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Study Guide

**Disarmament and International
Security Committee**

**Agenda: Regulating Production, Collection
and Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons**

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INDEX

Letter from Bureau	3
Introduction to committee	4
Introduction to agenda	5
Causes	6
Arms manufacturers	6
Wars	7
Private companies	8
Trade	9
Dark Web	9
Smuggling	9
Wars	10
Seizure and Arms Collection of Arms by Traders	11
Repercussions/ effects	13
Acquisitions of small arms by terrorists	13
Civilian acquisition of arms	13
Arming of civilians by the government	14
Socio-Economic problems	14
Past Action	16
Arms Trade Treaty	16
PoA	16
International Tracing Instrument (ITI)	17
Resolution 2117(2013) on small arms and Resolution 2220(2015)	17
Case Studies	18
Africa	18
Syria	19
Institutions for guidance and support	21
MOSAIC	21
SALIENT	21
UNSCAR	21
CASA	21
Conclusion	22

Previous UN meetings	23
Questions a Resolution Must Answer	24
Bibliography	25



Letter from Bureau

Distinguished delegates,

It is our absolute honor to welcome you to the 6th edition of the Shishukunj Model United Nations Conference 2021. We express our deep enthusiasm about serving as your bureau members. We take even greater pleasure in welcoming you all to the first committee of the General Assembly: Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC).

This year DISEC will be discussing a globally significant topic: Regulation of Production, Collection and Trade of Small Arm and Light Weapons. The last two decades have seen a growing trend in the production and possession of small arms. This has had negative impacts on several economies while severely destroying peace and harmony. The committee is expected to address aspects such as the production of such weaponry, the legality of their trade, and the repercussions of their ownership by civilians and non-state actors and come up with plausible solutions for the same.

This study guide offers a brief yet comprehensive insight into the agenda and should be a starting point for your research. Important subtopics have been explained in detail, and delegates are requested to read the study guide thoroughly. Nevertheless, research should not be restricted to the study guide. All delegates are expected to be well researched and aware of their country's stance concerning the agenda.

The aim of the committee is to build consensus among countries and draw innovative solutions in the draft resolution. We will try our best to guide you all through the sessions and make this a memorable experience through fruitful debates and cooperation.

In case of any queries, please feel free to reach out to us personally or on the committee group. We look forward to seeing you all soon.

Regards,

Archit Khandelwal (Chairperson)

Harbhajan Singh Tuteja (Vice-chairperson)

Maitreyi Kapse (Rapporteur)

Introduction to committee

The Disarmament and International Security Committee is the first committee of the general assembly which deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

The DISEC considers all deactivation of arms/weapons and international security matters within the scope of the United Nations Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations. The committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage. Over the years, efforts have been made to rationalise the committee's work, concentrating on rearranging its agenda and improving its organisation of work.

According to its mandate, the committee sessions are structured in three distinctive stages:

- 1) General debate
- 2) Thematic discussions
- 3) Action on drafts.

According to the UN Charter, the purpose of DISEC in the General Assembly is to establish 'general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and also to give 'recommendations with regard to such principles to the members or to the Security Council.'

Disarmament and international security lie at the heart of our determination to prevent illicit arms trade and to save current and future generations from the horrors of war.

Note: The term 'SALW' used throughout the guide refers to 'Small Arms and Light Weapons.'

Introduction to agenda

Since the dawn of the 21st century, small arms and light weapons have proved to be one of the most pressing issues on a global level. As of today, the SALWs are relatively accessible to civilians in many countries. Over 175 nations allow, if not advocate, possession of arms by citizens. In countries like Mexico, Guatemala, and the USA, keeping and bearing arms is a protected fundamental right. Inexpensively produced by arms manufacturers and private companies, SALWs have contributed to terrorist attacks, exacerbated armed conflicts, and empowered transnational organised crimes. Apart from these, many illicit sources are producing arms domestically and misusing them against humankind. Despite the awareness about the repercussions of SALW production and use, the domain and means of their trade remain relatively unknown. Many nations have seen devastating effects of the arms trade on the world, particularly countries in the African continent. Along with the loss of life and spread of terrorism, such trade also has great economic effects. The economic loss from insecurity driven by armed violence, both in conflict and non-conflict settings, is estimated to be around \$500 billion per year.

