

UNLIREC Newsletter

Caribbean Region

Caribbean Security Sector Officials Trained to Combat Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives

(Port of Spain, 16 Apr 2012) – The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, through its Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), launched a sub-regional training course for security sector officers from 11 different Member States of the Caribbean region to combat illicit firearms trafficking.

The 10-day training course ran from 16 to 27 April 2012, in the country's capital, Port of Spain, with the invaluable support of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

This regional Inter-Institutional Training Course on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives (IITC) trained 49 security sector and law enforcement officers from the following Caribbean States: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Participants learned interactive firearms investigation techniques, technical aspects of weapons and ammunition

identification, intelligence gathering and crime scene management, tracing and preparation of evidence in criminal proceedings, as well as practical disarmament measures, such as weapons destruction and stockpile management. The course also covered cross-cutting issues related to the use of force, gender awareness and child protection. The sub-regional course likewise introduced new and innovative issues, most notably maritime security, container searches and identification of armed individuals.



Participants from UNLIREC's Sub-regional IITC, April 2012 with UNLIREC Advisors. Photo: UNLIREC

Since 2004, UNLIREC has trained over 3,300 law enforcement officers

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throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, thus strengthening the capacities of States in the region to address the problem of the proliferation of and trafficking in illicit firearms.

This training course forms part of UNLIREC's Firearms Assistance Package to Caribbean States, which began in 2010, with the financial support of Canada and the United States of America. UNLIREC's Assistance Package strengthens State capacity to implement relevant

international and regional disarmament instruments, such as the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms (UN 2001 PoA) and the CIFTA Convention.

In parallel to this sub-regional training course, UNLIREC also provided technical assistance to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the destruction of surplus and obsolete firearms and ammunition.

Caribbean States Increase Efforts to Combat Sea-borne Illicit Arms Trafficking during UNLIREC event in Trinidad and Tobago

(Port of Spain, 21-22 Jun 2012) – UNLIREC, in collaboration with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, convened a Roundtable on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons through Strengthened Border Control with the financial support of Australia, Canada and New Zealand.



Cross section of participants at the Roundtable
Photo: UNLIREC

12 Caribbean States and a select group of international experts gathered in Port of Spain to discuss how best to strengthen national capacities and promote regional cooperation to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW)

and their ammunition by focusing on maritime border controls.

The roundtable participants aimed to identify a range of other practical steps to address the challenges expressed by Caribbean Governments in preventing illicit SALW trafficking associated with organized crime and drug trafficking at coastal borders and between island States. The roundtable also considered inputs to the 2012 Review Conference on the UN 2001 PoA in this area.

Practical tools, such as UNLIREC's specialized module on illicit SALW trafficking in border management contexts was presented as a supplement to its flagship Inter-Institutional Course on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives (IITC), along with a UNLIREC discussion paper on sea-borne illicit trafficking in SALW, Ammunition and Explosives in the Caribbean Region during the two-day event to stimulate and guide discussion

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on the topic. These are just two of the tools forming a wide gamut of technical assistance available to Caribbean States to address this issue.

This training course forms part of UNLIREC's Firearms Assistance Package to Caribbean States, which began in 2010, with the financial support of Canada and the United States of America.

More than 1,000 Surplus and Obsolete Small Arms Destroyed with UNLIREC Assistance in Port of Spain

(Port of Spain, 25-29 Jun 2012) – The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GoTT), with on-going assistance from UNLIREC, destroyed 1,150 surplus and obsolete small arms, including semi-automatic machine guns, pistols and revolvers. The weapons were destroyed at the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) Teteron Barracks using a combination of hydraulic shears and disc saws provided to the Government by UNLIREC. The destruction process included independent monitoring and verification undertaken by UNLIREC personnel.

A ceremonial destruction and closing ceremony took place on 29 June at the Teteron Barracks. During the ceremony, Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Kenrick Maharaj; Heads of Divisions; and members of the diplomatic community were addressed by Lt Col. Darnley Wyke of the TTDF; Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security, Dr Wendy Quamina-Yorke; and UNLIREC Senior Programme Officer, Ms Juliet Solomon.

The UNLIREC-assisted destruction activities in the country are made possible with the financial support of the US Department of State's Office for Weapons Removal and Abatement. These activities form part of UNLIREC's Caribbean

Assistance Programme, launched in Kingston, Jamaica in April 2010, and carried out in 8 Caribbean countries with the financial support of Canada and the United States of America.



Photo: UNLIREC

Since October 2011, UNLIREC has assisted the GoTT in the destruction of 2,305 surplus, obsolete and confiscated small arms, more than five tonnes of small arms ammunition and has provided equipment and training in order to guarantee permanent national capacity for weapons and ammunition destruction.

The destruction of small arms and ammunition in cooperation with the GoTT forms part of joint efforts to combat illicit SALW trafficking, strengthen the capacity of the country's security forces and reduce armed violence throughout the country.

