



THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

28 May 2009

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OFFICE OF THE  
HIGH REPRESENTATIVE  
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MAY 29 2009

H.E Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs  
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York, NY 10017

LOG No. 141/05

Excellency,

I refer to your letter referenced ODA/12-2009/AVPP of 11 February 2009 requesting submission of views by member states on the interrelation between armed violence and development as required under operative paragraph 2 of General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/23 (2008).

I have the pleasure of conveying to you, an executive summary as well as a comprehensive report on the relationship between armed violence and sustainable development in Papua New Guinea.

While the report is substantive and encompasses various aspects of armed violence and our ongoing collective efforts to address this impediment to achieving sustainable development, this report is being submitted at this time to meet the set deadline of 31 May 2009.

The final and endorsed version of this report will be shortly forthcoming.

Sincerely,



Robert Aisi

DDA  
CONVENTIONAL ARMS BRANCH  
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**Papua New Guinea's Perspective on Promoting Development through  
Reducing and Preventing Armed Violence**

## **Executive Summary**

**Papua New Guinea** believes that:

- The problem of armed violence needs to be appropriately measured so that action can be taken to reduce it;
- Programmes on armed violence prevention and reduction need to be integrated as key elements of national and local development strategy and planning;
- There are several international and regional treaties and agreements that can support armed violence prevention and reduction; and
- Targeted, practical and sufficient aid must be committed (in addition to existing funding) to act effectively on armed violence and development.

The forms of armed violence in **Papua New Guinea** can be categorised into two types: armed conflict armed violence and non-conflict armed violence.

The armed conflict violence that occurs mainly involves inter-group fighting between clans in rural areas. This type of violence also spills over into urban areas when members of opposing groups come into contact, but on a much reduced scale.

Non-conflict armed violence is common in Papua New Guinea and involves criminal violence (homicide, intimidation, break and enter and rape), growing and more organised levels of gang violence, self-directed violence (suicide), there is some level of intimate partner violence and violence against women but with low incidences of arms used.

The Government of Papua New Guinea is of the view that there is a clear link between armed violence and sustainable development in the country. Armed violence impedes Papua New Guinea's ability to realise the Millennium Development Goals. Armed violence has a negative impact on development and is a source of instability and human insecurity in Papua New Guinea.

Firearms are playing a significant role in exacerbating Papua New Guinea's law and order problems and the costs of armed violence in both human and material terms are substantial.

The threat of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, impacts on a woman's ability to move freely in the community, to use public transport, to access health and education services, and to travel to market or to the workplace.

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## **Introduction**

Papua New Guinea notes that four strategic goals can be identified in order to offer experiences in how action can be taken to prevent and reduce armed violence in support of development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

1. Improving measurement of armed violence;
2. Integrating armed violence prevention and reduction with development programming to address common root causes;
3. Complying with international agreements aimed at or relevant for armed violence prevention and reduction; &
4. Ensuring adequate official development assistance directed to the combined programme of 'armed violence reduction and development' (AVD)<sup>1</sup>.

Achieving these strategic goals will require a more coherent and sustained approach to support Member States across the UN system, including existing coordination mechanisms such as the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), Inter-Agency apparatus as well as engaging the major UN implementing agencies, and the International Finance Institutions.

Any and all strategies pursued are under the authority of and/or at the specific request of recipient States and should not be a condition imposed by the donor community.

### **1. Measuring Armed Violence**

To demonstrate what programming works to prevent and reduce armed violence, States should obtain evidence on how:

- Armed violence hinders sustainable development; and
- Poverty and lack of development increases the risk of armed violence

In practice, this means States must collect information on rates and types of armed violence, and on how their citizens are affected by armed violence. Information should be gathered on the effects of armed violence – including both the immediate effects (deaths and injuries) and the indirect effects (increased costs for example of health care and policing, reduced national productivity and income). Information should also be gathered on the root causes of armed violence, with attention accorded to underlying issues such as unemployment, rapid urbanisation, and inequality. All data gathered should be disaggregated to show differences by gender, ethnicity, geographical region and socio-economic position.

