

## Sub-Sahara African arms imports

In this presentation I will discuss weapons exports to Sub-Saharan countries in relation to the discussion regarding the proposed Arms Trade Treaty and the consequences for Africa. The military industry in Sub-Saharan Africa is very small. Only in South Africa a modern and diverse military industry exists, producing a wide range of weapons but by far not all the military products the South African government procures.

With the help of China, Iran and Russia Sudan has created a military industry, which according to the Sudanese government produces small arms, ammunition and artillery and upgrades armoured vehicles. It is almost certain that Sudan is dependent on outside suppliers for the key components of the weapons 'produced' in Sudan. In Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and possibly some other countries in the region, small ammunition production plants exist and these are likely to supply ammunition to actors in the region. Even these small and relatively basic facilities are dependent on outside suppliers for essential machinery and probably also for basic components. Kenya has an ammunition industry supplied by the Belgian company *FN Herstal*. Taken together the African military industry is only a small supplier of weapons to the region.

Due to their limited or even non-existent indigenous military industrial capacities all countries in Africa are dependent on foreign suppliers for their military equipment. During the period 1996-2007 Russia, China, a number of smaller East European countries, Israel and South Africa are the most significant suppliers of weapons to the Sub-Saharan region, except South Africa. The latter is the largest recipient of weapons in the region and receives considerable numbers of advanced weapons from Sweden, the UK, Germany and several other West-European countries.

The role of African countries in supplying weapons to other African countries should not be forgotten. Several African countries have supplied weapons, especially small arms and ammunition to allied governments or rebel groups. Such weapons came from their own military stocks or were specifically purchased for this purpose. Weapons have long lives and especially in the type of warfare common in Africa the warring factions consider weapons produced decades ago suitable enough. Especially small arms are abundant in Africa and find their way throughout the continent.

### **Financial value of arms exports to sub-Saharan Africa**

Africa is only a relatively small market in financial terms for arms suppliers. The aggregated military expenditure of Sub-Saharan Africa states, excluding South Africa, amounted to an estimated 5.4 billion USD, which is 0.47% of the total global military expenditure of about 1 200 billion dollar in 2006, and about the same as the annual military expenditure by Sweden alone.

Based on publicly available official national data, the value of arms exports in 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, is estimated at \$39–56 billion. This accounted for 0.4–0.5% of the total international trade. Total annual turnover of the world's military industries lies in the order of magnitude of \$300 billion.

An approximate financial value of the total annual arms exports to sub-Saharan Africa can not be calculated as the most important arms suppliers to the region and do not provide useful data on the financial aspects of their arms sales. It can be assumed that the total financial value of arms exports to sub-Saharan Africa is very low compared to arms transfers to all other parts of the world.

EU countries and the USA provide data on arms exports by recipient in their public annual reporting. These data show, without South Africa, military products worth about 150 million euro in 2005 were delivered to Africa. The values per recipient country are in the millions. This demonstrates the marginal value of arms exports to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa for European and US economies or in relation to the global turnover of military industries. Most of Sub-Saharan Africa is simply not a large market for products from Western arms producers. Only South Africa is a significant market in financial terms for European arms producers with deliveries worth hundreds of millions.

Some of the most important arms suppliers to African countries, especially Russia, China, Belarus, Ukraine and Israel, do not provide

useful arms exports data broken down by recipient or at all. Based on what is known of actual deliveries it can be assumed that the total financial value of weapons supplied by other countries than the US and the EU countries, excluding South Africa, is considerable higher than the weapons supplied by the USA and EU. Arms supplies from other countries to the most prominent recipients in the region (Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Angola and Nigeria) may peak in certain years to several hundreds of millions. In comparison with global arms trade, these figures are still low.

## Second hand weapons

Despite the relatively low level of financial turn over that can be derived from marketing arms to Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) numerous military suppliers sell arms to the region.

Most successful seem entities that offer second hand or less advanced and therefore cheaper and easier to operate weapons. Especially actors in Central and Eastern European (ex-Soviet) states, China and South Africa have sold significant quantities of weapons to the region, often including mercenaries who service and even operate the weapons supplied. These rather unrestrained exports are driven by several considerations:

- Governments are keen on making any sales that bring in much needed hard currency. In a number of these countries, especially Russia, weapons are still one of the few manufactured products that can compete on the international market. Exports help create economies of scale and help to bring down costs for the military procurement by the exporting countries themselves. Arms exports are therefore pushed by interest groups such as the military or the ministries of defences.
- Governments, notably China, hope to gain access to much needed natural resources such as oil, and use arms sales to improve relations with governments in resource rich countries which have difficulties obtaining weapons elsewhere.
- In a number of arms supplying countries there appears to be widespread disinterest among government officials and the public in general in the problems and hardship endured by large shares of African populations. Governments are embedded in a culture of self-interest and unlikely to apply strict export controls.
- Influential individuals, including the management of arms pro-

ducing companies, arms dealers, arms brokers, arms transporting companies, corrupt military and other government officials, make considerable profits on the individual level and will try hard to prevent more restrictive policies.

## Western governments reluctant

Low African military expenditure means low chances of clinching major deals. Together with increasing reputational risks this means that western governments have become increasingly reluctant to permit arms exports to Africa. While in the early 1990s the Belgian company FN Herstal was still permitted to build an ammunition production plant in Kenya, around 2005 the Belgian government refused to give permission for the supply of ammunition production machinery to Tanzania. For large exports orders elsewhere in the world things are very different, as exemplified by the UK and French governments permitting large arms export deals with their “new friend” Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.

Major western arms producing companies such as Lockheed Martin, EADS, BAE systems or SAAB are not very visible in Sub-Saharan Africa. Not counting sales to South Africa, these companies make only *very* limited sales to the region, even though in a number of cases such deals have been controversial, e.g. the case of the over expensive air traffic control radars in Tanzania supplied by British Bae systems.

The low sales to the region lead to one important conclusion: large western companies would notice little of stricter arms export regulations that would exclude some African countries as potential clients and are therefore unlikely to oppose stricter regulations.

Surprisingly governments of countries where a greater sense of responsibility might be expected appear more important as arms suppliers than western companies. Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands, have sold surplus weapons to African states, albeit less controversial Botswana and Benin, instead of providing the equipment for free as part of security sector reform.

A number of countries, notably the USA, the UK and France also provide military aid, mainly training and support equipment and to a lesser extent actual weapons, to Sub-Saharan countries. Such aid is partly provided for sincere altruistic reasons, but also and arguably mainly in support of the pursuit of specific interests of the donor countries: access to natural resources and, especially in the case of the

USA, combating groups considered a terrorist threat to US interests.

The relative size of military aid to Sub-Saharan Africa is small.

## African countries

To come to an ATT, or maybe more realistically to more limited regional agreements, aimed at setting basic principles in which states are asked to consider issues like the level of stability, wealth and human rights conditions in recipient countries, it is useful to look in more detail at how such concerns are currently applied in the case of African countries procuring weapons abroad.

Many African countries have seen bloody violent conflict in their recent history. Horrific human right abuses have been common in these conflicts. Repressive governments have been abundant and democratic rule has only slowly spread throughout the continent. Based on such a heritage many, especially non-Africans, would argue for a complete ban on all weapons to Africa. When looking at the actual concerns related to arms supplies to different types of cases in Africa a more nuanced approach may be more useful.

### *The first category*

The first category consists of situations on which the international community have agreed, that no weapons should be supplied to certain entities involved in conflicts or repression and where UN arms embargoes have been imposed. Such situations are still rare. Currently there are 6 mandatory UN arms embargoes related to Sub-Sahara. Four of those prohibit only the supply of weapons to specific rebel groups or a specific region within a country. This is however a major increase from the period before 1990 when in 40 years the UN imposed only two arms embargoes worldwide. Even if UN arms embargoes are in place weapons still reach the targeted entities through different channels.

Certain governments break arms embargoes, as they believe supplying weapons to warring factions may serve their interest. Typical examples are the regime of Charles Taylor in Liberia supplying the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone, the Guinean government the LURD rebels in Liberia some years ago, and different African governments involved in the war in Congo supplying different warring factions.

This is also the area in which the 'illegal arms trade', defined as arms trade without authorisations from relevant governments, plays an important role. This is the working area of Victor Bout and simi-

lar infamous figures that sell weapons to anyone with enough money, precious materials or the right to give concessions for exploiting natural resources. Arms producers or arms owners, often in countries with weak export control, such as eastern Europe, Iran or China, arms brokers, some of them operating from West Europe, 'fishy' transport companies, corrupt government officials in both exporting and importing states, form networks that supply weapons via circuitous routes to embargoed entities.

Usually such arms embargo busting involves relatively small quantities of weapons, mainly small arms and ammunitions. The impact of such small supplies can however be very significant in the African context. A typical example of well documented embargo busting delivery was the case in which 68 tonnes of military equipment, which had been purchased from the Ukrainian State's Export Company, Ukretsexport, using an EUC for Burkina Faso's National Defense Department, was diverted to Liberia and subsequently transferred to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, in 1999.

