

# Research Report

---

## GA I – International Security and Disarmament Prevention of Illegal Trade of Small Arms Weapons Research Report

MUNISH '11



Please think about the environment and do not print this research report unless absolutely necessary.

<b>Forum</b>	GA1
<b>Issue:</b>	Prevention of illegal trade of small arms weapons
<b>Student Officer:</b>	Anna Stoelinga
<b>Position:</b>	Deputy President

---

## Introduction

Due to the quickly growing amounts of small arms, civil wars could be prolonged, the number of civilian conflicts severely increases and the development and rebuilding of countries is interrupted when a conflict has ended. Moreover, annually all small arms cause an estimated 500.000 deaths, of which 40% is homicide or suicide. This non-conflict armed violence is particularly threatening to our society as human rights are also violated.

The fact that small arms weapons are mostly part of an illicit trade systems (arms trafficking), makes it very difficult to determine the amounts of arms circulating around the world, although estimates predict that some \$2-10 billion a year is spent illegally on small arms. This illicit trade system accounts for a shocking 41% of all trade in arms.

The United Nations have been tackling this issue for several years, but as long as no proper solution is found, these efforts must continue.

## Definition of key terms

### **Small arms :**

“hand-held small calibre firearms, usually consisting of handguns, rifles, shotguns, manual, semi-automatic, and full automatic weapons and man-portable machineguns.”<sup>1</sup> What this basically means is that small arms are weapons which can be used by an individual.

### **Non- conflict armed violence :**

any violence by civilians outside of a war involving weapons. This includes drug related violence and domestic violence. Also included are homicides, suicides, social cleansing<sup>2</sup> and gender based violence.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the SALW

<sup>2</sup> Eradicating all people who are considered unwanted in society (e.g. homosexuals, criminals, paedophiles)



## Arms trafficking :

the illegal trading in or smuggling of contraband weapons or ammunition.<sup>3</sup>

## The Geneva Declaration :

a diplomatic initiative aimed at addressing the interrelations between armed violence and development.

## General Overview

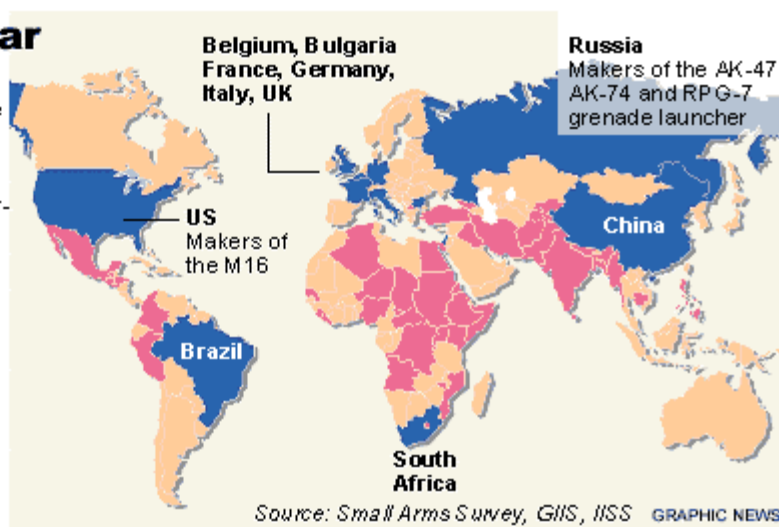
Over the last decades, small arms have become a real problem for the world society. There are several reasons for this increasing problem. First of all, the trade of small arms has switched from government related business, to private sectors and individuals. Furthermore, the current civil wars lead to extreme use of the weapons. It is very difficult for governments to control in countries affected by civil wars. Also, the economies of countries such as the

USA and the Russian Federation depend on the export of small arms. Another event that lead to these small arms becoming a larger problem, is the collapse of the former Soviet Union. This may sounds strange and the link is not very obvious, however there is an explanation. The

### World at war

Small arms, ranging from pistols to machine guns and mortars, kill 500,000 people every year. Of the four million war-related deaths in the 1990s, 90% were civilian - 80% of those were women and children.

