

MIDWEST MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Gateway to Diplomacy

BACKGROUND MATERIALS

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General Assembly First
Committee

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General Assembly First Committee

Committee Mandate

Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) was established as one of the foundational institutions of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 and is the primary embodiment of sovereign equality within the UN, representing all 193 UN Member States.¹ As a deliberative body, the UNGA allows all Member States the opportunity to express their stance and opinions on international issues in order to create non-binding resolutions aimed at addressing some of the world's most pressing issues.² As one of the UNGA's six subsidiary bodies, the General Assembly First Committee (GA1) was created to address threats to global peace and security as outlined in Article 1, Section 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations*.³ GA1 has been responsible for the creation of a number of landmark UN documents including the very first resolution, *A/RES/1(I)* the "Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy."⁴ While the United Nations Security Council has the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security through binding resolutions, GA1 is primarily responsible for deliberating and creating policies to create the conditions necessary for peace and security to prevail.⁵ Due to the interconnectedness of their work, GA1 often works closely with the Security Council, as well as a number of other UN organizations including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.⁶ At the 76th session of GA1, Member States deliberated on topics including the reduction of military budgets, establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.⁷

Membership

As one of the six subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, membership in GA1 is extended to all 193 UN Member States.⁸ New Member States must be recommended by the Security Council and are approved by a 2/3 majority vote amongst current members of the General Assembly.⁹ Additionally, GA1 invites over 100 observers to its annual sessions in order to get a diverse viewpoint in the decision-making process from

¹ United Nations General Assembly. "General Assembly of the United Nations." N.d.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ United Nations General Assembly. "Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)." N.d.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ United Nations General Assembly. "Allocation of Agenda Items to the First Committee." A/C.1/76/1. 2021

⁸ United Nations. "About UN Membership." N.d.

⁹ Ibid.

a number of non-member states and independent entities.¹⁰ GA1 is overseen by an annually rotating Chairperson, with Moroccan Ambassador Omar Hilele having served during the 76th session.¹¹

Reporting

GA1 gathers annually to debate how to address issues of peace and security, and delegates use the results of these discussions to develop working papers.¹² After being reviewed by the committee and amended to reflect the stance of the body, these working papers may become draft resolutions if accepted via a majority vote by the committee.¹³ Draft resolutions are then passed onto the General Assembly Plenary, where it may be voted upon by every Member State in order to be adopted as a resolution reflective of the will of the international community.¹⁴ This process is essential for maintaining sovereign equality, as not all Member States have the resources and staffing available to be represented at every committee session and informal debate.¹⁵

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ United Nations General Assembly First Committee. "Omar Hilele (Morocco), Chair of First Committee." United Nations. N.d.

¹² United Nations General Assembly. "Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)." United Nations. N.d.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

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General Assembly First Committee

Topic 1: Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Introduction

The term “conventional weapons” includes a wide range of armaments such as planes, artilleries, small arms, and light weapons, but excludes weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons).¹ While most conventional weapons are not prohibited by the United Nations, certain weapons in this category have emerged that create excessively injurious or indiscriminate effects.² Specifically, the United Nations (UN) has sought to ban weapons which could either indiscriminately target civilians or cause excessive injuries to combatants.³ The *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects* (CCW) was adopted on October 10, 1980 and signed by a total of 50 Member States with the goal of increasing civilian protections and avoiding unnecessary suffering of combatants.⁴

Background

Sometimes referred to as the Inhumane Weapons Convention, state parties to the CCW have signed on in an effort to ban weapons that could indiscriminately harm civilians and to limit the effects of weapons that cause unnecessary suffering or superfluous injury.⁵ The history of the international movement to eliminate inhumane weaponry can be traced back to July 1964 when Northern Vietnam decried the use of napalm and white phosphorus in the Vietnam War.⁶ This led to the Soviet Union releasing a statement in April 1965 condemning “the use of barbarous weapons of annihilation, including napalm bombs, against the peaceful population”.⁷ In 1968, the Tehran International Conference on Human Rights requested the UN Secretary General to investigate “... the need for additional humanitarian international conventions or for possible revision of existing Conventions to ensure the better protection of civilians, prisoners and combatants in all armed conflicts and the prohibition and limitation of the

¹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Conventional Arms.” United Nations. N.d.