### *The second category*

The second category includes cases where violent conflicts rages or certain actors are involved in grave human right abuses but certain governments still find it acceptable to supply weapons. Good examples are the Sudanese government involved in massive human rights abuses in Darfur, the repressive government of Mugabe in Zimbabwe, and the case of Ethiopia and Eritrea, who fought a very bloody war 8 years ago and since then have been several times on the brink of renewed war.

The EU and the USA prohibit arms sales from their territories to Sudan and Zimbabwe. Russia, China, Belarus, Iran and, to a lesser extent, for example Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia, have continued arms supplies to these countries. In the case of Sudan it has been argued that Darfur is an internal affair and that far going interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country is unacceptable for the two veto wielding UN Security Council members.

Russia and China have resisted any attempts to impose a full UN arms embargo. Sudan is currently only being told through a UN resolution not to move weapons to Darfur and not being punished for ignoring that UN demand. The profits of the arms sales and, in the case of China the protection or improvement of relations with a significant trade partner and supplier of oil, being the most cited real motives for this stance. At least as important is however the fact that both China, with the Tibet issue and lack of democracy in general, and

Russia, with bloodbaths in Chechnya, have their own internal human rights and conflict issues. They cannot be seen coercing another country to change its behavior related to similar issues.

In the case of Eritrea and Ethiopia, both Russia and China supplied both sides in the run-up to the actual war of 1999-2000. Then they agreed on a voluntary UN arms embargo but subsequently did not implement it and kept on supplying with the war on going. This war saw some of the most vivid examples of ruthless arms trading with Russian supplied weapons partly operated by Russian supplied mercenaries fighting each other. Finally, when both sides had already stocked up enough weapons to continuing the extremely bloody fighting, Russia and China accepted a one yearlong arms embargo. Once a rather shaky peace agreement had been signed between the two countries the embargo was not extended and unconditional arms supplies were restarted despite the tensions between the two countries remaining. The USA has since some years supported the Ethiopians especially because of their role in fighting Somali Islamists.

### *The third category*

A third category includes those conflicts in which there are actors whose actions are of a kind that they should not be supplied, and actors which are more or less fighting for a good cause on the other side. Military action may be part of an effective strategy to end these conflicts and therefore the least evil side might be a possible proper recipient of weapons.

Examples are the genocidal Hutu lead government of Rwanda that in 1994, despite being well armed by France and Egypt, was defeated, hundreds of thousands of innocent Rwandan lives too late, by the Tutsi dominated RPF rebels supported by Uganda. Currently the Ugandan government fighting the LRA and the Chad government could be grouped in the category of actors that fight for something good. However the problem is that the actions by these governments or by the military units involved, have included human rights abuses. Furthermore Uganda's role in the DRC is highly controversial.

For these reasons many Western governments have been very reluctant to permit arms exports to the governments of Rwanda and Uganda and these countries have therefore turned to the usual suspects, Russia, China, etc. for their no strings attached arms supplies.

In the case of Sierra Leone in 1999-2000 the UK choose to support the government with weapons in its fight against the RUF, despite the government forces having been or still being involved in human rights

abuses and using child soldiers. The UK government chose to support the lesser evil in the hope to establish some order and security in the country on which a more lasting peace could be built. Important in this case is that not only weapons were supplied but that a sincere effort was made to reform the Sierra Leone army into a human rights abiding and security providing institution.

#### *Controversial cases*

Finally there are the cases that are a little controversial. Weapons supplies to democratic and reasonably well-governed countries like Botswana or South Africa may be questioned in the light of other priorities such as poverty reduction or combating the spread of AIDS.

However such issues of good governance should be dealt with mainly by the African countries themselves. The 'right approach' can hardly be enforced upon these countries by rich countries, who themselves could improve their own arms procurement considerably. That does of course not mean that the supplier countries have no responsibility at all in these cases. They should create arms export policies aimed at minimizing complicity in corruption by arms supplying companies. In the light of the obvious vulnerabilities of African states they should also tone down aggressive marketing tactics.

The most widely accepted arms supplies are those related to improving the capacities of African countries to participate in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Canada donating 100 armoured vehicles for use by peacekeepers in Sudan can be considered the best kind of arms 'trade' possible. African countries are generally considered badly equipped for peacekeeping tasks. The AU mission in Sudan is short of all kind of equipment. Still, even though for example western European countries are stuck with large numbers of surplus military equipment, few have followed the example of Canada.

#### *Transparency is needed*

Responsible and legitimate defence policies, aimed at protection against real threats and at providing real security for all requires a proper democratic decision making process. This would include a broad public discussion on the national and international level about military expenditure, military procurement and arms trade. Such a discussion has to be well informed, which in turn requires sufficient openness in military issues.

Transparency in military matters can build confidence between and within states. It helps to prevent corruption. It helps to track the

whereabouts of weapons and therefore supports controlling the arms trade and preventing illegal weapons trade. Finally it is needed to be able to measure the actual effect of mechanisms taken to prevent the unwanted spread and abuse of weapons. Without proper transparency it will be impossible to judge if the Nairobi declaration or the ECO-WAS moratorium actually do what they are supposed to do. Requirements about such openness should also be an ingredient of an eventual arms trade treaty.

Currently transparency in military matters by African states is generally considered inadequate. This is well illustrated by the limited Participation of African states in the UN register on conventional arms. This register was established in 1991 'to prevent excessive and destabilizing accumulations of arms'. States are invited to report annually on their imports, exports and holdings of certain types of major conventional weapon. During the period 2001-2006 21 African states did not report at all, 24 states reported at least one year but only 6 countries reported at least 5 of the 6 years. Some countries submitted reports which were incomplete.

This lack of African participation in the only global transparency instrument on conventional arms can be explained by a lack of capacity or lack of will (legitimate military secrecy, culture of secrecy or related to corruption related interests of high level individuals).

Some of the disinterest is undoubtedly related to the fact that a number of African countries see no point in making an effort to report imports of major weapons, since they seldom import such weapons while small arms and light weapons are of great significance in conflicts in the region but were not included in the register. This concern was voiced by a number of African states already a decade ago. This in 2006 finally lead to states also being asked to submit information on imports, exports and holdings of small arms and light weapons. Very few African countries followed this request and until now only Mali, Senegal, Swaziland and Togo bothered to submit information on their imports of small arms.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the abundance of conflicts and human rights abuses in Africa show the need for an ATT, even though such an ATT should be imbedded in other initiatives aimed at preventing and ending conflicts. The often complete lack of will of a large number of countries to

A fundamental option must be adopted in all conflict ridden parts of the continent by searching for African solutions to African problems. The AU Peace and Security Architecture for instance is an initiative that needs to be supported as a viable and sustainable approach towards the reduction of violent conflicts.

In terms of policy, lack of international standards and treaties governing the import, export and transfer of arms needs to be stemmed in view to address both demand and supply sides of small arms and light weapons. Other policies with a regional approach need to be developed to address all human security related challenges for example, the Nairobi Declaration, the Nairobi Protocol and the EAPCCO Protocol (East Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation) on Cattle Rustling.

Regional Economic organs need to intensify interstate peace building efforts at the regional level. By adopting policies to address violent conflicts, the states would be ensuring that the grounds for investment are secure.

Considering that a large population lives below the poverty line, a deliberate effort need to be made towards introducing pro-poor policies that benefit the masses in the region. Also, active promotion of education that could help to reduce the negative impact of insecurity and violent conflict needs to be sustained particular amongst pastoralist communities.

In view for the international community allocate funds to Horn and Great Lakes regions, a declaration needs to be made as reconstruction zones under the peace, security, development and stability facility.

On disarmament and demobilization, proper planning needs to be carefully crafted as this could trigger instability if not properly articulated. Also, continued presence of militias, other Armed Groups (OAGs), is unhealthy for long-term stability and regional integration. Therefore, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration all have to be planned effectively and prudently in order to ensure permanent disarmament and sustainable peace, nationally and regionally.

# African Initiatives to Control Arms Transfers

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Arms transfers are essential to support a state's legitimate security needs, such as territorial defense and violent crime prevention and control. This is based on the contractual theory in politics that reflects citizens as having surrendered their right of force to the state for uniform application of justice and punishments. States are therefore free or entitled to acquire arms for citizens' welfare.

However; arms in the wrong hands have acute, immediate impacts on personal, economic, social, and civil rights, which translate into longer-term effects that prevent development.

Africa has suffered a great deal from armed conflicts where lives are lost through the use of unregulated arms. Africa is not a major manufacturer of arms but is a major transfer destination and user

## Continental and regional responses

Most of these responses deal with small arms.