- Leading suppliers
- Countries with armed conflicts



collapse of the former Soviet Union led to governmental chaos. Chaos always leads to lack of control, and in this case, the USSR, already being leading suppliers of small arms, lost control over the trade in small arms. Large arm businesses were sometimes sold to individuals who did not always keep to the universal protocols and guidelines for the trade in small arms. They just wanted to make a lot of money, and they didn't mind how. Furthermore, the economy in the USSR was already bad before the fall, but after the collapse it worsened and one wanted international devices. They saw the trade in small arms as the perfect way of doing so. The loss of control comes back here, because the crisis, did lead to chaos and no one controlled the arms market. Small arms are still obstructing world peace and security and will continue to do so if no solution is found.

Although it is a big problem all over the world, there are several areas, where it is more severe (see map above).

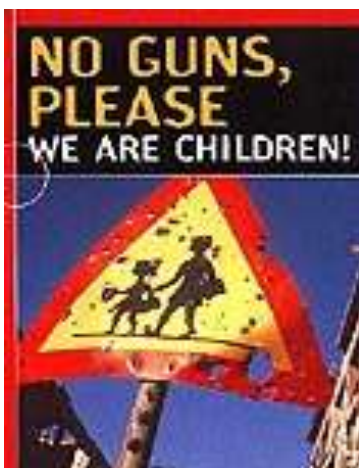
Some examples are Somalia, Mexico, and very recently, Libya. However, Libya is a bit ambiguous. Without the weapons, the opposing groups would not have been able to begin a

<sup>3</sup> It is very difficult to draw a clear line between legal and illegal weapons, as almost every single weapon in circulation was once legal. For the purpose of this research report, we will stick to the definition above.



rebel movement against Muammar Gaddafi. On the other hand, what will happen to all those weapons once the situation has stabilised? Often, lack of a proper government may be the cause, however different causes may be possible too. Not only do these arms hinder the rebuilding of post-conflict areas, but because they are so small and easy to use, it makes them very accessible to young children. Not surprisingly, they are used by the majority of child soldiers of which there are approximately 300,000. Not only will they be victims of the violence physically, but emotionally they will also be traumatised.

Long after peace agreements have been signed in conflict areas, the small arms will continue to create a violent atmosphere. An example is South-Sudan. On August 30<sup>th</sup> 2011


















Part of the UNICEF pamphlet against small arms

Sudan submitted a complaint against South-Sudan to the Security Council. They accused the country which only recently became independent of causing instability in the South-Kordofan region. They would have done this by using illegal small arms. Many use these arms for survival, others for protection. Financial and physical insecurity are often a cause for the use of small arms. Another problem remains the relative cheapness of small arms. For only \$100 or so you are able to buy a weapon in the western hemisphere, be it legal or illegal. In 1999 it was reported that it was possible to buy an AK-47 assault rifle for the price of a chicken in African countries, such as Somalia. This illustrates the cheapness of small arms.

The trade in small arms is probably one of the least transparent trade systems worldwide (the drug- and human trafficking trades must be kept in mind). Although it happens worldwide, it mostly occurs in areas of armed conflict and organized crime. This is where the demand is highest. It is logical that arms are not trafficked in great numbers, so that is why the so-called 'ant trade' makes it so much more difficult to trace. This is when a lot of shipments are made, with only a few arms on board, so that over time this will result in a large amount of small arms for one party. This style is used near for example, the USA-Mexican border.

Another way of transferring small arms illegally, used by some governments, especially in Africa, is by transferring weapons to small groups, such as non-state armed groups or terrorist organizations with similar political ideas. This is in contradiction with the UN arms embargoes and treaties.



2001-10 Rank	Supplier	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	 <u>United States</u>	5908	5229	5698	6866	6700	7453	8003	6288	6658	8641
2	 <u>Russia</u>	5896	5705	5236	6178	5134	5095	5426	5953	5575	6039
3	 <u>Germany</u>	850	916	1713	1105	2080	2567	3194	2500	2432	2340
4	 <u>France</u>	1297	1368	1345	2219	1724	1643	2432	1994	1865	834
5	 <u>United Kingdom</u>	1368	1068	741	1316	1039	855	1018	982	1022	1054
6	 <u>China</u>	499	509	665	292	303	597	430	586	1000	1423
7	 <u>Netherlands</u>	203	239	342	209	583	1187	1326	530	545	503
8	 <u>Sweden</u>	880	191	526	314	538	432	366	454	383	806
9	 <u>Italy</u>	216	426	341	212	774	502	684	417	514	627
10	 <u>Israel</u>	407	436	368	628	368	299	438	281	807	472
11	 <u>Ukraine</u>	700	311	442	200	290	553	728	330	320	201
12	 <u>Spain</u>	7	120	150	56	108	843	590	610	998	513
13	 <u>Switzerland</u>	193	157	181	243	246	285	301	482	255	137
14	 <u>Canada</u>	129	170	263	265	226	226	334	227	169	258
15	 <u>South Korea</u>	165	N/A	100	29	48	94	220	80	163	95

