

SAFERWORLD
PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

25
YEARS

OUR HISTORY
SAFERWORLD

25 YEARS BUILDING SAFER LIVES



25

YEARS

Saferworld was launched in 1989/90 as a politically-independent research organisation. 25 years later we have programmes or advocacy platforms in over 25 countries and territories across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and North America.

In the 1980s national security was dominated by **Cold War politics** and the nuclear arms race, which were fuelling civil wars and destroying people's lives and livelihoods.

However, the break-up of the Soviet Union ushered in a new period of political unrest and conflict as former Soviet republics raced to sell off Cold War arms stockpiles, with **small arms fuelling conflict** and resulting in more death, injury and disruption than nuclear weapons.

From its beginning Saferworld campaigned for more effective controls on the proliferation and misuse of conventional arms and was at the forefront of national, regional and global efforts to **stop irresponsible arms transfers**. Saferworld was involved in the very first discussions about developing a fully global and legally-binding arms export control instrument and remained at the heart of the campaign for this **Arms Trade Treaty** for the next 20 years. The treaty became international law on 24 December 2014.



TAKING A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

While we worked for more effective arms transfer controls and action on small arms proliferation during the 1990s, we also began looking at the broader elements of conflict such as **governance, power, marginalisation, access to resources, and development**.

As part of this we started in-country programming in areas such as Kenya and the Western Balkans. As our experience of working in conflict-affected countries grew, this informed our **international policy and practice**.

By 2008 we were operational in 15 countries and territories – in Africa, Asia and Europe – in all cases **working closely with local partners**. Arms issues remained a priority but had been joined by newer areas of work including security and justice sector development, community security programming, and conflict sensitive approaches to development.

Since 2008 we have continued to reflect and build on our **programme and policy experience**. We have started new programmes in the Middle East and North Africa and developed an increasing focus on **cross-border and regional conflict**. We have also remained at the forefront of conflict prevention thinking and practice, developing work on the peacebuilding role of emerging powers; the post-2015 development agenda; the interrelationships between gender, peace and security; conflict drivers such as illicit finance and militarised responses to security threats; and new approaches to 'justice as prevention'.



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| GULF WAR | | HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IN SOMALIA QUESTIONED | | RWANDA GENOCIDE raises questions about neutrality of aid workers and aid dispersal in refugee camps | SREBRENICA MASSACRE highlights failure of traditional peace keeping to protect civilians | THE SCOTT REPORT on the arms-to-Iraq affair highlights serious shortcomings in the UK's antiquated arms export laws | GOVERNANCE COLLAPSES IN ALBANIA. Looting of state arms stockpiles fuels crime, militancy and civil unrest in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. | KOSOVO WAR | MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AGREED. but fail to address conflict. | SEPTEMBER 11TH ATTACKS against the United States dramatically alter public perceptions of security, leading to the 'war on terror'. | THE COTONOU AGREEMENT between the EU and 77 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries on aid and trade creates opportunities for dialogue between the EU and civil society on its impact on conflict. | IRAQ WAR highlights that military measures alone do not provide security, and that people cannot rebuild their lives without basic security. | EU ENLARGEMENT into Central and Eastern Europe increases the challenge of achieving effective EU arms export controls. | SUDAN PEACE AGREEMENT Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement ends a devastating civil war that has left a legacy of poverty and insecurity. | NEPAL PEACE AGREEMENT. Integration and rehabilitation of Maoist Army combatants, improving public security, and implementing security sector reforms become key issues. | WAR OVER SOUTH OSSETIA creates tensions across the region and calls into question the effectiveness of European conflict prevention mechanisms. | ARMS TRADE TREATY RESOLUTION. UN General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to negotiate a 'strong and robust' Arms Trade Treaty. | ARMED SPRING changes the face of politics in the Middle East and North Africa. Subsequent civil wars affect Syria and Libya, with sustained unrest and violence in Yemen. | SOUTH SUDAN INDEPENDENCE. People of southern Sudan vote for independence from the North. There are huge economic, security and governance challenges for the new state. | SOMALIA ENDS TWO DECADES WITHOUT GOVERNMENT | UKRAINIAN CONFLICT ISLAMIC STATE ANNOUNCES 'CALIPHATE' ACROSS PARTS OF SYRIA AND IRAQ |
| THE BREAKUP OF THE SOVIET UNION. Former Soviet republics race to sell-off Cold War arms stockpiles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| 1989-90 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
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SAFERWORLD launches as a politically-independent research organisation. 'Saferworld' is a one-word embodiment of what we are hoping to achieve.