First discussed in the United Nations on July 9th, 2001, the UN has since taken multiple steps in combating the manufacture, stockpiling and illicit trade of SALW. The Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (UN PoA) was signed in 2001, followed by the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) in 2006 and finally, the legally binding Arms Trade Treaty of 2013 (ATT) were some prominent efforts the United Nations made on its part. Although several treaties have been signed, loopholes exist which encourage the extremist and civilian acquisition of SALW and facilitate their trade through illicit realms.

Although small in size, the SALWs have dramatically accelerated violent conflicts leading to loss of livelihoods, displacements, living in constant fear of life in affected areas, among many other social problems. Locating the primary source of their production, making rigid laws relating to possession of SALW and curbing their unauthorised trafficking is becoming increasingly necessary to maintain global security. It is the need of the hour to look into loopholes and implement firmer policies to achieve the shared goal of international peace.

Causes

Before delving into the production methods of SALW, it is vital to understand what they are. As per the UN panel of 1997, the SALW do not have what is referred to as a "universally accepted" definition. Instead, a defining characteristic that is their accessibility, has been adopted. Small arms is an umbrella term for all the portable weaponry that is produced worldwide. It includes revolvers, pistols, carbines and rifles, sub-machine guns etc. Light weapons, on the other hand, include hefty machine guns, under barrels, mounted grenade launchers etc.

While there are many known production sources throughout this guide, three have been discussed, including arms manufacturers, productions during wars and production by private companies.

Arms manufacturers

The production of SALW is relatively easier compared to any other weapons. The granting of licenses and the dissemination of technology have enabled many countries to manufacture small arms and light weapons in ways that are not necessarily costly. At present, about 80 countries manufacture small arms ammunition for pistols, revolvers, rifles, carbines, sub-machine guns, and machine guns. Producers that are capable of producing the equipment required to manufacture small weapons ammunition are significantly scarce.

According to several surveys and reports, 5,30,000 to 5,80,000 small guns are manufactured worldwide every year either under a licence or as illegal productions. More than 30 million units of these weapons are produced for the armies of nations alone. Arms manufacturers sometimes produce more arms than they are legally permitted to. These excess arms are then distributed all over the world and result in illicit trading.

In countries of Africa, the production of homemade arms is also referred to as "craft weapons", is a widespread business. In Ghana, this homemade weaponry is the source of 80% of violent armed crimes. Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast ranked domestic craft weapons as the primary source of production.

In 1997, an overwhelming volume of small arms were confiscated from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The occurrence of pistols was alarming, followed by rifles and revolvers. A total of 2463 SALW were seized, giving us a rough idea of how much higher the projections of the next two decades were.

Wars

It is not an uncommon observation that simply the availability of small arms and light weapons fuels violent intrastate conflicts and proxy wars. Since these deadly weapons are the primary tools of violence, there are two significant procurement sources. They come through either government-sanctioned sources within the country or non sanctioned sources abroad. In countries like Sudan, Uganda, Sri Lanka, etc., these weapons' availability surpasses soldiers'.

The rise in demand for SALW in regions characterised by armed conflicts, especially after wars, can be attributed to the following:

- Popular demand; especially in countries with loose gun laws
- Existing supply; suppliers motivated by monetary gains try to increase supply for the same

The supply of SALW during wars is exceptionally high. It is estimated that around 639 million SALW come from the remains of civil or proxy wars and armed conflicts. However, this figure has very little relevance to the much larger threat these remains actually pose. Many of these remain unused and are stockpiled for future use if similar conflicts arise or are eventually acquired by civilians after the war. At times these are left behind with the non-state organisations who facilitated the wars; this puts them in a position to illegally move them around in neighbouring nations or among other such non-state groups who share a similar ideology.

The extremist groups alone are not responsible for the illicit transfer of SALW; corruption and malpractices among military personnel also contribute to this. Their improper disposal can also be attributed as one of the main reasons for their circulation after wars.