Estimated amounts of money (\$million) earned by weapon export – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute



## Main parties involved

### International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

“The International Action Network on Small Arms is the global movement against gun violence, linking civil society organisations working to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.”<sup>4</sup> They support all endeavours attempting to improve regulations and strengthen controls of arms. The IANSA represents the voices of civil society on the international stage, for example in the UN process on small arms.

### Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is one of world’s main weapons suppliers. In 2010 Russia reportedly exported \$6039 million worth of weapons. Although this number applies for all weapons, a large percentage of this was small arms.

### United States of America

The USA is the main supplier of illegal arms in Mexico. It is reported that over 90% of the illegal arms discovered there are originally from the US. Often these weapons would be bought in small numbers by an individual in a legal gun shop and subsequently smuggled over the border.

### Mexico

Mexico is one of the main importers of illegal small arms. On August 13<sup>th</sup> a tunnel was found from Tijuana (Mexico) to across the border into the USA. Although it is said that it was for drugs smuggling, it could well have also been used for arms trafficking.

### Somalia

In Somalia, the import of illegal weapons is a problem too. Due to the instable government, there is a lack of control. The small arms are used by pirates dominating the Gulf of Aden.

### Taliban

The Taliban is an Islamic terrorist group, and the main Militia Group in Afghanistan which has ruled there since 1996 up until around 2002. Although Afghanistan does have a pro-western puppet president since 2002, Hamad Karzai, the Taliban still have a great impact on life in Afghanistan. At the 2009 elections, they organised their own violent election campaign, thus winning more territory, but Karzai won with a majority. The Taliban, being a terrorist organisation, use illegal weapons too. Due to lack of control it is difficult to seize these weapons and prevent them from getting to their final destination. The Taliban’s shootings with small arms are responsible for many deaths in Afghan cities and countryside.

---

<sup>4</sup> As defined by the IANSA themselves.



## Palestine

The weapons in the Palestinian regions are also mostly of illegal origin. It is said that the majority of all guns fired from for example the Gaze Strip are of illegal origin, however, as of yet this claim cannot be confirmed.

### Timeline of events

- May 15-17<sup>th</sup> 1998** The G8 Meet in Birmingham, UK. Small arms were a major topic.
- 1999** Small arms are a subject of conversation at the Security Council Meeting  
UN General Assembly votes to hold the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms (UNCITSA), which is to be held two years later
- July 9-20<sup>th</sup> 2001-** UNCITSA was held in New York. This resulted in the adoption of 'Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects'
- 2003 –** Biennial Meeting of States is held to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action
- 2005 -** Biennial Meeting of States is held to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action
- June 7<sup>th</sup> 2006 –** The Geneva Declaration is first adopted by 42 states
- June 26<sup>th</sup>- July 7<sup>th</sup> 2006 –** The Review Conference of the UNCITSA is held
- 18<sup>th</sup> December 2006 -** A/RES /61/89 is adopted by the UN General Assembly
- 2008 -** Biennial Meeting of States is held to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action; A new document is adopted for the Programme. This focuses on co-operation and assistance by member states and enlarging the capacity of this co-operation among others.
- 2010 -** Biennial Meeting of States is held to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action
- 2012 –** A review conference of the Programme of Action is planned



## Relevant (UN) Documents

- The Geneva Declaration  
<http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/Geneva-Declaration-Armed-Violence-Development-091020-EN.pdf>
- Secretary-General Report 2011  
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/289/72/PDF/N1128972.pdf?OpenElement>
- 'Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects'  
[http://www.nti.org/e\\_research/official\\_docs/inventory/pdfs/apsarms.pdf](http://www.nti.org/e_research/official_docs/inventory/pdfs/apsarms.pdf)
- A/RES/61/89 – 'Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms'  
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/499/77/PDF/N0649977.pdf?OpenElement>

