

Forum: General Assembly First Committee

Issue: The Question of Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons

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Introduction

States have the right to self-defense. The use of force by States should be carried out in agreement with the Charter of the United Nations and International Humanitarian Law. Yet, according to François Delattre, former Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations in New York and head of France's UN mission, Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), the production of which is a right of states for self-defense, are responsible for the highest number of victims in the world with 90 per cent of conflict casualties and more than 500,000 deaths per year in conflicted and non-conflicted areas.¹ The social and economic costs of the SALW do not limit to the immediate violence, but result in the loss of productivity, the depletion of social and physical capital, the breakdown of basic social services, and the decline in the quality of life.² From the standpoint of development, they produce weak institutions, systemic economic inequalities, exclusion, gender violence, limited education opportunities, unemployment, organized crime, and drug consumption.³

The illicit trade in SALW takes place when SALW traded through official and licit channels are smuggled into illicit networks which frequently benefit from countries with poor or no legislation for arm control. The illicit trading can also benefit from SALW left over in conflicted areas, once the conflict has ended, or because they have been diverted from arsenals with ill-security.

¹ "Human Cost of Arms Trafficking 'Runs Deep', Disarmament Chief Stresses as Security Council Debates Halting Illicit Trade on 'Dark Web'" 18 December 2017 (SC/13126).

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13126.doc.htm>.

² <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-violence/social-and-economic-costs.html>.

³ <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-violence/social-and-economic-costs/impact-on-development.html>.

The illicit trade in SALW takes place mainly in regions afflicted by violence, terrorism, organized crime and armed conflict. Intercontinental trafficking of SALW is only a small part of illicit trade, since large numbers of arms trafficking take only place at the regional level. In addition, illicit smuggling of small quantities of arms can result in accumulation of large quantities.

Definition of Key Terms

Small Arms

For the UN, as defined by the UN ITI document, “‘Small Arms’ are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns”.⁴

Light Weapons

For the UN, as defined by the UN ITI document, “‘Light weapons’ are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include, inter alia, heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 millimetres”.⁵

SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons)

For the UN, as defined by the UN ITI document, “‘Small Arms and Light Weapons’ will mean any man-portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique small arms and light weapons or their replicas”.⁶

Illicit SALW

⁴ United Nations, *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2005.

⁵ United Nations, *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2005.

⁶ United Nations, *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2005.

For the UN, as defined by the UN ITI document, “small arms and light weapons are ‘illicit’ if: (a) They are considered illicit under the law of the State within whose territorial jurisdiction the small arms or light weapon is found; (b) they are transferred in violation of arms embargoes decided by the Security Council in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations; (c) they are not marked in accordance with the provisions of this instrument (the ITI); (d) they are manufactured or assembled without a licence or authorization from the competent authority of the State where the manufacture or assembly takes place; or (e) they are transferred without a licence or authorization by a competent national authority”.⁷

PoA (Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects)

The PoA “is a globally agreed framework addressing a wide spectrum of small arms issues and control measures, which has laid the foundation for action at the national, regional and global levels. It is a central tool for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and for controlling the negative consequences of small arms and light weapons (SALW)”.⁸ It was adopted by all UN member states in 2001. It is a PoA that should be implemented by the Member States and at the regional and international levels. There have been three Review Conferences in 2006, 2012, and 2018, sixth Biennial Meetings of States in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014, and 2016 and two meeting of government experts in 2011 and 2015.⁹ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/programme-of-action/>.

ITI (International Tracing Instrument)

It is a politically binding document adopted by the General Assembly in 08 December 2005 (A/DEC/60/519), which requires unique marking providing the name of the manufacturer, the country of manufacture and the serial number, permitting ready identification by all States of the country of manufacture; and encourage the marking of such additional information as the

⁷ United Nations, *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2005.

⁸ Parker, Sarah and Katherine Green, *A Decade of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Analysis of National Reports*, UNIDIR/2012/2 (New York/Geneva, 2012), p. xvii.