Private companies

In 2003, the Control Arms Campaign (founded by International Action Network on Arms Trade and Amnesty International) estimated that over 1,135 companies based in more than 98 different countries manufacturing small arms and their various components and ammunition. These companies are mainly private companies. Some MNCs produce arms and ammunition and illegally trade them and sell licensed products.

At a net sale of \$348 billion in 2018, a total of 70 companies based in the USA and Europe (listed in 2018) accounted for 83 per cent of total top 100 arms sales, where the top 100 companies of Europe sold arms worth \$102 billion in 2018. The top 10 companies in Russia also sold arms worth \$36.2 billion. Arms from these companies get circulated in the whole world.

Sometimes, Private companies produce more arms than they are permitted to and conduct illegal trading to earn more profits. Developing a mechanism to check these kinds of illicit production is essential. Though strict laws exist in some countries, corruption and ineffective implementation do not prevent these problems.

Other than big manufacturers, small producers of arms are another significant source of SALWs. Blacksmiths in West Africa, for example, produce a range of small arms, including pistols and shotguns. Artisan firearm manufacture is well-developed in Ghana, and Pakistan produces a wide range of inexpensive, artisan-crafted small arms, including revolvers and shotguns.

Private military companies also facilitate illicit arms trade. They move to places with arms and ammunition and also generate the need for SALWs. Acquisition of arms from such sources becomes easier. Underground trading of arms with them and improper disposal of used weapons become another cause of small arms and light weapons movement.

Trade

Dark Web

Dark Web is a highly secure system and contains a unique URL. There is a particular format of this URL, and it is pretty challenging to gain access to the dark web. A tremendous appeal of the Dark Web is the anonymity, and hence external government forces are unsuccessful in preventing it. Apart from that, the transactions of trade remain unknown, which makes it challenging to trace them.

The dark web is one of the biggest enablers for the circulation of illegal weapons on the black market and a potential source of diversion of legally owned weapons. Though in comparison to other products, the value of arms traded is more minor, its potential impact on international security is significant. The firearms listed on the dark web are not military-grade weapons but merely handguns.

64% of the products shown are handguns, 17% are long semi-automatic guns, and fully automatic long guns are 4%. The dark web doesn't produce new weapons but acts as a medium to traffic the existing ones. Since tracking the source and the buyer is almost impossible on the dark web, both sellers and buyers go for it when buying weapons online.

The USA is the most common source country for arms that are sold on the dark web. Almost 60 percent of the firearms listings are associated with products that originate from the US. This is followed by European countries, which account for roughly 25 per cent.

Smuggling

Smuggling contributes to another big part of illicit trading and the movement of arms. Although it is concentrated in regions characterised by organised crimes and violent armed conflicts, it would be wrong to say there isn't global involvement in the illicit trafficking of SALW. Since small arms and light weapons are inexpensive for criminals to conceal and transit, firearm trafficking is a lucrative market that fosters and funds other forms of serious crime. Smuggling of arms encourages proxy wars and regional conflicts as it arms non-state groups with weapons further worsened by the spread of sensitive technology.

Arms, especially SALW are smuggled across borders. While commercial businesses and private entities carry out the majority of arms trafficking/smuggling, sometimes governments are also involved and deliberately try to arm proxy groups involved in insurgencies against rival governments.

The movement of weapons across countries has been linked to an upsurge in conflict in neighbouring regions by the same armed organisations, with disputes often appearing to follow the flow of guns. This is predominantly observed in countries like Nigeria, Liberia, DRC, Somalia etc., which eventually destabilises neighbouring countries. This can be accorded as another reason for armed conflicts being so common throughout the African subcontinent.

The most prominent example of smuggling of contraband arms and weapons in India is from Yunnan province in China to the insurgent groups of Northeast India via Myanmar, Pakistan, Afghanistan etc. A majority of these assault rifles, grenades, revolvers, and handguns originate in China. Insurgent groups carry out the smuggling both in Myanmar and Pakistan, such as the ISI, KNU, KIA etc. The Afghanistan–Pakistan region undoubtedly has the highest concentration of illegal weaponry in the world, a situation made more explosive by the fact that it is also a hotbed of extremist ideology.