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### **Main types of armed violence in Papua New Guinea**

Reliable statistical information on the importation, stockpiling, and misuse of small arms in Papua New Guinea is limited. There is also an absence of routine surveillance of firearm injuries in rural areas and many communities are unable to access emergency medical services. This affects the quality and quantity of mortality and morbidity data. However, generally the types of armed violence affecting Papua New Guinea are noted below:

- Inter group conflict is prevalent in many parts of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, although it is not a Highlands specific problem. Although mainly confined to rural areas, there is an increasing trend for inter group fighting to occur in urban and peri-urban areas.
- Politically motivated armed conflict – rival clans are compelled to seek equal or greater fire power. Politics is extremely competitive and clan-based, and the increasingly militarized nature of politics has resulted in the use of violence as an electoral tool, particularly in Highlands region of Papua New Guinea.
- There are criminal groups of varying character and intent operating in urban areas, along arterial highways and that follow larger patterns of development. Armed groups often have access to high-powered firearms and are increasingly sophisticated and more organised in their actions. Armed assault and armed robbery are pressing problems.
- The nature of politics combined with the prevalence of armed groups has provided an easy merge between politics and violence, which is common, especially in the Papua New Guinea Highlands region during elections relative to other parts of the country.
- Armed violence is a random or calculated event. It is purposeful in intent and directed at key targets, whether economic or political. In some specific areas of Papua New Guinea armed violence is about access to social, economic and political resources, whether through committing crimes, escalating communal tensions, pay back or revenge killing or winning elections.
- The practice of hiring or loaning guns between clans is neither uncommon nor widespread. However, ammunition is comparatively difficult to find primarily because of the existing Government moratorium on firearms and ammunition sales.
- Whilst some independent studies have suggested that women in Papua New Guinea experience high levels of violence, the Government of Papua New Guinea is of the view that further detailed studies are required but which also needs to understand and account for the cultural context within which violence occurs. Domestic violence is a growing concern but the Government is now seriously addressing it as a national development issue.
- In some parts of Papua New Guinea women and girls are at risk of rape, gang rape and other forms of violent sexual assault, and the associated fear accompanies them in many aspects of their daily life in urban and rural settings; a issue that the Government is also addressing.

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**Areas/groups most affected by armed violence**

PNG has identified a variety of forms of non-conflict armed violence from domestic and sexual violence to increasing problems of armed criminality and tribal violence.

The two largest cities of Port Moresby and Lae, as well as the Southern Highlands and Enga provinces, are regarded as serious non-conflict armed violence areas. Post-conflict Bougainville remains affected by sporadic incidents of armed violence and ex-combatants still have access to a wide assortment of military-style firearms. The limited studies and assessment based only in these areas do not however, reflect the overall real situation of non-conflict armed violence in Papua New Guinea.

Port Moresby, the country's largest and fastest growing urban centre, accounts for most of all nationally reported crimes, despite accounting for only 5 per cent of the country's population. The Southern Highlands is arguably the most problematic rural area for gun violence.

Young and adult men are the main perpetrators of armed conflict and non-conflict armed violence, and make up the largest number of deaths to gun violence and disabled survivors.

Women and girls suffer many forms of gun related violence such as sexual violence at gunpoint, and have to cope with the trauma and stigma, in addition to assuming the bulk of the care giving roles. The incidences of gun-related violence is not only restricted to the female population.

Domestic and family violence is not distributed evenly across all provinces, regions and localities. Generally there is a disproportionate percentage of female victims compared to male victims.

**Armed violence undermines development in Papua New Guinea**

Armed violence in Papua New Guinea undermines human rights and people's right to development.

