

Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee

Topic: The Question of Combating the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Conflict Zones

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Introduction

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons has been one of the major threats to global peace and the most persistent challenge in armed conflict. According to the United Nations, small arms refer to weapons designed mainly for individual use, such as inter alia, revolvers, rifles, and carbines, and light weapons refer to heavier arms, designed mainly for crews with two to three people, including portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, and portable launchers of anti-tank missiles. Despite their smaller size, small arms and light weapons are responsible for the vast majority of conflict-related deaths and injuries, as well as displacement, food insecurity, and sexual violence cases due to their ease of transporting, handling, operating, and affording, which makes them attractive to violent non-state actors, such as criminals or terrorist organizations.

Recognizing the significant impacts of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, the international community, as well as the United Nations, has taken steps to combat the issue and prevent further proliferation, adopting instruments such as the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) and treaties such as the International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). With these instruments and treaties, as well as the nation-wide organizations, the international community is putting in efforts to foster regulations, enhance transparency, and overall combat the issue. However, the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons is an ongoing, untackled problem, especially in conflict zones, where it is politically unstable, and the use of small arms and light weapons is hardly controlled. Therefore, combating the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in conflict zones should be addressed,

especially considering that it has a high risk of aggravating violence, prolonging conflicts, and abusing human rights.

Definition of Key Terms

Small Arms and Light Weapons(SALW)

The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons(ITI), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution A/60/88(2005) defines small arms and light weapons as 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.

Small arms are defined as portable firearms that use projectiles with a diameter less than .50 caliber(12.7 millimeters) or .60caliber(15 millimeters). They are weapons typically intended for individual use, and they include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns.

Light weapons are defined as weapons that can range up to the caliber of 100 millimeters. They are weapons primarily designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, and they include: 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 missiles and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars.

Illicit Trade

Illicit trade refers to the transaction of goods, such as but not limited to small arms and light weapons, that violate legislative or regulatory frameworks at any stage, including their production, transportation, certification, or sale.

Conflict Zones

Conflict zones refer to areas, regions, or countries experiencing ongoing violence, armed conflict, civil unrest, or severe political instability. These areas often suffer from damage of military

actions, including loss of life, displacement, economic collapse, and food insecurity, being in environments with violent clashes, deteriorated security conditions, and insufficient essential services.

Diversion

Diversion has been defined by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research(UNIDIR) as the rerouting and/or appropriation of conventional arms or related items contrary to relevant national and/or international law, leading to a potential change in the effective control or ownership of the arms. Different forms of diversion include looting following State collapse, battlefield capture, leakage from government or civilian stockpiles due to ineffective physical security and stockpile management, arms embargo violations, and State-sponsored diversion.

Marking

Markings on small arms or light weapons typically include the name of the manufacturer, country of manufacture, year of manufacture, weapon type or model, caliber, and a serial number, facilitating clear identification by all states. Geometric symbols with alphanumeric codes may also be used as an alternative to listing all the details.

Tracing

Tracing refers to the systematic tracking of illicit small arms and light weapons to determine the stage they were diverted to the illicit realm, including the stage of manufacture and importation.

Refugee

The UNHCR(Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) has defined refugees as people forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country, and who are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence, or serious public disorder. Currently, there are approximately 40 million refugees globally due to various conflicts. The usage of small arms and light weapons significantly contributes to the refugee flows nowadays.

Internally Displaced People

Internally displaced people is defined by the European Union as someone who has been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. At the end of 2024, 83.4 million internally displaced people were recorded, which marked a new high.

Non-State Armed Groups(NSAGs)

Non-state armed groups, also known as the armed non-state actors, are defined as violent non-state actors that are distinct from the armed and security forces of a State, who operate without authorization to achieve diverse objectives, including the political and ideological aspects.

