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## *They Kill 500 Children Every Day: Small Arms— A Lethal Global Scourge*

by *Dietrich Garlichs*

Around the world, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and other small arms kill 500 children every day. No other type of weapon claims as many victims amongst the civilian population: 90 percent of all war-related casualties are caused by small arms, 80 percent of these victims are women and children. In the last decade, this amounted to three million people. And then there are the millions of people who are shot and wounded or are deeply traumatized by the loss of relatives or by the violence they have witnessed.

Even when the wars are over, the weapons are not really silenced. UNICEF has discovered that in Cambodia, children have been unable to shake off the effects of their experiences under the violent Khmer Rouge in the seventies. They still bear the scars today as adults. Many of them have never learned how to lead an ordinary family life or to solve conflicts without resorting to violence.

Of course, the actual reasons for the conflicts lie elsewhere. Nevertheless, the easy availability of small arms encourages a violent approach to dealing with conflicts. Wherever rifles and sub-machine guns are available in arms caches or are already in private hands, minor conflicts escalate faster and human rights are more readily violated.

Unscrupulous brokers sell Russian Kalashnikovs, German G-3 rifles and other small arms from one crisis zone to the next. There are more than 500 million small arms in the world. Many of these weapons also fit into children's hands. They contribute to more than 300,000

girls and boys being exploited as child soldiers. The consequences are disastrous. Many children are traumatized either because they themselves have been victims or because they cannot live with what they have done.

The German Committee for UNICEF has launched the campaign "Stop Small Arms!" in anticipation of the first UN Conference on Small Arms in New York from 9–20 July 2001. It is demanding decisive measures to limit the worldwide proliferation of small arms. This means above all:

- Governments must impose more rigorous controls on the production and on the legal and illicit trade in weapons and ammunition.
- Private brokers must be identified and subjected to stricter controls.
- Surplus arms, which arise for instance through the modernization of armed forces, must be collected and destroyed.
- Programs for the demobilization and reintegration of soldiers—particularly children—must be encouraged.

The "Stop Small Arms!" campaign has met with a very positive response from the German public at large. More than 170,000 people have signed the petition so far, including many politicians and other prominent figures. This campaign is managed and run by UNICEF volunteer groups and by many church communities. They are finding that the campaign demands are being very well received by the public. Many school classes have spontaneously joined the campaign. Although the small arms problem is considerably more complex than the question of land mines, people are just as convinced of the need for this campaign.

***"Wherever rifles and sub-machine guns are available ... minor conflicts escalate faster and human rights are more readily violated."***

The first UN Conference on Small Arms in July 2001 is an opportunity to protect many people from death and trauma by stemming the flood of weapons. Whether it seizes this opportunity will depend not so much on the urgent nature of the problem but on how much pressure is brought to bear by public opinion. We can but hope that the land mine campaign acts as an example in this respect.

Dr. Dietrich Garlichs is Director of the German Committee of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

## Staff Spotlight:



*Renée Ernst*

### Upcoming BICC Events

BICC is organizing a workshop and briefing on **Practical Disarmament: Weapons and Development** on 10 July 2001 in the margins of the UN Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in New York. Cooperation partners are German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS), and the German Foreign Office. The workshop will give practitioners an opportunity to discuss specific projects to combat the proliferation and misuse of small arms and, whilst intended primarily for UN agencies and donor and humanitarian organizations, will be open to all conference delegates. It will be followed by a public briefing during which prominent diplomats and disarmament experts will speak about practical disarmament and the role of national governments and the international community. Contact: Sami Faltas at [faltas@bicc.de](mailto:faltas@bicc.de).

BICC and the German NGO medico international are organizing a workshop on War Economies at the Evangelische Akademie Hofgeismar, from 19–21 October 2001. Contact: Anne Jung at [medico.jung@t-online.de](mailto:medico.jung@t-online.de) or Wolf-Christian Paes at [paes@bicc.de](mailto:paes@bicc.de).

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The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and facilitating the processes whereby people, skills, technology, equipment, and financial and economic resources can be shifted away from the defense sector and applied to alternative civilian uses.

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René Ernst worked in the field of international development co-operation before joining BICC as head of the Project Management Department in August 2000.

