

Forum:	Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)
Issue:	Regulating Light Arms Availability and Establishing an international firearm protocol
Student Officer:	Gaia Maria Liturri
Position:	President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Esteemed delegates,

My name is Gaia Liturri and I will be serving as the president of the CCPCJ commission in this year's PSMUN. I am 17 years old and a senior in High School. I am located in Spain and attend the American School of Valencia. My MUN experience started almost 6 years ago and I have had the opportunity to chair my fair share of conferences including PSMUN 2021. Should you ever need to reach me for questions or comments my email is gaialiturri@studentasvalencia.org.

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is a functional commission of the UN ECOSOC. It acts as a policymaking commission in the assigned field. Their job consists of improving international action to stop national and transnational crimes.

The topic being discussed in the following study guide tackles one of the most pressing underlying issues in the world right now. It has come to attention that light arms are becoming ever more accessible and as such, the violence and disruption their misuse causes are spreading uncontrollably. As such, the CCPCJ has in its hands the possibility to resolve this issue by regulating this availability and establishing a new functional international firearm protocol that will allow for the combating of these crimes and a safer world.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that this guide to the topic is just introductory. You might want to refer to the resolutions mentioned and use the statistics described, but it is also crucial that you undertake research on the topic specifically, keeping your country's position in mind. This being said, I hope you are excited about this year's PSMUN. I will see you soon.

Kind Regards,
Gaia Maria Liturri

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Nowadays firearm use is increasing so rapidly that some countries present more firearms in circulation than actual citizens. The need for regulation of these weapons is fundamental for the eradication of all the terrible acts that are committed daily, by the misuse of arms obtained through an unregulated system that does not account for all the possible sources of arms. To achieve a more conscious system and a mindful regulation of weapons, it is critical to address the causes of this phenomenon specifically focusing on light arms which constitute the largest percentage of those in circulation.

Such causes include the illegal trade of arms which has not yet been tackled in multiple countries. At the same time, the lack of unanimity by countries on this topic makes it impossible to conclude how and to what extent trade and accessibility should be controlled. This has led to multiple failures to abide by a resolution to control civilian access to such powerful tools. To date, 1 billion small weapons are in circulation in the world and 85% of those are in civilian possession. These devastating numbers bring along innumerable risks, many of which are already taking place daily. The spring of 2020 brought along an increase in gun sales and with it are associated increases in fire injuries in domestic violence instances. This being one of the multiple events that have come to global attention, it has become ever clearer that there is the need to stop the continuous availability of such tools.

Furthermore, the currently existing firearm protocol functions only towards the illegal trade of firearms. The aforementioned increase in light weapons availability, however, sees the need for a new protocol to be established to internationally coincide on measures to take in case the regulations were disregarded. This new protocol should aim to “control and regulate licit arms and arms flows, prevent their diversion into the illegal circuit, facilitate the investigation and prosecution of related offenses without hampering legitimate transfers” (UNODC).¹

The need to address this topic in its entirety arises from the neglect that it has received until now and the consequences this has caused civilians. Regulating accessibility and establishing a new protocol will serve as a stepping stone towards international peace, which by being one of the sustainable development goals of the 2030 agenda has converted itself into the main priority for today’s world.

¹ *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/documents/firearms-protocol/UNODC_Study_on_Firearms_WEB.pdf.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Light arms²

Man-portable lethal weapons for individual use that can expel or launch a shot, bullet, or projectile by the action of an explosive (handguns, rifles, and carbines)

UNODC³:

United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime serves as the primary body contributing to the resolution of world peace through the eradication of drugs, crimes, corruption, illegal markets, etc.

UNHRC⁴:

United Nations Human Rights Council focuses on the preservation of human rights and dignity likewise.

International protocol⁵:

The international agreement between parties supplements a treaty and outlines the procedure to be followed in specific circumstances.

Accessibility:⁶

It refers to the ability to obtain the weapons in this case without the necessity to follow strict procedures and checks.

