

# MUN 2014

*Background Guide:*

*General Assembly First  
Committee on Disarmament  
and International Security*

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
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# Letter from the Director

## *Delegates,*

First and foremost, welcome to MUNI's Committee on Disarmament and International Security (DISEC). I am Jeffrey Tsai, and will be serving as the research director for this committee. This will be fourth year involved in Model United Nations. I am a political science major at the University of Illinois.

This year, DISEC will tackle two important issues in the global community. The first topic has to do with the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, which continues to be a problem in our globe today. I hope delegates can focus on the need for transparency and border patrol. If possible, try not to form a new forum since there is already enough programs in the United Nations regarding this issue (and that has not solved anything yet). Delegates are encouraged to find a diplomatic solution in their country's point of view to figure out how to deal with the illicit trade. For More Economically Developed Nations, the need to help the Less Economically Developed Nations should be considered. On the other hand, Less Economically Developed Nations should try to see what they can do collectively to stop the illicit trade.

The second, a more recent issue is on drones, specifically on counter-terrorism. Drones have a negative connotation as they kill innocent lives. There are two sides of the spectrum when it comes to drones in countering terrorism. Those who are against argue the moral and ethics behind drone attacks. However, those who support drone attacks show that it is effective. Delegates should not try to push towards one side or the other, but should attempt find a diplomatic solution to the issue.

In an era when international security is a top priority of the international community, we look forward to concrete resolutions and fruitful debates that will advocate a safer world. I hope to see everyone prepared on both topics and ready to dig into these topics with insight. Finally, I hope that all delegates will be able to experience the thrill and excitement of MUNI, even with all the professionalism and the diplomatic-mature atmosphere. Feel free to email me if you have any questions and I will try to assist you to the best of my abilities. Once again, I wish you the best of luck in your research.

Best Regards,

*Jeffery Y. Tsai*

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# *Topic: Assistance to states for curbing the illicit trades of Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects.*

## *Overview*

Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter outlines the role of arms in international security, with emphasis on Article 51, “nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of a Member of the United Nation to self-defense”. Defensive technology is something that nations feel the need to develop in order to ensure their security, which leads to nations to obtain stock of arms, military equipment, and many other forms of dual-use technology. A significant portion of these goods must be internationally transferred from suppliers to manufacturers to their destinations. In recent years the sophistication of international trade coupled with the high demand for arms and dual-use technology has allowed the expansion of black and grey markets that funnel extremely dangerous illicit transfers. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) are the bane of peace. They cause worldwide crime and violence because most small arms and light weapons cannot be tracked and are insignificant in the context of international security. However, SALWs remain the favorite choice of weaponry for mobs, gangs, organized criminals, pirates, terrorists, rebels, drug cartels, and bandits. As their namesake, SALWs are light, cheap, and concealable, thereby, Less Economically Developed Nations (LEDC) use them as their weapon of choice for national violence, namely the African countries (Africa Union).

An estimated 875 million SALWs circulate the global community today. In most parts of the world, namely the Global South, such SALWs can be used by nearly anyone—with or without a license. Indeed, in some areas small arms or light weapons are used as currency or trade. The availability of SALW has a wide range, and thus has caused much trouble for national governments. The size and appearance that are suggested in the name “small” and “light” are misleading to their true potential. Small and light allow easy smuggling and illicit trading between non-governmental organizations, third party groups, and black markets. In some areas, while weapons embargoes and war zones have been explicitly blocked off, weapons’ trading still finds access across the lines.

## *History and Current Issues*

In 2001, nearly 140 nations worldwide congregated to create the UN Program of Action in an attempt to stop the illicit trade. However, the program did not define “illicit” arms trades. Still, with this UN program, many nations still balked at the idea of further progress at the destruction of these arms, including China, India, Iran, Israel, Russia, and the United States. Many nations have disagreed about the measures required to counter the illicit trade and their concerns have repeatedly blocked certain developments under the UN program.