After graduating in Agricultural Sciences, René spent ten years working in South America, Africa, and South East Asia, during which time she also conducted post-graduate research at an international agricultural research institute in West Africa. René subsequently became involved in development work and set up a network of governmental and non-governmental organizations in South East Asia. She also worked as a freelance consultant for the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

René has worked within various institutional settings during her professional career, for example GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), DED (German Development Service) and universities, and has co-operated with a wide range of national and international organizations, including BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), DSE (German Foundation for International Development), the World Bank and the FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organization).

Since arriving at BICC, René has coordinated a comprehensive study on military base closures commissioned by the South African government. Her current activities are related to the structural reform of the German armed forces and the resulting wave of base closures. The Project Management Department is offering advisory services to communities affected by the closures.

Although parts of her soul remain in the various countries where she has worked, René is pleased to be back in her place of birth. She and her daughter enjoy cycling, inline-skating or simply walking along the Rhine and rediscovering their favorite beauty spots.

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→ René Ernst at [ernst@bicc.de](mailto:ernst@bicc.de)

## *Gendering Demilitarization Work*

Women's issues and the broader question of how conflicts are gendered had not received a great deal of attention at BICC in the past. Part of Vanessa Farr's task as BICC Ford Fellow from October 2000 to June 2001 was therefore to work with the research staff to consider the question of what it means to 'engender' one's research.

A group of interested members of staff has met regularly to read recent feminist scholarship on conflict and international security and has found ways in which to bring a gender perspective to such practical questions as the management of small arms, the demobilization of troops, land-mine clearance, and the consequences of sending all-male peacekeeping troops into a conflict zone. These discussions have stimulated thought on how to develop more gender-sensitive research methodologies, particularly in community-based research. The reading group has also provided an opportunity to discuss more theoretical questions, such as the extent to which the ideals of 'appropriate' masculine and feminine behavior are mobilized in the build-up to war.

Vanessa Farr was encouraged by the extent to which the question of gender has been taken up in current BICC research projects, and looks forward to further developments in this direction.

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→ Vanessa Farr at [farr@bicc.de](mailto:farr@bicc.de)

## *Demobilization and Restructuring in Eastern Europe*

Recent debates on security politics in Eastern Europe have revolved around three issues: security conceptions; civil-military relations; and security economics. These discussions have, for the most part, failed to pay sufficient attention to experiences in downsizing armed forces, particularly experiences with the demobilization and reintegration of professional soldiers, and to factors determining the build-up of armed forces after socialism.

In order to fill this gap, BICC held a research seminar entitled *Demobilization and the Build-up of Armed Forces in Eastern Europe* on 31 May/1 June 2001. The seminar, which was organized by BICC's specialist on Eastern Europe, Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, brought together partners from BICC's Demobilization and

Restructuring of Armed Forces in Eastern Europe project and independent researchers from Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, the UK, and Ukraine. The aims of the seminar were threefold: to compare and draw lessons for restructuring and demobilizing from administrative strategies pursued in Poland, Hungary, Ukraine and Kosovo; to compare adjustment strategies for military professionals readjusting to civilian life; and to discuss reports on the determinants of the Eastern European build-up or restructuring of armed forces after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and identify factors explaining national variations.

The reports on downsizing after socialism indicated changes in the functions of the military in defense politics, shifts in civil-military relations (particularly in reintegration capacities), and changes in security identities. Post-socialist build-ups seemed to be mainly influenced by changes in security identities, domestic interest groups (particularly the military establishment), resource allocation, and the external environment (especially international organizations such as NATO).

The revised reports will be published as an English-language book later this year.

For further information please contact  
→ Andreas Heinemann-Grüder at [hg@bicc.de](mailto:hg@bicc.de)

## *International Disarmament Is at a Standstill*

BICC launched its sixth yearbook on disarmament and conversion (*Conversion Survey 2001: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization and Demobilization*, Nomos-Verlagsgesellschaft) on 14 June.

Speaking at the presentation in Berlin, BICC's Director, Herbert Wulf, stated: "The process of disarmament has reached a turning point for the first time in over ten years. International disarmament and conversion are stagnating. In some cases, we are even seeing rearmament." As a result, conversion—the civilian use of potentials formerly used for military purposes—has slowed down. Nevertheless, conversion remains on the agenda. This is particularly so in Germany where there is an ongoing discussion on the future structure of the Bundeswehr. At the international level, the emphasis is on the economic and social integration of demobilized troops and employees in the arms industry in Eastern European countries.

