

UN completes third training on Small Arms and Light Weapons risk awareness and control measures for Libyan women

[CNBCAfrica](#)

On 15 December, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), in partnership with UN Women and UNSMIL/Security Institutions Division, completed the third and last workshop of the new phase of its project on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) risk awareness in Libya, kindly supported by the Government of Italy.

In line with UN Security Council resolutions promoting the role of women in peace and security, UNMAS launched this project in 2015 supporting a pilot group of 12 female members of civil society from all over Libya, to become agents of change in their communities by building their capacities in SALW risk education.

The new group of women under the age of 30 was selected through a competitive process on the grounds of motivation, educational background, and geographical representation to undergo similar trainings, with the purpose of increasing the involvement of Libya's younger generations in promoting the prevention of armed violence and educating local communities on the issues, risks and perceptions of small arms. "I am happy to have met all of those ladies, we really get along very well. I was surprised how well the selection process had been done. I discovered people from other towns I did not even know before even by name. We do not have this culture of exploring our country in Libya. I discovered we have a responsibility towards each other that I did not recognize before" (Wigdan, 27).

During the three workshops, facilitated by the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey, in August, October and December, the participants received information on International Standards on SALW; Awareness raising principles, methods and tools; Child Protection guidelines; Women, Peace and Security framework. They were trained on how to conduct surveys and interviews, participate in debates and deliver a presentation. After she conducted surveys in her community, one of the participants stated "Men are aware of the issues and risks related to SALW but do not work on it. Women did not know anything about it. Women woke up and realized they have a role in this as mother, sister, daughter because they live with this at home. We are not only delivering messages to our communities but we are also making women aware of their role. They really woke up and realized the role they have as agents of change in their family or community". "During awareness raising activities, men were curious to know what young women had to say about weapons. They were impressed" (Najwa, 28).

As a result of these three workshops, the trained women are able to better assess SALW-related risks and share context-specific risk education messages in their own communities. "I gained a really good knowledge that I would be able to share with others. Thanks to the debates and presentations, I built my confidence to stand in front of a crowd, talk to people, raise their awareness and persuade them. Now, I feel I am ready to persuade people with different points of view" (Wigdan, 27). The debate sessions were important because I learnt how to communicate, transfer knowledge, express myself, and face the audience" (Najwa, 29).