

GENDER MAINSTREAMING SMALL ARMS CONTROL IN SIERRA LEONE

Policy Brief

SUMMARY

From 30th November to 3rd December 2021, the [United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa \(UNREC\)](#) conducted in Freetown, Sierra Leone, a [three-day training and a follow-up workshop on gender mainstreaming small arms control](#). The activities were carried out in collaboration with the Sierra Leonean Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SLeNCSA) and the [Mines Advisory Group \(MAG\)](#). The initiative is part of [UNODA's global project](#) on gender and small arms control funded by the European Union and serves to build the capacity of the Government of Sierra Leone and key stakeholders to integrate gender dimensions in the implementation of national programmes, policies and actions on small arms control. Participants included representatives of SLeNCSA, relevant ministries, parliament representatives, gender focal points from the military and police, the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone's Police, Statistics Sierra Leone, Small Arms Survey, UNDP, local members of the [International Action Network on Small Arms](#) among others. Outcomes of the activities include a list of gender-responsive small arms control recommendations to ensure SLeNCSA expands and strengthens its gender programme, as well as a gender-mainstreamed action strategy for the integration of gender dimensions into the second edition of Sierra Leone's Small Arms Control National Action Plan. Recommendations and a proposed strategy can be found at the end of the report.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

1. The proliferation, illicit trafficking, local manufacturing, and diversion of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), along with their transmission to unauthorized end-users can fuel high levels of armed violence and foment crime in Sierra Leone, can squarely undermine peace, security, societal stability and protrude a devastated impact on sustainable development. Armed violence affects women, men, girls and boys differently, therefore preventing, combating and eliminating the illicit manufacture and trade in SALW in Sierra Leone requires concerted efforts. The existing societal norms facilitating the demand, easy access, use and misuse of SALW necessitates a comprehensive mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all areas of small arms control and armed violence reduction programmes. When gender dimensions are not sufficiently dealt with, for instance to implement legislative and policy frameworks governing small arms control and regulation, the effectiveness and success of interventions are limited.

2. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), through its United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), is implementing a [multi-year project](#) in six countries of Africa in support of gender mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and misuse. With funding from the European Union, the project supports the Sierra Leonean National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons and key stakeholders in strengthening their capacity to integrate gender-responsiveness into the implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on arms control. Through conducting an [in-country training programme and a follow up activity in Sierra Leone from 30 November to 3 December 2021](#), the project supports the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms, the African Union's initiative "Silencing the Guns in Africa by Year 2030" and contributes to the implementation of Goals 5 and 16 of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3. During the training, stakeholders provided practical suggestions to adjust existing small arms control policies and procedures to make them more gender responsive and identified the following priorities:
 - Implementation of policies oriented to redressing power imbalances between women and men often linked to the access, possession, demand, use and misuse of small arms.
 - Application of small arms control rules and procedures that consider the gender risks associated with firearms possession and misuse.
 - Equal participation and representation of women and youth in the defence and security sectors.
 - Definition of the roles played by women and youth in small arms control operations.
 - Development of links between small arms proliferation and misuse and gender-based and sexual violence.
4. The following table includes a list of gender-responsive small arms control recommended actions and suggested policy measures to ensure SLeNCSA addresses the above identified priorities. Furthermore, it prepares for the subsequent strategic action framework of governmental responses to ensure gender is integrated in all small arms control policies, plans and programmes.

