



The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

An International Newsletter on integrating armed violence prevention and reduction into development strategies

Issue 7, July 2009

This e-newsletter supports the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development process. Drawing from practical efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence around the world, it aims to inspire and encourage governments, international organizations and civil society organizations to take action. The initiatives reviewed here can help transfer knowledge and lessons and identify ways of linking development programming with armed violence prevention and reduction strategies. The Geneva Declaration, which is now endorsed by 108 states worldwide, is committed to concrete interventions. The process is organized around three pillars – **Advocacy, Programming and Measurability and Research**.

For more information on the Geneva Declaration and its activities please visit the web site: www.genevadeclaration.org

In Memoriam: Colleagues lost in an airliner crash

Our colleagues and friends Ronald Dreyer, Pablo Dreyfus and Pablo's wife Ana Carolina were aboard the Air France flight AF 447 that disappeared over the South Atlantic on Monday 1 June 2009. They were among the 228 passengers and crew travelling from Rio de Janeiro to Paris aboard the aircraft.

Ronald Dreyer started his career as a delegate with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He also served with United Nations missions in El Salvador, Mozambique, Azerbaijan, Kosovo, Angola and elsewhere. In 2006, Ronald joined the Geneva Declaration Secretariat as its coordinator, based in Geneva. He worked with the Swiss Permanent Mission to the UN and the Small Arms Survey. He will be remembered for his dedication and passion to promoting the issue of armed violence and development. He was instrumental in mobilizing the support of more than 100 countries to this cause. His legacy, but more importantly his warmth and good humour, will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Pablo Dreyfus, who was also traveling with his wife Ana Carolina Rodrigues, worked tirelessly with Viva Rio and with the Brazilian authorities to stem the flow of arms and ammunition that fuelled bloody turf wars waged by drug gangs in Rio's *favelas*, or slums. He was a renowned expert on gun violence and on arms and drug trafficking, as well as countermeasures. His research was crucial in the campaign for Brazil's new gun law and the establishment of the Permanent Commission on Arms Trafficking in the Bra-

zilian Congress. Pablo was a generous, knowledgeable and good-humoured colleague. Ana Carolina also worked with Viva Rio, coordinating the Children in Organised Armed Violence project, and was highly regarded by all who knew her.

The Geneva Declaration Secretariat extends its condolences to the families and loved ones of Ronald, Pablo and Ana Carolina. Our thoughts are with them all during this difficult time.

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Advocacy

To date the Geneva Declaration has been adopted formally by 108 states, Luxemburg being the latest country to sign up. Commitment to the Geneva Declaration requires states to subscribe to measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015. It also means that states are expected to be transparent and open about the character and severity of armed violence within their borders.

Governments encouraged to send views on armed violence and development to UN Secretary-General. As we reported in past issues of the Geneva Declaration Newsletter, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/23 requested that UN member states send their views and other relevant information to the UNSG. Although the deadline for submissions was May 31, states are still being encouraged to send in their views. To date, roughly 30 governments have submitted reports and others are actively preparing submissions. The UN is drafting a Secretary General's report to be released later this year.

Starting in early 2009, the Geneva Declaration Core Group catalyzed a wider governmental response. Civil society organizations around the world also encouraged their governments to send their views to the UN. To date more than 50 governments have been contacted in this effort. As well, three groups of civil society organizations submitted their own views.

This mobilization demonstrates an important way that conflict prevention, peace-building and arms control and disarmament NGOs can contribute to awareness building and policy development with governments and the wider UN system. A growing number of NGOs now have a hands-on experience with the armed violence and development agenda, which should help in the continued growth of this movement. But critical gaps also remain. It is important that international and national-level development NGOs also play a role in encouraging governments and partners to take armed violence prevention and reduction seriously. Their voices must be added to the growing chorus.

For a list of government responses see:

http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/SALW/Html/Armed_Violence-MSViews.shtml

The civil society reports are at:

http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/SALW/Html/Armed_Violence-NGOViews.shtml

Programming

The Geneva Declaration process encourages all UN member states and NGOs to adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to armed violence prevention and reduction on the ground. Fortunately, there are literally thousands of efforts underway around the world that aim to reduce violence. Many of these explicitly draw on “developmental” approaches to day-to-day violence. The selection included below only scrape the surface of what is going on every day in affected communities.

To encourage learning and to improve practice, the Geneva Declaration Core Group is supporting a number of “focus countries” plan, design, implement and evaluate violence reduction activities. Specifically, Guatemala, Burundi, Timor-Leste and others are being supported by donor governments and the United Nations Development Programme to this end. Information on these activities is available at www.genevadeclaration.org.