⁹ *Programme of Action, The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons*, UNRCPD, <http://unrcpd.org/conventional-weapons/poa/>.

year of manufacture, weapon type/model and caliber. It allows the countries the prerogative for the particular way of the record keeping of the markings.¹⁰

Marking

The ITI requires that the appropriate markings are applied at the time of manufacture of every SALW; at the time of import; at the time of transfer from government stocks to civilian use; and that SALW in the possession of governments and security forces are marked. It requires manufacturers to develop measures against the removal of these marks.¹¹

Record-Keeping

The PoA and the International Tracing Instrument provide that states undertake to ensure that comprehensive and accurate records are kept on the manufacture, holding and transfer of SALW under their jurisdiction.¹²

Tracing

For the UN, as defined by the UN ITI document, “‘tracing’ is the systematic tracking of illicit small arms and light weapons found or seized on the territory of a State from the point of manufacture or the point of importation through the lines of supply to the point at which they became illicit”.¹³

International Transfer

The PoA provides to establish adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the export, import, transit or retransfer; to establish the illegal trade in SALW within their areas of jurisdiction as criminal offences under their domestic law of SALW; and to identify groups and individuals engaged in the illegal trade and transfer of illicit

¹⁰ United Nations, *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons*. See <https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Firearms/ITI.pdf>.

¹¹ Parker, Sarah and Katherine Green, *A Decade of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Analysis of National Reports*, UNIDIR/2012/2 (New York/Geneva, 2012), p. 48.

¹² Parker, Sarah and Katherine Green, *A Decade of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Analysis of National Reports*, UNIDIR/2012/2 (New York/Geneva, 2012), p. 109.

¹³ United Nations, *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2005.

SALW, and take action under appropriate national law against such groups and individuals.¹⁴ Contrary to the ITI, the PoA is not legally binding.

Arms brokering

The activity of intermediary actors (brokers) who facilitate the trading of arms and weapons. They “find markets, negotiate deals and make logistical arrangements to meet the requirements of buyers, sellers and other relevant actors, such as government officials, financiers and transport agents. Brokers facilitate the transfer of weapons and munitions and related materials in return for a commission fee or other non-pecuniary reward or benefit”.¹⁵ Brokers may be based. The PoA provides the registration of brokers, the licensing of brokering transactions, and the establishment of penalties for illicit brokering activities.¹⁶

Stockpile management and security

The PoA provides to establish appropriate locations for stockpiles; physical security measures; control of access to stocks; inventory management and accounting control; staff training; security, accounting and control of small arms held or transported by operational units or authorized personnel; and procedures and sanctions in the event of theft or loss.¹⁷

ATT (Arms Trade Treaty)

An international treaty that regulates the international trade in conventional arms and seeks to prevent and eradicate illicit trade and diversion of conventional arms by establishing international standards governing arms transfers. The Treaty came into force on 24 December 2014. At this stage the Treaty has a total of 105 States Parties and 130 Signatory States.¹⁸

¹⁴ Parker, Sarah and Katherine Green, A Decade of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Analysis of National Reports, UNIDIR/2012/2 (New York/Geneva, 2012), p. 174.

¹⁵ Wood, “International initiatives”, p. 5.

¹⁶ Parker, Sarah and Katherine Green, A Decade of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Analysis of National Reports, UNIDIR/2012/2 (New York/Geneva, 2012), p. 247.

¹⁷ Parker, Sarah and Katherine Green, A Decade of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Analysis of National Reports, UNIDIR/2012/2 (New York/Geneva, 2012), p. 273.

¹⁸ <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/>. For a summary of the Arms Trade Treaty, see Daryl G. Kimball, "The Arms Trade Treaty At a Glance", Arms Control Association, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/arms_trade_treaty. For the complete text of the Arms Trade Treaty, see https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_English/ATT_English.pdf.