In 2008 the official national major crime data shows that robbery, followed by grievous bodily harm and rape, were the most common forms of violence reported, and together make up 40 per cent of all forms of violence in the country.

Armed violence generally contribute to exacerbating Papua New Guinea's law and order problems and have contributed to the rise of less common forms of violence including maiming, abduction and kidnapping for ransom.

Armed violence, whether in the form of armed conflict or as criminal or interpersonal violence, imposes significant costs on affected communities in Papua New Guinea. The costs both in human and material terms are substantial.

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Armed violence undermines economic and social development. It affects community cohesion, peace and security, income generation, the safety and psychosocial health of men, women and children, and violates human rights. Inter group violence, particularly in the Highlands of the country restricts national and regional investment, destroys livelihoods and assets, and limits access to basic education and health services, often for prolonged periods to the detriment of people affected.

Armed conflict and non-conflict armed violence erodes the rule of law and undermines good governance.

Associated spending on policing and law enforcement, health care and victims' assistance diverts resources away from the country's development priorities and social welfare. The cost of armed violence to the society is increasing and includes responding to the victim's rights and needs such as medical care, physical rehabilitation and psychological support, which

To address the root causes of armed violence, the basic needs and rights of people must be met through the delivery of essential services, such as education, health care and justice, through livelihood opportunities and improved social justice.

Armed violence poses significant challenges to Papua New Guinea achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

#### **Development Issues increases the risk of armed violence in Papua New Guinea**

Social and economic development in PNG is heavily influenced by the country's geographic diversity that is characterised by high, densely populated mountain chains, swamps and rivers, remote islands and tropical climate.

There are currently no roads linking the capital, Port Moresby, with the north coast or highlands where the majority of people live. Over 80 per cent of the population live in rural areas and many villages are inaccessible by vehicle, and lack access to basic social services. Remoteness has significantly contributed to a lack of social and economic growth in many areas throughout Papua New Guinea. Compounding this, particularly in the Highlands region, inter group fighting in certain localities, has adversely impacted on development issues and made the challenges more complex.

There is growing concern over law and order issues, however, the National Government is committed and seriously addressing this through the national development policy frameworks and strategies that have been set in place.

Some social services to parts of the country have been degraded due to deteriorating infrastructure such as roads, aid-posts, hospitals, schools and district offices, leading to widening development disparity between regions and peoples and discontent with authorities. Human development indicators are among the lowest in the Pacific region.

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The Somare-Temu Government has made concerted efforts over the last five years to restore the basic infrastructure and service delivery country-wide with the ultimate goal of improving the citizens lives. External development assistance that are consistent with the development needs and priorities of the National Government is welcomed and needs to be mainstreamed into its overall development plans and policies.

The past decade has witnessed an upsurge in the incidence of inter-group fighting and armed criminality, and politically motivated violence in the Highlands region, which have coincided for the most part, with the advent of resource developments and associated in-migration.

Resource conflict and the inequitable distribution of resources have emerged as key contributors to insecurity and a reason for acquiring firearms, particularly in the Papua New Guinea Highlands. Clan members accord priority to high-powered firearms acquisition so that this could be utilized in a current or future problem.

Gender inequality is a feature of life in Papua New Guinea. Generally, women have a lower social standing than men, principally because of the cultural norms and traditions that is a core fabric of Papua New Guinea society.

Women face unequal opportunities in education and access to the labour force. Young women often face pressure to adhere to the societal norms of early marriage due to the perception that the marital relationship will provide long-term social and economic security. Women face the burden of a heavy workload, including care-giving, which is compounded by violence against women.

The Government of Papua New Guinea has made serious commitment and strides both in the policy and legislative arena to ensure that women and girls are equal development partners of the country.

**Papua New Guinea** recommends that data collected on armed violence in each State should be consolidated and made publicly available (for example on the government website).

## **2. National programming on armed violence and development**

National programming is central to achieving measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015. Strategies need to be preventive and dynamic, able to respond to changing situations. Strategies should address immediate risk factors in armed violence (such as arms availability), but should also address more structural factors to prevent violence and conflict from starting.