Yet another example is the trafficking of SALW from the USA to Mexico which has uncovered a relatively unknown trade route from the USA to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (Northern Triangle Countries). "The US continues to be the largest indirect source of illegal handguns and assault rifles as a result of unrestricted sales in stores and fairs in American cities," the report said. In 2020, the US Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy identified that the illicit movement of SALW between Mexico and the USA could pose major security threats to both countries. It has been estimated that about 200,000 firearms are smuggled to Mexico every year.

Local contractors

Sometimes, local arms dealers gain access to SALWs by various means (like illicit trading, procurement from local factories and gunsmiths, and from remains of wars, etc.) and start distributing them. They sell arms to civilians and criminals and even local goons and mafia groups. This again leads to the spread of terrorism and loss of security for the civilians of the country. Some local sellers are licensed, while others do illegal trading. Irrespective of the kind, trading in small arms poses a significant security threat to the country. Cases of police officers being shot and armed attacks on personnel result from such type of trade.

Many African countries suffer due to this kind of trade in arms in their terrorism. USA and Brazil are other examples for distribution of arms via local contractors. Local contractors also illegally gain access to arms, some of which are even non-conventional, and their usage has been banned for the collective good.

Wars

During wars, arms and ammunition is widely transported from one place to another. At such times, illegal acquisition and trading of arms become easier. Used weapons of war are also acquired and transported/ sold. Civilian's acquisition of arms increases the reach of these weapons, and tracking the source of origin becomes more difficult. Civilian trading and usage of arms are one of the biggest problems countries experience today. The demand for SALW increases in regions with wars, armed conflict, violence, and organised crime.

The proliferation of the international arms trade began amid the Cold War and only saw further growth in regional conflicts.²⁹ Indeed, in the 1990s, the US and the Soviet Union (USSR) supplied conflicted parties with arms and various weaponry. Examples of this were prevalent in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Seizure and Arms Collection of Arms by Traders

Seizure and collection of arms are mainly focused and driven by the idea that violent armed conflicts in regions have to be reduced, recurring incidents of violence have to be minimised, and illicit trafficking must be controlled. These weapons have proven to be fatal to the health of those collecting them because they contain hazardous ammunition.

Destruction of confiscated and seized arms: Destruction of confiscated small arms and light weaponry depends upon several factors such as operational cost, available equipment, availability of trained personnel, impact environment, involvement of government/ private institutions. Several methods of destruction are known, given that the arms have no ammunition left and have been segregated. The more conventional and inexpensive methods include:

- Melting in furnaces
- Crushing by a hydraulic press
- Burning in open pits
- Oxyacetylene cutting
- Burial in grounds and dumping in the sea were other methods often rejected because of the detrimental impact on the environment

Impact of careless disposal on the environment: Another vital theme under the collection and destruction of small arms is their impact on the environment. Although no method has proven to have minimal impact on the environment, it is essential to ensure that the harmful impact on land, water and air is negligible. Pollution control measures should not be neglected while disposing of small arms and light weapons.



Repercussions/ effects

Acquisitions of small arms by terrorists

Terrorism and violent extremist activities related to it have remained a significant threat to several countries of the world for decades. This alone has led to several cases of political instability, border disputes, loss of life and created a vacuum for terrorist organisations and criminal networks to exploit.

Through the acquisition of arms and light weapons, these groups gain more power. Due to the malicious nature of their activity, they have benefitted from the lack of governance, illegally acquiring and possessing small arms. Arms trafficking has been a profitable business for them and has also enabled them to benefit from collecting taxes and transit fees, robberies, ransom and extortions.

Terrorists also trade collected arms for money or bigger arms and ammunition. The illicit arms trade is the biggest reason terrorist groups can survive and spread terror worldwide.

Military coups, terrorists' control and attacks are all possible due to the illicit trade of arms. Various groups have gained power by illegally acquiring arms, resulting in political instability and global turmoil.