Brokering

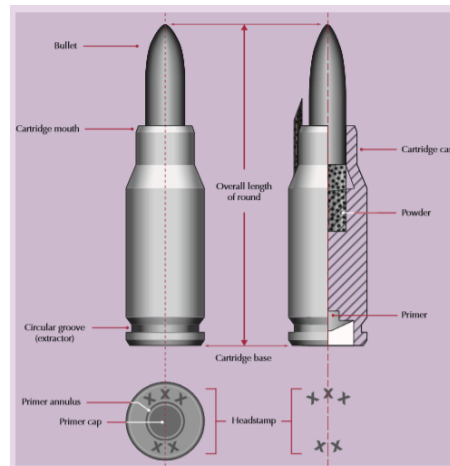
Brokering is an action of arranging transactions of goods, such as but not limited to small arms and light weapons, in return for any aspect of benefit, including the financial aspect.

Arms Embargo

An arms embargo is a restriction imposed by the United Nations Security Council that requires nations to stop any kind of supply, sale, or transfer of arms. Detailed clause is as follows: Prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer, to these [the listed] individuals, groups, undertakings and entities from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materiel of all types including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned and technical advice, assistance, or training related to military activities.

Ammunition

The United Nations defines ammunition as the complete round/cartridge or its components, including bullets or projectiles, cartridge cases, primers/caps and propellants that are used in any small arm or light weapon. Not only firearms themselves, but also the illicit trade of components such as ammunition, is a serious problem regarding this issue.



Ammunition (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes)

Background Information

Past Actions

Actions to combat the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons have been taken since the mid-1990s, as the global community and the United Nations have realized their significant effect on international peace. Resolutions have been adopted, starting from the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/50/70B in 1995, and regular meetings have been held by the Security Council regarding the issue. In 2001, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) was adopted at the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which aimed to both address the current impacts of SALW, as well as preventing proliferations by laying guidelines of national legislation and fostering controls. Also in 2005, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument, ITI), was adopted by the General Assembly on 8 December 2005 to ensure nations fulfill the guidelines of the Programme of Action and help nations trace illicit weapons. The adoption of the International Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2013 made further progress regarding establishing legally binding international standards of arms trade. Moreover, agencies such as the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) have supported nations with resources and expertise, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported the nations, especially affected by conflict zones using small arms and light weapons, with its recovery programs.

At the national level, most nations have national legislation regarding firearms that covers small arms and light weapons. Specifically, in conflict zones, numerous governments have collected illicitly owned firearms after their conflict or civil war has ended. For instance, the Nicaraguan government, following the end of their civil war, conducted a gun buy-back programme where cash, food, and microenterprise programs were provided in exchange for weapons. It was done with their Special Disarmament Brigade (BED), with the support of the Organization of American States and the Italian government, and as a result, collected and destroyed approximately 142,000 weapons. Not only Nicaragua, but also nations including Cambodia, Croatia, and South Africa have conducted similar programmes.

Method of Diversion

The diversion of small arms and light weapons from legal to illegal markets occurs with various methods, and those include illegal manufacture, illegal resale, and theft.

- Illegal manufacture

Manufacturing small arms and light weapons illicitly from the beginning constitutes a small proportion of the global illicit trade of SALW; however, it still often happens in certain countries. For instance, in the case of South Africa, approximately 15% of SALW seized in 1998 were determined to be homemade, and in Australia, domestic assembly with imported components has been identified as a major source of illicit weapons.

- Illegal resale

Many small arms and light weapons are legally purchased and then resold to second owners of individuals prohibited, as secondary markets have weaker regulations. In the United States, followed by Canada and Mexico, straw purchases, where firearms are bought legally but resold illegally, are one of the primary routes of entering the illicit market. Unregulated or less regulated events, such as gun shows, are known to be one of the major sources of supply of illicit SALW.

