



CCPCJ Chair Report

Topic 2: Addressing the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Conflict Zones



Table of Contents

Personal Statements	3
Chair – Julia Oraa	3
Deputy Chair – Sunny Naha	4
Introduction	5
Glossary	6
Issue Explanation	7
Perspectives of Parties Involved	8
History of the Topic	9
Countries And Their Evolution	10
Has The Problem Gotten Better?	10
Potential Solutions for the issue:	11
Past UN resolutions	11
International Agreements and Organizations	11
Current controversial topics and potential solutions.	11
Bibliography	12



Personal Statements

Chair – Julia Oraa

Distinguished guests, fellow chairs, and honorable delegates,
I am Julia Oraa, a 10th-grade student from the American School of Bilbao, and I am very excited to be your chair of the Commission of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice this April 2025. I am from Spain and it is my first time attending MUNISS. Although I don't have previous chairing experience, I have gone to a total of 7 conferences, including those both in and out of Spain, and have experience in a variety of committees, such as Human Rights, Security Council, the International Court of Justice, etc. I am sure we will have a very fruitful and enjoyable debate and am looking forward to seeing all of you in April!

Kind regards,

Julia Oraa.

Deputy Chair – Sunny Naha

Dear Delegates,

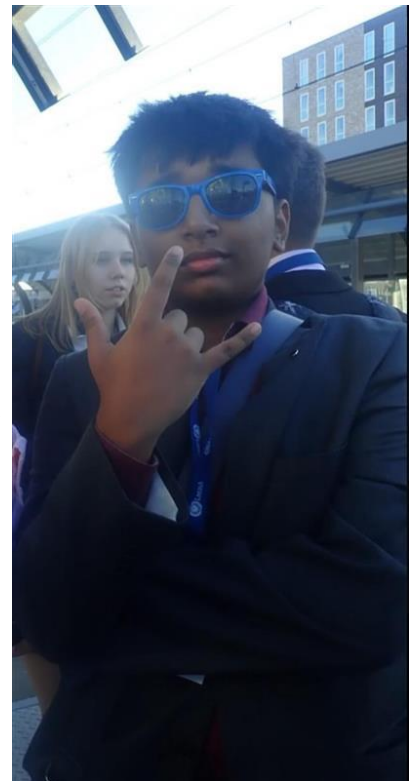
My name is Sunny Naha, and I am a 15-year-old student at the International School of Stuttgart. I am very excited to serve as your deputy chair for MUNISS 2025. In the past, I have participated in five MUN conferences including three at MUNISS and conferences in the Netherlands and Morocco. In these conferences, I have served twice as an admin and three times as a delegate in committees such as GA4, UNODC, and the Historic Security Council.

Although this will be my first time chairing, I look forward to bringing my experience and passion for Mun to the CCPCJ committee.

I look forward to a fun and engaging conference with all of you, See you all in April!

Best regards,

Sunny Naha



Introduction

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in conflict zones is a critical challenge to world peace, security, and human rights. The unlawful spread of these weapons—such as pistols, rifles, machine guns, and assault rifles—prolongs hostilities, impedes peacekeeping efforts, and aggravates humanitarian crises.

Small arms and light weapons begin by belonging to either the state, non-state actors, or civilians. Worldwide, there are as many SALW belonging to civilians as there are belonging to states (Safer World). One of the most common ways that these objects go from their owners to an illegal trading market is theft of these weapons, whether it be from military stockpiles, police armories, etc. For instance, nearly 112,000 guns were reported stolen in 2022 in the United States (Witherhurst and Richer). This arguably happens due to weak security systems and corruption.

There are several international institutions working to combat unauthorized exchange of SALW, such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Last September, States adopted the [Pact for the Future](#), acknowledging the threat posed by illicit SALW and urging further efforts to combat their trafficking and improve munitions management (UNIDIR).

Nevertheless, problems still arise due to poor enforcement systems, unretentive borders, and non-governmental armed organizations. In order to decrease this threat posed to our international well-being, some of the most integral things to consider are more international collaboration, stricter weapons control procedures, and more effective legislation to restrict the illegal flow of SALW.



Glossary

SALW (small arms and light weapons): 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 projectile by the action of an explosive (South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons).

Illicit arms trade: illegal/unauthorized manufacture, exchange, or possession of weapons.

Conflict zones: areas suffering from armed violence, such as wars, civil conflicts, etc.

Non-state actors: armed individuals or groups of people not belonging to the government/state that are involved in conflicts (e.g. terrorist organizations)

Proliferation: rapid increase in the amount of something (Oxford Languages)

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR): organization, belonging to the United Nations, in charge of conducting research (independently) on disarmament and international security issues (UNIDIR).

Dark web: World Wide Web sites that require specific software configuration or authorization to access. Through the dark web, users can communicate without leaking their private information in a way that they can be found. This leads people to use this platform for illegal purposes, such as the purchasing of illicit arms.

Violence containment: all spending which aims to prevent and contain the spread of violence

Arms trade treaty (ATT): A UN treaty that regulates domestic weapons use and seeks to improve regional security and stability, lower human suffering resulting from illicit arms transfers, and encourage state parties' responsibility and openness over conventional weapon transfers.



Issue Explanation

The illegal trade of SALW has serious and multiple humanitarian, economic, and social impacts. Firstly, The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu said that in 2021 alone, SALW killed 260,000 people, or one person every two minutes, accounting for 45 per cent of all violent deaths (United Nations). Currently, SALW play a huge role in terrorism, organised crime, and armed conflicts. The presence of these weapons contributes to the violation of several human rights, including being used to inflict injury, to torture, to coerce, to enforce displacement, and to commit violations such as rape (University of Minnesota) . These human right violations make people develop long lasting trauma-related disorders, such as PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder), ASD (Acute Stress Disorder), and more.