While some countries facilitate such trade and acquisition of arms, it becomes more challenging to stop the terrorist purchase of SALWs and adds another hurdle to the existing problems the world faces due to the trade of SALWs. The illicit trade in arms has been facilitating terrorist activities all over the world. Be it the civil wars of Yemen, Syria, etc., Africa, or all major terrorist attacks globally, all have become possible due to the illicit trade of arms. If the illegal trade in arms is put an end to, it will play a significant role in eradicating terrorism worldwide.

Civilian acquisition of arms

Over the past few years, there has been an increasing trend in the acquisition of arms by civilians. A significant reason for this can be lax laws regarding the possession of weapons in countries. Most of the small arms are not held by the armed forces but the civilians. Civilian ownership of legal and illegal arms accounts for more than 80% of the global stockpile of arms. Another source

of alarm is the extent to which the general public's access to firearms affects levels of armed violence, including homicides, other sorts of armed crime, and suicide.

The availability of firearms to civilians influences the right to life since it enables the commission of homicides. Firearms continue to be the most commonly used instrument for executing killings worldwide, accounting for over half of all homicides (46.3%), implying that they are used in around 174,000 homicides per year. Recent studies have shown that homicide rates in Latin America have skyrocketed because of easy access of small arms to civilians. 75 percent of all homicides in Latin America are the result of gunshot injuries. In 2015 and 2016, for example, over half of all killings in countries with high levels of fatal violence were committed with a firearm, compared to about 12% in countries with low levels of lethal violence.

The regulation of ownership of arms is thus an integral component to control their access and use. Most countries have set guidelines to limit their access to irresponsible users who might possibly pose a threat. Laws requiring background checks of potential purchasers' mental health and criminal history, and any relevant civil orders, have also

concretely reduced the risks of firearm deaths and injuries by ensuring that guns do not end up in the hands of individuals who are likely to misuse them.

Arming of civilians by the government

The government provides legal weapons to civilians. Some countries have given extreme arms freedom to their citizens, the highest being the US with 120.5 guns per 100 people, followed by Yemen with 52.8 guns and Canada with 34.7 guns. Arming civilians can have both positive and negative effects. For instance, it acts as a self-defense for civilians in case of crimes or attacks. However, this kind of possession also leads to increased violence in the localities and affects the mental health of citizens. Deaths due to gun violence, may it be accidental or revenge attacks, affect the socio-economic stability of the region greatly. This problem needs to be addressed in order to rectify the situation.