ISACS (International Small Arms Control Standards)

The United Nations developed International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) with international partners that provide clear, practical and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of small arms and light weapons control.¹⁹ ISACS is currently known as MOSAIC.

MOSAIC (Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium)

MOSAIC is a set of voluntary, practical guidance notes in succinct, operational advice. MOSAIC is the result of a decade of coordinated work within the UN system. Modules from the compendium are used in well over half of Member States, assisting authorities around the world to improve their small-arms control measures. MOSAIC translates into practice the objectives of key global agreements aiming to prevent the illicit trade, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. These agreements include the Firearms Protocol supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the PoA, the ITI and the ATT.²⁰

UNROCA (United Nations Register of Conventional Arms)

The UN Register of Conventional Arms (ROCA) is a mechanism of transparency provided by the UN by which Member States report their arms transfers. UNROCA seems to have captured over 90% of the global arms trade. <https://www.unroca.org/>.

NPC (National points of contact)

Are units of the Member States to work as strengthen the exchange of information and international cooperation with the UN and international actors regarding the SALW.²¹

SDG 16.4 (Sustainable Development Goal 16.4)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly to be achieved by the year 2030 designed “to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”. The aim of the goal 16 is to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all

¹⁹ <http://www.smallarmsstandards.org/about-isacs.html>.

²⁰ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/mosaic/>.

²¹ For a list of the NPI, see <https://smallarms.un-arm.org/national-contacts>.

and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. The fourth item of Goal 16 is to “significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime.”

Explanation of the Question

By the end of the 1990s, after intense lobbying activities of groups working on disarmament, the Security Council raised the question of the Illicit Trading in Small Arms,²² since Small Arms were by far the major responsible of casualties in conflicts. In 1997, the UN Panel of Government Experts on Small Arms called attention to the need of marking and tracing arms to counteract their illicit trading. These efforts led to the redaction of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, New York, 31 May 2001. The Protocol was the basis for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9–20 July 2001 (A/CONF.192/15) and was finally adopted as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, usually known as PoA. The main aim of the PoA is to foster the marking, registering and record-keeping of Small Arms and Light Weapons to allow the tracing of their illicit trade. As an answer to the PoA, the UN launched in 2005 the International Tracing Instrument, which is a politically binding document aimed at marking and record-keeping the SALW. In 2013, the UN launched the Arms Trade Treaty regulating the trading of conventional arms, including SALW. The ATT is politically binding for those countries which have ratified, accepted, and approved the treaty, but not for the rest.

The efforts by the international community, the UN and other actors against the illicit trading in SALW are confronted with a number of problems:

- Other than the ITI, the international regulations are not mandatory for countries which have not ratified the international treaties, particularly the ATT. Consequently, legislations for arms control may highly differ from country to country, so that it is relatively easy for illicit brokers to find gaps to partly conduct their activities in countries where they are not illegal. Along these lines, illicit traders can build highly complex societal structures in offshore countries to

²² <https://www.un.org/press/en/2002/SC7554.doc.htm>.

screen their activities. Additionally, security measures for SALW arsenals also differ from country to country and it is easy to divert SALW from them.

- The lobbying activities of the arm industry and of associations for the right to own and bear arms aim at eliminating or limiting legislation on arms trade control and at downgrading the degree of enforcement of legislation from compulsory to soft regulation at different levels: internationally, nationally and regionally.
- Countries with regional interests or with similar ideology to terrorist groups may facilitate and even participate in the illegal trading in SALW in third countries.
- The illicit trading in SALW affects multiple areas: for instance, from trading and industry to development, gender, childhood policies and peacekeeping activities. To face the illicit trading and its consequences, there are multiple institutions involved at different levels, from the international to the regional level. This high degree of complexity strongly hampers the fight against illicit trading in SALW.

Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

Member States and the ratification of the ATT

As of September 2019, there are 105 States Parties that have ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to the treaty, 33 States Signatories that are not yet States Parties and 56 States that have not yet joined the treaty.²³

United States

The United States has announced the intention to withdraw the ATT. It is the main producer and exporter of SALW. It is home to the most important lobby promoting the private ownership of Small Arms, the NRA.