- Theft

The United Nations International Study on Firearm Regulation had reported that more than 100,000 small arms and light weapons are lost or stolen annually in participating states. The United States has reported 12,000 stolen firearms in 9 months, and South Africa has reported that 17,500 firearms are stolen annually. Stolen weapons are known to frequently cross borders, as in the case of Uruguay, with 156 9mm pistols and 15 machine guns that had been stolen in Poland being observed.

Consequences of Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons on Conflict Zones

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons has had significant consequences in conflict zones, with common impacts such as deaths, displacement, prolonged conflict, hindered development, food insecurity, and economic disruption, due to the ease of operating and transporting them.

- Deaths, Displacement, Prolonged Conflict

The supply of illicit small arms and light weapons often prolongs and intensifies conflicts, as it provides non-state actors with easy access to weaponry. For instance, the persistence of wars in Africa is known to be closely linked to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, with numerous studies stating that most modern conflicts, driven by international disputes, rebel groups, mercenary forces, and armed gangs, operate with small arms and light weapons as it is cheap, portable and easily mastered by untrained combatants even including childrens. It has also been highlighted that out of the 49 major conflicts that occurred since 1990, 46 were fought using light weapons and have resulted in more than 4 million deaths, 20 million refugees, and 24 million internally displaced people.

- Hindered Development, Economic Disruption, Food Insecurity

Prolonged conflict by small arms and light weapons often destabilizes governance, undermines economic stability, and hinders development. With small arms and light weapons that increase violence and crimes, the aftermath of the conflict is more severe, leading communities to often suffer from poverty, reduced access to education and healthcare, and further economic disruption. Moreover, agricultural production is frequently disrupted, which worsens local economies, food insecurity, and famine conditions.

Trafficking Routes

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as a global phenomenon, manifests across many continents. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) statistics have shown that North America is the main point of departure of seized firearms, followed by Europe and Western Asia, while Central and South America and Western Asia account for up to 80% of trafficking destinations. There is a vast illegal trade within the noted subregions, with land routes in most cases. Maritime routes, though less common, tend to service large-scale shipments. The fact that sea-based seizures account for only 6% of total customs cases but account for 33% of all seized firearms indicates the possibility of maritime trafficking of a massive amount.

More specifically, data from the World Customs Organization has highlighted the concrete trafficking routes and their frequency. In total, 338 trafficking routes were identified in 2021, with the most frequent routing of an unknown source country to the United States, making up 50% of all seizures. Other frequent routes include: Canada to the United States with 21% of all seizures, United States to Mexico with 18%, Hong Kong to the United States with 56 seizures, Singapore to Saudi Arabia with 54, Netherlands to Saudi Arabia with 48, China to Saudi Arabia with 30, United States to the United Arab Emirates with 27, Oman to the United Arab Emirates with 24, and Jordan to Saudi Arabia with 21.



Weapons and ammunition trafficking routes (World Customs Organization, 2021)

Online Markets of SALW

Recently, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has expanded into the digital sphere or the online market, mostly through the dark web. The dark web is defined by the United Nations as the part of the internet not searchable by traditional search engines and hidden behind anonymity software. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) has noted that these markets operate either as cryptomarkets or vendor shops. A cryptomarket is where multiple sellers, also known as vendors, are brought together, with separate administrators managing the market. Third-party services, including escrow, are provided to customers, and cryptocurrencies are used. Vendor shops are also known as single-vendor markets, where an individual seller directly sells their products to customers. These marketplaces offer mostly firearms, most commonly pistols, rifles, and submachine guns. Digital products, such as manuals on manufacturing firearms at home and 3D models, also for home-based printing, are also sold frequently. The scale of these online marketplaces is uncertain and is predicted to be limited compared to the traditional offline marketplaces; however, the fact that it

offers a wider variety of types and better quality products, and that it makes current barriers, including cross-border cooperation, meaningless, makes the dark web a significant threat.

New Technologies in SALW

Recent technological developments have brought several significant changes in the manufacturing and management of small arms and light weapons. New technologies include the use of non-traditional materials, as well as more effective technologies for marking and tracing.