International: 4th Milestones Meeting of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention. This meeting will be held on 17-18 September, 2009, at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The theme of the meeting is “Boosting global violence prevention.” The 4th Milestones Meeting will make plans to substantially increase action, political support, and funding for violence prevention worldwide. It will convene representatives of Official Development Assistance agencies, other UN agencies, and large NGOs to find ways to step up support for violence prevention. It will end by issuing a declaration on the next steps to take to boost global violence prevention. The meeting will include ministers of health and from other sectors as keynote speakers and presenters. For information on the campaign see: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en/ and the international network at: <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/en/index.html>

Rwanda: Development and arms inspections linked. A firearms inspection exercise has been carried out by the Rwandan government in the parts of the country affected by so-called insurgents and firearms-related crimes. Community policing and sensitization exercises are being administered in the same areas. Through these exercises, citizens are encouraged to engage in voluntary surrender of illegal arms. They are informed of the need to actively participate in national development and social welfare programs particularly those geared at poverty reduction and the promotion of good health in affected communities (locally known as *mutuelle de santé*). Income generating activities are also promoted in view of the fact that armed violence hinders and retards sustainable development while at the same time poverty increases the potential for armed violence (*RECSA Member States Updates, June 2009*).

Kenya: Small arms and peacebuilding initiative. The NGOs Peacenet-Kenya and Saferworld-UK held a workshop in Nairobi with the National Commission on Disarmament and other government officials. The goal of the meeting was to review progress made in formulating national small arms control, armed violence reduction and peacebuilding policies. In light of recent post-election violence, such policy initiatives aim to help maintain stability in Kenya and work towards creating a lasting peace in the country. The workshops were not just used as a talking forum. Participants suggested critical changes to national policies and agreed on a timeframe to present them to the Kenyan Cabinet. For example, the policy on small arms will go through a final stage of validation before it is implemented, hopefully in late June, 2009. (*Reported by Peacenet- Kenya*)

Iraq: Community Seminars on armed violence and peacebuilding. A wide spectrum of Iraqi society were involved in seminars in 2009 on armed violence organized by the Iraqi Organization for Rehabilitation of Society and Environment in Karbala, central Iraq. For example, on 17 June participants included sheiks and other community leaders who agreed to work to reduce gun violence. On 21 June, the Peace Corps and other NGO groups took part, and on 23 June academics were involved. Participants in the seminars committed to creating a forum for peacebuilding in Karbala, which will develop projects to reduce the supply and demand for small arms, including urging the government to support the ATT. http://www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/mena.htm#Iraq

India: Pledges against armed violence. The Rural Development and Youth Training Institute (RDYTI) continued organizing rallies in June 2009 against gun violence and misuse together with armed violence in the villages of Mandargar, Jaspura and Damodarpura in the Kota District, Rajasthan. Over 600 people took an oath that they will not use any guns or other weapons in their community. In order to transfer messages to young people – often the most likely perpetrators and victims of violence – the RDYTI also hosted puppet shows, theatre performances, workshops, village meetings and youth Leadership training camps. http://www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Asia.htm

Cameroon: research training. Cameroon is beset by a growing incidence of predatory armed violence, particularly the notorious “coupeurs de routes” or highway bandits. But other forms of violence are hidden from view, including domestic violence. From 14-18

June 2009, Women in Alternative Action (WAA) Cameroon led a training session for young people on research and household survey techniques to shed light on domestic violence. The training included guidance on how to approach the authorities on sensitive issues, including topics relating to small arms. Participants in the course then used questionnaires to explore the effect of guns on women, and to explain the Disarm Domestic Violence campaign sponsored by IANSA.

http://www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm

Measurability and Research:

A central pillar of solid advocacy and programming is evidence. Good evidence is based on solid research. The Geneva Declaration process is committed to supporting national and local-level research to inform interventions, but also to promote awareness and understanding of the risks and dangers posed by armed violence and underdevelopment.

The following examples are examples of innovative and path-breaking research that shed light on the interconnections of armed violence and development. There are literally hundreds of reports and assessments emerging from the development and humanitarian sectors on the ways armed violence undermines human safety and wellbeing.

Central America: Approaches to gang violence reduction need to be rethought.