Germany

Germany is the head of the informal Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures (GIS), which organizes side events to the review conferences of the PoA.

²³ For the status of each Member State in relation to the ATT, see <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/treaty-status.html?lang=en>.

Most important countries producing, exporting and importing SALW

According to the Small Arms Survey, the countries which top the ranks in producing SALW are Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Italy, North Korea, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States. Yet these countries may only meet their requirements for internal use, and thus may not be the main exporters.²⁴

According to the Small Arms Survey, currently the main exporters of SALW in alphabetical order are Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United States of America with reported exports worth USD 100 million or more. Between 2001 and 2015, the Survey has documented twelve other governments that have exported USD 100 million or more in small arms at least once: Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Israel, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.²⁵

According to the Small Arms Survey, an analysis of customs data suggests that for the period 2001 to 2014 seven countries, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States—routinely imported SALW worth USD 100 million or more per year. Customs data also suggests that thirteen additional countries imported at least USD 100 million or more in at least one year, between 2001 and 2015: Cyprus, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Spain, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates.²⁶

Country Profiles

Member States have committed to send national reports every two years on their implementation of the PoA. For a database of the reports on the actions implemented by Member States, please refer to <http://www.un-arm.org/SA/SmallArms/CountryProfiles.aspx>.

Control Arms Coalition

The international alliance of non-governmental organizations working for strong international arms controls.

²⁴ <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/producers/industrial-production.html>.

²⁵ <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/transfers/exporters.html>.

²⁶ <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/transfers/importers.html>.

Arms Control Association

The Arms Control Association, founded in 1971, is a national nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to promoting public understanding of and support for effective arms control policies.²⁷ <https://www.armscontrol.org/>.

Small Arms Survey

Based in Geneva and Washington, the Small Arms Survey provides expertise on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. The Small Arms Survey generates evidence-based, impartial, and policy-relevant knowledge and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and civil society. The Survey is a project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. The main objective is to reduce the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their impacts.²⁸ <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/>.

IPB (International Peace Bureau)

Based in Geneva, the main aim of IPB centers on Disarmament for Sustainable Development. IPB aims at reducing the funding for the military sector, so that significant amounts of money could be released for social projects, which could lead to the fulfillment of real human needs and the protection of the environment. IPB supports a range of disarmament campaigns and supply data on the economic dimensions of weapons and conflicts. It gathers 300 member organizations in 70 countries, together with individual members.²⁹ <http://www.ipb.org/>.

SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute)

Based in Stockholm, SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.³⁰ <https://www.sipri.org/>.

²⁷ <https://www.armscontrol.org/about>.

²⁸ <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/about-us/mission.html>.

²⁹ <http://www.ipb.org/who-we-are/>.

³⁰ <https://www.sipri.org/about>.

NGOCDPS (Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security)

Founded in 1973, it provides services and facilities to hundreds of citizens' groups concerned with the peace and disarmament activities of the United Nations.³¹

<https://ngocdps.wordpress.com/>.

CAAT (Campaign Against Arms Trade)

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) is a UK-based organisation working to end the international arms trade. It hosts the Political Influence Browser which is a Database of the lobbying activities of the arms and security companies.³²

<https://www.caat.org.uk/resources/influence>.

Other Arms Trade Related Organizations

The Federation of American Scientist provides the following list of Arms Trade Related Organizations: <https://fas.org/asmp/resources/outres.html>.

NRA (National Rifle Association)

There are multiple associations and lobbies which promote the right to own and bear arms worldwide. The most important one is the NRA. Formed in 1871, NRA is the major political lobby and the foremost defender in the US of Second Amendment rights, which grants the people of the US the right to keep and bear arms. It is the premier firearms education organization in the world.³³

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 19, 1995	The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Goods and Technologies, which voluntarily bound 41 countries to control their arms trading through their export policies.

