

Forum: Disarmament Committee

Issue: The control of civilian gun possession after a civil war

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Introduction

War can have a disastrous effect on a country, leaving its citizen crippled in crisis as they face the consequences of the war. The consequence is that many ordinary civilians take up arms in order to protect their personal safety. Civilians may also use guns to justify their own personal beliefs and confront their opponents. In the case of a civil war, their enemy could be from the same state, causing conflicts within an area or region. After the war, many countries face the problem where some of these arms are 'gone' and unaccounted for. Presumably, these guns are possessed by people who may, in future, use them for personal benefits and reasons; threatening lives and nation's security.

The UNODA has concluded that the majority on deaths in conflict zones are caused by the use of small arms, which are often used at the hands of ordinary civilians. Furthermore, these small arms are becoming dominant tools of violence, leading to an increase in post-conflict killings. In order to prevent the dangers which may arise, such as mass killing, a solution is needed. It is debated whether a stricter gun policy for civilians which would lower, but not ban completely, guns would be helpful in order to maintain peace after a civil war.

The United Nations Charter commits nations to maintain international peace and security, and to collectively prevent and remove threats to peace. Thus, disarming civilians is vitally important as it is a major prevention of another outburst of war.

Definition of Key Terms

Civil War

A civil war refers to a war between organized groups within the same country or republic. Although it is less common, a civil war may also be between two countries created from a formerly united nation state. The aim of one side is often to take control of the country or a region, to achieve independence or to change government policies.

Firearms

Firearms refer to portable *guns* which can launch one or more projectiles and are often explosive. Firearms can also be referred to as small arms when they are portable and easily carried around by a single individual, mainly for military purposes. Firearms are usually limited to revolvers, pistols, carbines, rifles and other sort of small guns. Grenades are usually not considered as firearms.

“Small arms are cheap, light, and easy to handle, transport and conceal. A build-up of small arms alone may not create the conflicts in which they are used, but their excessive accumulation and wide availability aggravates the tension. The violence becomes more lethal and lasts longer, and a sense of insecurity grows, which in turn lead to a greater demand for weapons. Most present-day conflicts are fought mainly with small arms, which are broadly used in inter-State conflict. They are the weapons of choice in civil wars and for terrorism, organized crime and gang warfare.” – The UNODA on small arms.

Civilians

A civilian is a person who is not on active duty with a military, naval, police or fire-fighting organization. Most ordinary citizens of a nation are civilians.

Disarmament

Disarmament is the process of reducing or limiting the number of weapons a nation may possess or manufacture. Disarmament does not mean that all weapons must be eliminated and banned, but it urges a controlled number of weaponry in order to assure international security and stability.