**Bamako Declaration** is an African common position on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, SALW. It was established in December, 2000. It calls on all States to take appropriate measures to ensure the control of arms transfers by manufacturers, suppliers, traders, brokers, as well as shipping and transit agents, in a transparent fashion.

**The Economic Community Of West African States, ECOWAS, Moratorium** of October 1998 on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons is a 3 year renewable moratorium with a plan of action: Programme of Co-ordination and Assistance of Security and Development. It addresses the issues of small arms and light weapons in the West African sub-region. The Moratorium was a political commitment by the regional leaders to address the challenge of small arms and light weapons in a concerted manner.

**ECOWAS Convention** of 14 June 2006 on small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and other related materials is a legally bin-

ding regional instrument to address the problem of small arms and light weapons in the region. It is enforceable and therefore more effective than the Moratorium was. ECOWAS Secretariat is the implementing agency

**Nairobi Declaration** of March 2000 on the problem of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. A sub-regional body, the Nairobi Secretariat was set up in Nairobi to implement the Declaration. A coordinated agenda for action for implementation was prepared in November 2000 and an implementation plan.

On April 2004 the Declaration graduated to the **Nairobi Protocol** for the prevention, control and reduction of small arms and light weapons. The Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) is mandated to oversee the implementation of the protocol.

**The Southern African Development Community, SADC, Declaration** of March 2001 acknowledges the existing political will to reduce local demand and the need to review national legislation in conformity with the spirit of the Declaration to manage small arms and light weapons in member states.

**SADC Protocol** of August 2001 on the control of firearms, ammunition and related materials entered into force in May 2005. Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation, SAR-PCCO, is the implementing agency of the Protocol.

**Economic Community of Central African States, ECCAS**, has a component that implements the United Nations Programme of Action (UNoPA) in the Central African States.

**Arab League of States** coordinates the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action in its member States who include most of northern Africa States. Both ECCAS and the Arab League of States have not developed regional instruments but implement the United Nations Programme of Action directly.

## Transfers commitments

The various regional instruments in the continent commit member states to incorporate, as a matter of priority, the following elements in their national laws:

- Regulations governing and prohibitions related to possession and use of small arms and light weapons;
- Regulations for the manufacture, possession, import, export,

transit, transport and control of small arms and light weapons;

- Regulation for the effective control of manufacturers, traders, brokers, financiers and transporters of small arms and light weapons;
- Provision for seizure, confiscation, and forfeiture to the State, all small arms and light weapons manufactured or conveyed in transit and transport without or in contravention of licenses, permits or written authority
- Adopt the necessary legislative and other measures to establish as criminal offences under national law the illicit manufacturing of, trafficking in, and possession and use of small arms and light weapons including home made weapons
- The co-ordination of procedures for import, export and transit of firearms shipments.

## **Why are Regional and international agreements on arms control crucial?**

- They signal a common recognition that action is necessary to enhance various aspects of small arms control;
- They signal a common recognition of the nature of the arms problem (or certain aspects of it) and of the measures that are necessary to address it;
- They promote regional or international co-operation and co-ordination, thus providing assistance to states in tackling both the national and cross-border aspects of the problem;
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- They promote regional or international co-operation and co-ordination, thus providing assistance to states in tackling both the national and cross-border aspects of the problem;
- They commit states to implementing common standards of arms control, thus promoting consistency and preventing the problem from escalating in countries where controls might otherwise be weaker than in neighbouring countries;

- They assist states in identifying legislative and other measures that they need to implement at the national level;
- They commit states to taking action and provide a means of holding them to account;
- They call for, and encourage, the provision of technical and financial assistance from donor countries and other agencies.

## Challenges

Transparency on security sector is yet to be achieved. There exists mutual mistrust among states that stands on the way for security related information sharing. It can only be hoped that the on going processes will help the various participating countries to build confidence among themselves.

Without co-operation from manufacturers and traders, it will be difficult to realize the desires. While data on arms are from states, it would help a lot if manufacturers would also supply information on their sales details.

The emphasis is currently more on illicit and not licit arms. While the current attention on illicit arms is justifiable, based on the fact that most illicit arms were originally licit arms, the need to extend the attention to government held arms is still crucial.

Who determines the country needs to judge whether their need for transfers is justified or not? There is not general stand to determine the arms requirements of a state and thus transfers will only be checked if internal democratic controls of the particular state are in operation.

As long as we have weak governance structures, arms transfers will remain a challenge. The regulation of arms transfers has to go hand in hand with structural strengthening of governance structures that will guarantee the implementation of the laid rules and procedures.

## Conclusion

Africa is among the regions that have made most significant progress in terms of the development, agreement and implementation of regional agreements, including legally binding protocols in Southern Africa and the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa.

African states have also had an important influence on international initiatives such as the United Nations Programme of Action for the

prevention, combating and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (2001, UNPoA).

## Way forward

There is a need to translate the various commitments to actions. A lot has been put in place in terms of policy positions, but the main goal is to have them implemented by the states. There is a need for global co-operation by manufacturers, brokers and buyers. It is useful for all to understand that the issue of arms cannot and should not be left to governments alone but that all must be involved. The manufacturers and traders in arms must feel morally bound to participate in the process.

There is a need of support from all sectors of the society. Civil society, academicians and the business community should be involved to create the needed common fronts to fight the negative transfer of arms. There is also a need to search for political stability to reduce demand. Democratic consolidation of states should be viewed as part of the war on illegal transfers of arms because only stable governments can guarantee transparency.

More funding for the African processes. A lot of funds will be needed for advocacy and awareness creation. Able stakeholders should spend more on these processes along with meeting implementation processes.

The Arms Trade Treaty needs to be operationalized. This will open a forum on which states can be held or hold each other accountable.

# When Are Arms Necessary? A Christian-Ethical Reflection

Excerpts from a presentation by  
Mr. Jonathan Frerichs,  
World Council of Churches, Switzerland

When are arms necessary? It is certainly a question of great magnitude. This reflection will look for answers by sampling wisdom of the past, lessons of the present and opportunities of the future, building a composite response to a difficult question. It is intended as a Christian and ethical reflection that bears on secular and political realities. I will propose that we are constrained from complacency by a powerful hope, are compelled to avoid the use of arms by our growing realization of the true cost of violence, and are increasingly well equipped to control and eliminate arms by tackling the problem of violence from different disciplines and sectors.

## Wisdom of the past

In the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden, there were two special trees. One, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, gets all the attention, then and now. To eat of it...to go against God, started a story of woe that led quickly to the first use of arms -- Cain taking up a weapon and killing his brother Abel.

The other tree, the Tree of Life, is not forbidden and God seems to encourage eating from it. Its name is the opposite of violence or death. It is the epitome of Eden, of God's offer of life to be lived in all its fullness. But this tree seems to go untouched. What is more, it reappears at the end of Bible, the Tree of Life with leaves "for the healing of the nations".

What an image for the end of time. What an image for our time.

But humankind does not seem to understand the original offer, so God puts it more directly. In the book of Deuteronomy, God tells the Israelites: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." (De 30:19)

Choosing life has deep implications. Arms are not part of God's offer to us, the creatures made in his image. Lesser creatures come armed.

But we are not like lions, scorpions or eagles. To be armed, we have to make our weapons – misusing the minds and hearts and hands that make us most like God...

## Violence in Christian heritage

Before going any further, let us confess the place of violence in Christian heritage—in the Bible and in the history of the church. When a psalmist writes ‘O God, break the teeth in their mouths...’ (Ps 58), when the Bible has God telling Israel ‘I will carry out great vengeance upon them and punish them in my wrath’ (Ezekiel 25), when a church father says those who persecute Christians should melt in savage flames (Tertullian), when one people say God gave them a certain land so they can invade and expel and kill to keep it, and when there is anti-Semitism and other forms of racism – surely none of these can be confused with genuine faith and trust in God. They are examples of sin, part of the sadly authentic human story in the Bible. As sins they have to be condemned, confessed, repented of and cast into the depths of the sea. None of these verses give Christians justification to take up arms. All of them show that we fail to choose life. They actually de-legitimize the use of arms.

## When are arms necessary?

### Building an answer from the past

- With wonderful, life-giving vision, the Bible tells us: To the extent that people accede to God’s offer of life, arms are not necessary. Where arms exist, they are to be re-made into instruments of life. Even amid violence, the faithful response must be to *choose life*.
- The level of armed violence portrayed in the Bible and sanctioned by Christians in the centuries since is sobering and condemnable.
- The wisdom that limited violence in the past is needed even more in the present.
- The question ‘When are arms necessary?’ presupposes that we are in charge. We must always strive to be responsible to each other in human affairs but also be mindful, as the 2006 WCC Assembly said of nuclear arms, that in many ways ‘God saves us from ourselves.’

## Lessons of the Present

The policies adopted by international church bodies are an important area of present learning. We will concentrate on the WCC which was born in 1948 just after the cataclysmic violence of WWII.