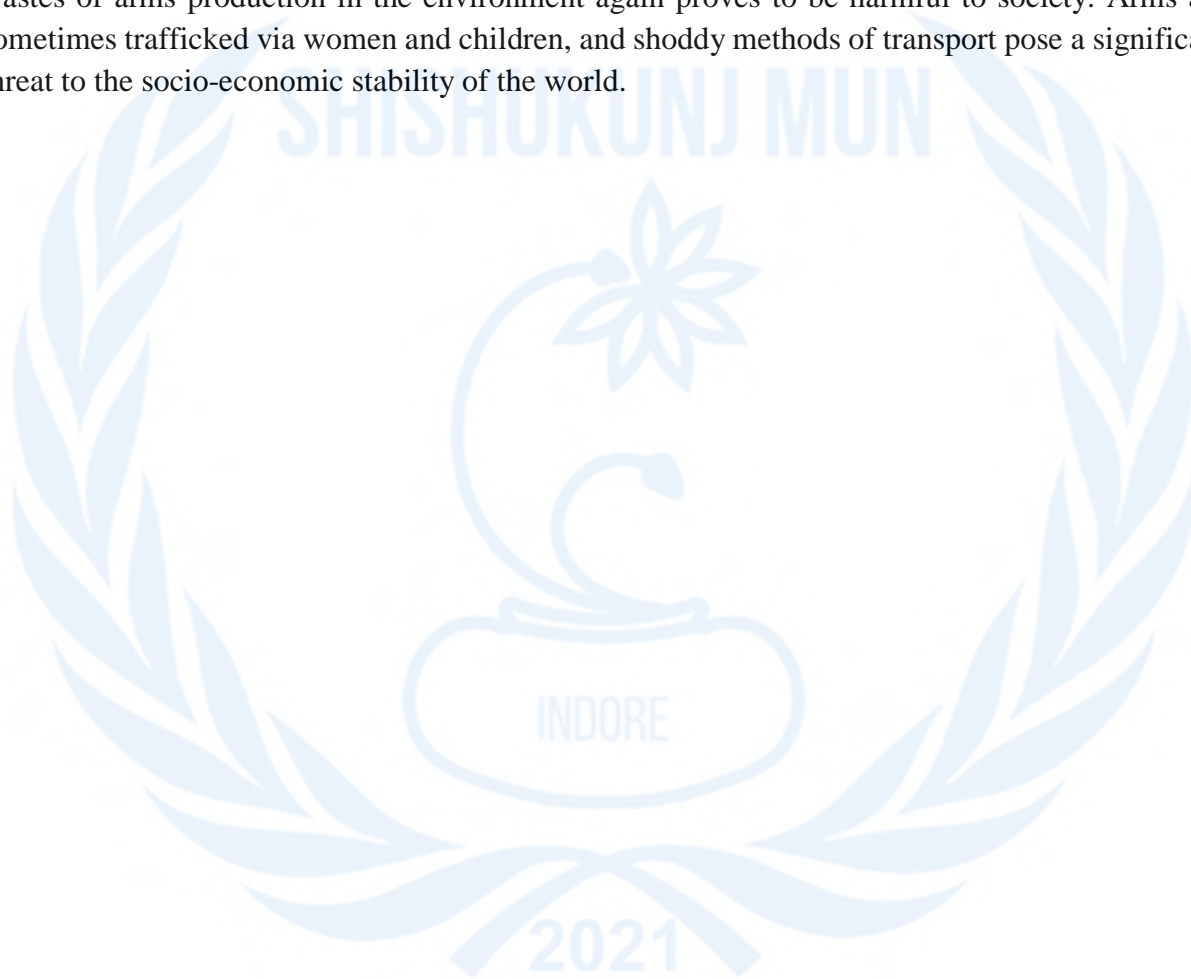
Socio-Economic problems

The trade of small arms and light weapons poses a large number of socio-economic problems. Violence caused due to the use of SALWs is one of the biggest problems the world sees today. Forced evacuations resulting from internal strifes or violence have led to the displacement of people from their lands and communities. Central America and Mexico have seen unprecedented cases of food shortages and inadequate housing.

Living in constant fear of their lives also seems to harm the mental health of civilians, their health benefits are being infringed upon, and the right to life is being denied in a sense. Civil wars and terrorist group uprisings result in migration and loss of life and infrastructure.

When there is an availability of SALWs to the people, there is a higher chance of violence, theft and crimes. This also has severe economic impacts.

The trade of small arms also requires a lot of economic and environmental resources. Dumping wastes of arms production in the environment again proves to be harmful to society. Arms are sometimes trafficked via women and children, and shoddy methods of transport pose a significant threat to the socio-economic stability of the world.



Past Action

Arms Trade Treaty

This treaty aims to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the global trade regulation in conventional arms and Prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion.

The arms trade treaty is an international disarmament treaty that establishes criteria for when the transfer of conventional arms may be lawful. The treaty was signed on December 24th 2014, and is one of the most widely accepted treaties; with the ratification of 110 states and another 31 signatories, the treaty restricts illicit trade in arms and weapons between countries.

The loophole in the treaty is that 32 states haven't ratified it. Another problem the delegates must look upon is that ammunition is not counted under the Arms Trade Treaty. James Lynch, Head of Arms Control and Human Rights at Amnesty International, said in a statement, " The Arms Trade Treaty promised to save countless lives by reigning in this massive, secretive industry. Still, at the moment, weak implementation and a lack of transparency are threatening to undermine it. About half a million people are killed every year by firearms, and millions more are trapped in brutal conflicts fueled by reckless arms sales."

PoA

Signed in 2001, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) encourages governments to improve national small arms regulations, to strengthen stockpile management, to ensure that weapons are correctly and reliably marked, to improve cooperation in firearms tracing, and engaging in regional and international cooperation and assistance.