Conventional approaches to gang violence reduction adopted by certain countries in Central America are often heavy-handed and coercive. They routinely feature police and even army personnel and meet delinquency with stiff penalties and prison time. A recent paper by the Small Arms Survey explores the flaws of these approaches with examples from Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mexico and the United States. It documents how so-called Mano Dura policies can radicalize gangs and make violence more dangerous. The paper also highlights the way more developmental efforts undertaken by local public and non-governmental agencies offer sustainable returns.

http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/publications/o_papers_pdf/2009-OP23-Gangs-Central-America.pdf

Brazil: Researchers say social and income inequality generates violence. Social and economic inequality appears to be the principle factor explaining soaring rates of violence in Brazil, according to recent studies. Despite high expenditures, crime fighting policies established over the past decades have not proven effective. Public security specialists now propose that carefully-tailored economic development strategies should be incorporated explicitly into public security models. This view was discussed at Brazil's Third Annual Forum of Public Security in Vitória, Espírito Santo State, at a round table that included several Brazilian experts. According to academic Rodrigo Soares, crime in Brazil is determined by social and economic conditions allied to public security policies: "The social and economic conditions are favorable for crime while crime fighting policies are weak in Brazil." Soares says that inequality reduces social cohesion, and generates unrest among groups suffering privations.

<http://www.comunidadessegura.org/en/STORY-cost-of-violence>

Timor-Leste: Rethinking gang and election violence. Although Timor-Leste claimed independence a decade ago, the young country's development prospects continue to be held back by instability and armed violence. The Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment (TLAVA) – a project of Austcare/ActionAid and the Small Arms Survey – has released two Issue Briefs highlighting the way armed violence is manifest in the country. The Issue Briefs highlight the fact that more than 90,000 youth are members of gangs (in a country of just less than one million people) and that a range of innovative interventions are emerging to address their spread and reach. Meanwhile, the Issue Briefs also observe the way seven electoral processes have been either vulnerable to, or resilient against, violence. It considers ways that development agencies can anticipate and prevent such violence from occurring in the future. www.timorlesteviolence.org

A call for papers on violent conflict and health. Editors of the journal *The Lancet* note that the public health sector plays a key role in violence prevention and reconciliation processes. In their view health and violent conflict are strongly interconnected: examples being health and the root causes of violent conflict, the health consequences of violent conflict, and the possible role of public health before, during, and after violent conflict. A special issue of *The Lancet* on violent conflict and health will coincide with Global Response 2010—an international conference on violent conflict and health in a globalizing world. For its special issue, the Lancet is encouraging submissions that build on the evidence-base of humanitarian relief, action, and documentation in violent conflicts, and the overall role of health workers before, during, and after such conflicts. The deadline for submissions is Aug 3, 2009. Contact Rhona MacDonald, Richard Horton, The Lancet, London NW1 7BY, UK [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)60964-8/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)60964-8/fulltext)

Publications:

International Compendium of Crime Prevention Practices. This very practical 2008 publication was released by the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. It contains crime prevention and community safety practices gleaned from North America, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Oceania and South Asia. It also provides concrete examples that illustrate what governments, police and community partners can do practically to reduce and prevent crime and victimization, and create and enhance safety. The compendium covers five broad themes: Community Safety, Youth at Risk, Youth Gangs, Community Safety and Indigenous Peoples, and Police - Community Partnerships in Crime Prevention. Many of the practices included form part of an integrated approach that addresses different risk factors associated with crime and victimization. Available in English, French and Spanish versions; download from: <http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org/>

Linking Mine Action and Development Series. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has published a set of Guidelines for Practitioners on Linking Mine Action and Development. Landmines and other remnants of conflict often affect lives and livelihoods long after a conflict has ended. Yet mine action programmes often aren't linked early and strongly enough with key development actors. In response,

the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Development has published guidelines on how to ensure mine action promotes development in mine-affected countries. The series includes four publications:

- *Linking Mine Action and Development - Humanitarian and Development NGOs;*
 - *Linking Mine Action and Development - Mine Action Centre;*
 - *Linking Mine Action and Development - Official Development Cooperation Agencies;*
- and
- *The Guidelines for Mine Affected States and the Guidelines for Mine/ERW Operators.*

See: <http://www.gichd.org/gichd-publications/listed-by-subject/#c2709>

Also consult www.genevadeclaration.org/resources.html

We want your feedback

Need for More information: Do you want to share information about activities that are ongoing in your country? Do you have any relevant publications that show the connections between armed violence prevention and reduction with development? If you have some information about successful projects—previous or ongoing—that you think would be relevant, please share them with our readers. To contact the editor, send an email to newsletter@genevadeclaration.org

This newsletter is edited and distributed by the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva in order to build awareness on issues relating to development and armed violence and to increase engagement with the Geneva Declaration process. QUNO is mandated by the Geneva Declaration Core Group of states to inform civil society about the Geneva Declaration process.