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In the Spotlight

UNLIREC delivers Hydraulic Shears for Firearms Destruction to Eight Caribbean States



The United Nations Office for Disarmament's Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), with the financial support of the US State Department Office for Weapons Removal and Abatement has procured and delivered 8 sets of Hydraulic Shears to the Governments of the Bahamas; Belize; Dominican Republic; Grenada; Jamaica; St Lucia; St Vincent and the Grenadines; and Trinidad and Tobago. The shears will ensure that the

Governments have permanent technical and human resource capacity to destroy surplus, obsolete and confiscated firearms.

Delivery of the shears forms part of UNLIREC's Firearms Destruction and Stockpile Management Assistance Package for Caribbean States aimed at reducing illicit small arms trafficking by reducing the risk of theft and diversion from government holdings of operational, confiscated, surplus and obsolete small arms, ammunition and explosives. Under the Assistance Package, UNLIREC has already provided 40 international standard padlocks to enhance levels of storage and security at key government stockpiles. The padlocks have been installed in stockpile facilities throughout the region.

The shears were delivered during the month of May 2012 and were accompanied by training on their use and maintenance provided to officials from Defence Forces, Police, Customs, Coast Guard and Prisons services. A total of 510 weapons were destroyed during the training sessions and 74 officials across the region were trained.

UNLIREC assistance to Caribbean beneficiary countries will continue under the Assistance Package for the June 2012 – May 2013 period and will include, inter alia, establishment of safe and efficient methods for destruction and disposal of weapons, ammunitions and explosives based on UN standards; development of independent weapons monitoring and verification methodologies; and legal review of national firearms legislation and regulations in the Caribbean to ensure State compliance with key international instruments.



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Andean Region

UNLIREC and Bolivia Continue Joint Efforts to Bolster the Nation's Legal Small Arms Control Framework

(La Paz, 26 Apr 2012) – As part of UNLIREC's Andean Assistance Package to enhance public security through crime prevention and firearms control, the Centre organized a legal seminar in collaboration with the Government of Bolivia to outline a series of recommendations on the nation's firearms bill. These recommendations – the result of a legal assessment conducted by UNLIREC in June 2011 – entailed working hand in hand with legislators and policy-makers to “dissect” the bill and emit a legal opinion aimed at bolstering the legal framework related to small arms control.

The legal seminar gave UNLIREC the opportunity to raise awareness on the content and technical aspects of the bill and sensitize those in attendance, including parliamentarians, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, Armed Forces, and the National Police, on their obligations vis-à-vis international firearms instruments. Bolivia summarized its efforts undertaken to date on countering the illicit trafficking in firearms and addressing the scourge of increased armed violence affecting the country and the region as a whole.



Photo UNLIREC

UNLIREC has been accompanying Bolivia – the only country in the region to date without a firearms law – in the process of strengthening its legal small arms control framework since 2010 through various assistance initiatives, beginning with a May 2010 legal seminar showcasing the obligations found in international firearms instruments. Government officials and national experts recognize the urgent need to enact the bill of law after more than 11 years of preliminary discussions.

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UNLIREC Urges UNASUR Member States to Synergize Regional Initiatives with Global Agreements

(Quito, 10-11 May 2012) – The Union of South American Nation’s new ‘South American Registry on Defence Expenditure’ was presented for the first time during an intense two-day strategic thinking forum on defence issues. Discussions revolved around the submissions provided by the 12 UNASUR Member States on military spending for the period 2006-2010. The report indicates that UNASUR countries spent approximately 126 billion dollars on defence during this period. While comparative spending figures indicate that countries notably increased their military spending from 17.6 billion in 2006 to 33.2 billion in 2010. However, these figures must be put into perspective whereby, on average, 58.7% of military spending was used to pay personnel; 23.5%, operations; 17.3%, investment; and 0.5%, research. The report sustains that the figures do not indicate an “armamentism tendency or a militarization of the region” with defence spending in South America well below other regions of the world (0.91% of GDP).

With the theme of transparency and confidence-building at the forefront of all discussions, UNASUR and the host country, Ecuador, invited UNLIREC to present the UN transparency mechanisms - the UN Register of Conventional Arms and the UN Report on Military Expenditures. UNLIREC went on to stress the need to incorporate and synergize regional initiatives with pre-existing global arrangements. The UN transparency tools are of pivotal importance due to their potential to increase confidence and cooperation between States by contributing to greater openness in military matters.



Photo: Ministry of National Defence, Ecuador

Since the early 1980s, every year the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) receives reports on military expenditures from UN Member States and publishes the collected data in an annual report of the Secretary-General. All this year-on-year information on global military expenditures is accessible at UNODA’s [website \[www.un.org/disarmament\]](http://www.un.org/disarmament).