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### **Measures in Papua New Guinea for prevention and or reduction of armed violence**

The national development plan of **Papua New Guinea** includes a direct reference to armed violence prevention and reduction. It also addresses social, economic and political factors that increase the risk of armed violence.

The fifth pillar of Papua New Guinea's 40-year National Strategic Plan refers to security although not specifically relating to armed violence - "Security & Global Relations: Happy & United Country."

Papua New Guinea's Medium Term Development Strategy does not directly address armed violence but refers to maintaining the rule of law to be underpinned by an independent judiciary and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms.

In collaboration with donors and other stakeholders, **Papua New Guinea** intends to strengthen action to prevent/reduce armed violence through the national development plan. This will include specific targets for reducing armed violence and for reducing the root causes of armed violence.

**Papua New Guinea** has undertaken the following programs on armed violence prevention and reduction:

A National Gun Summit was carried out in 2005. This was a highly consultative process adopting a holistic approach to the threat of armed violence and development in Papua New Guinea. A list of recommendations was produced, which raised wide expectations for a reduction in armed violence and an improvement in community security.

A National Gun Control Committee was also established to progress the recommendations of the Gun Summit. The implementation of the Gun Summit recommendations and the function of the Gun Control Committee is now being reviewed by the Government with the objective of effectively addressing armed violence to further foster and secure peace, security, development and prosperity for all.

Disarmament events tend to be ad hoc and often a reaction to particular outbreaks of violence e.g. tribal fighting or land ownership disputes around resource extraction sites. Government response to armed violence tends to be centred on the formal law and justice agencies and at a sub-national level.

The manner in which conflict is manifested in Papua New Guinea is varied and diverse. In the typical instance of a tribal fight, for example, Police rapid reaction forces would be deployed (Task Forces and Mobile Squads) to quell sporadic armed violence, followed by political negotiations between the factions to disarm.

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Two notable Government small arms reduction initiatives have been in the:

- (a) Southern Highlands province, where a state of emergency was declared in 2006 and a weapons disposal amnesty was instituted; and
- (b) Bougainville, where the Government had, in conjunction with the UN, attempted to disarm factions in a three (3) stage weapons declaration, containerisation and destruction process.

The initial Government strategy to encourage disarmament in Bougainville was to fund a Bougainville Ex-combatants Trust Account (BETA) which proved to be essentially a weapons buy back scheme. Disarmament was also linked to declaring Bougainville a Autonomous region, whose status would be granted by Parliament, only if there were tangible progress in disarmament of the region. Consequently the bulk of weapons surrendered occurred a few months before the national parliament voted on Bougainville's autonomy.

The long term efficacy of these and other armed violence reduction programmes has been limited due to such interventions largely excluding the wider community in the arms reduction process, monetising the disarmament process, and restricting weapons collection process to an individual or private level.

The Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) is inhibited by a lack of systematic recording of firearms and weak compliance with gun registration legislation. Weapons seized during investigations or used as court exhibits are often not disabled or destroyed once the case has been dealt with, and consequently find their way back into the community. Though not widespread, firearms from the Police or soldiery are hired out illegally to support tribal fighting or used in armed holdups. General leakage of weapons from the RPNGC and the Defence Force remains a concern but this has been addressed through secure armouries with the assistance of the Australian Government.

The Government of Papua New Guinea has also supported security sector reform by adopting the AusAID funded RPNGC Development Project over 3 separate phases; accepted direct inline support from the Australian Federal Police through an Enhanced Cooperation Package; adopted the AusAID funded Law and Justice Sector Programme (LJSP); which is now in its second phase; created a Law and Justice Sector Secretariat as the controlling authority and through a National Coordinating Mechanism for the LJSP; and also a semi-Government body called the Community Justice Liaison Unit, which acts as a bridge between the formal and informal justice sectors, providing strategic funding for peace building and arms disposal activities.

