



- Committee:** GA1 (Disarmament and International Security Committee)
- Issue:** Combating the social derivations of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and its illegal trafficking
- Student Officer:** Yavuz Erol Gönen, President Chair

## Introduction to the Issue

“Warzone,” today might make one recall the Call of Duty games; however, what these games depict in the form of entertainment is an aspect of the global politics which no-one wants to experience - war. With the weapon technology rapidly improving throughout the 20th century due to the World Wars and the following Cold War, now, weaponry is more accessible and more damaging than it was ever before. A type of weaponry that is most subject to individual-based usage and easy transportation is Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). There is no universally accepted definition of a “small arm” or of a “light weapon;” yet, for clarification of the terms, the definitions put forth by the 1997 UN Panel of Governmental Experts will be used in this Chair Report. According to the panel SALW include “civilian and military weapons that fire a projectile with the condition that the unit or system may be carried by an individual, a small number of people, or transported by a pack animal or a light vehicle.” The panel continues to exemplify SALW as follows:

- **Small arms:** revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns.
- **Light weapons:** heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems (MANPADS); and mortars of calibres of less than 100 mm.

As some of the delegates are already familiar with, the trading of SALW is a very important topic for each nation. Though some countries are “memed” online due to their more relaxed approach towards SALW economy for the average citizen, each country, today, has a national system that tracks each citizen’s weaponry purchase and reason for the purchase. Buying a gun as an average citizen is not an everyday activity, for governments require many certificates and verifications even before the selling of a small pistol.



Logically, this shouldn't be an issue unless you have reasons for buying a weapon other than those the government allows. In the case of terrorist activities or civil rebellions, purchasing SALW is prohibited. Enter **illicit trafficking**. Illicit trafficking is an illegal branch of economy which profits from the trading of illegal or government-controlled products without the supervision of a legal authority. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is, especially, concentrated in areas afflicted by armed conflict, violence, and organized crime, where the demand for SALW is highest. This traffic is a highly controversial and important issue, for it is one of the major sources of civil wars and regional conflicts, the arsenals of terrorists, drug cartels, and other armed groups. The issue is controversial, for it creates a dilemma in the solving. Governments cannot detect illicit trafficking in the first place; therefore, it is challenging to take an action that tackles the issue completely. It is our committee's responsibility in this year's SEV American College Model United Nations to bring reasonable and applicable solutions to the table. Good Luck!

## **Involved Countries & Organizations**

**United States of America:** While most arms trafficking appears to be conducted by private entities, certain governments also contribute to the illicit trade by deliberately arming proxy groups involved in insurgencies against rival governments, terrorists with similar ideological agendas, or other non-state armed groups. United States of America is the leading country in this field. In 2017, The United States exported USD 1.1 billion worth of small arms; **Italy**, **Brazil**, and **Germany** follow USA with 583, 544, and 514 million dollars respectively.

**Mexico:** Mexico is infamous for its illicit trafficking. Data indicates that thousands of firearms seized in Mexico are traced to the United States annually. These weapons are often purchased from gun shops in small numbers and then smuggled over the border. While individual transactions occur on a small scale, the sum total of the weapons trafficked into Mexico is large. Illicit trafficking sources especially drug cartels and anti-government entities in Mexico.

**Somalia:** In recent years, governments have covertly delivered tens of thousands of small arms and light weapons to various armed groups in Somalia despite a long-standing UN arms embargo. As revealed in the Small Arms Survey 2012, these weapons range from Kalashnikov-pattern assault rifles to third-generation SA-18 MANPADS, one of which was used to shoot down a Belarusian cargo aircraft delivering supplies intended for peacekeepers in March 2007.



**Sudan and South Sudan:** The Small Arms Survey 2014 reveals that newly produced ammunition is circulating in conflict-affected countries in Africa and the Middle East. Tracing investigations presented in this edition conclude that Sudan government stockpiles are the primary source of weapons for non-state armed groups of all allegiances in Sudan and South Sudan—both through deliberate arming and battlefield capture. Such arms monitoring is, however, increasingly hampered by the production of unmarked ammunition and the deliberate removal of weapons' markings.