Ammunition⁷:

The supplies (bullets) necessary for the correct functioning of the weapons

Illegal trade:⁸

Illicit trade is the production or distribution of a good or service that is considered illegal by a legislature. It includes trade that is strictly illegal in different jurisdictions, as well as a trade that is illegal in some jurisdictions but legal in others.

² "What is a Small Arm?" *AOAV*, 26 Feb. 2016, aoav.org.uk/2016/what-is-a-small-arm/.

³ *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/.

⁴ "OHCHR | HRC Home." www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/home.aspx.

⁵ "Protocol Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary." *Collins Online Dictionary | Definitions, Thesaurus and Translations*, www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/protocol.

⁶ "Accessibility." *Www.dictionary.com*, www.dictionary.com/browse/accessibility.

⁷ "Ammunition." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ammunition.

⁸ "Illegal Trade Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary." *Collins Online Dictionary | Definitions, Thesaurus and Translations*, www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/illegal-trade.

Black-market⁹

Any economic activity that happens outside of government-controlled and sanctioned channels.

International Humanitarian Laws¹⁰:

is a set of rules that seek to limit the effects of armed conflict. It lays out the responsibilities of states and non-state armed groups during an armed conflict.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although on a worldwide scale the availability of light arms has grown exponentially over the past decade, it has not been uniformed in all countries. There is still a very unbalanced situation regarding the accessibility to light arms and firearms in general which causes some nations to have a higher ratio of arms per person than others. This has led to many serious consequences which have seen a proportional rise to the one inaccessibility and sale of firearms.

Availability of light arms nowadays

Nowadays the spread of small arms and light weapons is global. Around 857 million light firearms were in civilian possession by the end of 2017 and that number has risen to over 1 billion by 2021. As of 2021, the United States of America counts more guns than people with a ratio of 120 guns per 100 people. These numbers are worryingly high, even more, when considering that only 12% of the world's civilian-held firearms result legally registered in governmental databases.

⁹ "Black Market." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/black-market.

¹⁰ "International Humanitarian Law." *European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations*, 12 2020, [www.ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/international-humanitarian-law_en#:~:text=International%20Humanitarian%20Law%20\(IHL\)%20is,groups%20during%20an%20armed%20conflict](http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/international-humanitarian-law_en#:~:text=International%20Humanitarian%20Law%20(IHL)%20is,groups%20during%20an%20armed%20conflict).