- **Manufacturing**

The manufacturing aspect of small arms and light weapons has been influenced a lot by the emergence of recent new technologies. For instance, while most weapons were produced from steel with some wooden or bakelite parts, many of them are now replaced with polymers. While there are positive aspects of using polymers, such as reduced weight and cost, new challenges, such as easily erased markings, are being faced. Furthermore, the modularity in design has been rising, which allows interchangeable parts to be in a single rifle. However, this also contains a negative aspect of creating difficulties for marking and identification, as multiple serial numbers on different parts can appear on the same weapon. Another huge development is the advent of 3D printing, which poses one of the biggest threats among new technologies, as it allows criminals to manufacture illicit SALW at low cost, with low barrier, but high quality.

- **Management**

Technologies in marking, record-keeping, and tracing have also developed and are improving how the management of small arms and light weapons is being done. For instance, the traditional method of stamping serial numbers on steel has been replaced by laser engraving, which is more suitable for polymers and very small surfaces, though there is a minor drawback that erased markings are harder to recover. Also, microstamping, which allows for smaller but high-precision marks, has also been used, as this can prevent the possible erasure of markings by criminals and further strengthen identification by additionally micromarking the components. Moreover, there are automatic identification systems such as barcodes, radio frequency identification, and biometrics, which can be used for enhancing national stockpile management. However, this also contains a minor drawback, in that it has limited use for cross-border identification.

Regulations on Brokers

The international trade of small arms and light weapons, as well as ammunition, has increasingly involved and used the services of specialist intermediaries, private agents, and dealers. Even the States and the State-owned entities have been using related services for the purpose of legitimate self-defense and law enforcement. However, most States have had little or no regulation on brokering or intermediation activities of small arms and light weapons, which created regulatory gaps leading to circumvention of export controls, violations of United Nations arms embargoes, and the diversion of arms to the illicit market.

Considering the situation, the United Nations Member States had agreed that brokering activities of arms should be taken under the control of national regulations, and with this, the UN Firearms Protocol, and the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects(PoA), which first suggested to establish national regulations of brokering, were adopted. Following these instruments, the Arms Trade Treaty was also adopted, which includes contents such as Article 10, requiring each State Party to : take measures, pursuant to its national laws, to regulate brokering taking place under its jurisdiction for conventional arms covered under Article 2(1).

However, despite these frameworks, the regulatory gaps still remain. For instance, the regulations for brokering of ammunition, parts, and components remain optional, and furthermore, according to the national reports on PoA implementation, out of 82 reports of regulations submitted, only 65 required licenses and 60 required broker registration.

Links Between SALW and Transnational Organized Crime

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons is closely linked to various transnational organized crimes, with weapons serving as both tools and commodities. They are often intertwined with drug trafficking, human trafficking, and smuggling, as they have similar routes, actors, and methods.

- Drug Trafficking

Among various transnational organized crimes linked to SALW, drug trafficking stands as the most deeply connected crime. Drug trafficking groups frequently use firearms not just as a tool for protection or intimidation but also as commodities in exchange for drugs. The UNODC emphasizes that while drug markets are international in scope and firearms trafficking tends to be more regional, they encounter through similar routes or by middlemen. Illicit weapons in drug flows can significantly increase violence and may further lead to armed conflict between rivaling actors or government authorities, which would weaken public security.

- Corruption in governments and financing of armed factions

The United Nations has identified corruption within government as one of the major enablers of the diversion of small arms and light weapons into conflict zones. Government corruption often leads to bribery, embezzlement, and theft due to weak oversight. This results in state-held SALW being diverted into the illicit market, which fuels armed violence in conflict zones. The United States Department of State, for instance, has noted that the Iranian government has provided financial, military, and fighter recruitment support to armed groups, including the Assad regime, Hamas, Hizballah, and the Houthis, which contributed to prolonged civil war, associated abuses, and the deaths of thousands of civilians during the year in Syria, Israel, Iraq and Yemen. Not only diversion of arms, but also financial aspects, including cash smuggling or the use of unofficial money, are sustaining the supply chain of such weapons. Despite the regulations imposed by the Security Council regarding the Iranian government's arms transfers, illicit trade continues, highlighting the limitations of enforcement in corrupt governments.