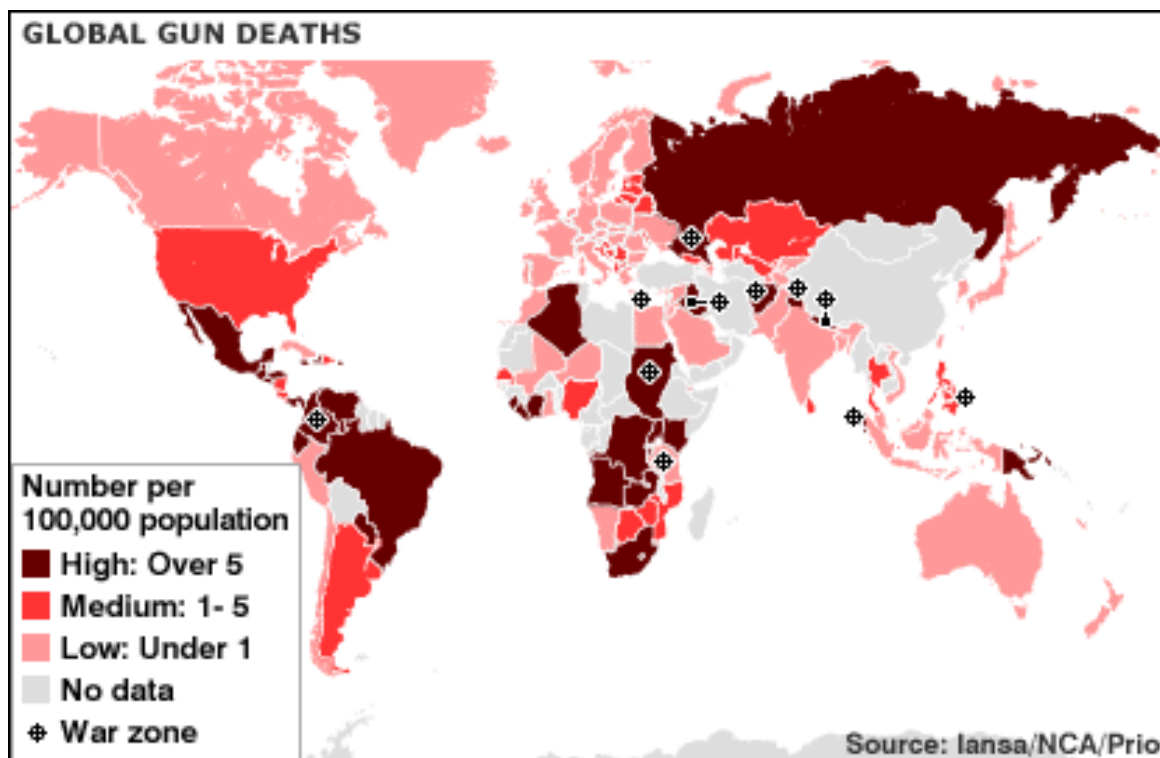
Gun Possession Law

Gun Possession laws are made to control and regulate the possession of guns. It is usually targeted at small arms.

UNODA - United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

The UNODA is a department of the United Nations established in 1998 and is dedicated to disarmament.

General Overview



1. Gun Deaths in Conflict zones in the year 2012

As shown from the map above, countries with high guns related deaths are often countries in war zones. Countries involved with armed conflicts from the year 2000 such as Colombia, South Africa, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Egypt, Mali and Algeria, all have high number of gun related deaths.

History

Syria Civil War

The Syria Civil War started in [March 2011](#) and is still on going to current date. During this period of conflict, it is estimated that there are 735 000 guns owned both legally and illicitly by ordinary Syrian civilians; creating an approximate average of 3.9 firearms per 100 civilians. Since the start of the war, there have been over 100 000 civilian deaths and much more civilian casualties. A large number of civilians continue to possess guns for personal safety reasons as they are still threatened by the situation. The arms used in the war, needs a solution, in order to control civilian possession of guns after war, once a new and stable government has been established.

Iraqi Insurgency

Although there has been conflicts within Iraq since [2003](#), the problem peaked when the US withdraw their troops in [December 2011](#), causing tensed conflicts between the central government and Iraqi religious rebellious groups. As of 2013, it is estimated that there are 34.2 firearms per 100 people in Iraq and over 60 000 civilian deaths from the civil war.

Key issues

The consequences from lack of civilian gun control

Civilians should be encouraged to disarm because their guns must be controlled in order to avoid future problems.

Short-term problems

Nations, who have recently resolved from a civil war, may face devastating consequences in their state as citizens adapt to the outcome and its impact on their life. What they may find is an increase in gun related death such as murders, suicides and mass killings.

Long-term problems

Many years after the civil war and years of people possessing guns, it will be harder to force and implement regulations which would effectively restrict and control gun possession. Civilians may not follow the regulations as they feel they have the right to not give up their own guns.

There is also the social problem which may arise. This may be such that a group of people in society refusing to give up their guns as they view it as normal or a necessary object for them.

Future Conflicts

Civilians are likely to have aggressive behaviors and violent attitude in future, especially in times of crisis such as another political conflict or civil war. Civilians may feel less obliged to obey to orders as they feel that they have obtained much power from their arms.