Early in the war, some of those who would soon found the WCC began to focus on requirements for a durable peace. Their efforts came to fruition in another child of 1948, the United Nations.

Overall WCC policy in international affairs is much in line with [the egalitarian] theme in the UN Charter. It supports standards that will work for the good of all people. The effect from the outset was to *minimize the role of arms*: offering instead rules-based settlement of conflicts; government monopoly on the use of force with limits on any use of force; the principle of collective security. For the churches, these policies soon became flavored with a growing convergence on the inadmissibility of war.

There are many pillars set in place during the 60 years of policy making since 1948. These have mostly to do with wars, big-power behavior, militarism, disarmament, nuclear weapons and in the last decade small arms.

On small arms, the churches concerns are similar to the public health approach [to war and societal violence], especially addressing risk factors, violence prevention and demand reduction. The policy is to deal with the societal problems directly so that arms use will decrease. Here is a sampling of positions adopted by the WCC on the use of arms:

- 1980s – Arms are not necessary and not even conscionable because such vast resources of wealth and brainpower are consumed to build armaments (Geneva, 1987 & previously).
- 1970s – Faced with armaments and arms use, Christians must resist the temptation to resign themselves to a false sense of impotence or security. The churches should emphasize their readiness to live without the protection of armaments, and take a significant initiative in pressing for disarmament. (Nairobi Assembly, 1975)
- 1960s – Seeking institutions to manage conflict rather than allowing the peace of the world “to depend on a precarious nuclear balance.” (World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966)
- 1950s – The churches recognised early in the nuclear era “that the only sure defence against nuclear weapons is...prohibition, elimination and verification” (Second Assembly, 1954) and already at that time laid out the basic points of what became – 16 dangerous

years later – the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the most important 'arms are not necessary' agreement for one class of weapons in history.

- 1940s – “War as a method of settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man... War is now total... Atomic and other new weapons render widespread and indiscriminate destruction inherent in the whole conduct of modern war... In these circumstances the tradition of a just war, requiring a just cause and the use of just means, is now challenged. Law may require the sanction of force, but when war breaks out, force is used on a scale which tends to destroy the basis on which law exists.” (First WCC Assembly, Amsterdam, 1948). Significantly, this statement went on to lay out three conflicting church positions on the use of force that endure to this day:
  - military action is the ultimate sanction of the rule of law and a civil duty;
  - modern war can never be an act of justice but a Christian may have to fight anyway;
  - an absolute witness against war and for peace is the will of God and churches must speak out to that effect.

Please note that I am not covering the monumental contribution to peace, justice and conflict resolution within the Roman Catholic Church. Suffice it to say that, in the close alliances with various Catholic groups the WCC has developed since the Second Vatican Council, there is evidence of the common mind and heart that has developed around social justice and peace.

## **When are arms necessary?**

### **Building an answer from the present**

- The more we know about the full consequences of the arms use, the harder it becomes to claim that arms use is necessary.
- The trend indicated by research is to see violence as a variety of related phenomena that occur at different levels of society and require prevention early.
- I have found no policy statement where the WCC approved of a war. Further research is needed. Also, perhaps silence has meant

consent in some cases. However, the references to particular conflicts by the governing bodies down through the years all seem to be critical. Quite an indication of how rarely arms are judged as 'necessary'?

- In that light, however, the WCC has come out clearly for the 'Responsibility to Protect', the emerging international norm that defines state sovereignty in terms of duties and obligations for the well being of civilians rather than as an absolute power. It limits, but does not exclude, the use of force in protective interventions for humanitarian purposes.
- We may abolish a whole class of weapons but we cannot abolish the roots of weapons use in society and in the human heart.
- Technological advances in weaponry have led to vastly more efficient killing power. These 'advances' raise the bar against the use of force.
- The potential, via the fulfillment of human rights, for avoiding the use of force is key to the ecumenical answer to our question. Arms are not necessary to the extent that one keeps one's house in order. The WCC, like the human rights community generally, has seen the UN's commitment to state sovereignty exclude much active application of human rights. May a shared commitment to human security soon take precedence over the commitment to separate national securities.
- We might well ask why the burden of proof seems to fall on those who do not want to use weapons, as if they are the ones that are unrealistic. In fact the wildest flights of unreality are by those who put excessive trust in arms. The more weapons one has, the greater the tendency to over-estimate one's ability to guarantee one's own security. Or, as a popular saying goes: If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

## Opportunities of the Future

Building on insights from the past and the present, I will mention two areas of future opportunity that would require an ethical and spiritual leap from where we are today and note certain practical examples of current work in need of progress. Whether ambitious or modest, each can be seen as an application of the answers gathered above.

The first opportunity is to pursue a good 'old' idea that still has an

exciting future. In her work on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt was responding to the phenomenon that armed violence feeds on breaches in the social fabric and on violations of the freedoms, responsibilities and fairness that hold people and communities together. Roosevelt called the UDHR a 'Magna Carta for all Mankind'. She was speaking to the hope that, on some level, all peoples yearn for a world where mutual solidarity would cross the boundaries of state, race, class and religion.

Could such a global ethos drive a new kind of diplomacy? Could it help generate a practical alternative to the threat of nuclear weapons? Could governments and civil societies construct a 'balance of confidence' and of mutual obligation, instead of a 'balance of terror' and of fear?...

The second opportunity is relatively new but already underway. It is an ethical and religious exploration of the concept of 'just peace'. The WCC is a fellowship of churches most of which are historically identified with "just war". These churches are beginning to grapple with the possibility of re-aligning their teaching (and hopefully, practice) with a new understanding, the concept of 'just peace'. Surely, the burden of the 20th century, the deadliest century in human history, gives us little choice – two world wars, several genocides, numerous other deadly conflicts.

A WCC process on 'just peace' is gathering peace declarations and other contributions from seminaries and other groups around the world. There will be an international ecumenical convocation on 'just peace' in 2011. (We are praying that St. Augustine might be jealous.)

## Work for Peace

How does one work for peace? By working to reduce injustice, an Anglican bishop in strife-torn Sri Lanka suggests. As injustice drops, peace will grow. Injustice and peace are like a seesaw – when one goes up the other comes down.

Specific practical opportunities should contribute to a culture of peace. They need not detract from the big goals, rather, make those goals more possible and help keep them in sight. They build the framework for disarmament and the non-use of arms. There is no shortage of practical opportunities ahead, including:

*Weapon-free zones.* The WCC is putting capacity into an exploration of whether multi-faith action would be effective in re-vitalizing the

proposed zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, WMDFZ. With people in our network we are also looking at the Africa nuclear-weapon-free zone, NWFZ, and its Treaty of Pelindaba. Could Africa with its own NWFZ in place be celebrated by churches during the 2010 Africa focus of the DOV? Only five countries [only two, by 12/08] need to ratify for the treaty to come into effect. With Africa on board, the Southern Hemisphere would be covered by NWFZs. What a message for the South to send North, to Washington and Moscow, Paris and Beijing, Jerusalem, Islamabad and New Delhi.

Weapons-free zones can be small too. When we launched a new 'Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum' recently we spent one day with the Middle East listening to other places in the world where churches have faced endemic conflict. There were six good case studies. A movement to create 'Church Sanctuaries for Peace' in Colombia stood out because parishes, in effect, are declaring themselves weapon-free zones: as small as one building, the church grounds, the neighborhood, the whole village, or more. Wherever the zone starts, parishioners tell armed actors – guerillas, the army or the paramilitary – to leave their guns 'at the door'. Sometimes doing so costs them their lives. Always it sends a signal that this is no place to have, carry or use arms.

The point to stress is the relevance – regardless of the class of weapons – of WFZs. As arms proliferation spirals upwards, such zones ought to be the calling card of every parish, every parishioner, every church.

*Treaties and processes.* These are instruments that reduce the availability and use of arms. Churches must work for them alongside civil society and governments, but develop our own unique agenda and contribute from what we have mentioned above: the prophetic voice, compassionate ethics, grassroots commitment and broad unity that are all gifts from God.

Obviously, these concrete steps are only samples of the many ways that the religious commitment to choose life can be translated into practical, political progress. The two conceptual leaps, above, are grounded in the same commitment.

## Conclusion

Historically, the use of force has been a prominent option for peoples and nations, with or without the qualification that it be a last resort. If one re-examines the use of force and that much-abused qualification

against the record of the 20th century and humanity's first faltering steps into the 21st, it is hard not to conclude that the Christian and ethical threshold for the use of force is now higher than ever before. Advances in various disciplines have raised the standard for what is 'last' in 'last resort'. Individuals, societies, nations and international bodies now have more scope, and greater obligation, than ever to take preventive action against violence rather than assenting to the use violence.

Our human experience with the nature and the consequences of violence has raised the cost – and lowered the utility – of using armed force. It is no longer adequate to call war a last resort. War has become a more remote and dubious option than ever before. War has often been acknowledged as a grave manifestation of collective failure to manage human affairs by other means. Now it is known to be more destructive and more deadly than has normally been acknowledged.

