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General and complete disarmament: the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2024

[*on the report of the First Committee (A/79/408, para. 114)*]

79/40. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 78/46 of 4 December 2023, as well as all previous resolutions on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, including resolution 56/24 V of 24 December 2001,

Emphasizing the importance of the continued and full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,¹ and recognizing its important contribution to international efforts on this matter,

Emphasizing also the importance of the continued and full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (the International Tracing Instrument),²

Recalling the commitment of States to the Programme of Action as the main framework for measures within the activities of the international community to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,

Underlining the need for States to enhance their efforts to build national capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument,

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 (A/CONF.192/15), chap. IV, para. 24.

² See decision 60/519 and A/60/88 and A/60/88/Corr.2, annex.



Mindful of the implementation of the outcomes adopted by the follow-up meetings on the Programme of Action,

Welcoming the successful convening of the Fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 17 to 28 June 2024, and its outcome,³

Recognizing the need for the strengthened participation of women in decision-making and implementation processes relating to the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, and reaffirming the need for States to mainstream a gender perspective into their implementation efforts,

Noting that web-based tools developed by the Secretariat, including its searchable database and the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium, and the tools developed by Member States could be used to assess progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming its decision, in its resolution [77/71](#) of 7 December 2022, to establish a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons in order to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, in particular in developing countries,

Noting that voluntary national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action can serve, *inter alia*, to provide a baseline for measuring progress in its implementation, build confidence and promote transparency, provide a basis for information exchange and action and serve to identify needs and opportunities for international assistance and cooperation, including the matching of needs with available resources and expertise,

Noting with satisfaction regional and subregional efforts being undertaken in support of the implementation of the Programme of Action, and commending the progress that has already been made in this regard, including the tackling of both supply and demand factors that are relevant to addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons,

Recognizing that sharing and applying best practices, on a voluntary basis, at the regional, subregional and national levels support the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument and should therefore be an ongoing effort, in order to address ongoing challenges associated with the diversion of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons,

Reaffirming that international cooperation and assistance are an essential aspect of the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument,

Recognizing the efforts undertaken by civil society in the provision of assistance to States for the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Recalling that Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, in accordance with the sovereignty of States and their relevant international obligations,

Reiterating that illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons is a serious problem that the international community should address urgently,

³ [A/CONF.192/2024/RC/3](#), annex.

Reiterating also the new challenges and potential opportunities with regard to effective marking, record-keeping and tracing resulting from developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, and bearing in mind the different situations, capacities and priorities of States and regions,

Recognizing that the opportunities and challenges associated with these developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, including polymer and modular weapons and firearms produced using three-dimensional printing, must be addressed in a timely manner,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,⁴ which contains an overview of recent developments in the illicit trade in and circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as the activities carried out by the United Nations,

Welcoming the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty,⁵

Acknowledging that effective national control systems for the transfer of conventional arms contribute to the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,

Recalling the adoption of resolution [78/47](#) of 4 December 2023 and, without a vote, of the final report⁶ of the open-ended working group established pursuant to resolution [76/233](#) of 24 December 2021, and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, which is a cooperative framework that is voluntary and contains a set of political commitments for strengthening and promoting existing initiatives on, and addressing existing gaps in, through-life conventional ammunition management, as contained in the annex to the report,

1. *Underlines the fact that the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects requires concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture, brokering, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and that their uncontrolled proliferation in many regions of the world has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels;*

2. *Recognizes the urgent need to maintain and enhance national controls, in accordance with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including their diversion to illicit trade, illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, taking into account, inter alia, their adverse humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences for the affected States;*

3. *Emphasizes the need for States to redouble national efforts to provide for the safe, secure, comprehensive and effective management of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons held by Governments to prevent, combat and eradicate the diversion of those weapons;*

4. *Calls upon all States to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (the International Tracing Instrument) by, inter alia, including in their national reports the name and contact information of the national points of contact*

⁴ [A/79/77](#).

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 3013, No. 52373.

⁶ [A/78/111](#).

and information on national marking practices used to indicate country of manufacture and/or country of import, as applicable;

5. *Encourages* all relevant initiatives, including those of the United Nations, other international organizations, regional and subregional organizations and civil society, for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action, and calls upon all Member States to contribute towards the continued implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels;

6. *Encourages* States to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to resolution [60/81](#) of 8 December 2005 to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons;⁷

7. *Endorses* the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 17 to 28 June 2024;

8. *Decides*, pursuant to the schedule of meetings for the period from 2024 to 2030 agreed upon at the Fourth Review Conference, to convene, in New York, a one-week biennial meeting of States in 2026 (10 meetings) and a one-week biennial meeting of States in 2028 (10 meetings), to consider key challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument at the national, regional and global levels;

9. *Also decides* to convene the Fifth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (and the International Tracing Instrument) in 2030 as a two-week event, to be preceded by a preparatory committee meeting of not more than five days, in early 2030;

10. *Underlines* the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument for attaining Goal 16 and target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;⁸

11. *Emphasizes* the need for the equal, full, meaningful and effective participation of women in all decision-making and implementation processes relating to the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;

12. *Encourages* States to take into account recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design, in particular polymer and modular weapons, in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument and to strengthen normative frameworks, where needed, and cooperation between law enforcement agencies so as to prevent unauthorized recipients, including criminals and terrorists, from acquiring small arms and light weapons;

13. *Emphasizes* that international cooperation and assistance remain essential to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, while being mindful of the need to ensure the adequacy, accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability of international cooperation and assistance measures, including, as appropriate, improved funding arrangements,

⁷ See [A/62/163](#) and [A/62/163/Corr.1](#).