Surplus conventional weapons from the Cold War flood the global arms market, fuelling civil wars from Bosnia to Sudan. Saferworld is among the first to say that **CONVENTIONAL SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS ARE THE REAL WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION** of people's lives and livelihoods.

Saferworld presses the 12 member states of the European Community to adopt a **CODE OF CONDUCT ON ARMS EXPORTS**. This would be the first significant step towards getting all arms manufacturing nations to take responsibility for how their weapons impact on conflict, development and human rights.

Saferworld receives its **FIRST MAJOR GRANT**. This enables us to start work on small arms proliferation in a more systematic way.

Saferworld starts to raise awareness of the risks of **HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS** inadvertently fuelling conflicts. Saferworld begins to look at broader elements of conflict such as **GOVERNANCE, POWER, MARGINALISATION, ACCESS TO RESOURCES, AND DEVELOPMENT**, as it becomes clear that illicit small arms are part of a much bigger problem.

Saferworld moves **FROM BRISTOL TO LONDON**, bringing us closer to Westminster and enhancing our capacity to work with partners.

Saferworld produces a comprehensive analysis of the issues underpinning the **ARMS-TO-IRAQ AFFAIR** and calls for a complete overhaul of UK arms export controls. Saferworld conducts **RESEARCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA** on how the EU can best assist countries affected by small arms proliferation. This is our first project to involve significant research in-country.

After six years of sustained research and advocacy by Saferworld and others, the **EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON ARMS EXPORTS** is finally agreed but falls short of the standards Saferworld is calling for. Saferworld helps establish the **INTERNATIONAL ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS (IANSA)**. By 2014 the network has over 500 member organisations working in 120 countries.

A MAJOR GRANT FROM THE UK DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT enables Saferworld to intensify work on small arms transfer controls and scale up its wider work.

Saferworld and partners successfully call for parliamentarians to pass the **UK ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT**, the first in-depth change to UK arms transfer controls since the Second World War. Saferworld works with the Kenyan Government to develop two **COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING PROJECTS** in the Kibera slum in Nairobi and in Isiolo, in Kenya's semi-arid north. The project aims to improve trust between the police and local communities, leading to a reduction in crime and insecurity. Saferworld and partners launch a joint programme which aims to mainstream **CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PRACTICE** into development and humanitarian assistance.

Saferworld and its local partners support **'BALLOT WITHOUT THE BULLET'** CAMPAIGNS against election violence in Sri Lanka. We subsequently conduct similar campaigns in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and southern Sudan. Saferworld conducts **SMALL ARMS SURVEYS IN BULGARIA, SERBIA AND ALBANIA** on public perceptions of small arms and security. These surveys show that people have security concerns beyond small arms, prompting us to refocus our response and look at broader conflict prevention. Saferworld undertakes its first planning mission to **SOUTHERN SUDAN**.

Saferworld co-authors an innovative training handbook: **ACTION AGAINST SMALL ARMS**. It continues to be used to train governments and civil society organisations around the world.

Saferworld's work with partners and local communities in the Balkans bears fruit as **'SAFER COMMUNITY PLANS'** are successfully implemented by residents, local authorities and law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia.

NATO peacekeeping and UN administration in Kosovo shows that the international community has to work faster to give locals responsibility for security and justice decision making. To help hand back voice and control to local people, **SAFERWORLD PILOTS A METHODOLOGY ON 'COMMUNITY SECURITY' IN THE BALKANS**.