The Biblical and spiritual imperative is to *choose life*. This powerful, ancient injunction challenges us to seek a broader understanding of the phenomenon of violence. It compels us to have a vision more equal to the complexity of violence, especially of armed violence. Measuring up to that complexity requires us to have a big vision and to find new strategies.

New, multi-sectoral and more integrated approaches are needed. These involve church groups taking new approaches and making common cause with new groups in civil society and with governments:

- When arms use is proposed, the human cost must be considered first. We have seen some of the many implications from this 'choose life' perspective, above, including public health surveys that uncover massive numbers of 'excess deaths'.
- All forms of disarmament are important. Much that works in one area will also exert pressure on other areas of arms control.
- Political advocacy for arms control instruments is essential for religious and ethical reasons and is needed at local, national and international levels.

If we actually choose life, the onus is on prevention and elimination. Non-use, non-possession, non-production, non-existence of weaponry must climb steeply from where it stands today. Eliminating even the most inexcusable weapons is proving hard, but it will happen. The process of banning landmines is a lesson in progress along the early stages of what is a very long road.

Success in limiting arms and arms use is an organic report card on

the health of a society and the vitality of its religions. People of faith need to be agents of change, not defenders of the status quo, firmly engaged at the spiritual, social, economic and political movement toward a just peace. To the extent that we are engaged, our answer to the question of when arms are necessary becomes more ambitious, more life-affirming, more of a challenge in the political sphere. In that spirit, the Christian and ethical response to the question is somewhere between “hardly ever” and “never”.

In closing, a word from the WCC Assembly of 1954. It was just eight years since the UN’s founding, but the Cold War had begun and many hopes for peace already lay in ruins. These words, by a modern Christian peace maker, Friedrich Nolde, place human labor for peace in the compassionate hands of God.

This troubled world, disfigured and distorted as it is, is God’s world. He rules and over-rules its tangled history. In praying, ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,’ we commit ourselves to seek earthly justice, freedom and peace for all [people]. Here as everywhere Christ is our hope... The fruit of our efforts rests in His hands. We can therefore live and work as those who know that God reigns, undaunted by all the arrogant pretensions of evil, ready to face situations that seem hopeless and yet to act in them as [people] whose hope is indestructible.”

# The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

Ms. Carla Morales, director of Official Programs  
of the Center for Human Progress,  
Arias Foundation, Costa Rica

I would first like to thank the organisers for allowing me to present to you the recent achievements of the Arms Trade Treaty initiative, and to bring to light the crucial importance of this document regarding the mitigation of armed violence and its impacts on the international community. Secondly, I would like to congratulate the Gothenburg Process on their third ecumenical conference, which has created for us all, a wonderful opportunity for information exchange and advocacy.

Currently, the UNDP estimates that there exists one weapon in circulation for every ten people on the planet, a fact that sadly, represents a conservative estimate of the prolific nature of such damaging instruments. Instruments that create a climate of insecurity, foment gross human rights violations and undermine development. In fact, within one year's time it is estimated that 500,000 people will be killed as a result of armed violence.

Furthermore, as noted to in a recent report by IANSA titled 'Africa's Missing Billions', Africa contains only 14% of the world's population but contributes 20% of the world's firearm homicides. Even more sobering is the fact that nearly 95% of these firearms are not manufactured within the country and are imported from countries who take no responsibility for the destination and end use of their products. This fact has cost Africa almost 300 billion dollars in the past seventeen years, and undermined almost all sustainable development efforts in the region. These squandered resources could have been directed towards more beneficial avenues, benefiting education or helping to stop the spread of HIV and Aids.

## Global principles

A conference held in 1997 between Nobel Prize Laureates began the long road towards creating a culture of peace, stopping the illicit spread of arms and combating the human rights violations associated with armed violence. This conference resulted in six global principles which constitute the International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers serving as the basis for the Arms Trade Treaty, and aims to overcome

the numerous obstacles standing in the way of peace. However, there remain many steps in order to codify this document, and allow for all countries to adopt the global principles of international arms transfers.

The six global principles include obligations based on relevant international, treaties and international customary law, principles recognised by the United Nations, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and the articles on the responsibilities of states for internationally wrongful acts. These six principles state that:

- All international transfers of arms shall be authorised by a recognised state and carried out in accordance with national laws and procedures which reflect, as a minimum, states' obligations under international law.
- States shall not authorise international transfers of arms which would violate their expressed obligations regarding arms under international law.
- States shall not authorise international transfers of arms where they will be used or are likely to be used for violations of international law.
- States shall take into account other factors, including the likely use of the arms, before authorising an arms transfer.
- States shall submit to an international registry of comprehensive national annual reports on international arms transfers, and the registry shall publish a compiled, comprehensive, international, annual report.
- States shall establish common standards for specific mechanisms to control all aspects of arms transfers, including brokering, licensed production etc, as well as operative provisions to strengthen implementation.

## Network of NGOs

Currently, the focus of many civil society organizations including the Arias Foundation has been to research the relevant international laws regarding arms transfers, and to build a strong network of NGOs, and parliamentary members. Members presently supporting this initiative include AfricaPeace Forum, Albert Schweitzer Institute, Amnesty International, Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, Cari-

tas Internationalis, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Non-violence International Southeast Asia, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), Oxfam International, Project Ploughshares Saferworld, Sou da Paz, Viva Rio, Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD). This network has the capacity to share information regarding these international laws in order to identify problem areas in each country that a relevant ATT would address, making the initiative successful on not only the international scale but on regional, local and municipal levels.

Many regions of the world have recognized the importance of this issue, and slowly the momentum has been growing for the need to regulate arms transfers within each region. From the time that the International Code of Conduct was created in 1997, many instruments have come to light that address the more specific problems that each distinct region faces regarding arms and armed violence. Many of the aspects from these instruments will be considered for addition into the ATT, as their successes and failures demonstrate the true nature of arms transfers and armed violence within each respective area.

Some of the instruments that have been developed include: ECO-WAS, Convention on SALW (2006); SICA Code of Conduct (2005); Best Practice Guidelines Associated with the Nairobi Protocol (2005); OAS Model Regulations for the Control of Brokers of Firearms (2003); Wassenaar Arrangement Best Practice Guidelines for Exports of SALW (2002); SADC Protocol (2001); OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light weapons (2000); EU Code of Conduct (1998); OAS Model Regulations (1997).

In order to create a draft of the proposed ATT, the First Committee of the United Nations voted to create the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the feasibility, scope and draft parameters of the treaty. In December of 2006 this decision was ratified by 153 countries in agreement of starting this process. Before the group was formed, the UN Secretary General requested that each member state submit a report describing their position as to the feasibility, scope and draft parameters to be incorporated and considered by the Group of Governmental Experts. This ensured that each country would be able to express their opinion either positive or negative regarding the contents of the draft ATT.

In March of 2008 the Governmental Group of Experts came together with representatives from 28 countries in order to discuss the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for an effective draft of the ATT. This was the first of three meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts with

two additional meetings to be held in May and August of 2008. Many of the decisions to be made are based on the research that has been conducted by the civil society organizations and the requirements of individual governments based on the responses to the Secretary General's request.

In order to implement such a powerful document we must all work together as one cohesive network, so that we may begin to not only ratify the ATT, but to ensure that it is introduced to an environment that is rich in information, and fully capable of taking advantage of the recommendations given by the Governmental Group of Experts.

Only then can we fully realize the potential of this document to change the face of our world for the better in the coming years.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this issue.

# ATT – Implications for Africa

Mr. Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator,  
International Action Network on Small Arms, (IANSA) Africa

International Action Network on Small Arms Africa, IANSA Africa, is part of the ATT process. The idea was to take over the process that Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias from Costa Rica had started with making a code of conduct. To take it a step further, Cambridge University interpreted the code of conduct to principles. In three years – very fast for such a process – the ATT has been changed into something feasible.

We as NGOs always want to go to the maximum. That the HR should be put into the ATT is something that we have been fighting for. How do we make sure to lobby so that this HR language is not left out.

US is always against any process that includes any form of armament. If the US stops the ATT in the UN, it may be taken out, just as the Land mines.

I like to start by saying, with St Francis of Assis, Make me an instrument of your peace. Is the church an instrument for peace, or a source of the problem?

## The Small Arms Crisis

Every day we are losing thousands of lives because of small arms: 560 homicides, 250 direct war deaths, 140 suicides and 50 accidental deaths.

Small arms means big problems. Currently there are 875 million guns worldwide. The global annual trade: \$ 4 billion legal and \$1 billion illicit. The annual cost of gun violence, eg: South Africa spends \$2 billion on law enforcement each year, more than on health care (\$1.6 billion).

IANSA is the global movement against gun violence. 31% of its 800 members are in Africa. Within the civil society we have seen that the impact of violence in Africa is immense.