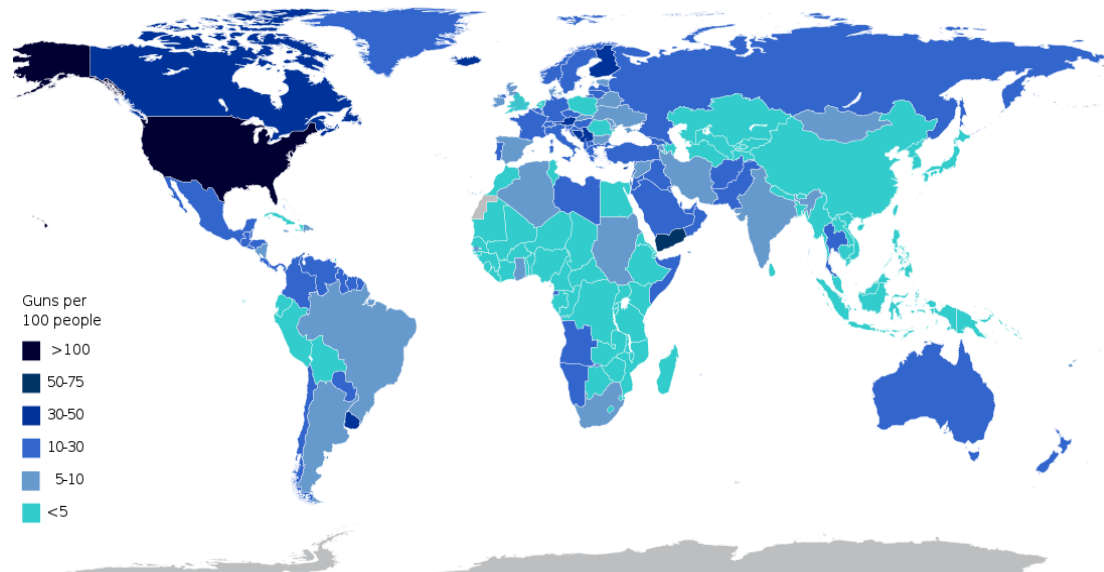


Figure 1¹¹: Guns present per 100 people per country

This map presents the global situation of gun density per country. It identifies nations with more or fewer firearms per 100 people. The presence of high numbers of light arms per 100 people in countries such as the USA and Yemen presents an instance of uncontrolled availability. The USA situation is majorly due to the poor gun laws in place which over the years have led to tragedies that have yet to be recognized by the government as a consequence of the flawed system for gun control. However, the serious situation of light arms availability in other countries sees as a cause of events such as the illegal trade and/or smuggling of arms. Furthermore, other countries which display the lightest arms in circulation include the Falkland Islands, Serbia, and Montenegro.

On the other hand, countries like China and most of Western and Central Africa have very low gun densities which resolve the lack of uniformity when it comes to the distribution and availability of arms. Taiwan and Indonesia show a complete restriction of civilian ownership of light arms with 0 guns per 100 people. These instances allow for the extremes of the spectrum of light arms availability to be present in our world. There have been numerous attempts to bring all countries to the same level but all attempts have been vain up until now.

In current times, with a pandemic affecting every country without exceptions, the arms legal and illegal markets have proliferated. Countries, against the advice of the UN and various NGOs to reprioritize their trades, have declared the arms negotiations essential. India for example has brokered millions in small arms at cost of civilian

¹¹ Small Arms Survey. "Guns per 100 people."

www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FEstimated_number_of_civilian_guns_per_capita_by_country&psig=AOvVaw0YcEVMmMxzAp7yO9tlamKN&ust=1639526844530000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAwQjhxqFwoTCOiznsz_4fQCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE. Accessed 2021.

safety while Canada, in the middle of the pandemic, exported 10 billion dollars' worth of light weapons to Saudi Arabia. These deals and many others have supposed great threats to civilians aside from the health threat that the coronavirus already represented for everyone. The COVID19 pandemic did not allow for proper regulation of these trades which directly facilitated conflicts to arise and human rights violations to go unnoticed. However, the black market, conversely to what was expected, faced a decline in demands. Despite the increase in social unrest, the multiple restrictions and quarantines imposed, signified a decline in conflicts which made it so the small arms demand worldwide was slumped. This was also due to the multiple ceasefire imposed by the UN peacekeeping forces. This sudden stop in many of the world's major conflicts has allowed for the governments to spend more energy in tackling this amongst many other issues.

Causes

The major cause of the unregulated accessibility to light arms is the lack of international unanimity on the topic. Few legislations that apply on an international basis are present regarding the availability of small weapons to civilians. Most countries regulate to some extent the issue internally. Small firearm registration is required in 133 countries, however, due to contraband¹² and black-market trades around half of the world's count of small arms in civilian possession is unregistered and thus unregulated. As such, two main sources for the lack of regulation bring up the most concerning data. One is the lack of international laws to regulate the acquiring of light arms through governmentally sanctioned channels. The other is the lack of laws to eradicate the black market which accounts for the most excessive acquiring of light arms.