Saferworld helps develop a **REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN THE BALKANS**. This shapes work by the ten countries of the region and assistance by the UN and EU Stability Pact to address problems with weapons, violence, and arms trafficking. Saferworld helps lead **BITING THE BULLET**, a project which contributes to the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (still the principle international agreement on small arms).

Saferworld helps develop the **OECD HANDBOOK ON SECURITY SYSTEM REFORM**. This affirms international recognition of the importance of more democratic, accountable and responsive security and justice services.

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After years of lobbying by Saferworld and partners, the UK Department for International Development commits to placing more emphasis on **FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS** and to treating access to security and justice as basic services in its development programming. Saferworld conducts targeted research looking at the relationship between **CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT** in Bangladesh and Kenya. Saferworld starts work in **CENTRAL ASIA** focusing on interethnic tensions in the Ferghana Valley which spans Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

As China emerges as a key actor in global development, peace and security, Saferworld launches a new programme focusing on **CHINA'S ROLE IN ARMS TRANSFER CONTROLS, CONFLICT PREVENTION AND CHINA-AFRICA CO-OPERATION**. Saferworld helps organise the first meeting between Somali civil society groups and the UN Security Council in Djibouti, allowing the Somali public to have its say on how the international community can best contribute to peace in Somalia. Saferworld also supports the creation of **NON-STATE ACTOR PLATFORMS IN SOMALIA/SOMALILAND** to act as a channel between ordinary Somalis and policy makers. Saferworld conducts a conflict analysis of the war over **SOUTH OSSETIA**, as a basis for comprehensive programming.

Saferworld's **MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA PROGRAMME** is established. The People's Peacemaking Perspectives project runs in 18 contexts. Its **PARTICIPATORY CONFLICT ANALYSES** produce some unique, and at times challenging, findings and policy recommendations for the EU and wider international community. Research in Nepal recommends rehabilitation options for male and female **MAOIST ARMY COMBATANTS**.

Following expansion, our **SOUTH SUDAN** programme covers small arms, community security, conflict sensitivity and China-South Sudan engagement. Saferworld starts working to shape the **POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA** and ensure that conflict prevention and peacebuilding feature strongly. An **EU-CHINA-AFRICA EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS** is established. The group provides an accessible pool of expertise for policymakers and officials to draw on. Saferworld begins its first major regional project in the Middle East and North Africa, looking at **WOMEN'S SAFETY AND SECURITY CONCERNS** in Egypt, Yemen and Libya.