The World Council of Churches, which is a member of IANSA, made a statement in on small arms and the ATT:

- To promote and support legislation and programs that enhance community safety;

- Work to strengthen small arms controls;
- Build networks to effect change;
- Support a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

The Arms Trade Treaty, ATT, covers all international arms transfers and all conventional arms, prohibits transfers if likely to be used to commit serious violations of human rights, humanitarian law or impede development ('golden rule'). Since 2003, over a million people have joined a petition for ATT. One of the campaigns was to collect pictures of one million faces that were handed to the UN secretary general in 2006. The last one who joined was a Kenyan.

153 states voted to start an ATT process in 2006. There were state consultations, where about 95 states submitted their views on an ATT in 2007 (including 21 African states). The next step is a Group of Governmental Experts, GGE, that will start in 2008. Several African countries have expressed interest in membership.

When we knew that the General Secretary of the UN would consult member states about the ATT, we also knew that he would not consult NGOs. Therefore we started people's consultations enabling the voice of civil society to be heard. Consultations were held in more than 50 countries.

In some countries, for example in Mozambique, they were able to make the people's consultation and submit them to the Department of foreign affairs to be included in the country's response to the UN.

## Africa and an ATT

The question is if there will be room for all the African states that want to join the GGE. The tricky part is that some of the government don't want to publish their view on the ATT. For example Tanzania was positive at first in New York, but when IANSA approached them in their capital, they didn't want to admit that. If the government doesn't publically have a decision, we must put pressure.

Many of the African states never implement the agreements in their national laws. Therefore we need to put pressure and lobby, and support sub-regional agreements. We also need to reach out to the Councils of churches and Catholic Bishops Conferences. One good example is the Council of churches in the great Horn which has integrated with other organisations.

We also want to see that more women's organisations are active. The churches need to see how we involve more women in this process.

# The Churches Role in Promoting an ATT

Mr. Didier Destremau, Caritas, France

When I start thinking about the topic “The churches role in promoting an ATT”, I discover that it would have been paradoxal, more than strange, that the Christian churches and the others as well, could have avoided taking a part in this crusade for reducing the number of arms circulating in our poor world.

Because, indeed, one of the essential missions of the churches is the option for the poor. That is to be on the side of those who need compassion and protection. When you know that thousands of people are dying every day by fire arms; that, in South Africa for instance, it is mainly the women and children who are victims of the proliferation of fire arms; that even in developed countries, the poor are those suffering more of violence, gangs, rackets, robberies and so on, it is obvious that the churches are in the front line of this war against proliferation of weapons. And logically, they can not be indifferent on the subject of trade because proliferation is fed by trade.

## What the Churches do

When you continue this reflection on the implication of the churches in favour of an Arms Trade Treaty, you need to understand what we mean by churches. For me it means both the big institutions, and the local dioceses and parishes serving small or large communities. It implies also a lot of vicars and ministers dedicated to the cause of their people. And finally the NGO's, the church related organisations. All these institutions that have, since a long time, adopted a strict position regarding the proliferation of weapons, and also, most of them, acted concretely for changing and improving the situation for their people.

Most of them ignore the international context, they are not aware of the consequences, the virtues of an international treaty, and they have perhaps the legitimate tendency to not see farther than their doorsteps. But they do act vigorously in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programs; they collect the weapons at the foot of their altars. So the churches did not push for the elaboration of an ATT strictly speaking. But by acting discretely and locally, they have paved

the way for an understanding of the situation. And by the success of their actions, they are models who impose their governments to adopt a positive attitude towards the ATT.

The experiences of conflicts and wars has led to a clear conclusion that presence of arms entails havoc, and that a logical and concrete approach resides in the acceptance of the presence of arms and therefore of arms trade. But also the necessity of focusing and concentrating on limiting the number of arms to a strict minimum.

And, step by step, the idea of a international agreement has surged and is now the main objective of the churches and their followers.

It is widely accepted that no transfer is morally indifferent. Every one brings in the open series of political, strategic and economic interests which have to be taken into consideration to judge the licitness of the operation. Most of the churches, if international, national, tribal or ethnic, still have a dream of eradicating the wars for ever. The believers think that a conflict solve nothing, in the contrary, often contributes to aggravate the problems. For those on the front line, there is no just wars, but a legitimate right to defend oneself and protect the populations.

With some regret and reluctance, the churches have admitted that, man being a sinner by nature and the world being marked by evil, the possession of arms is not a sin or a crime. Nevertheless, as I already said, this admittance imposes serious exigencies and obligations on a world wide level.

## Principles

Meanwhile the churches have, step by step, elaborated some principles on which basing these approaches. And because of the intense dialogue between and within the churches, a list of prerequisites is established, which is by now the framework of the draft of the common position of the churches and, hopefully, the base of the next treaty. In spite of its recognised imperfections and perhaps because Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias, who lauched the initiative world wide, chose this forum, the UN has imposed itself as the organisation to be the laboratory where this concept will be discussed, digested and matured.

Another topic is the scope and the wideness of the objectives. Knowing that the small arms and light weapons are responsible for 95 % of the people killed in the last conflicts, that these weapons are killing about 1 000 persons per day, the reflection and effort has been naturally aimed on these lethal devices. This also simplifies considerably the

foreseen difficulties and reduces the opposition of many states to any instrument able to limit their actions and interfere in their concept of sovereignty, and of many industrialists quite reticent to accept a hand cuffing to their producible commerce.

This is why, in 2001, the UN launched the “program of action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (PoA), an approach which had been preceded in 1995 by Boutros Ghali’s call in “Supplement to an agenda for Peace” which also treated the issue of small arms.

At this point we may discuss whether the support of the churches for the UN plan of action prepared the ground for a wide acceptance of ATT. Some are thinking that on the contrary, the plan of action was a way to jeopardize a broader approach not only because it implies only a non comprehensive list of weapons, but mainly for the reason that it was not legally binding.

My feeling is that in spite of its lackings, this initiative was positive, attracting the attention of the states, the public opinion and also the NGO’s to the necessity of enterprising something more efficient to face the problem. And let us remember that what we considered as a hard defeat, when in 2005 the special meeting to renovate and blowing some new life into the PoA failed to mark some progress, at the same time, more or less, meant that we registered an unforeseen advance in the ATT direction with the tremendously exciting vote of October 2006, when 153 countries created the group of experts supposed to launch the work for the text of the treaty.

The Catholic Church had not waited for this initiative to address the topic of Arms transfer. In 1994, the Pontifical council for justice and peace published a commendable booklet called ‘The international arms trade, an ethical reflection’, which I find so premonitory that I keep it with me all the time. In this pamphlet, the Vatican provides general ethical principles and stresses the responsibility of the exporting States as well of the importing States. It did not avoid main issues like the non states actors or entities, authoritarian regimes or problems of States already in conflicts. And to finish, the council for justice and peace appealed to an international regulation of arms transfer.

## The ATT

We are already at the core of an ATT.

Do not ask me which church was the actual initiator of the move. I don’t know, I did not check the chronology of declarations and it is

not very important. What is sure is that, immediately when the whole Christian community adhered to the concept, its hierarchy militated to incitate the public opinion to understand and to act. Many seminar, round tables, organisations, institutions were launched, including the Gothenburg process that started in 2001. But the churches were not completely in the ATT approach, because alike the bulk of the NGO's involved, they clutched to the small arms domain.

It was not earlier than in 2003 that it appeared to some NGO thinkers, among them Christian associations, that the PoA is too restrictive, and that all armaments have to be included in the process. If the scope of the treaty is too narrow, some states and other actors will easily bypass the objective and use the loopholes to continue their previous practices.

As soon as the idea of an ATT appeared, the Holy See jumped on board. Mgr Migliore, nuncio in the UN, declared last year: "The small arms conference failed to produce any tangible results. The Holy See takes this opportunity to appeal again to the international community to establish an obligatory legal framework aimed at regulating the trade of conventional weapons of any type as well as regulating the know how and technology for their production. My delegation supports the draft resolution aimed at establishing common international standards for the import, export and transferts of conventional arms".

Pax Christi had anticipated this position by as soon as 1994 choosing the control of international trade of weapons as one of its three priorities and by participating in the creation of IANSA and later on of ENSA. Indeed, Pax Christi focused its action on the nuclear weapons, but is nevertheless very involved locally, nationally and globally in the fight for an ATT; Colombia, United States, Sudan and Guatemala are countries where this catholic organisation is at the head of the crusade along with others.

I gathered declarations of many orthodox and protestant leaders about arm proliferation, against the attitude of their governments. I discovered a new name, the kerkinactie, an interchurch Dutch organisation acting among other issues on the disarmament topic. I have also a document coming from a Waldensian and Methodist Church expressing its aversion of a society suffering from excessive circulation of weapons. The Pentecosts, the Evangelicals, the Anglicans and the United Church of Christ take a clear position in favour of a global arm control.