Policy Recommendations	Policy Measures
Integration of gender dimensions in legislative and normative frameworks	- Ensure that the provisions within the Arms and Ammunition Act no 9 of 2012 related to gender and sexual-based violence are fully implemented and recorded. - Increase and allocate adequate resources and funding for the design and implementation of armed violence reduction/small arms control strategies and initiatives that consider gender specific needs including those of people with disabilities.
Gathering of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data on small arms	- Develop robust data collection mechanisms to allow the collection and analysis of sex, age and disability disaggregated data related to the ownership, use, misuse, impact and demand of small arms and light weapons. - Integrate small arms-related questions in incident recorder systems and national data and indicators on gender-based and sexual violence and other relevant gender equality related efforts. Likewise, ensure data collection systems on SALW-related issues include indicators on female and male victimization
Gender-responsive small arms control operations	- Support SLeNCSA's effort to implement weapons collection and destruction programmes in a tailored, inclusive and gender-sensitive manner. - Strengthen efforts to encourage craft producers of small arms to take up alternative livelihoods and to engage family members and the wider community for more sustainable and gender-transformative solutions.
Equal, full, inclusive and effective participation and women and youth empowerment in arms control	- Identify and implement inclusive steps to ensure the full, equal and effective participation and empowerment of women in arms control policy making programming and implementation. - Strengthen collaboration between the SLeNCSA, the Ministry of Youth and youth organizations to increase the participation, capacity and engagement of young people in the fight against the proliferation, trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Synergy between small arms control, women, peace and security and youth agendas and initiatives	- Establish cooperation between SLeNCSA and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and other national authorities working on gender equality issues. - Integrate and promote arms control in Sierra Leone's implementation and reporting efforts of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan and the African Union Agenda 2063. - Alignment of national action plans, strategies, policies and programmes on women, peace and security; youth, peace and security and small arms control.
Integration of transformative approaches to small arms control	- Development of collaborations between the SLeNCSA and non-governmental organizations including those providing victims and family assistance to support the design and implementation of programmes reducing and addressing the demand of small arms - Establish coordination and collaboration between SLeNCSA, organizations representing and assisting persons with disabilities as well as other relevant key stakeholders
Development of Partnerships and coordination , in particular with civil society	- Develop collaborations between SLeNCSA and civil society organizations working on women and youth participation and protection; and on the African Union's initiative 'Silencing the Guns by 2030'. - Strengthen the engagement and coordination between key stakeholders, in particular with national authorities and civil society working on development, peacebuilding, conflict prevention programmes and small arms control actors.

STRATEGIC ACTION

- UNREC, in collaboration with SLeNCSA and MAG - and with technical support from the Small Arms Survey, IANSA and UNDP - organized a workshop on 3rd December 2021. The workshop included discussions and consultations with SLeNCSA members, civil society and other key stakeholders on practical measures to be put in place to address gender gaps in small arms control in Sierra Leone. National participating entities formulated a gender-responsive action framework on small arms control, applying knowledge and tools acquired during the training. The framework refers to the functional areas of small arms control included in the Sierra Leone National Action Plan implemented from 2011 to 2015 and provides a baseline for the drafting of the second edition of SLeNCSA's National Action Plan.

7. The matrix below provides an overview of four proposed key small arms control areas for development, and uses the [Modular Small-Arms-Control Implementation Compendium \(MOSAIC\)](#) – Modules 04.10 and 06.10 – as reference.

Small arms control functional areas:

- I. Institutional Capacity
- II. Operational Support to Tackle SALW Supply
- III. Transformative Approaches
- IV. Gender-sensitive Small Arms Control Mechanisms

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SMALL ARMS CONTROL IN SIERRA LEONE – MATRIX

References: National SALW Action Plan (Edition 1, 2011-2015), the SiLNAP (2019-2023) on UNSC Resolution 1325; MOSAIC – Modules 04.10 and 06.10; [MAG \(2021\)](#) [Partnership and Progress: lessons in effective arms control from Sierra Leone](#)

SALW control functional areas		Outcome	Gender specific challenge	Proposed action	Lead Agency / actor	Resources needed
Institutional Capacity	Policy	Sierra Leone's policies, actions, and activities in relation to Small Arms Control are based on a gender sensitive inclusive National Action Plan	In the expired NAP, gender dimensions were neither included nor mainstreamed	A national action plan that is gender-sensitive is developed for small arms control in 2022 (targeting Q3 2022) in collaboration with key stakeholders. Inclusion of an objective within the NAP on SALW that enshrines the implementation role of SLeNCSA in the implementation of the SiLNAP (2019-2023) Inclusion of women and youth empowerment as part of the objectives/mandate of the SLeNCSA Increase the number of meetings of the technical national committee within the SLeNCSA, review its composition to reflect more views and diversity.	SLeNCSA Ministry of Gender Ministry of youth Civil society Gender focal points within the Ministries MAG Small Arms Survey	Financial resources to conduct NAP review sessions Financial resources gender mainstreamed human rights policies Human capacity – increase staffing (especially in