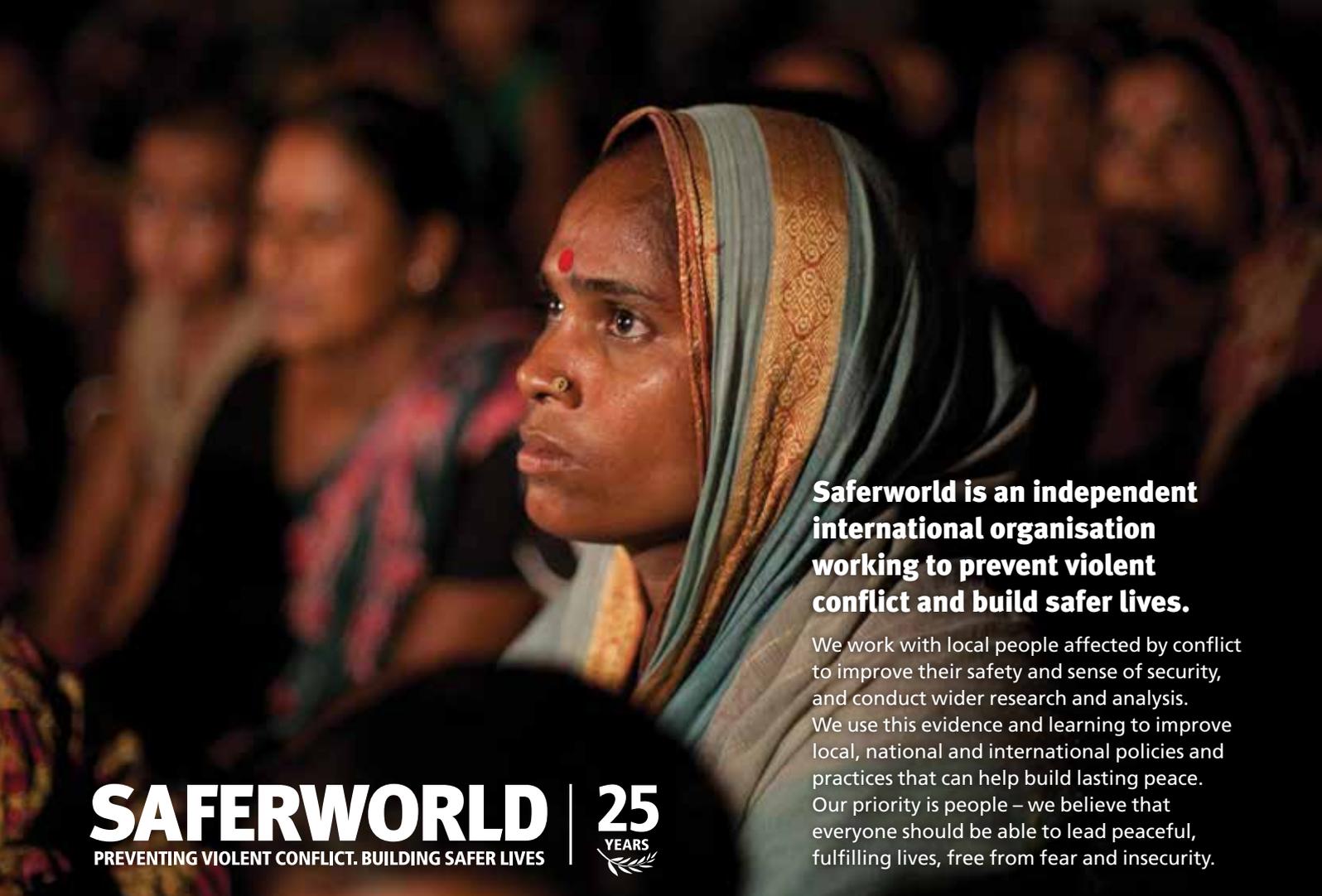
Ahead of **KENYA'S MARCH 2013 ELECTIONS**, Saferworld works with partners across the country to strengthen preparedness and coordination for peaceful, free and fair national polls. The elections pass by mainly peacefully (in contrast to the 2007 polls) – a testament to the collaborative work of civil society, communities and authorities. After approximately two decades of civil society advocacy and activism, the **UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS A GLOBAL ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT)**.

Saferworld begins to look at the impact of the engagement of **'RISING POWERS'** such as Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa in conflict-affected states. Saferworld undertakes a **GENDER AUDIT** of all its work and begins work to mainstream a gender perspective across the organisation. Saferworld's first major programme of work starts in **YEMEN** on 'Amplifying Youth Voices'.

Saferworld publishes its **COMMUNITY SECURITY HANDBOOK** explaining the principles underpinning this approach and the steps involved in planning, implementing, evaluating and improving interventions. The handbook brings together Saferworld's experience and learning of over ten years from a broad range of contexts. Saferworld begins policy work to explore **CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERNATIVES TO MAINSTREAM COUNTER-TERRORISM AND STATEBUILDING APPROACHES**. Saferworld's new strategic plan includes an objective to challenge the **GENDER NORMS** that cause and perpetuate conflict and insecurity – entrenching and mainstreaming the priority of this work across the organisation. The **ARMS TRADE TREATY BECOMES INTERNATIONAL LAW** on 24 December 2014. This is the culmination of 20 years of work and campaigning by Saferworld and wider civil society.



MAIN PHOTOGRAPHS
FRONT COVER: Saferworld works with communities living on either side of the Administrative Boundary Line between Georgia and South Ossetia. © MONICA ELLENA
BACK COVER: Saferworld partner BRAC uses popular theatre performances to raise awareness of social and safety issues in Bangladesh. © THOMAS MARTIN/SAFERWORLD



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Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives.

We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity.

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