The Global Firearms Programme and the Role of Civil Society Organizations

COP 2018 Side Event
17 October 2018
Vienna
The role of civil society organizations

• Civil society organizations play an important dual role.
  1. **Advisory**: participating and cooperating with government goals and programs while nevertheless informing on the needs of the public
  2. **Oversight**: holding governments and programs accountable to their citizens
Objective: Countering illicit arms trafficking and related crimes, through implementation of UNTOC and the Firearms Protocol and effective international cooperation and information exchange.

Donors:
Cross-cutting elements (gender, civil society engagement, human rights, rule of law)
CSOs help counter common challenges in countering firearms trafficking

**Challenge:** Weak legislative and institutional frameworks

**CSO roles:** Advisory, advocacy and lobbying efforts

**Example:** Participation in legislative drafting workshops; model law development

**Challenge:** Insufficient criminal justice response

**CSO roles:** External oversight, encourage accountability

**Challenge:** Lack of information exchange and international cooperation

**CSO roles:** Organize interested parties

**Example:** Voluntary arms collection campaigns

**Challenge:** Insufficient empiric knowledge and understanding of firearms trafficking

**CSO roles:** Provide early warnings on emerging threats
Voluntary arms collection campaigns contribute to stable societies

Removing firearms from society

• Constitutes an important sign for a *culture of peace and non-violence* and a message against violent extremism;
• Constitutes an effective crime prevention measure;
• Prevents the diversion of arms into the hands of criminals, violent extremists and terrorists, inter alia;
• Decreases the destructive and violent power of organized crime groups, gangs, and terrorists;
• Removes a funding stream for terrorist and organized crime activities, as these groups often engage in transnational organized crime to finance their operations.
UNODC-supported voluntary arms collection campaigns

**Senegal:** NatCom launched its activities in Feb. 2018. The first phase of the project has been implemented in:
- Fatick
- Thies
- Ziguinchor

**Niger:** NatCom launched a firearms collection campaign for the southern region in April 2018.

**Burkina Faso:** NatCom launched a firearms collection campaign on 16 March 2018.

**Role of civil society in the voluntary arms collection campaigns**
- Operate as an intermediary between the community and international organizations
- Encouraged community involvement (particularly successful in Niger) and assisted with sensitization activities
- Developed campaign messages
Conclusions

➢ Need to further enhance the role of CSO in preventing firearms trafficking and to take advantage of their power to mobilize communities and shape policy development

➢ Importance of exploring, analysing and addressing linkages between firearms trafficking and other forms of serious crime, including organized crime and terrorism
Thank you!

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