² Ibid.

³ United Nations. “The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects as Amended on 21 December 2001.”

⁴ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “The Convention for Certain Conventional Weapons.” United Nations. N.d.

⁵ International Committee of The Red Cross. “1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. International Committee of The Red Cross. N.d.

⁶ Eric Prokosch. “The Development of the Convention on Conventional Weapons 1971-2003.” Article 36. 2021.

⁷ Robert Neer. “Napalm: An American Biography.” Belknap Press. 2013.

use of certain methods and means of warfare.”⁸ In 1972 the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts (CDDH) was held by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which led directly to the adoption of two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Convention relating to the victims of both national and international armed conflicts.⁹ Delegates at this conference considered the adoption of general principles of prohibitions on weaponry causing unnecessary suffering and indiscriminate attacks, including the 1899 ban on dum-dum bullets.¹⁰ The goal of this legislation was to apply existing international law to the prohibition of specific weapons which fall within the general categories that were already established.¹¹ This building pressure from the international community eventually led to the creation of the CCW.¹²

The initial text of the CCW included a framework for processes on how to join the convention, how it operates, and how to adopt additional protocols.¹³ In addition, the CCW contained three protocols at the time of signing: the *Protocol on Non-Detectable Fragments*, the *Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of mines, booby-traps, and other devices*, and the *Protocol on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of incendiary weapons*.¹⁴ CCW State parties meet annually at the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, and additionally gather every five years at the CCW Review Conference.¹⁵ The Review Conference is responsible for evaluating the operations and status of the CCW and its protocols and controls the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts for the CCW, created in 2001, to negotiate new protocols and study specific weapons and problems. At the first CCW review conference a fourth protocol was negotiated, *The Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons*, and in 2003 a fifth protocol was added titled *CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War*.¹⁶

Current Situation

The CCW was designed at its conception to be an updated mechanism to address modern weapons - as weapons technology evolves, the CCW is meant to evolve

⁸ International Conference on Human Rights. “Human Rights in Armed Conflicts.” Tehran Conference. A/CONF.32/41. 1968.

⁹ Eric Prokosch. “The Development of the Convention on Conventional Weapons 1971-2003.” Article 36. 2021.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “The Convention for Certain Conventional Weapons.” United Nations. N.d.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Meeting of the High Contracting Parties.” United Nations. N.d.

¹⁶United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “The Convention for Certain Conventional Weapons.” United Nations. N.d.

alongside it through additional protocols.¹⁷ The text of the document is also intentionally general in terms of rules and obligations states must follow in order to maintain flexibility and longevity.¹⁸ However, compliance to the CCW has been called into question at past review conferences due to such flexibility.¹⁹ While many States have signed the treaty and its five additional protocols, the CCW has received criticism for its lack of verification and enforcement mechanisms.²⁰ The CCW contains no formal process for addressing concerns about compliance to the treaty, effectively limiting how High Contracting Parties may address violations by signatories.²¹ As technology rapidly advances, CCW State parties will have to consider if additional protocols are necessary to keep pace with the realities of modern warfare. Additionally, negotiations on updates to the CCW to encompass emerging technologies is a lengthy and relatively slow process, such as the discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).²² The deliberations on LAWS have been ongoing in the UN since 2014, though no concrete mechanism has been created to limit the use of these weapons.²³ Due to opposing viewpoints amongst High Contracting Parties and arguments on the applicability of the CCW to emerging technologies, negotiations can often come to a diplomatic standstill.²⁴ These tensions have existed since before the CCW was enacted, as seen at the 1974 *Conference of Government Experts on Weapons that may Cause Unnecessary Suffering or have Indiscriminate Effects* in Lucerne.²⁵

CCW Implementation and Compliance

At the 3rd Review Conference for the CCW, it was decided that a method for ensuring compliance was necessary.²⁶ This led to the foundation of the CCW Compliance Mechanism, which is responsible for collecting and maintaining a database of reporting from the High Contracting Parties on implementation of the treaty.²⁷ To address issues of States capacity to adhere to the CCW, the Sponsorship Program was created in 2006 to promote universalization of the treaty and help fund the exchange of information related to implementing the CCW.²⁸ The Sponsorship Program assists Member States obtain finances for CCW related projects and connects signatories of the CCW to

¹⁷ United Nations. "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects." 1980.