³¹ <https://ngocdps.wordpress.com/>.

³² <https://www.caat.org.uk/about>.

³³ <https://home.nra.org/about-the-nra/>.

May 31, 2001	<p>Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. New York, 31 May 2001.</p>
June 8, 2001	<p>Resolution 55/255 adopted by the UN General Assembly “Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime” (A/RES/55/255) as Annex III of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000.</p>
July 9–20, 2001	<p>United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9–20 July 2001 (A/CONF.192/15). Adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.</p>
December 8, 2005	<p>Resolution 60/68 adopted by the UN General Assembly “Addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation”.</p>
December 8, 2005	<p>Adoption of the International instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons, 08 December 2005 (A/DEC/60/519).</p>
June 26–July 7, 2006	<p>First United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 25 June to 7 July 2006.</p>
August 27– September 7, 2012	<p>Second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 27 August to 7 September 2012 (RevCon2).</p>
July 2012	<p>First UN conference convened to negotiate the ATT.</p>
March 2013	<p>Second UN conference convened to negotiate the ATT.</p>

April 2, 2013	UN General Assembly endorsed the ATT.
June 3, 2013	Treaty opened for signature by Member States.
December 24, 2014	Entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty.
June 18–29, 2018	Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 18 to 29 June 2018 (RevCon3).

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

UNODA (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs)

Established in January 1998 as the Department for Disarmament Affairs and renamed in 2007 as United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), UNODA “provides substantive and organizational support for norm-setting in the area of disarmament through the work of the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and other bodies. It fosters disarmament measures through dialogue, transparency and confidence-building on military matters, and encourages regional disarmament efforts; these include the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and regional forums”.³⁴ <https://www.un.org/disarmament/>.

UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the prevention of illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons

“By its resolution 60/81 of 8 December 2005, the General Assembly decided to establish a group of governmental experts, appointed by the Secretary-General on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons, and requested the Secretary-General to submit the report on the outcome of its study to the General

³⁴ United Nations, “About us”, *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)*. <https://www.un.org/disarmament/about/>. <Accessed December 1, 2019>.

Assembly at its sixty second session".³⁵ The member states report to the GGE and the GGE report to the secretary general and the GA.

UNIDIR (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research)

Founded in 1980, UNIDIR is an UN autonomous institution that conducts independent research on disarmament and related problems; particularly international security issues.³⁶
<https://www.unidir.org/>.

UN CASA (UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms)

CASA is the small arms coordination mechanism within the UN. CASA is able to frame the small arms issue in all its aspects, making use of development, crime, terrorism, human rights, gender, youth, health and humanitarian insights. Collaborative initiatives under CASA include fact-finding missions, capacity-building projects, workshops and technical assistance to support Member States in the implementation of the Programme of Action, the International Tracing Instrument and the UN Firearms Protocol. Recently, CASA has decided to embark upon developing international standards for small arms control. <http://www.un-arm.org/PoA/ISS/CASA.aspx>.

UN Units which have participated in the development of the ISACS/MOSAIC standards³⁷

- CTED - Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
- DESA - Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- DPA - Department of Political Affairs
- DPI - Department of Public Information
- DPKO - Department of Peacekeeping Operations
- ICAO - International Civil Aviation Organization
- OCHA - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- ODA - Office for Disarmament Affairs
- ODC - Office on Drugs and Crime
- OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- OSAA - Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

³⁵ United Nations, *Report of the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/81 to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons*, 30 August 2007 (A/62/163).

³⁶ <https://www.unidir.org/about>.

³⁷ <http://www.smallarmsstandards.org/partners.html>.

