

UN Regional Centre for Peace and  
Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Discussion Forum on  
*Gun Violence in Nepal*

Kathmandu, 12 May 2010



On Wednesday 12 May 2010, the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) held a discussion forum on *Gun Violence in Nepal*. The event was the second in a series of discussion fora that the UNRCPD holds regularly in Kathmandu around the theme of peace and disarmament. With these discussion fora the UNRCPD aims to raise awareness of disarmament developments, promote dialogue between the government, civil society and the UN in Nepal and strengthen disarmament and arms control efforts in Nepal in accordance with global standards.

The subject of Wednesday's discussion forum was chosen against the backdrop of the *Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence* (10 – 16 May 2010) as well as of increasing numbers of gun violence incidents reported by national media during the first months of 2010. Seventeen representatives of the government, NGOs, academia and the UN participated at the forum.

Two presentations were provided to prepare the ground for the discussion. The first presentation (by Saferworld) focused on small arms and armed violence in the Terai region, based on a recent research conducted by Saferworld and partners. Among their preliminary findings were: Only 2% of the surveyed households reported to own a firearm; About 70% think small arms are a threat to their safety; and 87% think there should be a disarmament programme in Nepal. The second presentation (by the UNRCPD) outlined main strategies to address gun violence and provided examples of successful initiatives taken by governments, civil society and UN agencies around the world to prevent and combat gun violence.

In the discussion that followed the two presentations, participants shared their insights and findings on various issues related to gun violence. Issues that were raised included the following: Risk of deserting and early retired members of the security forces as well as disqualified combatants being involved in gun trafficking and crime in general; Criminal gangs are increasingly operational from Nepal since India has tightened security at their side of the border; Need to enhance national laws and law enforcement mechanisms regarding gun related crime (little differentiation of offenders among others); The same actors are likely be involved in the supply of both legal and illegal guns in the country; Lack of independent journalism due to corruption, intimidation and political affiliation; Many weapons previously used by the Maoists have been unaccounted for and are waiting to be used.

The discussion was concluded with a number of recommendations. Most of these recommendations aimed to address the issues mentioned above. Generally speaking, participants stressed the importance of a holistic and community driven approach to address gun violence as well the importance of coordination and collaboration. The establishment of a working group on small arms was suggested as a way of taking these discussions forward in a more structured and action-oriented way.