¹⁸ Reaching Critical Will. "Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)." N.d.

¹⁹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "CCW Compliance Mechanism." United Nations. N.d.

²⁰ Jeff Abramson. "Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) at a Glance." Arms Control Association. 2017.

²¹ Ibid.

²² United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "Background on LAWS in the CCW." United Nations. N.d.

²³ Bonnie Docherty. "The Need for and Elements of a New Treaty on Fully Autonomous Weapons." Human Rights Watch. N.d.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Eric Prokosch. "The Development of the Convention on Conventional Weapons 1971-2003." Article 36. 2021.

²⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "CCW Compliance Mechanism." United Nations. N.d.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "Sponsorship Programme." United Nations. N.d.

resources to assist in removal of landmines and other explosive remnants of war, especially in least developed countries who may otherwise struggle in meeting the goals of the convention.²⁹

The CCW Implementation Support Unit was established in 2009 in order facilitate communication between High Contracting Parties and streamline the submission of information related to the convention's implementation.³⁰ The number of reporting forms submitted to the CCW Compliance mechanism peaked in 2017 at 58 submissions, far short of the 129 States that are party to or signatories of the CCW.³¹ The Covid-19 pandemic had adverse effects on the number of submissions as well, with State resources being diverted to other necessary programs.³² While these numbers are beginning to recover, the effectiveness of available compliance and implementation support resources are being called into question.³³ In 2019 the United Nations General Assembly passed *A/RES/74/76*, which looked to strengthen the CCW by calling upon all High Contracting Parties to fulfill their financial obligations in order to fully fund available compliance and implementation mechanisms.³⁴

LAWS and the CCW

When considering the use of force in combat, experts fear the use of autonomous weapons systems for making complex ethical choices.³⁵ Prejudices have been shown to be evident within artificial intelligence systems based on incomplete or biased data sets, reinforcing existing discriminatory patterns which disproportionately effect historically marginalized people.³⁶ Additionally, autonomous systems fail the proportionality test of engagement, being unable to ethically weigh anticipated military advantages over the possible civilian harm in any given situation.³⁷ These systems also leave room for debates on accountability when deployed, as it could be considered unfair or at the very least legally challenging to hold an operator responsible for the unpredictable operations of an autonomous system.³⁸ LAWS also fail to comply to the Martens Clause of international law, which requires emerging technology to follow the principles of humanity regarding the humane treatment of others and respect human life.³⁹

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "CCW Implementation Support Unit." United Nations. N.d.

³¹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "CCW Compliance Annual Reports Database." United Nations. N.d.

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ United Nations General Assembly. "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects." *A/RES/74/76*. 2019.

³⁵ Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. "Emerging Tech and AI." 2021.

³⁶ Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. "Race and Killer Robots." 2021.

³⁷ Bonnie Docherty. "The Need for and Elements of a New Treaty on Fully Autonomous Weapons." Human Rights Watch. N.d.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Bonnie Docherty. "Banning 'Killer Robots': The Legal Obligations of the Martens Clause." Arms Control Association. 2018.