Expanding on the legislations for small arms accessibility and availability, it is necessary to note how many Middle Eastern countries and most nations in the African continent require multiple permits for diverse types of small arms. They also make a distinction between the reasons for the issue of the light arm and the type. Requesting access for purposes such as personal protection is strictly prohibited in the majority of the nations, under the assumption that this is the job of the police corps and similar bodies. For the purposes of hunting and sport shooting, the laws have been getting more and more lenient to the point where it is now possible to acquire a gun for those purposes and not get any sanction for using it under other circumstances. On the other hand, countries like the United States and Mexico, have converted the possession of arms by civilians to a constitutional right, therefore, preventing any possible measure to be taken against certain people giving up the arms in their possessions.

¹² "Contraband." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/contraband.

There is also a great lack of small weapon ownership control. Not one country periodically assesses how many guns are in circulation, and that has led to an exponential increase due to the easiness of obtaining small arms from illegal sources. Licenses and background checks are also ironically only run by the countries with the lowest rates of small arms in circulation. This is again attributed to the lack of light arms laws to regulate their issue and use. Furthermore, it is important to mention that said laws would also need to address access to ammunition seeing as ammunitions for light weapons are even more accessible than the weapons themselves by being sold without the need for any legally accepted explanation/permit.

As of right now and for the past decades, another great source of unregulated small weapons has come from the black market. Since it operates outside of the government's control, every small weapon that gets trafficked, ends up being unregulated and not recognized by the government. This causes massive increases in the number of civilians who possess small arms without the governmental body even being able to acknowledge the issue. If the legislations are already lacking a clear tackling of small arms, light weapons, and ammunitions regulatory system, the existence of the black market puts even more people in jeopardy.

Effects

Major effects have arisen from recent increases in light arms circulation due to the lack of regulation of accessibility and availability of these ones. Based on the ICRC the major ones reported include multiple violations of the International Humanitarian Laws (IHL) and with these many violations of basic human rights. An increase in civilian suffering under innumerable aspects has also been adverted and an increase of the lethal effects and duration of civil conflicts. As a consequence of these, there has been an impossibility by many humanitarian aid bodies to interfere and provide victim assistance, reconstruction of infrastructures, and parties reconciliation. Furthermore, many countries have observed gun used in homicides and suicides augment under the form of mass shootings and firearm use in instances of domestic violence.

The IHL focuses on reducing the effects of armed conflicts. The proliferation of small arms exacerbates these effects thus making these laws completely pointless. The arms are not only used to cause physical harm but also serve the purpose of intimidating, blackmailing, and coerce which identifies the harm they create as wide and varied. Additionally, these uses of small arms create breaches in the Human Rights Declarations by converting many civilians caught in armed conflicts into refugees which increases their risk of infectious diseases and others thus putting at high risk their physical and mental health. All of this is considered human suffering, and it has been investigated as one of the main effects that the easy availability of small arms is causing by directly prolonging conflicts. These conflicts are also showing the impact on socio-economic development and the normal economic activity by reducing exports and imports and thus revenues.