Future armed violence reduction programme interventions will seek to avoid the pitfalls of past attempts in arms control, engage with community groups who would add value to the disarmament process, civil society and faith-based organisations already pursuing armed violence reduction programmes and using international best practice as a basis to inform the Papua New Guinea strategy.

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Small scale arms control initiatives have proven to be more effective where community consultations have ensured some ownership of the process. Communities are able to impose their own customary sanctions on armed individuals who fail to comply with disarmament drives. Using groups such as the churches or women's assemblies as entry points into communities and leveraging off their traditional authority, their on-going peace building and conflict resolution activities has also been a successful strategy in reducing armed violence.

Where community based armed violence reduction initiatives have been combined with the formal justice sector e.g. integrating community police or village courts, this has also proven to be more appropriate for Papua New Guinea than perhaps larger scale interventions such as was seen in the Regional Assistance Mission for Solomon Islands.

NGO and FBO groups who figure prominently in armed violence reduction in PNG include:

- Oxfam - strong advocacy and research in armed violence reduction especially in the Highlands region.
- Coalition to Stop Gun Violence – a group of 20 + NGOs who raise awareness on the effects of gun violence and development in Papua New Guinea, and voice public concern to implement the 2005 Gun Summit recommendations.
- Peace Foundation Melanesia - conflict resolution training and advocacy, especially in post conflict regions.
- Yumi Lukautim Mosbi (We care for Port Moresby) – AusAID and private sector funded urban safety initiative run through the National Capital District Governor's office. Coordinates small arms surrenders in the nation's capital through offering employment opportunities and public services to urban settlement areas with high crime.
- Catholic Bishops' Conference and Caritas – peace building advocacy and coordinates armed violence reduction initiatives in Southern Highlands among other regions.
- Leitana Nehan and Papua Hahine – women's advocacy and gender based violence support groups in post conflict areas and urban centres.
- Kup Women for Peace and Meri Kirap Sapotim – Women led community security initiatives which were established as a result of prolonged tribal fighting, withdrawal of services and increased gender violence. Actively promoting disarmament and addressing gun violence by creating local systems of governance.

The primary coordinating agency for armed violence reduction as part of the development framework is the Ministry for Internal Security of Papua New Guinea.

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The Ministry for Internal Security of Papua New Guinea aims to strengthen Government action on armed violence by extending armed violence prevention and reduction responsibilities to other ministries or official bodies for a holistic approach to deal with the issues. These include the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, Departments of Prime Minister & NEC, Justice and Attorney General, Foreign Affairs & Trade, PNG Defence Force and Internal Revenue Commission (Customs).

### **3. Fulfilling international commitments**

There are many existing and emerging international norms and legal agreements that States should implement in order to promote development and reduce armed violence. Among the existing agreements Papua New Guinea is actively implementing include:

- UN Programme of Action on Small Arms & Light Weapons (2001). Last report was submitted in 2005;
- Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008);
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – we are developing a National Action Plan;
- Papua New Guinea is a self nominated pilot country under the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence;
- Arms Trade Treaty (developing) – we submitted our views in support of a strong treaty to the UN Secretary-General in 2007

### **Regional agreements**

- Nadi Framework on harmonisation of firearms laws; and
- 2005 Pacific Plan that advocates as part and parcel of enhanced regional security for weapons control.

In addition to these agreements, which are important to facilitate national sustainable development, Papua New Guinea believes that it would be useful to review and develop new international goals on reducing and preventing armed violence globally as a part of sound development practice, and that this would, therefore, complement the existing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### **4. International cooperation and assistance**

Both recipient States and donors have responsibilities for implementing the commitments of the Geneva Declaration. Recipient States should integrate explicit programming on armed violence prevention and reduction within their national development plans and should make funding commitment from the national budget to implement these programs.