In 2013 the Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the CCW decided to convene an informal meeting of experts to discuss emerging technologies related to LAWS.⁴⁰ This meeting took place in 2014, with two subsequent meetings in 2015 and 2016.⁴¹ The findings of this informal meeting were presented at the 5th CCW Review Conference, and which led to the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to assess questions related to emerging technologies in the area of LAWS.⁴² The GGE first met in 2017 with a mandate to evaluate the issue of emerging LAWS technologies.⁴³ Based on the research and debate of this GGE, the 2019 Meeting of High Contracting Parties adopted a set of 11 guiding principles on LAWS outlining how they pertain to the CCW and the necessity of human responsibility for decisions to utilize weapons systems.⁴⁴ The 2022 meeting of the GGE has continued to expand upon how existing protocols within the CCW pertain to LAWS and how the operational framework on emerging technologies within the CCW can be expanded upon through the guidance of experts in the legal, militaristic, and technological fields.⁴⁵ However, researchers on autonomous weapons fear these measures progress too slowly for the rapid growth of technology, going as far as stating that “If states do not shift soon from abstract talk to treaty negotiations, the development of technology will outpace international diplomacy.”⁴⁶

Future Outlook

Conventional weapons are the most common type of weapon globally, and have historically been the weapons of choice for armed conflict.⁴⁷ The United Nations has taken on the responsibility of combatting certain types of these weapons capable of causing severe suffering to combatants or indiscriminately harming civilians.⁴⁸ Since its inception in 1980, the CCW has created a platform for reducing the harm these armaments create.⁴⁹ While a solid basis for this work has been created, moving forward there is much work to be done in order to eliminate the conventional weapons outlined in the CCW. Full implementation and compliance by High Contracting Parties are

⁴⁰ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Background on LAWS in the CCW.” United Nations. N.d.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons- Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.” United Nations. 2022.

⁴⁶ Bonnie Docherty. “The Need for and Elements of a New Treaty on Fully Autonomous Weapons.” Human Rights Watch. N.d.

⁴⁷ United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. “Conventional Weapons.” United Nations. N.d.

⁴⁸ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. “The Convention for Certain Conventional Weapons.” United Nations. N.d.

⁴⁹ Ibid

necessary to meet this goal.⁵⁰ Continued debate on emerging weapons technologies is also crucial, as can be seen with the work the CCW has done related to LAWS.⁵¹

Focus Questions

- Is your State party to the CCW? Why or why not?
- How effective is the CCW based on current implementation?
- Has the CCW effectively prevented unnecessary suffering and the targeting of civilians with conventional arms?
- How can Member States address the shortcomings and pitfalls of the CCW?
- What other emerging technologies could fall under the purview of the CCW?

⁵⁰ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "CCW Compliance Mechanism." United Nations. N.d.

⁵¹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. "Background on LAWS in the CCW." United Nations. N.d.

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General Assembly First Committee

Topic II: Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Small Arms and Light Weapons

Introduction

The circulation of small arms and light weapons and their connection to terrorism is a deep concern at a local, national, regional, and international scale. In the last decade alone, there have been 85,148 recorded terrorist attacks involving small arms and light weapons, resulting in over 190,000 fatalities worldwide.¹ Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are defined as everything ranging from handguns to fully automatic weapons. More specifically, small weapons are those that can be operated by three or fewer people without having to use a vehicle. This issue of SALWs in terrorist involvement is complex and can influence social development, economic growth, sustainable development, and the protection of human rights within the global community. In 2001, countries adopted the *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* (PoA), a framework that addresses the issues of the illicit trade of SALWs and agreed to improve national regulations, strengthen management, and further improve detection and countering of illegal arms trade.² Since then, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and the UN Security Council have passed several resolutions addressing this issue.³

The General Assembly consists of 193 UN Member States and annually adopts the resolutions concerning “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” as well as resolutions related to the “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them”. Both resolutions mandate the UN’s small arms process and are informed by the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.⁴

Background

The illicit trade and circulation of small arms and light weapons has been a major concern by Member States and is becoming an increasing threat over the past decades. The illegal manufacture, uncontrolled distribution, and excessive collection of such weapons threatens peacebuilding, reconciliation, negotiation, stability, and safety on all levels, ranging from the local level to the international level. The international community is concerned that such illicit trade is antithetical to the culture of peace and human dignity, undermining international humanitarian law and aggravates violence, as well as hindering sufficient and long-term humanitarian aid to victims of armed conflict.