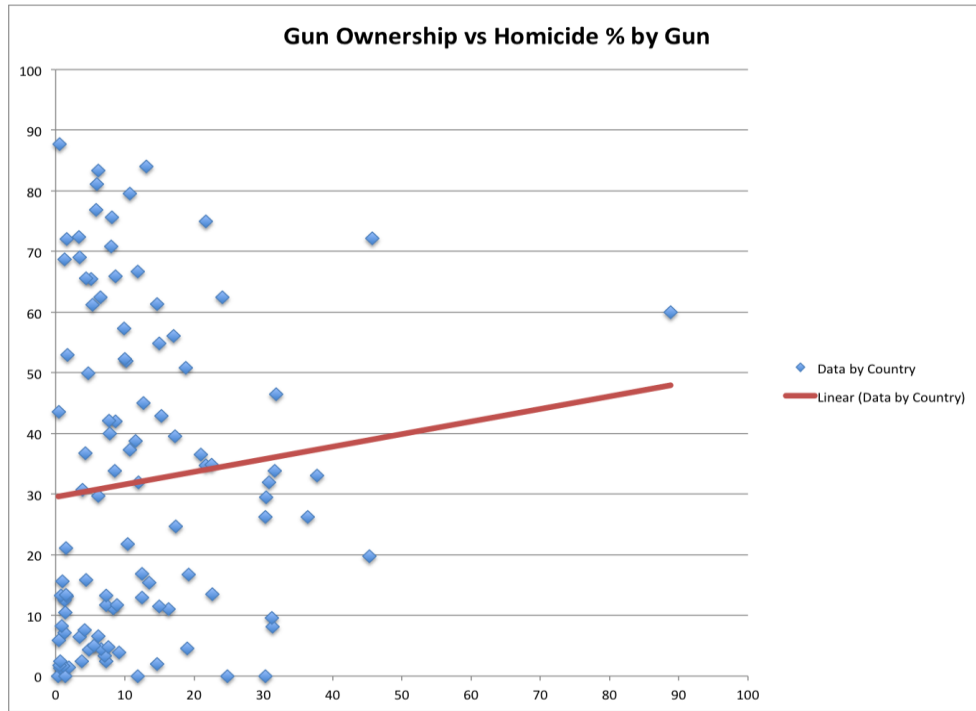


Figure 2¹³: Gun ownership vs homicide % by gun

In figure 2 it is possible to see the correlation of guns per person by country and the firearm homicide percentage. The correlation is positively strong which suggests that the more guns and small arms present in a country, the more probable it is that homicide is committed by using a light arm. Be it accidental or purposeful, homicides employing small arms have risen with the increase of availability of these weapons. In each country, this trend follows as well, as seen in the United States for example.

¹³ Tucker Balch. "Guns and Homicide." 12 Dec. 2019, www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Faugmentedtrader.com%2F2012%2F12%2F16%2Fguns-and-homicide-worldwide-statistics%2F&psig=AOvVaw3gdF32imveK-EUkQx27EKd&ust=1639526515192000&source=images&ccd=vfe&ved=0CAwQjhxqFwoTCLiMva-4fQCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD.



Figure 3¹⁴: Monthly small-arms sale in the last decade in the USA

Figure 3 displays firearm sales in the United States. The major peaks as it can be observed are related to horrifying tragedies that took the lives of many. As it can be seen, an increase in small arms in circulation causes an increase in events like mass shootings (Sandy Hook) and in general unrest and civil conflict. Simply by reducing the accessibility to these weapons the peaks would not be so tragic.

Similarly, the accessibility has also inevitably caused an increase in suicides by small arms. The increase in mental health issues in the teenage and young adult population worldwide has led to an overall steady augment of suicides. However, the possibility to use small arms to perform the action makes it that much easier to actually succeed. While there has been an increase in suicides by gun there has been a decrease in unsuccessful ones. The effectiveness of the weapons to which most people have now access to leads them with no room to redeem. The presence of light arms in the households has also seen the increment of firearm injuries in instances of domestic violence, by now 19% of these crimes involve a weapon and the presence of such weapon increases the risk of homicide of the victim by 500%.

Current international protocols

As of now there is only one legally binding instrument to eradicate the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of small arms, their parts and ammunitions at an international level which was adopted in resolution 55/255 and it's the Firearm

¹⁴ Phillip Levine and Robin McKnight. "Monthly gun sales." *Brookings*, 13 July 2020, www.google.com/search?q=gun+sale+trends&source=lnms&tbnm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiR6_XnxuH0AhV_kDWMBHTtpCF8Q_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1422&bih=702&dpr=1.8&safe=active&ssui=on#imgrc=b-tM5G4ktuD6yM.

Protocol. This protocol tackles one of the most important causes of the unregulated accessibility to small arms globally which is not under governmental control: the black market and illegal trade of arms. However, this protocol, despite its international nature has not achieved its goal of bringing all countries at the same level. Many of them are still not committed to it or are still not implementing it.