**Switzerland & Norway:** Although the SALW trafficking is not as problematic in these countries compared to other nations mentioned, Switzerland and Norway are touched on in order to overcome a common misconception. Many perceive such countries as utopic; however, as of 2017, Norway stands as the 11th country with the largest SALW export; whereas, Switzerland has only recently dropped to a “major exporter” from a “top exporter.”

**Note from the Chair:** There is not enough time and space to touch on each country which is subject to illicit SALW trafficking; however, a focus on African and Middle Eastern countries is essential. It is suggested for the delegates of such countries to research their individual combat with illicit trafficking. Nevertheless, the countries mentioned offer examples of similar cases for other African and Middle Eastern countries.

## **Detailed Analysis of the Issue**

The illicit proliferation of SALW can prolong armed violence and support the illegal emergence of violent groups. Access to illicit SALW contributes to the development of terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, gender violence, and piracy. Today, research indicates that the diversion of weapons is closely linked to corruption and poor management practices. Anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war maim both people and livestock long after the cessation of hostilities. Moreover, such activities are major barriers to post-conflict recovery and re-development. Beyond the humanitarian consequences, they also overload local and national health services, reduce available workforce and disrupt societal structures. Furthermore, weaponry and ammunition are not always properly managed, allowing illicit access or accidents that may affect security personnel along with nearby populations.



Despite the obvious ethical concerns of the illicit trafficking of SALW, the economic benefit of such traffic is undeniable. In fact; Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United States of America routinely report exports of small arms, light weapons, their parts, accessories, and ammunition worth USD 100 million or more every year. Bear in mind that this information is for the officially trafficked weaponry, whereas, the benefit of illegal trafficking is safely assumed to be way larger, for illegal activity comes with no-taxation and larger monetary transactions. Exploring the wide-spread nature of this issue, it has been documented by the Survey that twelve additional governments have exported 100 million USD or more in small arms at least once between 2001 and 2017: Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Israel, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The trafficking of SALW also stretches to the corporate side of economy, where more than 1,000 companies produce small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. This, however, is restricted not only due to governmental regulations on corporate but also on the availability of technology. Speaking of the former reason, governments apply restrictions or high maintenance on corporations which fund illicit SALW trafficking in order to secure taxation, not due to the ethical concerns. Nevertheless, the granting of licenses and production rights and the spread of technology have enabled many countries to produce small arms and light weapons without undertaking expensive or time-consuming research and development programs. As an example for the latter reason on the other hand, only about a dozen countries produce advanced guided light weapons. And most of the top manufacturing countries are also the top exporting countries. Some countries, however, such as India, Pakistan, and North Korea, also have substantial small arms industrial production capacities to accommodate sizable domestic markets.

*Procurement analysis suggests that within a 50 year period, world production of military assault rifles, carbines, pistols, and light and heavy machine guns would range between 36 million and 46 million units, with an annual production of small arms alone (firearms, rather than light weapons) averaging 700,000—900,000.* Research suggests that close to 80 countries currently produce small arms ammunition for pistols, revolvers, rifles, carbines, sub-machine guns, and machine-guns. Producers with the capacity to make the equipment necessary to manufacture small arms ammunition are far less numerous, however.



Today, governments remain central providers of security regarding illicit SALW trafficking. It is lawfully considered that it is their sovereign right and responsibility. Governments also have a responsibility to ensure public safety and have a vested interest in providing human security and development to their citizens. Therefore, ensuring that arms in private ownership do not enter illicit circuits must be part of the equation for every country. To effectively execute these tasks, their armed and security forces legitimately employ a range of weaponry, which they acquire through national production or through import. Exporters and importers need to ensure those weapons are transferred and stored safely, and not end up in the wrong hands.