¹ ICCT. “International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.” N.d.

² United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and Pacific. “Programme of Action.” United Nations. N.d.

³ Woolcott, P. “Arms Trade Treaty.” Audiovisual Library of International Law. 2014.

⁴ United Nations Office for Disarmaments Affairs. “Small arms and light weapons”. United Nations. N.d.

Member States are especially concerned about the safety of children and the ability to aid child victims of armed conflict, as well as child soldiers, mentioned in the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children.⁵ While Member States respect the right to individual and collective self-defense as outlined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the global community realizes the urgency of the rising threat of the illicit trade of SALW and the need for transnational cooperation, as well as financial and technical assistance.⁶

Security Council Resolutions *S/RES/2117* and *S/RES/2220* are at the forefront of UN efforts to address the illicit trade.^{7 8} In 2013, the Security Council stated in Resolution *S/RES/2117* that small arms and light weapons are a rising threat because of the ease of manufacture and the frequency of use in the majority of recent conflicts.⁹ While recognizing the right of Member States to manufacture such weapons for legitimate security, sporting, and commercial purposes, Member States maintain the stance that this is an issue of urgent substance. Member States recognize the significance of voluntary guidelines, such as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) developed under the UN SaferGuard programme, and the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) in arms and ammunition stockpile management practices.¹⁰

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Resolution *S/RES/2220(2015)* focuses on the Council-mandated arms embargoes, stating that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of SALW across the globe undermine the effectiveness of efforts by the Security Council, as well as local, regional and national security forces.¹² SALW are at the root of destabilizing local areas and organized-crime related issues, seriously effecting local safeguarding of citizens, establishments and general peacebuilding operations.¹³ Marking and tracing of SALW by Member States, specifically nations in conflict and post-conflict states, can be a tool to detect arms trade violations and stockpile management issues.¹⁴ Member States further have been concerned about the Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons by Terrorist Organizations as a Source of Finance (ICCT). SALW on the black market have a significantly higher value than SALW in the regular trade environment.¹⁵

⁵ United Nations General Assembly. "Promotion and protection of the rights of children; Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children." N.d.

⁶ United Nations. "The Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects of 2001." 2001.

⁷ United Nations Security Council. *S/RES/2117*. Undocs. 2013.

⁸ United Nations Security Council. *S/RES/2220*. Undocs. 2015.

⁹ United Nations Security Council. *S/RES/2117*. Undocs. 2013.

¹⁰ United Nations SaferGuard. "International Ammunition Technical Guidelines." United Nations. N.d.

¹¹ United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms. "International Small Arms Control Standard." United Nations. 2015.

¹² United Nations Security Council. *S/RES/2220*. Undocs. 2015.

¹³ Klare, M. T. "Secret operatives, clandestine trades: the thriving black market for weapons." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 44(3), 16-24. 1988.

¹⁴ United Nations Security Council. *S/RES/2220*. Undocs. 2015.

¹⁵ Klare, M. T. "Secret operatives, clandestine trades: the thriving black market for weapons." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 44(3), 16-24.1988.

The *A/RES/60/288 - UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy* has established four fundamental pillars for the combat of SALW.¹⁶ It is concerned with the addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and measures to prevent and combat terrorism, as well as measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard. Furthermore, it is concerned with measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.¹⁷

In 2011, an agreement among signed governments to improve small arms regulations and other aspects of the issues was signed into effect. It deals with the evolution of the small arms issue in the viewpoint of the security council, which involves international cooperation and supports of the Arms Trade treaty. Additionally, the agreement tackles the past and present usage of small arms and light weapons by terrorist organizations. It includes several current and past instances of terrorist organizations using said weapons.¹⁸