One of the biggest debates among nations is the question of exports and the items of exports, including the degrees of security and checks. Certain states have consistently opposed restrictions on transfers to those without import authorization from the importing country. The United States has long opposed such a restriction because it may interfere with the the rights of the oppressed to defend themselves against tyrannical and genocidal regimes. The United States has opposed controls on small arms ammunition or civilian arms possession as it is extremely tedious, costly, ineffective, and against some of the constitutional rights of citizens.

On May 2001, the General Assembly adopted the Firearms Protocol. The protocol entered into force in July 2005, but did not cover everything, including war conflicts. The Firearms Protocol promoted better reinforcement in stockpile management, controls on exports, weapons disposal, disarmament, and demobilization. However, this protocol was not legally binding, and did not contain more explicit transfer criteria or restrictions on transfers.

Later, in December 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted The UN Instrument on Tracing Illicit Small Arms which gave standards on marking and tracing of small arms that were contained in the UN Firearms Protocol and the program of action. It encouraged states to mark all legally produced small arms with a code containing a unique serial number and information that identifies the country of manufacture and the manufacturer, but this was not accepted by all nations due to the ambiguity.

The Programme of Action called for the General Assembly to follow certain step in an attempt to combat the illicit brokering of small arms. The General Assembly established a group of governmental experts in 2004 to investigate embargo violations. Research

by NGOs highlight the role of poorly regulated private brokers and transport firms in illicit arms transfers. Nonetheless, at the November experts meeting, some states questioned the need for an international instrument on brokering controls, while others questioned the control of arms trades outside the nations themselves.

Two more resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly in December 2006 that concerned the small arms. The first, on an arms treaty on imports, exports and transfers, called for a group of experts to construct an instrument in the trade of arms. Eventually, this was done by an NGO, with much support from certain nations. The second resolution was on the stockpiling of surplus ammunition and how the ammunition should be controlled.

All of the resolutions on the UN program, the arms trade treaty, and ammunition controls were adopted by majority voting. This prevented the United States from blocking their adoption. Surprisingly, the United States was the only nation that voted against all the resolutions and treaties, while 24 other states abstained—all of these countries had something in common—they were major traders of small arms. However, even though these countries showed signs of requiring aid, they did not block attempts to pass the resolutions. With much aid and persuasion, these states may turn a hand and start combat against illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

## *Possible Corrective Action*

### *International Agreements*

More agreements, such as the Programme of Action, the Nairobi Protocol, the SADC protocol, and the Organization of American States, need to be established, whether binding or not. These create standards and principles that can improve national control.

### *Weapons Collection and Destruction*

Governments or peacekeeping missions usually authorize weapons collection. The destruction of these weapons, is essential in cutting down illegal trades of arms. These weapons can be recollected by voluntary means, by obligation, or by purchase.

### ***Stockpile Management***

Stockpiles are very important and require high security as they are essentially keeps with a lot of weapons—a great danger if not properly secured. Security forces may be unable to protect the weapons so many weapons find their way into the illicit market.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

The surrender of weapons by combatants ensures that the arms, whether through illicit or legal means, will not be used for violence. DDR is an important in the disposal and decrease in arms circulations, thus decreases the chance of illicit trade.

### ***Legislation Reformation***

More than half of the world's supply of SALWs is civilian hands. Countries may need some type of legislation to control the usage and availability of these guns. A judicial system may also keep the SALW-holders in check, making sure that all guns are registered and that their owners are trained to a minimum standard before being licensed. National parliaments may also play a critical role in enacting appropriate gun control and monitoring its enforcement.

### ***Public Education and Awareness***

In many countries, guns identify masculinity. Education or other types of persuasion can do changing this concept. NGOs may aid local governments in raising the awareness of the general population to decrease the fervor for arms.

## ***Questions to Consider***

1. What are the major threats of small arms and light weapons?
2. Will strengthening border patrol help?
3. How are nations going to be more transparent about the transfers of SALWs?