The implementation of the PoA is judged based on national reports submitted by the Member States. Information collected from member states are studied, and the required assistance is then provided. To effectively implement the provisions of the PoA, it is essential to strengthening regional customs, law enforcement and intelligence cooperation through existing regional forums such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and other relevant regional organisations.

International Tracing Instrument (ITI)

The general assembly adopted the ITI within the PoA framework. It is an instrument aimed at strengthening weapons tracing. Improving weapons tracing is now part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The ITI promotes development in the tracking process of SALWs. However, this is difficult for countries that struggle to arrange the various monetary and infrastructural resources for developing the required mechanism for SALW tracing. Inaccurate identification of weapons and lack of import marking is another hurdle in the tracing of SALWs.

There is a need for a systematic legal framework outlining countries' guidelines while tracing SALWs. This could be a national or a regional one, depending on countries' choices. Along with SALW tracing, conflict tracing is also essential, along with logistical developments for effective implementation of the ITI.

Resolution 2117(2013) on small arms and Resolution 2220(2015)

Resolution 2117 was the first thematic resolution on small arms adopted by the SC. It sought to strengthen the council's response to small arms-related threats to international peace and security.

Case Studies

Africa

After the cold war ended in 1991, countries of Africa saw an unprecedented disruption of peace. At the time, countries that dominated the global arena both politically and economically gradually began showing interest in the African continent. This further worsened the already crumbling state it was in. This was when proxy groups and non-state actors stepped in, fuelling regional conflicts. During the cold war, millions of portable small arms and light weapons were shipped into Africa to equip proxy forces and the military of independent states. Many untrained civilians without supervision had access to these. This trend of possession continued as the surplus weaponry from the war was sold in the arms market for half of what they were actually worth. In violent conflicts, SALW were the weapons of choice, but in Africa, they were slowly morphing into weapons of mass destruction, leading to the loss of more than 7 million lives.

The situation got more and more volatile with the emergence of several extremist groups such as Boko Haram, Lord's resistance army, Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. With easy access to SALW, civilians became the main target of their violent campaigns. Over the last two decades, countries like Nigeria, Somalia, DRC, Mali, Mozambique, Burkina Faso and many more have witnessed gruesome civil wars and conflicts evolving from the possession of small arms. To date, local conflicts are further exacerbated by the availability of small arms. It leads to the displacement of locals and massive socio-economic disparities. Arms transfer from conflict to conflict, fulfilling the desire and need of criminals who have no regard for borders.

Unsurprisingly, breaking this cycle of conflicts driven by the availability of arms has proven to be a herculean task. These weapons originate from both within and outside Africa and are trafficked. These are also majorly carried out by non-state groups who are facilitated by corrupt security officials and other such groups who share the same ideologies.

The casualties resulting from these wars are genuinely horrifying. In Nigeria, about 350,000 people have died as a result of the ongoing conflict between Boko Haram and the Nigerian army. This has spilt over to the neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. On the surface, this may seem like a repercussion of the conflict; however, this will play a major role in the destabilisation of Africa. "Within the last few weeks, more than 5,890 terrorists comprising foot soldiers and their commanders have surrendered with their families to their own troops in the North East Zone," said Brigadier General Bernard Onyeuko, spokesman for the armed forces. Similarly, the conflict currently taking place in DRC has spilt over to Libya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. It will not be long before Guinea is affected by this as well. The illicit trade in light weapons has been blamed partly for the continuance of hostilities across the

African continent. Approximately 30 million weapons are currently being disseminated throughout Africa.

Kawu Monguno, a lecturer at the University of Maiduguri, recently added that the lack of cooperation between African Security Forces is a big issue, particularly in Nigeria. "For quite some time, there has been a problem in managing the joint forces," he said. "Leadership has been a problem, and there has been a withdrawal of forces time and time again from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). We don't have enough security officers to man these porous borders."

Syria

The Syrian Arms laws are

- Applicants for a gun owner's license in Syria are required to establish a genuine reason to possess a firearm, for example, for the legitimate protection of persons, assets, or property.
- The minimum age for gun ownership in Syria is 25 years.
- Arms possession is only possible by license.