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Papua New Guinea has been a frequent participant at international armed violence reduction fora and has shown interest in engaging with international partners through the United Nations sponsored meetings. Other bilateral donors such as NZAID, Norway and AusAID have provided for Government officials and key NGO representatives to attend international armed violence reduction workshops.

Follow-up reporting has been slow from Government nor have many practical measures been implemented as a result of such international engagement due to mainly to capacity constraints. Consequently Government and civil society groups remain to collaborate effectively in addressing the issue of armed violence, as advocated in the Geneva Declaration.

Opportunity for improvement exists also when considering the limited response in Papua New Guinea to Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, the harmonisation of firearms laws within the Pacific Region through the Nadi Framework, reporting on CEDAW and CRC, and implementing programme activities within the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

International cooperation through various small arms reduction support networks exist, mainly through IANSA and UNDP.

Australian assistance has been provided to Papua New Guinea in border control and security which impacts on the numbers of illegal arms and ammunition being brought into the country. Drugs are also often involved in cross border security breaches. Similarly a tightening of Civil Aviation Authority security has improved Papua New Guinea's status as a responsible Pacific country in terms of arms being smuggled aboard aircraft.

Annex I

## Promoting development through reducing and preventing armed violence Submissions to the UN Secretary-General, 2009

# Notes for campaigners

A 2008 UN General Assembly resolution calls upon Member States to send their views on armed violence and development to the UN Secretary-General, so that he can compile a report to be published in November 2009. **The deadline for government submissions is 31 May 2009.**

The resolution is the latest stage in a process started by the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, which recognises the strong connection between preventing armed violence and promoting socio-economic and political development. To date, 103 States have signed the Geneva Declaration:

[www.genevadeclaration.org/geneva-declaration-signatories.html](http://www.genevadeclaration.org/geneva-declaration-signatories.html)

### Suggested actions for civil society partners

A guide note (below), proposing four broad areas which your government's submission should cover, has been prepared by a small working group of NGOs with UNDP and the Quakers UN Office (QUNO) to support regional and global civil society action. Suggestions for how to use this template submission are provided below:

- **Please coordinate with other CSO/NGOs concerned with armed violence and development.** This note is being distributed through several international networks, so it is possible more than one organisation in your country will be using it. If you are in doubt, please contact us.
- **Contact UNDP country office, if appropriate.** UNDP is supporting this work on armed violence and development. Some UNDP country offices will be able to help with civil society advocacy on the submission.
- **Identify government officials responsible for completing the submission and arrange a meeting.**

It is possible that your contacts in government will not have heard about the Geneva Declaration or the request of the UN Secretary-General. A '*note verbale*' has been issued to each Member State—this is the official request to make a submission. The '*note verbale*' is available online at [www.iansa.org/campaigns\\_events/UNSGconsultations\\_armed\\_violence.htm](http://www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/UNSGconsultations_armed_violence.htm)

Each country will be different, but it is likely the most relevant officials will be part of the national development agency, Ministry of Interior or similar ministry. Some countries might not have anyone assigned to write the submission – please encourage them to assign someone! When complete, the submission must be sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to your country's mission at the United Nations in New York (US).

- **Support your government's officials with documents and materials to help prepare a submission.** Given the very limited time available, it may help if you can supply evidence on the types and rates of armed violence in your country, on the impacts of armed violence (short and long-term), and if possible, on the links between armed violence and development in your country context. However, even if this information is not available, vital points of principle can be brought out in submissions.

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- **Maintain regular contact to ensure that the submission is completed.** Only submissions before the 31 May will be included in the Secretary General's report. Those submitted after will not. This is an important opportunity to ensure that issues relevant to your country are included in the report.

**Ensure that the final submission is submitted to your country's mission in New York.**

The submission cannot be sent to the UN directly, it must be sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to your mission in New York, who must then send it to the UN Secretariat. Please contact us when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has sent the submission to New York.