

“In Harm’s Way: Girls in Settings of Endemic Armed Violence”

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The panel was organized by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Mission of Norway to the UN, and the IANSA Women's Network to review the impact of armed violence on women and girls. It featured experts from Columbia, DRC, Guyana, and three children from New York City who are participants in school projects against guns. The speakers discussed the issue that gun violence in the home is a threat to human security, particularly of women and girls. When cultural attitudes are combined with the easy availability of guns, a crisis that can no longer be ignored is created. An analysis of data carried out in a study from an international campaign on armed domestic violence which was launched in 32 countries last summer has found "a worrying pattern in which guns are routinely used to threaten, intimidate and facilitate violence against women in the home."

Despite the different countries and contexts of the speakers, their words paralleled each other in describing how armed violence in the home and community, armed conflict, and the availability and misuse of guns feed each other in an unending cycle. The speakers stressed how these are not simple issues with easy solutions but that this cannot justify apathy, silence, and inaction. They identified ways forward including data collection on gun possession and its links to violence against women in order to formulate and implement successful public policies to address the phenomenon. They also demanded action to end impunity for armed violence against women and girls; and gun violence prevention through a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty. Finally, they agreed that gender equality and empowerment of women - the third Millennium Development Goal – cannot be achieved without eliminating gun violence against women.

(From <http://www.iansa-women.org/node/334>)