Secondly, the largest component of violence containment is military expenditure, which accounts for 54% of it (International Action Network on Small Arms). Furthermore, political instability - to which the illegal trade of SALW, as previously discussed, leads - is highly linked to economic uncertainty, which can potentially have devastating consequences on the economy, such as mass withdrawals from banks, a decrease in foreign and domestic investment, etc. These factors contribute to recessions.

Lastly, SALW facilitates violence and conflict in communities, which creates more dangerous environments. Moreover, the illicit trade of these weapons has been associated with gender-based violence. Not only this, but armed groups and militias use SALW as resources in order to go against governments or even commit terrorist acts. As a result, political instability arises. Police officers and other institutions in turn find it hard to control these groups, as they are armed. This weakens legal systems and enforcement.

Not addressing this issue would result, as observed previously, in a psychologically harmed society, potential recessions, and unsafe communities. This is why it is imperative that nations collaborate to develop solutions to the problem and ensure this does not happen.



Perspectives of Parties Involved

- **US:** Recognizes the dangers of the illicit trade of SALW, but still opposes treaties that regulate the use of weapons, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, or ATT. Chooses to prioritize national sovereignty and the rights of their legal gun owners. Puts counterterrorism before the regulation of weapon use.
- **UK:** Supports international SALW regulations and actively works to prevent their illegal trade. Strongly supports the ATT, has strict export controls policies, and aids countries affected by the impacts of the proliferation of SALW (Phillips).
- **China:** Major arms exporter, supports the UN's restrictions to the trade of SALW but opposes their intervention in their state sovereignty. It has been previously accused of fuelling armed conflicts by exporting weapons to the areas where they happen, such as African countries.
- **France:** Major arms exporter and trader but still supports the restriction of SALW trade. Supports international treaties and has previously expressed its concern for the proliferation of SALW in conflict zones, especially in Africa and Middle Eastern countries (Politico).
- **Iran:** Has been previously accused of supplying weapons to proxy or armed groups (Voice of America). It is against Western arms restrictions and "dominance".
- **DPRK:** Accused of being a key supplier or weapons to conflict zones and it is said to have a major issue regarding non-state actors and their ownership of SALW (Brookings). Denies its involvement but has been sanctioned for this in the past.

History of the Topic

For a long time, the illicit trade of SALW has been a major factor to violence, instability, and conflict worldwide. In addition to heavier weapons like mortars and grenade launchers, SALW includes firearms such as rifles, handguns, and machine guns. Elaborate networks of suppliers, traffickers, and consumers – the majority functioning against both national and international regulations – are involved.

Early Development (End Of WWII – 1990s)

The illegal trade of SALW began to occur or increased significantly after World War II, when stocks of weapons – especially those left behind by soldiers – became easily accessible. The Cold War was a point in time when the proliferation and production of weapons increased drastically, and neighbouring countries were supplied with them by both parties (the USSR and the USA). This facilitated the illicit trade of SALW, with weapons often finding their way into the hands of non-state actors. Proxy wars were common in regions such as Vietnam, Latin America, or Afghanistan.

2001 (UN Program Of Action On Salw)

Because of the issues that arose regarding SALW, the UN decided to adopt the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the illicit trade of SALW.

2014 (Present)

The rise of non-state actors such as ISIS has facilitated the illegal arms trafficking. Many weapons, although originally meant to belong to legitimate governments, have fallen into the hands of armed groups or are sold in the black market. Technology has made innovation on smuggling techniques much easier, and therefore smugglers find ways to continue with the illicit trading.



Countries And Their Evolution

- **United States:** While it supports peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts, it is often criticised for its participation in arming and supplying armed groups from around the world. Historically, it has been one of the most important exporters of small arms.
- **China:** As time passes, China has more and more influence in arms exports. It has been accused of having faulty and vague legislation that facilitates the trafficking of SALW.
- **African Countries:** Nations such as Somalia and the DRC struggle with rebel groups or terrorist associations that are fuelled by the illegal trafficking of SALW.

Has The Problem Gotten Better?

While worldwide initiatives have helped to regulate the legitimate arms trade, the illegal market remains considerable. In many ways, the problem has evolved rather than improved – as smugglers have innovated with their techniques –, with new means of smuggling and distribution defeating efforts. Therefore, while there have been some improvements in regulation, the spreading of conflicts and emerging technologies means that the problem has not improved considerably and may even be getting worse in some aspects.



Potential Solutions for the issue:

Past UN resolutions

- The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons: released in 2001 and was one of the first programmes to directly address the illicit smuggling of SALW.
- UN Security Council Resolution 2117: released in 2013, a resolution – from which Russia abstained – that addresses the negative effects of SALW and how they aggravate conflicts and facilitate crime.

International Agreements and Organizations

- The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (2014): aims to regulate the international trade of traditional weapons, including small guns, in order to prevent them from being spread or incorporated into illicit markets (ATT).
- The Firearms Protocol, part of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, attempts to improve the banning of the illegal manufacture and trafficking of firearms.
- Organizations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), and the Organization of American States (OAS) have put in place measures such as labeling and tracking methods and national action plans to fight illicit SALW movements.

Current controversial topics and potential solutions.

- Stronger measures: many states and groups support a stronger implementation of existing legislation, such as improved monitoring methods and accountability for noncompliant states.
- Greater application of the ATT: some parties advocate for increased adherence to the treaty, which has yet to be ratified by some major arms exporting countries such as the USA.
- Technological Innovations for weapon tracing: new marking and tracing technologies are being developed to track down arms transfer more easily.
- Making processes more transparent: improving legal systems and reporting through the UN Register of Conventional Arms.



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