

IMS Office of the Gender Advisor: SALW and the Gender Perspective

What is it?

NATO has a long-standing commitment pursuing an active policy in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Alliance continues to maintain its security objectives through this policy by supporting and facilitating dialogue among Nations to implement their international obligations. Integration of the gender perspective is essential for NATO and its partners to counter the destabilizing impacts of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and provide sustainable solutions to the various security challenges posed by SALW.

Gendered Impacts

Death and violence caused by SALW are highly gendered. Gender roles, bias and responsibilities varying by location, context, time and culture lead SALW to impact women, men, boys and girls in different ways.

Additionally, women and girls also play an active role in SALW, including arms trafficking, something that traditional arms control may overlook.

The large gaps in gender sensitive data have led to a lack of analysis, limiting success and effectiveness of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. For example, only a small minority of recorded cases of accidental explosions include sex and gender disaggregated data.



In the Military Context

One of the ways NATO can support a secure environment with proper safeguarding is to integrate a gender perspective to understand specific and unique mobility patterns which affect the exposure to risk for men, women, girls and boys. For example, **in some environments, women and girls are often involved in fetching water and agricultural tasks, thus have knowledge of very specific geographical areas.** Adolescent boys are engaged in herding which often happens further from the villages, again meaning that they have knowledge of areas that others in their community do not.



Cooperation, Dialogue and Engagement

Multilateral and institutional cooperation are essential towards facilitating best practices and creating a coordinated effort for interventions. NATO supports global initiatives led by other international bodies, including the UN Global frameworks.

In addition, inclusive on-the-ground **dialogue and engagement with local communities and stakeholders, made up of women, men, boys and girls, is crucial to understanding the different roles and responsibilities actors have.** This direct liaison with communities serves to build trust and fill gaps on vital and life-saving information.



NATO MECHANISMS

To support Member and Partner Nations on SALW commitments:

1. NATO/Partnership Trust Fund mechanism
2. Ad Hoc Working Group on SALW and Mine Action

Integrating the gender perspective leads to effective arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, and thus towards building a secure environment in line with NATO's values