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WILPF PUBLISHES CASE STUDIES ON SPAIN AND SWEDEN RELATED TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ARMS EXPORTS

August 10, 2016

WILPF's disarmament programme, [Reaching Critical Will](#), has published two new case studies ahead of the [second Conference of States Parties](#) (CSP2) for the Arms Trade Treaty (22-16 August, 2016). The case studies are associated with the May 2016 report '[Preventing gender-based violence through arms control: tools and guidelines to implement the Arms Trade Treaty and UN Programme of Action.](#)'

This report, authored by Rebecca Gerome, contextualises gender and gender-based violence (GBV) within the use of conventional weapons, the [Arms Trade Treaty](#) (ATT), and the [UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons](#) (UNPoA). It focuses on exporting countries' risk assessments: how they ought to be conducted, indicators for specific risks around GBV, and the resources with which we can evaluate recipient countries according to these indicators.

THE CASE STUDIES

WILPF has now published two affiliated case studies on [Sweden](#) and [Spain](#). The case studies shed light on the export licensing process in these countries and government efforts to determine the associated risks of GBV with their arms exports. What follows here is a brief dive into each of these case studies, picking out key areas where each country is failing to meet its responsibilities, or could be doing more.

GAPS IN SWEDEN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

Sweden, the world's eleventh largest arms exporter, uses an independent agency under its Ministry for Foreign Affairs to implement controls on arms exports. However, despite a commitment to a [feminist foreign policy](#) – '[combatting sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations](#)' – Sweden doesn't have a single specialist on gender or development on the agency's staff. So how comprehensive is their feminist foreign policy?

A [contract](#) of November 2015 between Swedish defence company Saab and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also suggests that the reach of a feminist foreign policy only extends so far. The UAE is part of the Saudi-led coalition intervention in Yemen, a conflict where [civilians are bearing the brunt](#) of the violence. Sweden [withdrew from a military cooperation agreement](#) with Saudi Arabia in May 2015, where [concerns over women's rights](#) were ostensibly at the heart of the politics. However, the military surveillance equipment to be supplied to the UAE is the same as was once being sold to Saudi Arabia.

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It appears that industry interests are finding a way to get around the limitations of foreign relations.

SPAIN: HOW USEFUL ARE UN AND NGO RESOURCES IN A RISK ASSESSMENT?

Spain's exports to Cameroon come under criticism in WILPF's most recent case study, where GBV is linked both to the intended end user and to the diversion of exports to the Central African Republic (CAR). Spanish shotgun ammunition has been recovered from anti-Balaka fighters and armed civilians in CAR since the start of 2014. All armed parties to this conflict have been documented as perpetrators of GBV. The UN Secretary-General's [2015 report](#) on conflict-related sexual violence states that during 2014, 2,527 cases of conflict-related sexual violence were documented in the CAR, including rape perpetrated to terrorise civilians. This report explicitly exposes patterns of GBV in conflict situations.

A [2013 report](#) by Human Rights Watch on the torture and ill-treatment of Cameroon's LGBT community by gendarmes (who report to Cameroon's Ministry of Defence) should have raised concerns in Spain's export risk assessment. However, Spain approved two licenses to Cameroon's armed forces in 2014. Similarly, the Spanish government's risk assessment process claimed not to use CEDAW reports because "they are not linked to armed violence." However, CEDAW Recommendation 30 and much of its other work besides – for example this [report on DRC](#) – reveals that this is not the case. WILPF recommends better use of readily available external resources.

WILPF PUBLICATIONS AND THE WIDER CONTEXT

[WILPF's efforts](#) have been consistent and crucial in advocating a strong ATT with legally-binding gender provisions. In the treaty text adopted by the UN in April 2013, [Article 7\(4\)](#) prohibits the export of weapons that can be used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence, a move that has been called "[ground breaking](#)."

Since the treaty's ratification in December 2014, WILPF has published two briefing papers. The first of these in August 2015 – '[Gender-based violence and the Arms Trade Treaty](#)' – brings clarifications to the terminology around GBV and armed conflict. Then in October 2015, '[Women, weapons, and war: a gendered critique of multilateral instruments](#)' strengthens the case for gender provisions in resolutions, treaties and commitments on conventional weapons, and advocates the mainstreaming of a women, peace and security agenda.

Effective implementation of the ATT means a thorough investigation into the gendered consequences of arms sales and acting accordingly, prioritising a state's human rights responsibilities over industry interests. WILPF is committed to monitoring these risk

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assessments and, where necessary, making recommendations to guide future arms control.