

# Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

## UNDP inputs to the Report of the Secretary-General 2026

### South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNDP SEESAC)

In the Western Balkans, significant efforts have been undertaken to mainstream the gender perspective into arms control at both policy and operational levels. At the policy level, the Western Balkans' SALW Control Roadmap,<sup>1</sup> initially adopted in 2018 and revised in 2024 for phase II of implementation for the 2025-2030 period, calls for the full integration of the gender perspective into arms control and prioritises women's participation in policymaking. This has been further operationalised through SALW strategies and action plans adopted by jurisdictions across the region,<sup>2</sup> which envisage concrete measures in that regard. To facilitate implementation of these policy commitments, UNDP SEESAC supports Western Balkans authorities through a comprehensive set of activities to enhance:

#### 1) Women's participation in arms control and disarmament

In an effort to broaden the evidence base for strengthening women's role in arms control, UNDP SEESAC in cooperation with ministries of interior (Mols) conducted a regional analysis of women in SALW control in the Western Balkans,<sup>3</sup> documenting notable improvements in women's representation, especially in policy-related areas. For instance, women's representation in SALW commissions - bodies responsible for policy development, coordination, implementation, and monitoring - rose substantially, with some jurisdictions surpassing 40% by 2022, a significant rise from 14% to 29% in 2016. Nevertheless, women continue to be severely underrepresented in operational and technical roles, such as border police services, criminal police, and physical security and stockpile management. The findings indicated that challenges to women's representation and participation stem from complex institutional and societal gender norms, as well as diverse gender-specific barriers. To address identified challenges support is provided to the Mols' human resources departments in implementing the measures outlined in the analysis.

Additionally, to facilitate women's participation, UNDP SEESAC organised a regional workshop on gender and arms control, gathering representatives from 18 women's organisations. It provided an extensive introduction to SALW control, key concepts, trends, and relevant normative frameworks, equipping participants with the information and tools required for active involvement in SALW policymaking.

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<sup>1</sup> See [Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their ammunition and explosives in the Western Balkans by 2030](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [Regional Arms Law Compendium - SEESAC](#)

<sup>3</sup> See [Women-in-SALW-Control in the Western Balkans](#).

## 2) Prevention of firearms misuse in violence against women

To enhance institutional response to firearms misuse in domestic violence and violence against women, SEESAC conducted a comprehensive regional analysis<sup>4</sup> offering insight into the impact and gender-based nature of firearms misuse in domestic violence. The analysis documented the role of firearms in enabling domestic violence and their disproportionate impact on women: 68.4% of women killed with firearms were killed in a domestic violence context, compared 10.9% of men.

Building on this evidence and an extensive regional process<sup>5</sup> involving over 100 police officers and 17 women's organisations, SEESAC developed two practical guidelines: Guidelines for Assessing and Addressing Risks Related to Firearms Misuse in Domestic Violence,<sup>6</sup> and the Guidelines for Gender Responsive Firearms License Approval.<sup>7</sup> These tools support professionals in effectively preventing firearms misuse in domestic violence by ensuring comprehensive risk assessment and the integration of a gender perspective in licensing procedures. Following that, SEESAC organised two training of trainers<sup>8</sup> for police officers on the Guidelines' practical application, establishing a pool of 29 trainers. These trainers then further disseminated the knowledge on the Guidelines within their institutions, conducting 10 jurisdiction-level trainings and educating over 130 police officers. In parallel, concerted efforts have been undertaken to positively influence public discourse around domestic violence, particularly incidents involving firearms. To establish a baseline, a media analysis was carried out regarding the reporting of such cases in the Western Balkans region. Based on the findings, trainings were organized for representatives from ministries of the interior, police services, prosecutors' offices, and the media.<sup>9</sup> These trainings aimed to deepen their understanding of the issue and enhance the quality of media reporting. Additionally, guidelines on effective media communication related to domestic violence involving firearms were developed for MoIs and police services.<sup>10</sup>

## 3) Institutional capacities for gender mainstreaming

To strengthen institutional capacities for gender-responsive SALW control and foster interinstitutional cooperation, SEESAC organised advanced regional gender and SALW training<sup>11</sup> for 19 representatives of SALW commissions and gender equality agencies and provided on demand

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<sup>4</sup> See [The Misuse of Firearms in Domestic Violence in the Western Balkans: Key Trends and Main Concerns](#).

<sup>5</sup> See [https://www.seesac.org/News\\_1/just-launched-guidelines-for-gender-responsive-firearms-license-approval-and-guidelines-for-assessing-and-addressing-risks-related-to-firearms-misuse-in-domestic-violence\\_1/](https://www.seesac.org/News_1/just-launched-guidelines-for-gender-responsive-firearms-license-approval-and-guidelines-for-assessing-and-addressing-risks-related-to-firearms-misuse-in-domestic-violence_1/)