⁸ Resolution [70/1](#).

technology transfer and adequate training and support programmes, as well as strong national ownership;

14. *Also emphasizes* the fact that initiatives by the international community with respect to international cooperation and assistance remain essential and complementary to national implementation efforts, as well as to those at the regional and global levels;

15. *Recognizes* the necessity for interested States to develop effective coordination mechanisms, where they do not exist, to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action and strengthen the exchange of information on international cooperation and assistance, including experiences on completed assistance projects;

16. *Encourages* States to consider, among other mechanisms, the coherent identification of needs, priorities, national plans and programmes that may require international cooperation and assistance from States and regional and international organizations in a position to do so;

17. *Decides* to establish and maintain a structured procedure within the Secretariat, starting in 2026, to process offers of and requests for assistance submitted under the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument to facilitate the matching of needs and resources, as outlined in paragraph 212 of the outcome document of the Fourth Review Conference;

18. *Requests* the Secretariat to establish a dedicated funding mechanism under the trust fund for global and regional disarmament activities to receive voluntary contributions from Member States to advance international cooperation and assistance activities related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, complementary to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, the Saving Lives Entity fund and other existing funding mechanisms;

19. *Encourages* States to make, on a voluntary basis, increasing use of their national reports as a tool for communicating assistance needs and information on the resources and mechanisms available to address such needs, and encourages States in a position to render such assistance to make use of those national reports;

20. *Encourages* States, relevant international and regional organizations and civil society with the capacity to do so to cooperate with and provide assistance to other States, upon request, in the preparation of comprehensive national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;

21. *Encourages* States to reinforce, as necessary, cross-border cooperation at the national, subregional and regional levels in addressing the common problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, with full respect for each State's sovereignty over its own borders;

22. *Also encourages* States to take full advantage of the benefits of cooperation with the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, the World Customs Organization, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in accordance with their mandates and consistent with national priorities;

23. *Encourages* all efforts to build national capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action, including those highlighted in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference;

24. *Recalls* its decision, in its resolution [77/71](#), to establish a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons in order to strengthen

technical knowledge and expertise in areas relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, in particular in developing countries, for a duration of four weeks in-person in four regions, respectively, preceded by a preparatory self-paced online course, with the participation of 15 fellows per region, and in order to expedite the implementation of the programme, to provide the yearly financial resources necessary to ensure a sustained operationalization of this programme and urges its implementation in 2025, and requests the Secretary-General to operationalize the decision and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its eightieth session and periodically thereafter for follow-up;

25. *Encourages* States to submit, on a voluntary basis, national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action, notes that States will submit national reports on their implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, encourages those States in a position to do so to use the reporting template made available by the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat, and reaffirms the utility of synchronizing such reports with biennial meetings of States and review conferences as a means of increasing the submission rate and improving the utility of reports, as well as contributing substantively to meeting discussions;

26. *Encourages* States in a position to do so to provide financial assistance, through a voluntary sponsorship fund, that could be distributed, upon request, to States otherwise unable to participate in meetings on the Programme of Action;

27. *Welcomes* the establishment of the Saving Lives Entity fund to ensure sustained financing for coordinated, integrated small arms control measures in countries most affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and encourages States in a position to do so to make voluntary financial contributions to the fund;

28. *Encourages* interested States and relevant international and regional organizations in a position to do so to convene regional meetings to consider and advance the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as the International Tracing Instrument, including in preparation for the meetings on the Programme of Action;

29. *Encourages* civil society, industry and relevant organizations to strengthen their cooperation and work with States at the respective national and regional levels to achieve the implementation of the Programme of Action;

30. *Reaffirms* the importance of States' undertaking to identify, where applicable, groups and individuals engaged in the illegal manufacture, trade, stockpiling, transfer, possession, as well as financing for acquisition, of illicit small arms and light weapons, and take action under appropriate national law against such groups and individuals;

31. *Requests* the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive analysis, within existing resources, of progress in the trends, challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including with regard to national frameworks, based on available credible information, including information submitted and/or provided by Member States, for presentation at the Biennial Meeting of States in 2026 for consideration and appropriate follow-up;

32. *Also requests* the Secretariat to report on support provided by the United Nations system for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including experiences, best practices and lessons learned regarding the efficient use of available resources, for presentation at

upcoming meetings on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;

33. *Decides* to establish an open-ended technical expert group, convening for at least two days, and no more than three days, in 2026 and 2028, within the schedule of meetings of the Biennial Meetings of States, to develop agreed recommendations, by consensus, to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the light of developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design, in particular polymer and modular weapons and firearms produced using three-dimensional printing, focusing on the provision of international cooperation and assistance, as outlined in paragraphs 174 to 178 of the outcome document of the Fourth Review Conference;

34. *Requests* the Secretariat, within existing resources, to conduct a study on obliterated markings and methods for marking recovery in the context of the International Tracing Instrument and to report to the Biennial Meeting of States in 2026;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its eightieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

36. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its eightieth session, under the item entitled “General and complete disarmament”, the sub-item entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”.

43rd plenary meeting
2 December 2024