		Increased presence of the SLeNCSA nationally to provide more tailored and inclusive responses to small arms control issues.	Staff gender imbalance in 1 of the two regional offices where staffing is limited	Establish 2 more regional offices (in addition to the two already in place) Engage with the government to increase financial support and budget allocation to support decentralization (+international donors) Improve SLeNCSA recruitment policies to encourage women's participation, including in leadership positions Establish gender equal representation and participation quotas in the SLeNCSA offices	SLeNCSA ECOWAS and other regional and subregional organizations Donors	the regional offices) Financial resources Capacity building
		Better incorporate/reflect the mandate of the SLeNCSA and include its role in mainstreaming gender in SALW control processes	Low-level capacity for gender and peace and security analysis	Advocate for a revision of the existing role/mandate of the SLeNCSA – the expired NAP/Act that established the NatCom does not reflect the SLeNCSA purpose. SLeNCSA staff are trained on gender mainstreaming and have access to health and safety tools and measures in the work environment.	SLeNCSA MAG UN Women Civil Society Regional and subregional Organizations	

	Legislative and regulatory issues	Availability of data/Increased data collection and monitoring of small arms control policies	Gender analysis must be improved to increase women's participation in data collection Gender indicators were not included in previous surveys on small arms Gaps in including sex and age disaggregated data. Unequal access to firearms registration processes for women	Conduct a general survey on SALW (perception study, household level, including impact indicators/gender indicators, questions on domestic violence among law enforcement officials) Advocate the Government to allocate appropriate funding for the collection of disaggregated data (sex, age and disability) Include the consultation of partners and other family members as part of the background check for weapons licensing.	SLeNCSA Institute of Statistics Ministry of Gender Other ministries Civil Society	Government Funding Capacity in gender analysis Gender specialists/experts
		Application of the legislation is evidence-based	Lack of analysis on the impact of SALW on development, GBV and other gender-related issues No indicative data on the impact of legal and illegal arms on women, boys and girls	Increased inclusive and gender-balance consultation/coordination arenas Review the current weapons licensing procedure and criteria to ensure they are accessible, easy to understand and to comply. For instance, during the ongoing merge of the two Arms and Ammunition Acts.	SLeNCSA Law enforcement agencies Civil society organizations	Human resources Financial resources Capacity building

		The implementation of provisions included in the laws aiming to reduce the trade and circulation of illicit weapons and promote better accountability of civilian held weapons.	Civil society, relevant ministries and women's groups are not sufficiently engaged in the design and implementation of policies	Incorporate in the firearms law gender sensitive methods and approaches to encourage weapons registration (such as the use of mixed-sex mobile teams). Sensitize communities to increase the understanding of the licensing process.	SLeNCSA Ministry of Gender Ministry of Interior Civil society Women's groups Statistics Sierra Leone Ministry of Youth	Funding Coordination between organs and organizations Human resources to organize coordination meetings
		Improved coordination between key SALW and gender stakeholders in decision making processes / implementation	Only pillar 1 of the Women, Peace and Security agenda – participation of women in small arms processes is addressed	Establish a monitoring framework to report on the progress of the implementation of the NAP and other policies. Expand the mandate of SLeNCSA to allow the submission of weapons license applications through SLeNCSA decentralized regional offices and ensure that the process is gender responsive.	SLeNCSA Relevant ministries Law enforcement agencies Civil society organizations Regional and subregional organizations (ECOWAS, etc.)	

Operational Support to Tackle SALW Supply	WAM	Collection (Civilian-/State-held Weapons)	A gender-responsive voluntary weapons collection plan is developed and implemented Reduction of illicit possession of SALW from Civilians	Lack of analysis on the links between weapons possession/demand and masculine behaviors Poor definition on the roles that women and youth can play during the implementation of weapons collection programmes Sensitization and awareness raising is not gender-sensitive	Conduct of gender-responsive community sensitization campaigns to promote weapons collection programmes Design tailored gender sensitive activities addressing the links between SALW possession, demand, use and misuse and masculinities Training of women and youth organizations on community sensitization on the importance and benefit of supporting weapons collection programmes and processes	SLeNCSA Civil Society Ministry of gender Ministry of youth UN Women Media (radio, TV...) SLeNCSA, SLP, RSLAF, SLANSA, MARWOPNET, ONS, Media, women and youth groups, MAG, CSOs, UN Agencies	Financial resources to develop messages and promotional materials to be distributed Resources needed to design gender-sensitive communication plans and for dissemination with the media, youth groups and other CSOs at local at national level
		Destruction	Weapons destruction programmes are gender -sensitive	Training on armory destructions not widely available to women, excluding them from those roles. Lack of capacity to integrate gender into weapons destruction	Training and capacity-building opportunities include measures to facilitate access and encourage the participation of female officers Sensitize weapons management officers on the benefits to integrate female technical experts in the design and implementation of weapons destruction programmes Appointment of gender focal points and gender expertise in	SLeNCSA, SLP, RSLAF, SLANSA, ONS, MAG, CSOs, UN Agencies	Human resources to carry out training on sensitization Weapons destruction machines, IT