Please see the enclosed flyer on the *Conversion Survey 2001*.

Further details and information on how to order the book can also be obtained at  
→ [www.bicc.de/publications/](http://www.bicc.de/publications/).

## BICC Publications

In addition to its annual *conversion survey*, the BIC *disarmament and conversion studies* and other books, BICC publishes *reports*, *briefs*, and *papers*. These series analyze the international conversion process, report on conversion projects and experiences, and offer scientific as well as practical know-how. Further details can be obtained at [www.bicc.de/publications/](http://www.bicc.de/publications/).

BICC. 2001. *Conversion Survey 2001: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization and Demobilization*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, Germany, June.

Sami Faltas and Joseph Di Chiaro III (eds). 2001. *Managing the Remnants of War: Micro-disarmament as an Element of Peace-building*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden.

BICC. 2001. Brochure on: *Small Arms Control and Disposal: Research, Consultancy and Support*. BICC: July.

## BICC Notes

BICC organized a **Conference on Curbing the Demand Side of Small Arms in IGAD States: Potentials and Pitfalls** in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in late April. More than ninety participants from North America, Europe and the Horn of Africa took advantage of the opportunity for an extensive exchange of information, experiences and opinions. The proceedings are available at [www.saligad.org](http://www.saligad.org).

For further information please contact  
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An international conference on **Disarmament, Arms Industries and Conversion in the Regions** took place on 27/28 April in Bremen, Germany. Two hundred people gathered to discuss issues related to industrial conversion and base redevelopment, focussing on regional effects, actors and policies. The conference, which was co-sponsored by BICC, provided conversion experts and practitioners, officials and academics with an opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas. The local organizers, led by Wolfram Elsner and Marion Salot of the University of Bremen, will publish the proceedings.

Further information can be obtained at  
→ [www.conversion2001.de](http://www.conversion2001.de) or contact Michael Brzoska at [mb@bicc.de](mailto:mb@bicc.de)

BICC and agiplan Projectmanagement held a **conference on the consequences of the reform of the German Bundeswehr** in Wuppertal on 28/29 May. Representatives of the communities affected came together with experts from North-Rhine Westphalian ministries and from federal finance institutions to dis-

cuss the opportunities and problems arising from the planned base closures. About 150 military bases will be affected by the reform over the next six years.

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→ René Ernst at [ernst@bicc.de](mailto:ernst@bicc.de)

Kees Kingma conducted an evaluation of the **Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme** in Rwanda in May and June 2001. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and several bilateral donors have been supporting the demobilization of members of the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) and their resettlement and reintegration into civilian life through a special window of the UNDP Trust Fund for Rwanda since 1997. The evaluation assesses the implementation as well as the impact of the programme.

For further information please contact  
→ Kees Kingma at [kingma@bicc.de](mailto:kingma@bicc.de)

On 6 June, the five leading German peace research institutes launched the **Friedensgutachten 2001**—the annual German report on international peace issues. BICC was a partner in the project for the second time and provided input to the editors' joint statement as well as contributing articles on topics such as war economies, NATO expansion, small arms, arms exports and Northern Ireland.

For further information please contact  
→ Corinna Hauswedell at [ch@bicc.de](mailto:ch@bicc.de)

BICC's **Fellowship Program for Capacity-building on Disarmament, Conversion and Peace Policy**, which is sponsored by the Ford Foundation, has been extended. New applications are invited. A full description of the program, the selection criteria and the application procedure can be found at [www.bicc.de/info/fellowship.html](http://www.bicc.de/info/fellowship.html).

For further information please contact  
→ Kees Kingma at [kingma@bicc.de](mailto:kingma@bicc.de)

The Geneva Forum organized a seminar on 27 June to present the **Conversion Survey 2001** to the diplomatic community, NGOs and the media. The meeting at the Palais des Nations was opened by the German Ambassador to the Conference for Disarmament, Güter Seibert, and chaired by Patricia Lewis, Director of UNIDIR and member of BICC's International Board. Michael Brzoska gave an introductory talk which stimulated a lively discussion among the 40 participants on the relationship between conversion and arms control.

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