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Guidelines-for-Assessing-and-Addressing-Risks-ENG.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Guidelines-for-Gender-Responsive-Firearms-Licence-Approval.ENG.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See [https://www.seesac.org/News\\_1/SEESAC-Deliveres-a-Five-day-Regional-Training-of-Trainers-for-Police-Officers-in-the-Western-Balkans-on-the-Use-of-Guidelines-to-Address-Risks-of-Firearms-Misuse-in-Domestic-Violence\\_1/](https://www.seesac.org/News_1/SEESAC-Deliveres-a-Five-day-Regional-Training-of-Trainers-for-Police-Officers-in-the-Western-Balkans-on-the-Use-of-Guidelines-to-Address-Risks-of-Firearms-Misuse-in-Domestic-Violence_1/) and

[https://www.seesac.org/News\\_1/Building-sustainable-institutional-capacities-for-Gender-Responsive-Firearms-License-Approval/](https://www.seesac.org/News_1/Building-sustainable-institutional-capacities-for-Gender-Responsive-Firearms-License-Approval/)

<sup>9</sup> See [SEESAC Finalizes the Second Round of Trainings on the Ethics of Informing the Public about Incidents of Firearms Misuse in Domestic Violence Context - SEESAC](#)

<sup>10</sup> See [Guidelines for officials of the ministries of interior and police services for communication with the media in cases of firearm misuse in gender-based violence](#).

<sup>11</sup> See [https://www.seesac.org/News\\_1/bringing-together-salw-commissions-and-gender-equality-agencies-to-enhance-gender-responsiveness-of-salw-control-in-the-western-balkans/](https://www.seesac.org/News_1/bringing-together-salw-commissions-and-gender-equality-agencies-to-enhance-gender-responsiveness-of-salw-control-in-the-western-balkans/)

and tailored support to SALW commissions in the region, including gender coach programme for heads of these bodies. A publication sharing experiences and lessons learned from mainstreaming the gender perspective in SALW control in the Western Balkans<sup>12</sup> was released. Finally, a guide for gender analysis and gender sensitive data collection<sup>13</sup> was developed to strengthen the analytical, operational, and institutional capacities of Firearms Focal Points in the Western Balkans.

**United Nations Development Programme - Ethiopia**

**Support to the National Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (SNDRP)**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Ethiopia is implementing a project called “**Support to the National Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (SNDRP)**”. The project supports Ethiopia’s National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC) the mandated body to design, plan and implement the **National Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (NDRP)**. The NDRP is the largest Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process in the world. The national DDR process targets 371,971 ex-combatants, with the largest concentration in the Tigray region (Northern Ethiopia), and covers all conflict-affected regions in the country. Women and young people making up of 33% and 76%, respectively, of the targeted ex-combatants. Through this program, UNDP promotes the gender-responsive and disability-inclusive implementation of peace agreements across the regions and the NDRP.

Since its inception in 2022, the Government and the NRC have demonstrated leadership in advancing the DDR process, committing 15% of their own budgets to support the project with prioritized rollout of demobilization and reintegration for women ex-combatants. Since its launch in November 2024, the SNDRP has played a key role in establishing and strengthening the Government’s core DDR policies, systems, and institutional capacities.

As of April 2026, UNDP has supported the national DDR process to advance from the initial system-building, testing, and piloting stage in 2024, when 7,953 ex-combatants were demobilized in the Tigray region, to at-scale implementation reaching a total of **87,182 ex-combatants, where women ex-combatants account for 14%**, with 46% of demobilized ex-combatants being between the ages of 18 and 32 years old.

<b>Updated Demobilized XCs figures Summary by Region, 03 April 2026</b>				
No	Region	Male	Female	Total
1	<b>Tigray</b>	52,385	11,543	63,928
2	<b>Amhara</b>	14,262	192	14,454
3	<b>Oromia</b>	6,967	121	7,088

<sup>12</sup> See [12 Steps towards Sustainable Gender Mainstreaming in SALW Control - Lessons Learned from the Western Balkans: What Works?](#)

<sup>13</sup> See: [A Brief Guide to Gender Analysis for Firearms Focal Points.](#)

4	<b>Afar</b>	1,415	297	1,712
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75,029</b>	<b>12,153</b>	<b>87,182</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

In addition to the institutional building and technical support that UNDP provides to NRC, the project facilitates reinsertion payments of ETB 90,400 for 75,741 ex-combatants, totaling approximately ETB 6.8 billion (approximately \$ 52 million), with payments for the remaining ex-combatants made directly by the Government of Ethiopia. UNDP is the lead coordinator with development partners and international institutions and is responsible for advocacy and manages the funds for the programme. Moreover, UNDP facilitates interagency coordination efforts to support women ex-combatants during and after demobilization.

To ensure the inclusion of women, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), and youth under the leaving no one behind policy, UNDP has supported the demobilization of 12,153 women (31% of the total female XCs targeted by the national DDR process). The programme focused on providing gender-sensitive support, including specialized gender equality and responsiveness training for government staff; supplemental nutrition for lactating mothers; standardized dignity kits; specialized medical care for victims of Sexual and Gender Violence (SGBV); and psychosocial support for victims of SGBV. Approximately 42,923 PwD ex-combatants have been demobilized (by September 2025). 600 assistive devices are under procurement, and India has pledged 16,000 prosthetics and additional support for PwD.