Sustainable Development Goals 16.4: Combat Organized Crime and Illicit Financial and Arms Flows

Sustainable Development Goal 16.4 aims to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime by 2030. It is under the column of SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Actions to achieve the goal, including legislative and policy development, strengthening international cooperation, and collecting, monitoring, and exchanging data regarding illicit arms flows, have been proposed and taken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Possible solutions

Strengthening Customs Control

Strengthening customs control is one of the most important measures to combat the illicit trade of SALW, as most of the illicit trade occurs through land routes and borders. To do so, developing inspection technologies and training personnel would be required. Cooperation with the World Customs Organization(WCO) would be supportive, as it has supported the initiatives of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects(PoA) and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument, ITI) with projects such as European Union - League of Arab States(EU-LAS) project.

Marking and Tracing

Implementing marking and tracing systems is essential to prevent illicit trade and diversion of small arms and light weapons into illicit markets. The United Nations' instruments, such as the International Tracing Instrument(ITI), provide guidelines for markings and tracing of SALW. Establishing a specific national marking system, then sharing it with the international database, would further make tracing and recovery of illicit SALW less complicated. An effective marking and tracing system will allow international societies to track back to the point of diversion, and will eventually reduce the amount of SALW used by the armed groups in conflict zones.

Awareness Campaigns

Public awareness campaigns play a crucial role in combating the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, especially in post-conflict zones. These campaigns can encourage civilians to hand over firearms by informing them of the dangers of possessing and trading arms illicitly. For instance, in Sierra Leone, public awareness campaigns combined with voluntary disarmament in exchange for incentives have helped reduce the illicit SALW trade and raised public understanding regarding the dangers of illicit SALW. Numerous awareness campaigns often cooperate with civil society organizations to better promote the contents.

International Cooperation

As the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons transcends borders, international cooperation is needed. Providing assistance in aspects including technical and financial would help build an effective national marking, tracing, and record-keeping system, and would further strengthen the international system. Such cooperation could extend to the developing and transferring of advanced tracing technologies, ensuring all states are equipped with such tools, and as a result, interdict illicit arms flows.

Collection Programs

Collection programs are an effective solution, frequently used especially in post-conflict zones, that can reduce the number of illicit small arms and light weapons remaining and circulating in society. Collection programs are usually conducted by encouraging civilians to return their firearms voluntarily, in exchange for incentives including food and money. Many countries, including Nicaragua, Cambodia, Croatia, and South Africa, have successfully conducted these programs, and have resulted in significantly lowered weapons remaining in society as an aftermath of conflict, and have enhanced long-term stability. Various types of collection programs include Door-to-door collection, Weapons/Arms for Development, Tools for Arms, Goods for Guns, Exchanging weapons for cash (buy-back), and Weapons in exchange for development (WED, WfD).

Developing Technologies

Developing technologies will also play a contributing role in addressing the issue of illicit small arms and light weapons. For instance, advanced marking and tracing systems such as laser engraving and micro stamping, as proposed by the United Nations, would enhance the traceability and prevent the diversion of SALW. Moreover, developing the technologies regarding digital file tracing or digital rights management would prevent the spread of 3D printing manuals or CAD files, which will curb home-based weapon manufacturing.

Major parties involved

United States of America

The United States has one of the highest rates of civilian gun ownership in the world, with 120 firearms for every 100 people, and as such, has large numbers of SALW trafficked. However, the United States of America has demonstrated strong leadership in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by developing laws and regulations and providing assistance to countries in need in various aspects, including financial and technical support.