Under the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), governments agreed to improve national small arms laws, import/export controls, and stockpile management – and to engage in cooperation and assistance. In 2005 they also adopted the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), which requires States to ensure that weapons are properly marked and that records are kept. Moreover, it provides a framework for cooperation in weapons tracing – fulfilling one of the commitments governments made in the Program of Action. Improving weapons tracing is now part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Today and in recent history, a geography that is affected arguably the most by illicit SAWL trafficking is Africa. The persistence and the complication of wars in Africa is sometimes blamed on small arms proliferation. A comparison between the murder rates in pre- and post-colonial would help determine the impact of small arms proliferation. Africa Researchers for the Small Arms Survey estimate that around 30 million firearms are being circulated throughout Africa. This number is much less than the total number of small arms in Europe, estimated to be 84 million; yet, the number of small arms isn't as important in comparison to how they are being used. The Small Arms Survey reports that at least 38 different companies are producing small arms in Sub-Saharan Africa, yet indigenous companies are not fulfilling the demands. South Africa is the largest exporter of small arms in the region, but only \$6 million in small arms were exported out of the country, while \$25 million in small arms were imported into the continent in 2005. Beyond legal trade, the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons also has a great effect on Africa. Many of the illicit trade among small arms in Africa can be attributed to post-conflict removal and movement of weapons. This illegal transfer of weapons from country-to-country has been seen to incite conflict in bordering regions by the same armed groups. An example of this can be seen in the conflicts



ranging from Liberia, moving towards Sierra-Leone, the Ivory Coast, and finally to Guinea. Another illicit trade of small arms is seen in craft production. Reports from arms analysts Matt Schroeder and Guy Lamb suggest that the country Ghana has the potential to yield 200,000 new weapons every year. The consequences of small arms on African people due to international conflicts within Africa, rebel group activities, mercenary groups, and armed gang activities have yet to be fully measured, although Stockholm Peace Research Institute means transparency and information-sharing regarding arms transfers in the region will build trust and confidence. The International Action Network on Small Arms, Saferworld, and Oxfam International put it in perspective when they reported that armed conflict cost Africa \$18 billion each year and about 300 billion USD between 1990-2005. During this period, 23 African nations experienced war: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, and Uganda.

## **Past Attempts to Solve the Issue**

Small arms control was first broached by UN Resolution A/RES/46/36 (December 1991), which was expanded upon by A/RES/50/70 (January 1996). This latter resolution mandated a panel of experts to research the type of small arms and light weapons being used in the world's conflicts and to study which weapons might apply to fall under an arms control regime. The recommendations of expert reports returned to the General Assembly, A/52/298 (1997) and A/54/258 (1999) led to a July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms, with a follow-up in July 2006.

On 26 September 2013 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2117, which urged nations to remain committed to small arms embargoes and SALW control protocols.

Work on SALW via the United Nations is coordinated by the Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), though the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism, which comprises 21 UN departments and agencies working on different aspects of small arms and light weapons control. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), carries out research in arms control affairs and has published many articles and books related to small arms and light weapons.

On 2 April 2013, the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to adopt the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to govern the legal international trade in many types of conventional weapons, from warships and aircraft to small arms and light weapons. A basic obligation of the treaty is that all States Parties should establish or maintain controls in the area. In this way, the treaty also helps the international community to address unregulated or illegal trade in conventional weapons. The treaty opened for signature on 3 June 2013. To date, two-thirds of UN member states have signed the treaty (130 states), and 72 have ratified it. The treaty entered into force on December 24, 2014.



In addition, NATO is helping to address these issues by encouraging dialogue and cooperation among Allies and partners to seek effective solutions. It has two very effective mechanisms: the Ad Hoc Working Group on SALW and Mine Action (AHWG SALW/MA) and the NATO/Partnership Trust Fund mechanism. NATO also supports initiatives led by other international bodies, such as the United Nations (UN) Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects (commonly known as the PoA) as well as the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In the area of anti-personnel mines, the Alliance and its partners also assist signatories of the “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction” (Ottawa Convention). Allies who are not party to this Convention facilitate efforts in the general realm of what is commonly called mine action, which includes: clearance of mine fields, providing victim assistance, raising mine risk awareness through education, and assistance in destroying mine stockpiles.