A main concern here is such that as civilians become more accessible to arms, they may form violent actions such as mass shootings, and thus killing lives which could have been easily protected.

The problems and difficulties when disarming civilians

There are difficulties which may arise through the process of disarming civilians under post chaotic conditions.

Threat

Some civilians may refuse to disarm as they are still paranoid or threatened by the civil war and its disastrous effect. Some civilians may feel that the political issue of their nation has not been fully addressed and corrected, and therefore unwilling to disarm and threatening the security and stability of their nation and its political side.

In order for the process of disarming civilians to be fully effective, civilians must feel safe and have incentive and confidence to give up their arms. They should feel as if their safety will always be ensured and that there is no need for them to hold onto their weapons.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In history a few organizations such as the national rifle organization have attempted to solve

the issue of civilian gun possession after the American civil war; however due to the federal laws passed by the congress, this did not work. After the civil war in the United States of America the congress passed a civil rights act and they also passed a Freedmen's Bureau Act to prevent the soldiers from continued usage and abuse of firearms. As the former law stated, all were entitled to "the full and equal benefit of all laws... concerning personal security... including the constitutional right to bear arms." However, there were still paranoid citizens and so they formed a group and decided to ban the sale of inexpensive handgun in order to ensure their own safety. This reduced the amount of slaves in post civil war period from owning firearms. This was a successful attempt in controlling gun possession and they went on install other measures. They had judicial permits installed, high taxes on guns and ammunition; police gun sweeps on all homes and the police approval of individuals and organizations possessing firearms. These policies worked in history to disarm a certain target people. There is no reason why they wouldn't work now and this is why the policies are supported by the gun control in America.

There was still a problem in trying to control the gun possession though. After the USA civil war many were against the freedom of blacks and thus many groups were formed to oppress the blacks. The formation of the Klu Klux Klan made controlling gun possession a lot harder because the certain groups felt threatened and felt the urge to hold onto weapons for their own defense. To defend themselves they resorted to illegal firearms that were available after the civil war. Consequently, these people were threatened and force to disarm.

Possible Solutions

There are a variety of solutions to this issue. Just like stated in the section above, careful attention to one specific group may have good effects.

Tax rates on firearms after war could be raised in order to discourage further accessibilities to firearms.

Another way is to create an exchange program. After the civil war, there are bound to be other problems such as lack of food, structural damage, loss of life and such. By creating an exchange program, people can be encouraged to trade their firearms in for beneficial resources which would support their basic needs.

Legislation and laws could be passed by the governmental body of the country. When these

laws are passed, this could hold people in the position in which they would have to give in their firearms or be under the threat of the law.

If we take away the guns of people in a very quick and decisive manner, they will feel vulnerable and would go on strike. This is why it is important to remember to disarm in small increments so slowly the gun possession reduces especially after civil war. For example the government can control the manufacturing of gun shells and bullets. If they make the gun shells so small and incapable of doing damage, then they reduce the effect of the firearms. Also they could manufacture the bullets in such way so that they don't harness the capability of causing death. This again could help governments control the damage of these firearms.

After the firearms are collected all the material going into making them could be melted down and recycled for further more humane and reasonable uses such as used for making car parts as some of the firearms use the same material and alloyed metal as the one used to make car engine parts. This in turn will help reduce the environmental effect of the guns and post processing of these guns.

However, these are all relatively good ideas but other factors have to be considered. Factors such as will the people rebel against the government for taking and trying to control firearms that are meant for security reasons? And would we be jeopardizing any rights in trying to control arms after war? Issues like this arise. Usually after a civil war there can be a change in government or ruling policy or even the system of politics. Cabinet ministers, politicians could however resort to corruption. This would cause further harm in trying to control gun possession as people without these firearms after a war could be targeted by the corrupted minister in the new ruling system. Corruption is very much eminent in this world and this cannot be stopped by solution. The introduction of corruption could make it much harder for countries to control their gun possession, especially after civil war.

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Possible solutions

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