## Evaluation of previous attempts to solve the issue

In 2001 the 'Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects' was adopted in order to tackle this issue. With the Programme, the IANSA wanted governments to :

- Make illicit gun production/possession a criminal offence
- Establish a national coordination agency on small arms
- Identify and destroy stocks of surplus weapons
- Keep track of officially-held guns
- Issue 'end-user certificates' for exports/transit<sup>5</sup>
- Notify the original supplier nation of re-export
- Disarmament, Demobilization & Re-integration (DDR) of ex-combatants, including collection and destruction of their weapons
- Support regional agreements and encourage moratoria (i.e. a period of delay or suspension for an organised plan)
- Mark guns at point of manufacture for identification and tracing
- Maintain records of gun manufacture
- Engage in more information exchange
- Ensure better enforcement of arms embargoes
- Include civil society organizations in efforts to prevent small arms proliferation.

---

<sup>5</sup> Certificates will be issued to any person purchasing a small arm, to ensure that it will be used by that person only and will not be re-exported or sold to another party.





Although these ideas look very promising, the whole programme was severely weakened, because the USA would not cooperate. They didn't see any reason why it would have a good impact on their country, because their economy would be severely weakened. With the USA in opposition it was and is very difficult to come to a solution for everyone. At the Biennial Meeting of States in 2003, poor progress by many countries was reported by the IANSA, with regards to the Programme of Action. Furthermore, the Human Rights Watch still reported weapon abuse by governments and non-state groups.

One other indirect problem to solve this issue had also not been addressed was the gap between Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) and More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs). It is much easier for a more stable government to act than for a government in a country where war and/or civil conflicts are taking the overhand. What is important to notice is that MEDCs are usually the exporters, and are making large profits. LEDCs are usually the countries who import the small arms, because for them it is a reasonably cheap solution. Wars weaken a government's control on monitoring of illegal trades.

## Possible Solution

In order to solve this issue, it is of great importance that the legislation of arms trade is able to control the circulation of *legal* weapons. It is not intended to completely ban gun use, but it needs to be more regulated. Also, to solve the issue properly, effective law enforcement needs to be put in place, for those violating legislation. As always it is necessary to focus on transparency, with regards to the weapon trade. By doing this it will make it a lot easier to analyse the ongoing business.

As long as there is no proper tracking system for legal weapon holders, it will be a difficult task combating illegal trade.

Attention also needs to be raised about the dangers of small arms weapons.



## Bibliography

"About Us | IANSA - the Global Movement against Gun Violence." *Home | IANSA - the Global Movement against Gun Violence*. IANSA. Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.iansa.org/aboutus>>.

"Arms Trafficking." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, 17 July 2011. Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arms\\_trafficking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arms_trafficking)>.

"Introduction." *Gun-control-network.org*. Gun Control Network. Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.gun-control-network.org/GCN03.htm>>.

Ki Moon, Ban. "Report of the Secretary-General." *ODS HOME PAGE*. United Nations, 5 Apr. 2011. Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/289/72/PDF/N1128972.pdf?OpenElement>>.

Neild, Robert. *Public Corruption: the Dark Side of Social Evolution*. London: Anthem, 2002. Print.

"Non-conflict Armed Violence." *Small Arms Survey*. Small Arms Survey. Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-violence/non-conflict-armed-violence.html>>.

"PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS." Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <[http://www.nti.org/e\\_research/official\\_docs/inventory/pdfs/aptsarms.pdf](http://www.nti.org/e_research/official_docs/inventory/pdfs/aptsarms.pdf)>.

Shah, Anup. "Small Arms—they Cause 90% of Civilian Casualties — Global Issues." *Global Issues : Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues That Affect Us All — Global Issues*. 21 Jan. 2006. Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.globalissues.org/article/78/small-arms-they-cause-90-of-civilian-casualties#SmallArmsareProliferatedThroughBothLegalandIllegalTrade>>.



"Small Arms and Light Weapons and Mine Action." *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*.

NATO, 9 Nov. 2010. Web. 29 Aug. 2011.

<[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52142.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52142.htm)>.

*Welcome to SIPRI — Wwww.sipri.org*. SIPRI. Web. 29 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.sipri.org/>>.

"What Is the Declaration." *The Geneva Declaration*. Web. 29 Aug. 2011.

<<http://www.genevadeclaration.org/the-geneva-declaration/what-is-the-declaration.html>>.