Current Situation

The current situation involving terrorism and SALWs have had significant impacts on development across the globe. Direct effects include fatal and non-fatal injuries, resulting in a loss of productivity within society due to the loss of life or inability to continue work, as well as increasing the personal cost of treatment and rehabilitation, both physically and mentally, as well as financial costs at household, community, municipal, and national levels.¹⁹ The psychological and psychosocial cost to the individual and the community is climbing with every loss or harm of life. Indirect effects include armed crime, reduced access and quality of social services, lower economic activity, investment, and savings, as well as reduced revenue collection, lower social capital and less development interventions.²⁰ As terrorist violence increases through the use of SALWs, the demand and need for healthcare and social services also increases, often to a level that not all communities are able to provide. Least developed countries especially struggle to achieve adequate care for terrorism and crime victims, often due to a lack of capacity. Such attacks also have the compounding effect of causing health clinics and education facilities to close, which in turn detrimentally influences vaccination and immunization coverage, school enrollment rates, life expectancy, and child mortality rates.²¹

Economic activity of a nation or region is also detrimentally affected through the destruction of physical and cultural heritage infrastructure, causing increased transportation and shipping costs, increased prices of local goods, and obstruction of local methods of trade.²² As a result, this can also negatively affect local and foreign

¹⁶ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. "United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism." N.d.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Muggah, Robert. "Tracking Effects of Small Arms and Light Weapons." 2014.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Muggah, Robert. (2014). Tracking Effects of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

direct investment and domestic revenue collection, as well as impact levels of domestic consumption and savings. With terrorist organizations using small arms and light weapons to recruit child soldiers, the social capital of a nation is also directly influenced by the amount of terrorist activity using SALWs.²³ Membership of armed gangs and organized crime increases with the illicit trade and manufacture of SALWs, increasing criminality among minors, incidents of domestic violence involving firearms or the threat of weapons, as well as respect for customary and traditional forms of authority.²⁴ To measure the effectiveness and need of interventions of SALW trade among terrorist organizations, incidents of security threats are analyzed. Member States analyze the costs of logistics and transportations, costs of security management, and opportunity costs associated with insecure environments and/or damaged investments.²⁵

Relevant Bodies

There are several relevant UN bodies, programs and agencies which counter the illicit trade of SALWs, including the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR), the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), and Project CRAFT, the Collaboration, Research and Analysis Against the Financing of Terrorism.

Coordinating Action on Small Arms

Created in 1998, CASA is a joint action programme managed by the UN to enhance capacity-building, support research and assist in the compilation and analysis of relevant information to help Member States understanding current issues involving SALWs and their potential impact. Coordinated by the United Nations Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, CASA members have supported training for over 800 officials, including parliamentarians and law enforcement officials, as well as helped establish a Regional Training Centre in Brazil.²⁶

International Tracing Instrument

The International Tracing Instrument is a legally binding document outlining obligations on marking, record-keeping, and international cooperation, as well as assistance seeking to enhance tracing of illicit SALW, which are defined as the following:

(...) any man-portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or

²³ Muggah, Robert. (2014). Tracking Effects of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

²⁴ Muggah, Robert. (2014). Tracking Effects of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

²⁵ Muggah, Robert. (2014). Tracking Effects of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

²⁶ Tanaka, N. (2006). *United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA)*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/pdf/arms060705CASA-eng.pdf>

*projectile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique small arms and light weapons or their replicas.*²⁷

United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation

The UNSCAR is a multi-donor and UN-managed fund supporting arms regulations aiming to:²⁸

1. mobilize resources to support the ratification/accession and implementation of relevant international instruments on arms regulations;
2. improve effectiveness of assistance through coordination, monitoring and matching of resources;
3. promote increased sustainability through more predictable sources of funding.