UNDP is supporting the design of a gender responsive national Reintegration framework and piloting reintegration activities across conflict-affected regions. The Reintegration Framework provides women ex-combatants with economic, social, and political reintegration support, paving the way for them to access education, business loans, capacity-building support, and mental health and socio-economic support.

### **United Nations Development Programme - Philippines**

UNDP supported the GPH-MILF Task Force on Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities (TFDCC) in conducting initiatives on the development of programs for women who have undergone the decommissioning process. During this workshop and planning session, 86 Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB) and/or female decommissioned combatants (including some members of the Social Welfare Committee) underwent individual needs assessment to identify their specific needs, priorities and priorities, including those related to livelihood, capacity-building, and access to social services.

The UNDP Philippines is implementing the Assistance for Security, Peace, Integration and Recovery for Advancing Human Security in BARMM (ASPIRE) Project, a joint initiative funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by the UNDP, designed to consolidate peace and accelerate recovery in the region. It specifically targets the proliferation of loose Small Arms and Light Weapons

(SALW) by incentivizing voluntary hand-over and stenciling through comprehensive socio-economic and livelihood assistance. By transforming formerly conflict-ridden communities into productive, safe zones, the project seeks to establish a sustainable foundation for localized economic growth and human security.

Within this broader framework, the ASPIRE project has implemented targeted interventions in the pilot communities in Basilan and Maguindanao del Norte Provinces to support women's economic empowerment, fostering sustainable livelihoods as a direct pathway to peace and community resilience. The project demonstrates a strong commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment by actively investing in women-led enterprises and capacity-building activities within the conflict-affected areas. Through these initiatives, women are transitioning from victims of conflict to recognized economic drivers and advocates for peace. Hereunder are the ASPIRE Project initiatives where women benefited:

**Livelihood and Skills Training:** To ensure long-term self-reliance, the project has focused heavily on equipping women with practical and entrepreneurial skills:

**Social Enterprise Development:** Thirty (30) officers and members across three (3) women's organizations (*Candiis Women Association, Sapah Bulak Women Association and Pagtaayunan Kawman Buton*) in Basilan province underwent comprehensive capacity training. This program equipped them with the critical skills to establish and manage sustainable social enterprises that address local community needs while generating reliable income, thereby fostering long-term regional development.

**Baking Skills:** A training on basic baking techniques and equipment operation was provided to 20 women beneficiaries from two distinct women-led organizations in Basilan.

**Resort Operations:** Ten (10) members of the *Langil Pangkabuhayan Association* received specialized skills development training and earned official certifications in Resort Operations. This empowers the community to transform a previously conflict-affected area into a viable and safe tourism destination.

**Socio-Economic and Livelihood Support:** To complement the capacity-building efforts and ensure immediate operationalization, the project provided socio-economic intervention to these groups:

**Enterprise Support & Machinery:** To address critical logistical and production barriers, the project provided a mini-delivery van and a coconut oil expeller machine to *Pagkaayunan sa Buton*, a women-led organization in Haji Mohammad Ajul specializing in coconut by-products. This strategic support significantly expands their production capacity and market reach.

**Essential Equipment Provision:** The project successfully turned over twenty (20) complete baking sets (including ovens and LPG tanks) and 20 heavy-duty sewing machines to local women's organizations in Basilan.

**Direct Participation in SALW Reduction and Peacebuilding:** The empowerment of these women has directly translated into tangible peacebuilding outcomes:

**Leadership and Governance in the Peace Process:** Ensuring women's perspectives are integrated at the highest levels of decision-making, a female representative from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace process mechanism serves as an active member of the ASPIRE Project Board. This inclusion guarantees that the project's strategic direction remains gender-responsive and deeply aligned with the broader normalization goals. The Brigade and Deputy Commanders of the Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB) of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) actively contributed to the design of the ASPIRE Project's implementation. Their engagement reflects a deliberate transition of BIWAB members, from serving as a support arm of a revolutionary movement to becoming key partners in advancing community-led peacebuilding and development initiatives.

**Voluntary Hand-over of Firearms:** Demonstrating a profound commitment to freeing their communities from the proliferation of illegal weapons, four (4) female beneficiaries directly handed over SALWs in exchange for livelihood interventions.

**Advocating for Social Cohesion:** Beyond economic activities, these women are actively participating in social cohesion efforts, including awareness campaigns, peace forums, and Islamic symposiums. By leading the advocacy against the dangers of firearms in their communities, these women have become pivotal agents of change, utilizing their influence to successfully convince their husbands and sons to disarm.

The ASPIRE project's targeted investments in female beneficiaries manifest that economic empowerment and peacebuilding are inextricably linked. By directly empowering at least 84 women through social development and skills training, and the voluntary surrender of firearms by some participants and members of women's associations, the project goes beyond poverty alleviation but also elevates women as influential community leaders. This elevated status has empowered them to take active roles in conflict resolution which is evidenced by their direct handover of weapons and their success in convincing male relatives to disarm. Ultimately, the integration of women into the socio-economic fabric of BARMM and women member in the Project Board serve as a cornerstone for the ASPIRE project, proving that resilient, women-led households are the foundation of a lasting, self-reliant peace.