Another treaty that was produced in the hope of tackling this issue is the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which established common global standards for the trade of weapons including small arms. It encourages state to start regulating a healthy arm trade so to eradicate the illicit market. This treaty also tackles the black-market as it is the only cause that can be tackled to a global level due to its internationality.

The International Tracing Instrument on the other hand is a legally binding document that outlines the tracing of illicit arms in a timely and reliable manner. However, since it was adopted, more sophistication has been put in the manufacture of the weapons which poses new challenges to the marking and tracing of small arms. These challenges are being discussed at length and a solution to them could be a game changer.

Overall, no treaties have been signed yet which tackle directly the regulation of small arms availability due to the difference in legislations in different countries. As such, the need for a protocol to follow internationally for the use of light arms and the consequences and sanctions to be applied under extreme circumstances has been identified.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America

The USA currently counts more guns than people with a ratio of 120 guns per 100 people. The country also currently recognizes civilian small arm possession as a constitutional right and has done so since the 18th century. Similarly, one of the leading ideals of the republican ideology which is held by about half of the American population is that gun laws are a restriction of that same constitutional right. As such, there are currently no regulations clearly establishing what small arms are permitted and for what scope. The accessibility to small arms varies through the states but in some, such as Arkansas, obtaining a gun legally does not require any type of license or permit and is as easy as other activities such as grocery shopping.

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation, as of 2017 presented around 17 million guns in civilian possession. The government has as of 2014 relaxed their gun control laws and in general small arms. Now small arms are allowed for whatever purpose to be in civilian possession only if the individual possesses a permit or license. These both can be obtained after attending safety classes, much like a driver's license. No type of small

arm, however, is allowed to be carried loaded out in public, and the minimum jail time for the breaking of any of these points is 8 years. The country constitutes the major export of firearms towards the African continent and part of the Middle Eastern region. This contributes to fomenting many civil conflicts which are costing many lives. Russia also participates in the trade of arms in illegal channels but the government, mainly for self-benefit motives, is currently employed in eradicating the market.

Yemen

The Yemeni nation has basically no gun control. Different types of guns can be released for almost any reason and they can all be carried around without a permit. Furthermore, the jail time administered for any possible miss happening while in gun possession is one year at most. In Yemen, a common mindset spread by the leaders as well as being shared by the citizens point of view is that gun ownership is a right more than a privilege. Although not explicitly stated in the constitution or any other legal document, guns can be carried around with freedom as if it were. Yemen is the second most armed country in the world with around 52 guns per 100 people. There is not a lot of information of the black-market situation but there has been an increase in import of arms due to the proxy war that has been going on.

Taiwan

Taiwan has almost no guns in circulation and as far as civilians go, no one is allowed to own any type of small arm. There is an estimate of 0.2 guns per 100 people making it the least armed country in the world. The government firmly believes that the security system of the country is enough to support civilian protection and does not see the necessity to put at risk someone's integrity with a gun that might be misused.

Indonesia

Indonesia does not permit private gun ownership. Only high ranks of society can access small arms on a private basis and have to first apply for a license. This makes it so there is very little circulation of arms. Furthermore, illicit arms possession leads to 20 years of jail time which also applies to high ranked officials who have unregistered guns.

United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime has focused on eradicating the illegal trade and black-market for small arms and light weapons on the basis of international crime and corruption. It has been operating to obtain global information the trafficking of arms and has developed the Firearm protocol in an attempt to put the whole world on the same page regarding the topic. Their efforts have brought changes in other areas of the issue. The studies conducted by the UNODC have also collected information regarding numbers and policies that countries use or neglect to regulate the small arms circulating on their territory.

They have also established the Programme of Action (POA) and is currently the most invested UN body on the issue. They also developed a Global Firearm program which

serves the purpose of establishing an adequate criminal justice system to face the diverse challenges that extreme availability to arms poses to the world and other citizens.

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs provides organizational support to the norm setting in the disarmament area. They have supported the General Assembly and the Disarmament Office on the path to regulating the illegal trafficking of arms to ensure citizens safety.