Arms Trade Treaty

As the first legally binding instrument established by the UN on conventional weapons, the *Arms Trade Treaty* of 2014 seeks to regulate international trade of SALWs. Through establishing transnational standards for arms transfer, it seeks to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade of conventional arms.²⁹

Counter-Terrorism Centre

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) was established in 2011 to support Member States in countering terrorism and preventing extremism conducive to terrorism. Its main four pillars are:

- I. Addressing the Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism
- II. Preventing and Combatting Terrorism
- III. Building States' Capacity and Strengthening the Role of the UN
- IV. Ensuring Human Rights and the Rule of Law

Furthermore, the UNCCT seeks to address countering the financing of terrorism, cybersecurity, foreign terrorist fighters, CBRN weapons, border security and terrorist travel. In June of 2017, UNCCT became part of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) through *Resolution 71/291*.³⁰

Collaboration, Research and Analysis Against the Financing of Terrorism

The CRAAFT initiative is designed as an academic research and community-building program promote stronger, more coordinated counter terrorist financing. In 2022,

²⁷ United Nations. "International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. United Nations." N.d.

²⁸ UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. "UNSCAR: UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation." N.d.

²⁹ Woolcott, P. "Arms Trade Treaty." Audiovisual Library of International Law. 2014.

³⁰ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)*. United Nations. N.d.

CRAAFT is leading the Conference on Reassessing the Financing of Terrorism in 2022 (RAFT22), bringing together high-profile representatives of the European counter-terrorism effort as well as leaders in technology, financing and security in order to assess current counter-terrorism financing in Europe and future strategies.³¹

Current Statistics

2020 data from the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime shows that most illicit firearms were seized in Mexico, followed by Colombia and the Russian Federation.³² Terrorism organizations use small arms and light weapons to arm their members, child soldiers, and to carry out various forms of armed violence. The increasing prevalence of children in combat can be contributed to the ease of use and reduction of armament size, making it easier and cheaper for children to operate SALWs.³³ Different funding techniques by terrorism organizations for different regions of the world include gaining territory, kidnapping, and using weapons as commodities, for example funding other conflicts.³⁴ The Crime-Terror Nexus describe the connection between street crime and terrorism. The connection between terrorism and the illicit trade of SALW is a threat to international peace and equality. The transactional nature of the nexus where other topics such as drugs, influence, and the illicit trade of natural resources are involved. International cooperation as well as cooperation with affected communities is targeting the illicit trade of SALWs before these can be traded by international terrorism organizations³⁵. Paragraph 4 of S/RES/1373, notes “with concern” the close connection between international terrorism and “. . . illicit drugs, money laundering, illegal arms, trafficking, and illegal movement.” Drug trafficking, for example, is now thought to be one of the largest sources of income for both international organized crime groups and terrorists.³⁶ Challenges of countering the illicit trade of SALWs includes local, regional, and international differences in the attempt of controlling SALW trade and stockpiling. The difficulty of tracking and accounting of each weapon that falls under the SALW definition is in international cooperation, differing laws, differing cultures, and local cooperation with national and international forces³⁷.

Focus Questions

³¹ Project CRAAFT. “Collaboration, Research and Analysis Against the Financing of Terrorism. Retrieved from Reassessing the Financing of Terrorism in 2022 (RAFT22).” 2022.

³² United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. “Firearms Trafficking.” United Nations. 2020.

³³ Bloom, M. “Small Arms: Children and Terrorism”. Cornell University Press. 2019.

³⁴ Clarke, Colin P. “Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Trafficking, Smuggling, and Use for Criminality by Terrorists and Insurgents: A Brief Historical Overview.” International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), 2020.

³⁵ Wang, P. “The crime-terror nexus: Transformation, alliance, convergence.” Asian Social Science, 6(6). 2010.

³⁶ UN International Drug Control Program 1998, p. 124; IMF Survey-29, 1996.

³⁷ Maze, K., & Rhee, H. International Assistance for Implementing the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects: Case Study of East Africa. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research= Institute De Nations Unies Pour Recherche Sur Le Désarmement. 2006.

- What domestic legislation has your Member State passed in an attempt to control SALWs?
- What regional or international treaties, conventions, or bodies that deals with SALWs is your Member States a party to?
- Does your country or region experience terrorism or armed conflict? To what degree are SALWs present?
- What are ways that Member States can prevent terrorists from acquiring SALWs at the local, national, regional, and international level?
- What are the economic and security capacity gaps that your country is facing with regards to preventing SALWs from falling into the hands of terrorist organizations?

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