In 1999, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), which groups Allies and partner countries, established the AHWG on SALW. Originally, this Working Group focused only on issues related to the impact of the proliferation of SALW on Alliance’s peacekeeping operations.

In April 2004, the Working Group’s mandate was broadened to include mine action issues (therefore becoming the AHWG SALW/MA). It is one of the few forums in the world that meets on a regular basis to address these specific issues. The objective of the Working Group is to contribute to international efforts to reduce the threats caused by the illicit trade of SALW and the impact of mines and other unexploded ordnance. The Working Group organizes itself around an annual work program. In practice, it uses a four-pronged approach to accomplish its work by:

- *providing a forum in which EAPC members and certain implementing organisations can share information on SALW and ammunition projects they are conducting. These organisations include but are not limited to the European Union (EU), the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) and the United Nations (UN). This exchange of information helps to improve coordination with donor countries and implementing organisations, with the aim of increasing effectiveness and avoiding duplication of work. The information is consolidated into the Project Information Matrix, a web-based information-sharing platform, which is regularly updated by the members of the AHWG SALW/MA;*
- *inviting partners from the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), as well as partners across the globe, to share information and identify national and regional approaches;*
- *inviting speakers from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), regional and international organisations, and research institutes to share their views and recent research with delegations;*
- *facilitating the management and creation of the Trust Fund projects. This includes updating delegations on the status of Trust Fund projects and highlighting where more effort or volunteer donations are needed;*
- *organising regular international workshops, seminars and conferences on topics particularly pertinent to SALW and mine action.*





## List of Important Events

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
December 1991	Small arms control was first broached by a UN Resolution
January 1996	A/RES/50/70: This resolution mandated a panel of experts to research the type of small arms and light weapons being used in the world's conflicts and to study which weapons might apply to fall under an arms control regime
1999	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council established Ad Hoc Working Group on SALW
July 2001	United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms
2005	International Tracing Instrument (ITI) was adopted, which requires States to ensure that weapons are properly marked and that records are kept
December 2014	Arms Trade Treaty entered into force to govern the legal international trade in many types of conventional weapons
September 2013	UN Security Council passed Resolution 2117, which urged nations to remain committed to small arms embargoes and SALW control protocols

**Note from the Chair:** The concept of SALW inherently is widespread throughout the globe; thus, it includes many tangents and sub-histories. The topics mentioned on the timetable are only some of the significant diplomatic developments. It is suggested for the delegates to read their country's individual history concerning SALW.

## Possible Solutions

Looking at past attempts to solve the issue, economical sanctions and adopting organizations are observed to be preferred by the governments. This is significant because it shows the delegates what possible solution methods are acceptable to the United Nations members. Thus, the refusal of such methods as a whole by a delegation is somewhat unjustifiable. To clear a possible misunderstanding, the way these methods are applied can be questioned or refused; however, the methodology itself is seen to be accepted. Though, with country-specific and valid reasons, economic sanctions can be refuted on the grounds of damaging





the economy for multiple nations. The chair suggests the scrutiny of border passes for countries struggling with illicit trafficking. Though statistical data analysis does offer practicality, the inherent nature of illegal SALW trafficking does not fully reflect on accessible data. Therefore, for international trafficking the physical borders along with international cargo-transportation can be monitored by an unbiased UN organization. Moreover, the chair also believes for an effective resolution, the focus should be specified to a region that is most affected by SALW trafficking. *With past experience, I believe that resolutions that aim to solve an issue throughout the globe tend to be way too general to have effective measures and are subject to more refutations.* Thus, I suggest the delegates to have a focus on African and Middle Eastern geographies, as these countries are the main areas damaged. Nevertheless, a resolution which aims to create a global understanding and frame of reference for SALW trafficking will also be appreciated.

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