Regarding laws and regulations, the United States has a wide range of laws and regulations that cover the whole lifecycle of SALW from production to possession, such as the Gun Control Act, the National Firearms Act, the Arms Export Control Act, and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations.

In the assistance aspect, the United States has been providing both financial and technical assistance to those countries in need. For instance, as of 2006, it has provided over \$27 million in assistance to help destroy 900,000 small arms and light weapons and over 80 million pieces of ammunition in 25 countries, and has destroyed over 18,600 Man-portable air-defense systems(MANPADS) in 17 countries. Technical assistance was also offered for the development of stronger export and import control and related border security systems, through programs such as Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS), where training and equipment were provided.

Russian Federation

Russia plays an important role in the issue of small arms and light weapons, being one of the largest producers and exporters. Domestically, the possession of firearms is regulated but not prohibited, with approximately 3.2 million gun owners estimated according to the study of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, with the majority being legally registered. However, the issue of the illicit trade of SALW has been long-lasting, with the police in Moscow confiscating around 1000 guns per month in 1997, which were held without the required documentation. Therefore, Russia has been putting in efforts regarding the enforcement of legal frameworks, regulating the production and export of small arms and light weapons, especially strictly controlling deliveries using a licensing system. As one of the member states of the PoA(Programme of

Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects), it has proposed measures including strictly regulating brokering activities possessing relevant technologies, and prohibiting the re-export of imported arms.

People's Republic of China

China is also one of the leading countries in the production of small arms and light weapons. Illicit firearms transfer to the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, has been repeatedly seized by UNODC. The Chinese government does acknowledge the impacts caused by the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, and therefore has taken steps to adopt and strengthen strict laws and regulations for the whole lifecycle of SALW, including manufacturing, usage, and trafficking. It has also been implemented in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects (PoA).

Ukraine

Ukraine is a case where the aftermath of the conflict may lead to diversion and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. Due to the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, a large amount of firearms has been supplied by allied countries for Ukraine's defense, and while these are legally sanctioned, concerns of diversion have been raised. Organizations, including the OSCE(Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and the Small Arms Survey, and nations such as the United States have been actively supporting Ukraine by suggesting a plan to reduce diversion, and Ukraine is also putting in effort to create and foster strict regulations regarding firearms.

Syrian Arab Republic

Due to the Syrian civil war, a large number of SALW, both legal and illegal, have entered Syria, and as a result, have led to one of the most significant illicit small arms and light weapons markets being created. Routes included land borders of neighboring countries, such as Turkey, and maritime routes. Multiple organizations, including the Small Arms Survey, have reported that legal weapons provided often got diverted by terrorist organizations such as ISIS.

Republic of South Sudan

Due to decades of civil war, South Sudan has also been affected by the illicit small arms and light weapons trade, with its weak governance. Small Arms Survey has estimated that between 232,000-601,000 illicit arms were circulating in South Sudan in 2016, and higher numbers were estimated in rebel-held areas, as can be seen from the community security assessments conducted in 2017, concluding that 80% of households owned at least one firearm in Rumbek and Kuajok. Seeing the situation, an arms embargo was imposed by the United Nations Security Council; however, it is being violated, as mentioned in the 2025 Security Council report, that modern Turkish-made rifles with scopes from civilians and cattle keepers were seized in late 2024.

Republic of Yemen

Yemen also suffers from the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, as it has also gone through its civil war. The number of small arms in Yemen is estimated between 6 million to 9 million, with the majority being assault rifles from the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China. Small arms and light weapons are not regularly produced in Yemen, and are produced in small amounts, even if they are produced. Most of the small arms and light weapons in Yemen are known to be imported, as they have weak borders and fragile regulations.

Republic of Turkey

Turkey plays an important role as both the source country and the trafficking hub of small arms and light weapons. The location of Turkey, at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, and neighboring conflict regions such as Syria and Libya, is one of the main reasons for its close relationship to illicit SALW. Turkey has recognized the urgency of the issue and has supported international initiatives by the United Nations, and has been working to foster its regulations and encourage international cooperation.

