



StarMUN 2025, GA1:

Research Report on the issue of Assistance to states for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them

Definition of key terms:

Small arms and light weapons (**SALWs**) are defined in the United Nations *International Tracing Instrument (ITI)*¹ as:

(a) "Small arms" are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns;

(b) "Light weapons" are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include, inter alia, heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 millimetres.

Background Information, Timeline of Events:

The global number of seized illicit arms in both 2016 and 2017 was 550,000. Of these, 72% were classified as "firearms or SALWs."² Current hotspots for the illicit trade of SALWs are in Central and South America, as well as in Middle Eastern countries.² Many African countries do not report or lack the capacity to report data accurately or fully to the UN. Non-UN sources consider certain African countries like the Central African Republic or the Democratic Republic of the Congo vulnerable to arms trafficking.³

To fight the problem of traffic in illicit SALWs the United Nations passed the *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*⁴ in 2001. The Programme of Action, often referred to as *PoA*, called for governments to act on the national, regional and global levels. The PoA also set first standards regarding policies around the world. It required not only basic developments to be made (like the introduction of effective laws and regulations^{4.1}) but also calls for a required marking on all SALWs^{4.2}. Following after the introduction of the PoA, the UN introduced the International Tracing Instrument (ITI)¹ in 2005. The purpose of the ITI is to identify and track illicit SALWs and foster international cooperation^{1.1}.

1: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Firearms/ITI.pdf>

1.1: I, 1./2.

2: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Firearms/2020_Global_Study_on_Firearms_Trafficking_Executive_Summary.pdf

3: https://ocindex.net/rankings/arms_trafficking?f=rankings&view=List

4: [https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.192/15\(SUPP\)](https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.192/15(SUPP))

4.1: II, 2.

4.2: II, 7./8.

In 2013, the General Assembly passed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).⁵ The instrument, although described as too inefficient from some, is the first treaty regulating the global arms trade.

Major Problems, especially in Central America are the lacking presence of the police in certain areas of states, a lack of police training, equipment and interagency cooperation, as well as the lacking citizens' trust in the police and lacking capacities in agencies.⁹

Possible future solutions:

Studies suggest that building trust between communities and the police can be achieved through collaborative efforts. Additionally, addressing the lack of cooperation between agencies within countries might be more effective with a centralized approach rather than decentralizing power. Governments should also ensure that local authorities enforce regulations correctly.

Relevant Treaties, UN Resolutions and Actions:

- Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (2001)⁴
- International Tracing Instrument (2006)¹
- The Arms Trade Treaty (2013)^{5,6}
- Annual resolutions: Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them (annual/2024)⁷
- Annual resolutions: The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (annual/2024)⁸

Useful Links and Sources:

Bamako Declaration (African Union, 2000) <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/bamako-declaration.pdf>

OSCE guidelines (2003) <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/5/13644.pdf>

UN Study (2020) https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Firearms/2020_Global_Study_on_Firearms_Trafficking_Executive_Summary.pdf

Goal 16.4 of the UNs Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): *16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime* <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/70/1> (page 25)

UN about SALW, related resolutions <https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/>

Programme of Action on SALW, UN (2001) [https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.192/15\(SUPP\)](https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.192/15(SUPP)) (page 16, onwards)

International Tracing Instrument (2005) <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/International-Tracing-Instrument-six-official-languages.pdf> (page 20 - 27)

5: <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/treaty-text.html>

6: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/749455?ln=en&v=pdf> (Voting records: Page 13)

7: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4070630?ln=en&v=pdf>

8: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4070459?ln=en&v=pdf>

9: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/latin-american-research-review/article/armed-arena-arms-trafficking-in-central-america/9A009D77F8483A3437A3E93725EF2BDE>

Present challenges regarding new technologies (IANSA, 2024) https://iansa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/New-Technologies-in-SALW_IANSA_ENG.pdf

Arms Trade Treaty (2013) <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/treaty-text.html>

SALWs in the conflict in Yemen, Middle East (FES, 2020) <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>

SALWs in western African countries (2021) <https://iwatchafrica.org/2021/05/how-the-illicit-trade-in-small-arms-and-light-weapons-salws-is-fueling-conflicts-in-west-africa/>

Arms Trafficking: Central America (U.S. Gov, 2023) <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/firearms-trace-data-central-america-2023>

Arms Trafficking: Central America, Reasons, problems: Study (2021) <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/latin-american-research-review/article/armed-arena-arms-trafficking-in-central-america/9A009D77F8483A3437A3E93725EF2BDE>

Interpol Firearms Traffic Database iARMS <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Firearms-trafficking/Illicit-Arms-Records-and-tracing-Management-System-iARMS>

Arms Trafficking Ratings and figures on Organized Crime Index https://ocindex.net/rankings/arms_trafficking?f=rankings&view=List

Small Arms Survey Databases <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/databases>

5: <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/treaty-text.html>

6: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/749455?ln=en&v=pdf> (Voting records: Page 13)

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8: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4070459?ln=en&v=pdf>

9: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/latin-american-research-review/article/armed-arena-arms-trafficking-in-central-america/9A009D77F8483A3437A3E93725EF2BDE>