The UNODA recollects all the major information of treaties and resolutions that have been adopted by major bodies of the UN regarding the topic of disarmament international affairs.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of Event	Description of event
November 19th, 1990	Adoption of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
March 24th, 1994	Signing of the Open Skies Treaty
1999	The IHEID started the Small Arms Survey (SAS)
May 31 st 2001	Adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA)
May 2002	The IANSA gets accepted by the UK
December 2005	Adoption of the International Tracing Instrument
December 14th, 2011	Adoption of the OSCE Vienna Document
April 3 rd 2013	Adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty
September 26 th 2013	Adoption of resolution 2117 by the Security Council
2014	The IANSA gets accepted by the first country in Africa (Ghana)
May 22 nd 2015	Adoption of resolution 2220 by Security Council providing further support to the Arms Trade Treaty
December 7 th 2015	Adoption of the resolution 70/29 by the General Assembly
2017	UK government developed and applied the counter-proliferation program
March 2020 -	Multiple ceasefires imposed by the UN peacekeeping forces due to the pandemic
April 16th 2021	The EU declare new funding wave for the PoA to keep acting

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

A/CONF.192/1515: It is the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It was passed by the General Assembly and has been implemented since 2001. It hasn't been effective since the beginning and it needed various follow-up resolutions in other conventions to back up its efforts.

The Arms Trade Treaty¹⁶: It is a multilateral treaty that operates to regulate the balanced trade of arms on a worldwide scale. It has been widely accepted although resolutions have been adopted to support its principles

Firearm protocol¹⁷/International Tracing Instrument¹⁸: They are binding documents that focus on the black market of arms, either on its eradication or on the tracking of its elements and materials. They have not fully succeeded in their intent but they are now facing new challenges due to changes in the development of the weapons.

Vienna document¹⁹: it was redacted by the OSCE group and it promotes trust through transparency and verification of armed forces and conventional arms. Together with the **Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE)²⁰** and the **Open Skies Treaty²¹** constitute a web of interlocking and mutually reinforcing arms control obligations and commitments (OSCE).

The Small Arms Survey²²: This is a research project taking place in the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. They provide impartial and evidence-based knowledge on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. The objective of this initiative as stated directly by its creators is to

¹⁵ "A/CONF.192/15(SUPP) - E - A/CONF.192/15(SUPP) -Desktop." *ESubscription to United Nations Documents*, [www.undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15\(SUPP\)](http://www.undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15(SUPP)).

¹⁶ *The Arms Trade Treaty* |, www.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/TheArmsTradeTreaty1/TheArmsTradeTreaty.pdf.

¹⁷ "The Firearms Protocol." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/the-firearms-protocol.html.

¹⁸ *UNIDIR | The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research*, www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-international-tracing-instrument-examining-options-to-support-operationalization-en-712.pdf.

¹⁹ *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe | OSCE*, www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/4/86597.pdf.

²⁰ "Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe." *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe | OSCE*, www.osce.org/library/14087.

²¹ "The Open Skies Treaty at a Glance." *Arms Control Association | The Authoritative Source on Arms Control Since 1971*, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/openskies.

²² "Vision and Mission." *Small Arms Survey*, www.smallarmssurvey.org/who_we_are/vision_mission.

“strengthen the capacity of governments and practitioners to reduce illicit arms flows and armed violence through three mutually reinforcing activities: the generation of policy-relevant knowledge, the development of authoritative resources and tools, and the provision of training and other services”²³. In the last 20 years, this project has been for governments a helpful resource when trying to understand how to prioritize and make reforms on this issue.

SAWL modules²⁴: The small arms and light weapons modules are documents redacted for governments to explore options and obligations when thinking of combating SAWL proliferation and misuse. They provide strategies and action plans applicable on a national level with no need for UN agency intervention. The modules outline regional and sub-regional protocols on the matter as well as principles that should be kept in mind when trying to control the magnitude of the issue. These modules were produced to boost governments’ efficiency on the topic until now some reforms have been seen based on them although not entirely revolutionary.