Timeline Of Events

Date	Description of Event
<i>A/RES/50/70B</i> , 15 January 1996	UN General Assembly resolution, <i>A/RES/50/70B</i> , is the first resolution adopted under the topic of combating illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in conflict zones.
<i>First Security Council Resolution</i> , 19 November 1998	The Security Council first addresses the issue of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in conflict zones.
<i>Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA)</i> , July 2001	The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) was adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It aims to address the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons.
<i>International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument, ITI)</i> , 8 December 2005	The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument, ITI), was adopted by the General Assembly. It is an international instrument for cooperation in weapon tracing.
<i>Syrian Civil War</i> , 15 March 2011	The Syrian Civil War is a historically long-lasting conflict between Sunni and Shia.
<i>International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)</i> , 2 April 2013	The International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was adopted with 154 in favor, 3 against, of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, and Syria, and 23 abstentions. It is an international treaty that aims to regulate and

	establish standards for the international trade in conventional arms, as well as to prevent the illicit trade and diversion within the arms trade.
<i>South Sudanese Civil War</i> , 15 December 2013	The South Sudanese Civil War was caused by the conflict due to the political and ethnic division between the government forces and anti-government forces.
<i>Yemeni Civil War</i> , 16 September 2014	Along with other civil wars caused in African States, the Yemeni Civil War was also caused by the conflict between the Sunni and Shia, with South Yemen believing the Sunni and North Yemen believing the Shia.
<i>The Adoption of SDGs 16.4</i> , September 2015	The United Nations adopted SDGs 16.4: Combat Organized Crime and Illicit Financial and Arms Flows.
<i>Invasion of Russia into Ukraine</i> , 24 February 2022	With its long-lasting conflict and Ukraine's attempt to join NATO, in February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine.
<i>Sudanese Civil War</i> , April 2023	The conflict in Sudan erupted due to the ethnic, regional, and economic difference between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

UN Involvement, Resolutions, Treaties and Events

UN Involvement

The United Nations' involvement in combating illicit trade of small arms and light weapons have been active, with policy-making organs such as the General Assembly annually adopting resolutions under the topics including “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” and “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them”, and Security Council addressing the issue from 1999 with numerous resolutions and reports. Internal agencies such as the CASA(United Nations Coordinating Actions on Small Arms) has been providing related assistance, along with instruments including the PoA(Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects) and ITI(International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument)) being adopted. Moreover, guidelines such as the MOSAIC(Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium), supporting the policymakers of States regarding small arms, are provided, and funding facilities such as the SALIENT(Saving Lives Entity) and UNSCAR(United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation) have been offering financial assistance to tackle violence with illicit small arms and light weapons.

UN Resolutions

- Resolution 2616, 22 December 2021 (S/RES/2616)
- The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, 6 December 2023 (A/RES/78/46)
- The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, 15 December 2022 (A/RES/77/71)

UN Treaties

- The International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), adopted on 2 April 2013, is an international treaty that aims to regulate and establish standards for the international trade in conventional arms, as well as to prevent the illicit trade and diversion within the arms trade.

UN Instruments

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

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted at the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, is an international instrument aiming to address the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons, as well as to prevent their further proliferation. The member states of the Programme of Action undertake numerous actions in cooperation, including developing, adopting, and strengthening national and transfer controls on SALW, destroying weapons that have been confiscated, enhancing international cooperation to improve tracing capabilities, participating in regular conferences, and submitting national reports, which are used to reform the legislation, systems, and current efforts regarding the public awareness.

- International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument, ITI)

The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument, ITI), adopted by the General Assembly on 8 December 2005, is an international instrument for cooperation in weapon tracing. This instrument, under the Programme of Action, ensures that all weapons contain essential details in their marking, fulfilling the guidelines of the PoA.

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