Just to moderate this impression of unanimity, allow me to say that a section of the Evangelicals are rather against, and that the Catholic

Bishops of USA preferred not to create dissension among their people, and decided to stay silent on the subject of arms. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches in their synod of 2001 in Turin took a similar position. Scores of very pertinent documents are published by church related organisations like Plougshare, Caritas, Pax Christi, World Council of Churches and many others which indisputably contribute to the awareness of the issue around the world.

We may multiply these examples of implications, calls, pamphlets, declarations, press releases which, at the end of the day, had a real influence on the decision makers. Of course, writing a press communiqué is easy and not always efficient. But when it is complemented by gatherings, marches, pacific demonstrations, teachings and so on, the urgency of the topic enters the mind of people and leaders.

Don't tell me that the ECOWAS agreement, the Nairobi declaration did not take any roots in the bishops' repeated appeals to curb the circulation of weapons in the suburbs of the cities as well as in the tribes and among the herds keepers. And the links between these regional initiatives and the global ATT is obvious and well known.

## Conclusion

I don't know whether you are convinced that the churches played an eminent role in promoting and supporting ATT. The churches' leaders act sometime in secret and with discretion. In other occasions they are more vocal. Indeed, it is therefore hard to assess exactly their role and give figures and statistics. But the churches can do better and more because the solution to proliferation is not a mere treaty, but its actual implementation.

How? Let me give you some directions which I think are relevant:

- Act to maintain the present momentum and support more officially and vigorously these initiatives like the Gothenburg process in their seminars, leaflets, declarations etc.
- Help ENSA to be a more lively and strong organisation.
- Pass alliances with other non-Christian organisations (Red Cross, Red Crescent etc)
- Put on board other faiths, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews
- Be more visible.

Thank you.

# The Gothenburg Process: Churches Should Unite Against Arms Trade

Peter Brune,  
director Life & Peace Institute  
(until 2008)

Military expenditures are skyrocketing, and wars have become increasingly dependent on high tech material and advanced techniques. At the same time, the military industry is becoming increasingly transnational in line with general globalization. While the monitoring of what is produced and where it is shipped is also becoming more and more globalized, not least through the active involvement of civil society organizations in these matters, it is to a very large extent still a matter of national control regimes. Every government wants to know and have control over what is manufactured and where it goes.

## The Gothenburg initiative

In 2001, three Swedish ecumenical institutions (the Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation) started a joint project to highlight the growing transfers of military equipment, primarily to the global south. The increase in these transfers ruptured the positive trends of a decline in the production and proliferation of arms, which prevailed until the end of the 1990's, following the end of the Cold War. The new approach that characterized this church-related initiative is twofold:

- The focus is on the legal trade of conventional weapons (“government to government”).
- All different actors involved in the trading and proliferation of military equipment should take active part in the dialogue in order to enhance the understanding of the complexity of the issue?

Over the years this initiative has become known as the “Gothenburg Process”. A series of national, regional and global conferences have been carried out, the first two in the city of Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2001 and 2004 respectively.

## Four types of actors

Arms transfers may be accepted by most mainstream churches as supporting a state's traditional "legitimate security demands", as well as allowing for the use of minimal armed force to stop violent criminal acts where there is a direct threat to life. At the same time it has been all too evident in recent history that the excessive proliferation of arms often puts people at risk, fuelling violent conflict and creating increasing insecurity, vulnerability and fear. So how do we pull together all of our efforts to work against this? Very much is already done and much work is going on. As mentioned earlier, one of the strategies we have been following in the Gothenburg Process has been to involve all of the different actors involved in the arms trade. We distinguish between the following four agents:

- the producers (the arms industry)
- the users (mainly the armed forces in the recipient countries)
- the controllers (mainly the national control authorities)
- the "critical civil society" (in the Gothenburg Process mainly churches, ecumenical and interfaith institutions)

So far, we have managed to have all of them on board at the conferences, not all of them at the same time, but at least a serious engagement and a surprisingly strong and honest participation, in spite of the fundamentally different views on the necessity of producing and trading in arms. In this regard it is also correct to say that the Gothenburg Process has less of an "activist" approach, but the scope is more to promote dialogue in order to achieve a sustainable change. This does not rule out the possibility that churches can also support "activist"-related activities. A good example is the campaign for better control of small arms, to which most churches have signed up.

But in order to both understand and influence the different actors, we have within the Gothenburg Process chosen to actively involve different players throughout the process. The "security benefits" to be derived from arms transfers must be carefully considered and scrutinized *vís-a-vís* e.g. the wider development needs of the importing country and the risk that the weapons may be diverted to states and groups that do not respect universal human rights principles and international law.

In recognition of our common vulnerability as human beings, churches need to respond to the realities of the arms trade from a theological and ethical perspective. In many countries, churches are also in

a position to invite different actors to engage in dialogue. A serious shortcoming is the lack of church-related expertise. There are simply not enough people who can provide the churches with relevant information, and there is a need to bridge this gap.

### **Arms for what?**

So under what circumstances would arms be needed? Also among churches and church-related institutions there is a wide range of different views on this. Here are some examples:

In 2003, Caritas Internationalis organized a conference on civil-military relations. The following quote is from the intervention of the representative from Caritas Zambia:

“In Africa, the main principle is that each nation needs a body that can offer defence, stability and deterrence. These give positive space to a country to go about its business of nation building. Armies in Africa have played such a positive role. It is also, however, true that the same means that are used for security can be and have been used for destruction. The army has also been the cause of many problems. In Africa examples of the negative and destructive nature of armed forces include participation in civil wars, ethnic conflicts, coups and recruitment of child soldiers.

Despite the negative examples above, the representative from Caritas Zambia argued that one should think positively and consider the type of army that allows nation building. Positive elements of the work of the armed forces include improved communications and health care, the opening up of inaccessible areas, training, building projects, construction work and the general protection of national resources.”

In most European countries other official authorities would be responsible for many of the tasks that are mentioned above, such as the protection of natural resources. Nevertheless, the questions remain: What kind of equipment shall these armed forces have, who shall produce them and who shall take the decisions? And again as stated earlier, so far the churches and the ecumenical, interfaith and other faith based organizations have said very little about these pertinent issues.

Another example: The churches in South Africa and Sweden have been working together in their resistance against the enormous procurement package that followed the post apartheid restructuring of the armed forces in South Africa. While it is correct that the procurement process was democratically decided by i.a. the South African parliament, the

churches questioned the wisdom in spending so many resources on armament from the beginning. There are needs in the South African society that the churches in both countries could easily describe as more urgent, while the purpose of buying jetfighters, in this case from Sweden, was not really obvious. The churches' line of argument was along ethical considerations, which do not always coincide with political considerations.

## Future perspectives

We can note a growing interest in the matters discussed at both Gothenburg I and II has increased considerably in the recent years. The number of NGOs, government initiatives etc, working for better global control of both the production and proliferation of military equipment has grown, and it is easier to find partners. Still there are certain dimensions that would constitute unique church and faith-based contributions to the global disarmament efforts, also when it comes to conventional weapons.

When taking into account that military expenditures have increased dramatically in recent years, the urge for stronger engagement in worldwide disarmament becomes even more apparent.

Over the years I have been able to participate in various opportunities for dialogue with different actors involved in arms trade. Especially challenging is the dialogue with representatives of the military industry and of the armed forces. It has been a most interesting experience, especially when talking to committed Christians engaged in the production of arms or those pursuing a professional military career. This dialogue is necessary and, I dare say, mutually beneficial. It will continue and through a step-by-step approach it will advocate for an increased involvement from all actors, recognising the important contributions that faith communities can make in this process.

At the same time it is necessary to realize that we are dealing with institutions that only slowly are subject to change, namely the military-industrial complex on one side and the churches on the other – this is one of the reasons for the longtime commitment requiring a lot of patience in the Gothenburg Process.

2007 has been a year with many activities. Besides the Nairobi conference, we had also a consultation in Washington with US churches as well as a number of activities in Europe. In February 2008 there will be an Asian consultation in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Another concrete

activity we wish to accomplish during the coming years is to arrange a seminar on interfaith responses to arms production and arms transfers.

The next larger Gothenburg conference is scheduled for 2010. We hope that by then there will be even larger commitments to the involvement of the faith communities in the global disarmament efforts and that, through this joining of forces, the faith communities can better exercise their moral authority for a world without arms, maybe not in our life-time, but at least a world with fewer arms.

# Part II

## Workshop on Ecumenical Action for Disarmament

*This section has been revised by the steering committee.*

### Introduction

Summarized below are some of the discussions at the second part of the International Ecumenical Conference on Arms Transfers that dealt with experiences of faith-based responses to arms proliferation.

There are many good examples of faith based organisations response to the growing production and proliferation of conventional arms. In all countries represented in this conference we have heard the important voices of faith-based organisations questioning the increasing amount of weapons flooding different parts of the world.