Counter-Proliferation Programme Strategy²⁵: This program is part of a larger initiative by the UK government called the “Small Arms & Light Weapons: Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) Programme”. The program sets countering weapon proliferation as one of the government’s top priorities. Actions taken following this strategy have tackled multiple aspects of the issue, including the accumulation of SAWL in civilian possession, the free access to ammunition, and the reduction of unregulated trade of SAWL across borders.

IANSA²⁶: The International Action Network on Small Arms has been incorporated under the laws of many countries in the past 20 years. This is a program that unites various organizations to reduce demands for weapons, improve regulation of such, and strengthen controls on their transfer. All this is done with the general aim to reduce gun violence. However, when tackling that issue, the smaller objectives focus on the regulation of SAWL and on the eradication of the illicit trade of such. Many countries seeing the efficiency of their actions have started contributing. The IANSA now counts more than 100 NGOs working together. This network does not only have original initiatives but also works to further implement those proposed by the UN such as the POA (mentioned previously).

²³ "Vision and Mission." *Small Arms Survey*, www.smallarmssurvey.org/who_we_are/vision_mission.

²⁴ www.file:///Users/Gaia/Downloads/SALW-module-6.pdf.

²⁵ www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/530840/SA_LW_counter_proliferation_programme_Fund_2016_-_June.pdf.

²⁶ "About Us." *IANSA*, 24 May 2021, www.iansa.org/about-us/.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Eradication of the black-market

The first concept to tackle is that it represents the major cause of the problem. As previously analyzed, the black market and the continuous failure by governments to prevent its working, have caused a proliferation in unregistered arm circulation upon civilians. Some possible ways to tackle this issue include enhancing the implementation of the UNPOA and all relevant agreements on small arms as their primary goal was to possibly tackle all sources of unmonitored trade and possession. Moreover, increasing support for local or national attempts for small arm periodic control instead of preventing them will ensure that all breaches of legislation are caught before they proliferate. By organizing educational initiatives to spread awareness of the causes and effects of unregulated gun availability and the risks of the black market, governments will ensure that the black market does not succeed in spreading its power and gets weaker by the year. Lastly by supporting and developing national initiatives to suppress the illegal import of arms the amount of unregulated circulation will decrease and so will its effects.

Legislative regulations

The lack of legislative unanimity on the topic has also been previously mentioned as one of the main reasons for the current accessibility to small arms in unregulated quantities. The first steps towards a solution for this aspect of the issue at hand would be something along the lines of developing national and international transfer laws and policies for small arms in government-sanctioned channels which would ideally reduce the accessibility to the black market. Furthermore, establishing regulations to avoid the brokering of illegal arms will favor the acquiring of arms in a regulated manner. Lastly, by strengthening the surveillance on gun ownership by establishing periodic population controls both on weapons and ammunition governments will ensure that any national legislation is being followed and not bluffed.

International protocol

The need for an international firearm protocol stems from the current lack of an efficient way to handle the issue at hand in all its nuances. Developing an international agreement defining common standards for regulating arms transfers, with due consideration of States 'obligations under international humanitarian law' would be the base for an efficient protocol. By taking conscience of the consequences and tackling those rather than the causes will form a prevention program rather than a curing one. The support of comprehensive disarmament and demobilization of former combatants and the destruction of surplus weapons when armed conflicts end should also be included in the protocol to ensure the safety of civilians and the efficiency of complementary legislations to the protocol. Tackling further the need for territory and

civilian safety, the development of an assistance mechanism for the rehabilitation of impacted areas, and for the disposal of all dangerous material that might be found as residual from any armed conflict will be needed. The protocol is also encouraged to support all national and international campaigns on small arms as well as encouraging the creation of an international awareness program that tackles different aspects of the issue in different parts of the world. This would make this protocol applicable internationally as well as locally.

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