Coming to the Syrian Civil war, The Syrian Civil War is an ongoing violent conflict in Syria that started on March 15th 2011, between pro-democratic insurgents and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's long-standing dynastic regime. The Assad regime made people witness many economic disparities and one of the worst droughts lasting four years from 2006-2010.

The violence rapidly escalated, which led to a civil war. Hundreds of rebel groups sprung up, and it did not take long for the conflict to become more than a battle between Syrians for or against Mr Assad. Foreign powers started sending money, weaponry and even fighters. As the chaos worsened, extremist jihadist organisations with their aims, such as the Islamic State (IS) group and al-Qaeda, became involved.

The violence was so brutal that the accurate death and missing account is still unknown. According to the sources, nearly five hundred thousand people have been killed.

The sources of weaponry for the insurgents were government stockpiles. The rebels acquired government weapons and ammunition in three ways: purchased from corrupt government officials, via direct assault, in some cases immediately using captured weapons to sustain rolling offensives or brought by defecting soldiers. Since the beginning of the conflict, Syria's military has struggled

to staunch a steady stream of defectors from joining the insurgents. The presence of these former soldiers has both increased the lethality of the insurgency and helped to shape the types of weapons in demand.

The continuation of the war in Syria has also fueled arms trafficking, with illicit activities in the region causing chaos. The boost in black-market arms sales contributed to destabilising proliferation across the region. Indeed, the diversion of arms to illicit markets makes weapons nearly impossible to trace and can improve the arsenals of armed groups, criminal organisations, and terrorist groups. For example, Islamic State fighters acquired advanced weaponry from Syrian opposition groups and Iraqi Security Forces, adding to the threats posed to national, regional, and multilateral forces combating the terrorist organisation.



Institutions for guidance and support

MOSAIC

The Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) is a UN body that provides practical, authoritative guidance to practitioners and policymakers on a broad range of small arms control issues.

SALIENT

The Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT) is a United Nations funding facility located within the Peacebuilding Fund, which helps countries tackle armed violence and illicit small arms and light weapons.

UNSCAR

The United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) is another sustainable funding mechanism for conventional arms control, including small arms and light weapons, ammunition, arms trade and transparency in armaments.

CASA

The United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) is the UN system-wide internal-agency coordination mechanism on small arms, the arms trade, ammunition and armed violence issues. It seeks the expertise of 24 UN partners and aims at disarmament, fighting terrorism, conflict prevention and other peacekeeping operations.

Conclusion

After reading this guide, the delegates will get a better understanding of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the threat they pose to the world security and economic, social and political stability. The bureau expects a high energy and fruitful discussion since this topic concerns most countries in the committee and has both positive and negative sides. The delegates are requested to not keep their research limited to the guide and come up with substantive solutions for tackling the problem, keeping in mind the betterment of all.



Previous UN meetings

The United Nations has discussed the issue of Small Arms and Light Weapons several times. Several policies and resolutions have been made in the UN for the problem. Some of the meetings and resolutions are-

1. Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects New York, 9-20 July 2001
2. UNODC jointly with the UNODA, Vienna (Austria), August 9th 2021
3. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, December 12th 2016(A/RES/71/48-resolution)
4. Assistance to States for curbing the illegal traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them, December 11th 2015 (A/RES/70/29-resolution)

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1. How can the production of SALWs by private companies be regulated? Are there ways to prevent the illicit production of arms?
2. How can the acquisition of SALWs by terrorists and civilians be prevented? Is there a mechanism that can be developed to regulate weapon acquisition by various groups?
3. What are the ways through which the negative effects of civilian arms rights are prevented?
4. How can the trade of illicit arms via the dark web be prevented? Can a mechanism be developed to track down the source and the buyer of these arms?
5. How can arms movement via private companies be regulated? Can laws be made to regulate the movement of arms via private military companies?
6. What are the various loopholes in the existing treaties for SALWs? How can these loopholes be worked upon and effective implementation of these treaties be achieved?
7. How can the existing institutions contribute more to stop the illicit trade in SALWs?

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