Examples of these commitments; In Germany churches produces a report on German arms transfers every year; In South Africa churches protested against the enormous investments in arms in the post-apartheid restructuring of the armed forces (i.a. jet fighters and submarines) a few years ago; British bishops have made early statements in favour of the Arms Trade Treaty, and Churches in Mozambique have proven instrumental in small arms disarmament.

These examples serve as sources of inspiration. Hopefully at the forthcoming events within the Gothenburg Process it will be possible to share many more and thus build a stronger faith based network for disarmament.

### Which methods can Faith based organisations use?

#### *Advocacy*

Many participants in the workshop agreed that dialogue with governments, defence industry, and military is an important element in acting for a change. But dialogue alone is not sufficient. Monitoring of the activities of the different actors is another important component.

In order to have successful monitoring, good knowledge is needed. To enter into dialogue with government require a good grasp of the

facts. At the same time one should not be too afraid and wait too long to take action.

#### *Work on community level*

In Mozambique, Brazil and many other places around the world it has been shown that people can have more trust in churches and faith based organisations than in the official or public structures (e.g. police), when it comes to local disarmament and confidence building, or more concretely when it comes to handing in their firearms. In relation to this, churches and faith-based organisations may have a substantial role in a DDR-processes (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of ex combatants). These organisations often have more of a long-term commitment and a community focus that is highly important. From these experiences it is also natural that faith based organisations work with the “demand side” of arms, i.e. developing methods for the prevention of the armed violence through awareness raising and transformation of attitudes and behaviours (rather than only focusing on the supply side).

#### *Role model in society*

At the conference concrete examples were discussed where faith based organisations have acted as role models in society and have inspired other actors and sectors to act more responsible and ethically in situations where there is a high level of armed violence in the community. Other examples of how faith based organisations can influence is through investing in an ethically responsible way, which in many cases may influence other actors. Faith based organisations may also give their support in favour of global campaigns, to strengthen the credibility of these campaigns, through the moral authority that people connect with the faith communities and faith leaders.

### **Who can faith based organisations work with?**

Faith based organisations are many times faced with limited resources, which makes it more difficult to set aside staff that could build up extensive knowledge on specific aspects of arms production and arms transfers. It is therefore important to build networks with experts, researchers and specialized NGOs. On the other hand bishops and other religious leaders/authorities could open doors into the room of decision makers.

It is also important to work with church representatives in other

regions. An experience from Colombia showed that by providing information to bishops in North America and Europe proved to be a powerful tool in achieving an international dialogue about the situation in the country. The same goes for the need to look outside the doors of the own church and the own church constituency.

## Future ecumenical action on arms control

From the discussions on the experiences of ecumenical action on arms control, and from the presentations in the first part of the conference, it was agreed that the work should further be developed in three clusters:

- a) Theological and Ethical reflection
- b) Arms Trade Treaty – ATT
- c) Ecumenical action on small arms

The participants committed themselves to working towards the enhanced participation of their own church or faith community for the achievement of these goals. In order to operationalise these goals, the following objectives and strategies were agreed on:

### *a) Theological and Ethical Reflections*

#### **Objectives:**

- Overall objective: develop the faith based reflection regarding how to reduce production and transfer of arms
- Facilitate an ethical impact on public policy/opinion on the deadly consequences of the arms race
- Reflecting on the meaning of Just Peace in relation to the arms trade and production.

#### **Strategies:**

- To produce a theological reflection from the various Christian traditions, involving academia, practitioners and victims and survivors of violent conflicts
- Popularisation of this reflection, for broader dissemination
- Identify and make use of proper channels to influence the process leading up to an ecumenical declaration of a Just Peace.

*b) Support of the Arms Trade Treaty, ATT*

**Objectives:**

- Overall objective: That a global instrument for arms transfers is adopted, and that it sets clear minimum regulations to be fulfilled before approving international transfers
- Adding force to the campaign towards an ATT, by involving the faith based communities
- Give additional credibility to the campaign by the support from churches and faith based organisations.

**Strategies:**

- Coordination with the ATT steering committee to gain knowledge and updated campaign information, in order to coordinate action.
- Appoint focal points for ATT within religious groups, and creating a network. Harnessing the network through different means, e.g by a questionnaire and a mapping exercise.
- Prepare a church statement on the ATT, which churches can sign and use as a platform for common action
- Awareness building – start from the top, commitment from religious leaders. Widen also to inter-religious workshop with religious leaders.
- Promote the ATT in different ecumenical and religious gatherings.
- Provide grassroots faith based perspectives to the ATT advocacy.

*c) ENSA – Ecumenical Action on Small Arms*

**Objective:**

- Strengthen the ENSA network within IANSA and the different churches

**Strategies:**

- Convene an ecumenical church leaders forum on small arms and light weapons
- Contribute a grassroots faith based perspective on the thematic focus on the UN Programme of Action and other agreements and instruments for SALW disarmament

- Do awareness education on small arms and light weapons and identify champions within faith-based organisations
- Connect back with faith based resource agencies for ENSA support
- Advocacy and lobby national governments on small arms and light weapons by churches leadership.

# List of participants

## A

Ali, Mustafa Y                      World Conference for Religions for Peace, Africa

## B

Berhe, Abeba                      Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes Area and the Horn of Africa, FECCLAHA

Breitenfeldt, Martin              Protestant Church of Switzerland

Brune, Peter                      Life & Peace Institute

## C

Cesari, Michel                      Life & Peace Institute

## D

Destremau, Didier              Caritas, France

Dube, Joseph                      International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), Africa

## F

Frerichs, Jonathan              World Council of Churches

## K

Canon Grace Kaiso              Ugandan Joint Christian Council, UJCC

## H

Henao, Fabio                      Catholic Church, Colombia

Huber, Monika                      Church Development Services, Germany (EED)

## I

Ibutu, Susie                      National Council of Churches of Kenya

Isaksson, Viktoria              Swedish Mission Council

## K

Kenney, William              Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, UK

Kibui, Olivia                      National Council of Churches of Kenya

Koopman, Niko	Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, South Africa
<b>M</b>	
Matsolo, Dinis	Christian Council of Mozambique
Mbillah, Johnson	Programme for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa
Mitrany, Carola	Vivario, Brazil
Molin, Lennart	Christian Council of Sweden
Morales, Carla	Arias Foundation, Costa Rica
Muchai, Augusta	Institute for Security Studies, Kenya
Mårtensson, Håkan	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, Swe- FOR
<b>O</b>	
Omolo, Polycarp	National Anticorruption Campaign of Kenya
Ochilo	
Odera, Don M	Consultant, Kenya
<b>S</b>	
Samuelsson, Tore	Life & Peace Institute
Shoo, Arthur	All African Council of Churches
Stjernvall, Pia	Finnish Embassy in Kenya
Sumbeiywo, Lt. Gen. Lazaro K. (Rtd)	Moi Africa institute
Söderlind, Carl	Consultant
<b>W</b>	
Wairagu, Francis	Regional Centre on Small Arms, RECSA
Waworuntu, Tony	Christian Conference of Asia
Wezeman, Pieter	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI
Villanueva, Cesar H	Pax Christi, Philippines
<b>Å</b>	
Åkerlund, Anna	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, SweFOR

# WEB-links

Arias Foundation

<http://www.arias.or.cr>

Caritas Internationalis

<http://www.caritas.org>

Christian Council of Mozambique

<http://www.ccm.co.mz>

Christian Council of Sweden

<http://www.skr.org/english>

Control Arms

<http://www.controlarms.org>

Institute for Security Studies

<http://www.issafrica.org/>

International Network on Small Arms

<http://www.iansa.org>

Life & Peace Institute

<http://www.life-peace.org>

Pax Christi International

<http://www.paxchristi.net>

Regional Centre on Small Arms

<http://www.recsasec.org/>

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

<http://www.sipri.org/>

Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation

<http://www.swefor.org>

Swedish Mission Council

<http://www.missioncouncil.se/english>

Viva Rio

<http://www.vivario.org.br>

World Council of Churches

<http://www.oikoumene.org>

In November 2007 the Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council, Life & Peace Institute and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation organised an ecumenical conference on arms trade at the Desmond Tutu Ecumenical Conference Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Focus of the conference was the Churches responsibility to work for a legally binding global arms trade treaty. The conference gathered 30 church leaders and experts on arms trade from 14 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

This was the third conference in the Gothenburg Process, a successor to conferences in Gothenburg 2001 and 2004. Within the Gothenburg Process churches and church related organisations are working together, with the aim to raise understanding and knowledge of the ethical challenges posed by the arms trade. The process also encourages an inclusive and constructive dialogue with the defence industry, with control authorities and armed forces.

In this booklet we have compiled a limited number of the main contributions from the participants at the Nairobi meeting, coming from all over the world, to jointly explore what faith communities can do in order to further promote disarmament.

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