- OSAPG - Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide
- OSRSG/CAAC - Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
- OSRSG/VAC - Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
- UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme
- UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
- UNIDIR - United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
- UNMAS - United Nations Mine Action Service
- UN Women - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
- WHO - World Health Organization

Reports of the Conferences to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action

The conferences to review the progress made in the implementation of the PoA join representatives every six years who present national policies and strategies adopted to eliminate illegal circulation of firearms or describe the consequences of illegal trade. The final reports and conclusions of the three conferences held to date are the following:

- [RevCon3 2018.](#)
- [RevCon2 2012.](#)
- [RevCon1 2006.](#)

Reports of the Biennial Meetings of States on the Implementation of the Programme of Action

The Biennial Meetings of States (BMS) on the Implementation of the Programme of Action constitute opportunities for an exchange of information on the implementation of the PoA among States, regional and international organizations, and civil society. The BMSs highlight

successes and best practices in controlling and curbing the spread of illicit small arms and light weapons and identify areas where greater attention is needed. The reports of the Biennial Meetings of States on the Implementation of the Programme of Action held up to date are the following:

- [BMS6 2016](#).
- [BMS5 2014](#).
- [BMS4 2010](#).
- [BMS3 2008](#).
- [BMS2 2005](#).
- [BMS1 2003](#).

Reports of the Meetings of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action

The Meetings of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action join participants to exchange information, share experiences, discuss good practices, lessons learned and practical measures on national marking, record-keeping, and tracing policies. Participants also exchange information and share experiences regarding regional and international cooperation in support of the full implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. To date, there have been two Meetings of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the PoA with the following reports:

- [MGE2 2015](#).
- [MGE1 2011](#).

Most important UN Conferences, UNGA Resolutions and Decisions and Treaties

- Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2001), 8 June 2001 (A/RES/55/255).
- United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9–20 July 2001 (A/CONF.192/15). In this conference the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, was adopted.

- Decision 60/519 for the adoption of the International instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons, 08 December 2005 (A/DEC/60/519).
- Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 02 April 2013 (A/RES/67/234 B) by which the Arms Trade Treaty is adopted.

UNGA Resolutions and Decisions on trading in SALW and conventional weapons, which are also of application for SALW:

- Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them, 10 December 1996 (A/RES/51/45[L]) – https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/230995/files/A_RES_51_45%5EL%5E-EN.pdf <accessed 01 December 2019>.
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Possible Solutions

In the last twenty years, the international community has advanced greatly in the fight against illicit trading in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The UN has launched useful instruments in this regard, despite the high complexity of all the UN agents involved. However, the different degrees in the enforcement of legislations dealing with arms, money laundering, and trading in general from country to country hamper the success of these measures. Possible solutions should foster a higher enforcement of the current and future legislation dealing with illicit trading in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Fostering the use of the available common standards for marking Small Arms and Light Weapons as well as enforcing the use of a common international database for keeping records of the marked SALW will help the quick traceability of the illicit trading in SALW.

Other measures against illicit trading in SALW may address the accessibility to Small Arms and Light Weapons. One important source for illicit trading are SALW stock-piled in post conflict situations. Enforcing the destruction of SALW stock-piled after conflicts would prevent to be illicitly diverted to new conflicts, organized crime or terrorist networks. In addition, limiting and profiling the accessibility by individuals to legal SALW in countries allowing the right to bear arms would prevent the easiness with which these SALW are diverted to illicit trading networks.

The measures implemented to mark, keep records and trace small arms have proven very successful. However, these measures are not implemented to the same degree for ammunition, which is as important as SALW. Other than the information about the caliber of the ammunition, relevant information to trace ammunition is only marked in the cartridges and ammunition boxes, but not in the ammunition itself, although there are laser techniques available to mark ammunition. Enforcing an internationally binding instrument similar to ITI for ammunition and providing international standards for marking the ammunition and keeping the records would be very useful to trace the networks smuggling the ammunition necessary for SALW.

The illicit trading in SALW has an important impact on the development of societies and their institutions. Conversely, development and strong national, regional and international institutions have an impact on diminishing conflicts and organized crime networks. Thus, any measure to strengthen development, and particularly sustainable development and gender equality will have a positive impact on curving down the illicit trading in SALW.

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