				programmes and initiatives	building capacity for inclusive approaches		equipment, mobility,
				Lack of coordination between armed forces, CSOs, and communities	Develop inclusive information exchange and communication channels to update stakeholders on advances of implementation of weapons destruction activities and to facilitate the development of joint initiatives		
		Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM)	A gender responsive Physical Security and Stockpile Management approach is developed based on gender analysis	SOPs, risks and needs assessments are not gender responsive Lack of women participation in the design and implementation of PSSM	All existing and future procedures, documents and planning for the conduction of PSSM should include gender responsive approaches Ensure women representation in PSSM processes at all levels Ensure women have access to PSSM trainings	SLeNCSA, SLP, RSLAF, SLANSA, ONS, Media, MAG, CSOs, UN Agencies	
	Border controls and law enforcement cooperation		Effective gender responsive border controls and law enforcement cooperation to tackle the trafficking and illicit circulation of small arms and ammunitions	Border controls teams are not always gender balanced Female personnel often don't receive the endorsement of their partner to perform the job or to be deployed	Development of promotional activities to encourage female security personnel to join border control and law enforcement teams. Likewise, sensitization activities for border and customs authorities on the importance of having mixed teams. Recruitment processes need to include a family approach to promote women's participation in border control and enforcement cooperation	SLP, RSLAF, Customs, Immigration, ONS, SLANSA, ONS, Media, MRU, MAG, Women and Youth groups, CSOs, UN Agencies, Family Support Unit of SLP	Financial resources to carry out sensitization sessions Development of partnerships with government and private sector to provide family

				Carry out masculinity sensitization sessions for men to support women (partners, family members) to join border control and law enforcement work opportunities		incentive packages
	Management Information and SALW Survey	Management Information and SALW survey is disaggregated by sex, disabled and age data	Information and reports on advances of SALW initiatives lack disaggregated data Language included in reports and other official documents is not gender-sensitive	Ensure national reporting and surveys for collection of information are gender- sensitive Training on use of gender sensitive language in both spoken and written report Development of mechanisms for data collection on small arms disaggregated by sex, age and disability in partnership with the institute of Statistics, academia and relevant authorities	SLeNCSA Statistics Sierra Leone Ministry of Health Customs authorities Small Arms Survey MAG CSOs Media Academia	Financial resources to conduct capacity building sessions on gender sensitive reporting and data collection and analysis Assignment of national budget for the development of a data collection mechanism/observatory
Transformative Approaches	SALW Awareness and Communication Strategy	The population is aware of the risks posed by the proliferation and misuse of SALW, and of the specific	No sensitization campaign to ensure that national entities are aware of proliferation and misuse of SALW.	Implementation of an effective gender- sensitive awareness raising campaign (Radio, TV...) on the impact of armed violence on women and children at national and local levels	SLeNCSA CSOs Local authorities Media	Develop gender sensitive awareness raising material

		impact it has on women, girls and boys National entities, communities, civil society and security actors have better understanding of the challenges pose by the SALW proliferation, trafficking and misuse and are able to develop strategies that are adapted to the needs and context	There is a lack of Knowledge and understanding of the links between small arms control and armed violence prevention and reduction Absence of sex, age and disability disaggregated data on small arms issues.	Gender-sensitive awareness campaign to disseminate information on the advances with the implementation of small arms control initiatives and policies Develop a national survey that includes gender sensitive approach and focus on the impact, causes and consequences of proliferation, trafficking and misuse of small arms light weapons	SLeNCSA CSOs Media (radio, tv, SMS) SLeNCSA Security sector platform Civil society, Statistics Sierra Leone	Human resources: engagement of an external consultant to conduct the survey
	Safer Community Plans (SCP)	Women and men have equal opportunities to access positions within the SALW control and peace and security areas	There are internal and external barriers that prevent women from participating in activities connected with weapons. Existence of negative assumptions affirming that security and	Building women's technical capacity through training to work in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, health centres and intelligence gathering. Sensitize national authorities on the importance to develop an inclusive approach and integrate gender	SleNCSA Ministry of Gender and children affairs CSOs MAG Policy Armed Forces UN Women	Training: recruitment of technical experts to conduct gender responsive PSSM trainings