The commitment to report every year on military spending already exists for all countries of the world and UNASUR countries have been dutifully doing so over the years with 85 percent of UNASUR Member States having reported to the UN Register of Conventional Arms at least once since its creation.

The new South American Register on Defense Spending provides a promising opportunity for more intense collaboration between UNASUR and the United Nations to enhance transparency on military expenditures. If effectively organized, both organizations could help avoid overlap and prevent 'reporting fatigue'. In this regard, UNLIREC stands ready to work with UNASUR on exploring future opportunities for convergence and collaboration on this and all confidence-building matters.

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UNLIREC and VERTIC Assist Government of Ecuador in Implementation of Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

(Quito, 26 June 2012) – UNLIREC and its new partner, the Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), joined forces for the first time in a quest to mutually assist Ecuador in its implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). This one-day intense workshop was the result of an official request by the country and was carried out in collaboration with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Defence.



Participants engaged in discussion at the Workshop.
Photo: VERTIC

The workshop brought together national representatives from all sectors of the Government to discuss and review the main obligations contained in the BTWC

and other related non-proliferation instruments, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540(2004). Representatives from UNLIREC, VERTIC and the 1540 Committee provided national authorities with technical legal guidance for the drafting of new legislation related to weapons of mass destruction based on VERTIC's comprehensive diagnostic comparing national legislation with the provisions found in the BTWC.

The new alliance between UNLIREC and VERTIC will continue to focus on raising awareness among States in the region of the obligations set out under the BTWC and providing legal assistance in the revision and drafting of national legislation to ensure consistency with the obligations found in the Convention, as well as other instruments related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

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Regional Initiatives

UNLIREC and OAS Promote Legislative Advances in Combating Illicit Small Arms Trafficking

(Washington, 14-15 May 2012) – UNLIREC was invited by the Organization of American States – one of its long-standing partners in the region – to contribute to discussions on the advances made in 2010-2011 on the implementation of the CIFTA Convention. In this regard, UNLIREC summarized to the CIFTA Consultative Committee its institutional capacity-building, legal assistance and advocacy efforts to assist States in the region in combating illicit trafficking in small arms, ammunition, and explosives.

As well, given the emphasis made by States present on the legislative advances to combat this scourge, UNLIREC was opportunely called upon to present the 13 comparative legal studies it undertook throughout 2011 in Central and South America of which 12 were commissioned by the OAS. Comparative studies such as these allow for insight into how national

firearms legislations comply with the obligations found in international disarmament instruments. These studies were the result of intense hand-in-hand work with participating States to revise national small arms legislation with a view to identifying and addressing legal gaps and thus avoid impunity in cases related to illicit small arms trafficking. Ultimately, the legal studies aim at promoting a more harmonized regional approach to addressing the threat posed by illicit firearms.

Several delegations praised UNLIREC's activities in the field and highlighted the important role the Centre plays in the region as the principal UN entity providing SALW assistance. The CIFTA Secretariat likewise joined States in acknowledging the valuable partnership it enjoys with UNLIREC on small arms-related legal matters.



Logos of the OAS and UNLIREC

Agenda (July-Sep 2012)

- ✓ *Inter-Institutional Border Course on Combating Illicit Firearms Trafficking (IITC)* – UNLIREC, Tulcan – Ecuador, 2-7 July 2012.
- ✓ *Destruction of explosives and light weapons ammunition* – UNLIREC, Port of Spain – Trinidad y Tobago, 16-20 July 2012.
- ✓ *National Inter-Institutional Course on Combating Illicit Firearms Trafficking (IITC)* – UNLIREC, San Salvador – El Salvador, 16-27 July 2012.
- ✓ *Stockpile Management Workshop* – UNLIREC, San Salvador – El Salvador, 18 July 2012.
- ✓ *Legal Seminar on Small Arms Control* – UNLIREC, San Salvador – El Salvador, 20 July 2012.
- ✓ *Specialized Training Course on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Legal Practitioners and Judicial Officials (STC)* – UNLIREC, Guatemala City – Guatemala, August 2012.
- ✓ *Senior-level Policy Meeting on Firearms Control and Practical Disarmament Measures* – UNLIREC, Guatemala City – Guatemala, August 2012.
- ✓ *Stockpile Management Assessment and Workshop* – UNLIREC, Buenos Aires – Argentina, August 2012.
- ✓ *Destruction of Small Arms and Ammunition* – UNLIREC, Santo Domingo – Dominican Republic, September 2012.
- ✓ *Stockpile Management Workshop* – UNLIREC, Bridgetown – Barbados, September 2012.
- ✓ *Specialized Training Course on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Legal Practitioners and Judicial Officials (STC)* – UNLIREC, San Salvador – El Salvador, September 2012.
- ✓ *Destruction Assistance* – UNLIREC, Nassau – Bahamas, September 2012.
- ✓ *Specialized Training Course on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Legal Practitioners and Judicial Officials (STC)* – UNLIREC, Panama City – Panama, September 2012.

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