

## General Assembly

In General Assembly this year, you will discuss two problems that are very concerning. The first topic is happening in Latin America and is bringing huge negative effects to the region. Both violence and violation to human rights are some sequels of the trade of arms in Central and South America. The second topic is just as important as the first one since it also has serious repercussions. We hope as delegates, you can find viable solutions to these urgent problems.

**Topic A: Fighting trade of arms in Central and South America:** gun violence represents the most dramatic threat to public safety in Latin America and the Caribbean. After decades of uncontrolled proliferation, millions of weapons are circulating throughout the region. It is estimated that between 73,000 and 90,000 people are killed each year in Latin America, and guns are the leading killing “method” used. Today, most legal weapons in Latin America come from the United States, Europe, or the small but growing regional arms industry. It is difficult to estimate the quantity of weapons that Latin American countries import. According to data provided by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers, in 2005 Latin America legally imported at least \$175 million worth of small arms and light weapons, as well as ammunition and spare parts.

**Topic B: Transforming Refugee Camps into Sustainable:** It is estimated that around 60 million people worldwide are facing forced displacement. In response to this, the creation of “temporary camps” takes place; and in reality, these camps are maintained for years and are avoided by most refugees, as they do not offer any prospects other than stagnation, violence and despair. The conflict in too many countries forces families to abandon their homes, the population has no choice other than to live in miserable camps. The transformation of these refugee camps into sustainable settlements is necessary so that the people who escape their countries for the pursuit of living in a safe environment is fulfilled.

We hope to see you soon and see a great debate with committed delegates to find solutions, while representing your countries considering the common good and preservation of human rights.

## BACKGROUND

**Topic A: Fighting trade of arms in Central and South America :** Small arms and gun violence present the most dramatic threat to public safety in Latin America and the Caribbean. After decades of uncontrolled proliferation, at least 45 million to 80 million small arms and light weapons—that is, weapons operated by an individual or small group, including handguns, assault rifles, grenades, grenade launchers, and even man portable surface to air missiles—are circulating throughout the region.<sup>1</sup> Gunshots kill between 73,000 and 90,000 people each year in Latin America, and guns are the leading cause of death among Latin Americans between the ages of 15 and 44, according to World Health Organization estimates.

Small arms flooded Latin America during the Cold War, most significantly during the Central American civil wars of the 1980s. Although diverse motivations, channels, and suppliers have had a hand in their proliferation, the Cold War and its legacies bear most of the responsibility. Both the United States and the Soviet Union supplied their Latin American allies with mass quantities of weapons through proxy arms dealers.

Today, most legal weapons in Latin America come from the United States, Europe, or the small but growing regional arms industry. Because the international small-arms trade lacks full transparency, and a significant portion of the trade is illicit, it is difficult to know the types and estimate the quantities of weapons that Latin American countries import. According to data provided by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers, in 2005 Latin America legally imported at least \$175 million worth of small arms and light weapons, as well as ammunition and spare parts. The United States was the main supplier to the region, exporting almost \$50 million worth of these weapons. Other major suppliers to Latin America that year included Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Italy, Russia, South Africa, and Spain.

Traditionally, Latin American countries have not produced enough weapons to meet their domestic military needs and have relied on imports to fill their arsenals. While almost every country in Latin America manufactures small arms to some extent, production capabilities vary greatly throughout the region. In 2005, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile were the largest regional producers of small arms, and also the four largest regional exporters, transferring \$15.5 million, \$3.6 million, \$3.2 million, and \$657,000 worth of weapons, respectively, to other Latin American countries. Still, Latin American small-arms production is relatively small in scope. According to the Small Arms Survey, only about 4% of the small-arms-producing companies in the world are located in South America, on par with sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. However, in August, 2007, Russia's Izhevsk Manufacturing Plant announced it had finalized the deal to build two factories in Venezuela to produce AK-103 assault rifles and their 7.62 mm ammunition. Construction on the factories began at the end

of 2007 and is scheduled to be completed by 2010. The U.S. and Colombian governments have complained that the Venezuelan military's stockpiles of 7.62 mm FN FAL rifles, which the new AK-103s will replace, might be diverted to Colombian guerrillas.

#### Topic B: Transforming Refugee Camps into Sustainable Settlements in the Case of Protected Displacement.

Considering that the international community's response to refugee influxes is often the creation of "temporary camps"; and that in reality, these camps are maintained for years and are avoided by most refugees, as they do not offer any prospects other than stagnation, violence and despair. The conflict in too many countries forces families to abandon their homes, the population has no choice other than living in miserable camps. The transformation of these refugees into sustainable settlements could benefit this population that escapes from their countries for the pursuit of living in a safe environment. More than 60 % of refugees now live in cities in order to try to rebuild their lives, but the lack of preparation, structures and support associated with their illegal status forces them to survive in dire conditions and makes them vulnerable to exploitation and smugglers who incentivize refugees to spend their last savings to continue their journey towards Europe or other parts of the world. This situation has been pointed out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which, in July 2014, released an ambitious and much welcomed policy of alternatives to camps, calling for the transformation of existing camps into sustainable settlements in host countries. Fast developing refugee crises can cause a massive environmental impact. It is often a consequence of rapidly increasing displaced population compounded by poor camp planning and logistical decisions. Environmental deterioration of surrounding environment in turn generates impacts on the refugees and local populations. In absence of mitigating measures, the economic, social, and public health impacts on these populations can be devastating. Field experience shows that rapidly developing refugee crises can produce massive environmental impacts that ripple over the physical domain of the displaced population and its host region. This is often a consequence of a rapid increase in the camp population, compounded by poor prior assessment and logistical decisions.