		Women, men, boys, girls, and people living with disabilities are provided with safe environments, a platform for advocacy and education, including on SALW issues. The population's understanding and knowledge regarding SLeNSCA roles, and responsibilities is improved	SALW matters are seen as too technical for women. Absence of SLeNSCA representation at the local level	perspectives to the design and implementation of effective community safety programmes and plans To identify and construct inclusive shelters and support centres to assist victims of armed violence including gender-based violence at district, provincial and regional levels. Establishing SLeNSCA- focal points at the district and provincial levels while ensuring a gender-balanced and inclusive representation	Ministry of health CSOs UN OCHA UNFPA UN Women Donors SLeNSCA Donors	Financial resources to create and establish welfare centres Assignment of budget for the recruitment of female and male local officers
	Civic Participation	The linkages between the SALW Agenda and WPS and Youth Agenda are enhanced through an effective civic participation	Insufficient awareness of WPS/YPS agenda and link to small arms	Increase the engagement of SLeNSCA with civil society actors including women and youth organizations on a regular basis (quarterly) and developing coordination, collaboration and communication mechanisms.	SLeNSCA Youth and Women CSOs Ministry of Gender UN Women SLeNSCA Ministry of Gender	Financial resources to carry out quarterly meetings between SLeNSCA, civil society and other key stakeholders

		The knowledge of boys and girls is improved on SALW and gender issues.		Developing school curriculum for boys and girls to raise awareness on SALW and gender issues	Ministry of Youth Affairs Ministry of Education CSOs Academia	
Gender-sensitive small arms control mechanisms	Women's participation and representation	Significantly increase women's full and effective participation in small arms control, including in leadership roles Transform gender norms associated with arms control Establish best practices for women's participation Create institutional change for more gender equality	Resources/Finances – low budgetary allocation Traditional gender norms (male-dominated area) associated with arms control Unwillingness of local women to engage in meetings and trainings discussing small arms control issues (challenges include childcare and care for elderly, domestic work, no permission to attend from husband, they would need to bring something home from meeting such as food)	Sensitization of and trainings for women community leaders on arms control issues at national and local level <u>annually</u> Development of a gender Mainstreaming Policy for the SLeNCSA, which promotes gender-balanced and inclusive representation and the assignation of female experts to leadership roles Advocate President's Office and high-level officials to increase women's participation and leadership within the SLeNCSA Sensitize male family members on the importance of women's engagement in meetings and training, and also provide resources to support the provision of additional care work. Officially establish gender and youth focal points within the SLeNCSA	SLeNCSA in collaboration with civil society and technical experts, Ministry of Defence, Police academies or similar, Internal Affairs, gender experts, Youth, regional and international organizations	Financial support Human resources

		Establish more inclusive partnerships, including with people living with disabilities	Institutional challenges (recruitment strategies, no women candidates for selection of posts, women remaining in administrative roles and low ranks)	Officially establish a focal point for inclusive partnerships in the SLeNCSA e.g., disability inclusion, civil society engagement Encourage staff appointments to the Commission who have diverse backgrounds Invite representatives of the Ministries of Gender and Statistics Sierra Leone to the advisory board and ensure their participation is gender balanced.		
	Synergies, harmonization and coordination with existing frameworks and strategies	Improved coordination with other agencies working on gender, youth, disability, statistics, development Arms control is integrated into development and other relevant national strategies	Lack of engagement of diverse actors working on development in arms control / working in silos Lack of information exchange and transparency	Harmonization of NAP with ATT NAP, SiLNAP, National Medium-Term Development Plan, SL National Youth Policy, SSR, crime prevention strategies and other relevant plans Review of existing strategies and identify focal points for engagement Integration of NAP into Sierra Leone's strategic, implementation and reporting efforts under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 16 and 5	SLeNCSA in collaboration with broad range of national and international stakeholders working on security, peace, social and economic development, health, environment, humanitarian assistance among others	Coordination can be integrated into the work of the Commission Funding and resources for local focal points / offices required