

# Haileybury MUN 2022

## Research Reports



**Committee** Disarmament and international security

**Topic** The Question of Regulating illicit arms distribution and production

**Submitted by** Carolin Luisa Lange

**School** Haileybury College

### Summary

The proliferation and illicit international movement of firearms and explosives worldwide involves a complex mix of interrelated issues. Despite efforts to regulate firearms, there are multiple avenues for entrepreneurial criminals to bypass controls and traffic weapons across international borders. This issue has emerged as particularly relevant for EU security, despite the stringent firearms control measures.

In principle, the same actors involved in the illegal weapons trade are also involved in the legal trade in weapons: producers, traders, government officials and end-users. However, clandestine networks are typical for the illicit trade in weapons. These networks consist of producers, arms brokers, those hauling and selling arms to the end-user.

The trade with weapons is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world and is increasing every year. Through this availability of weapons and ammunition there is human suffering, political repression, crime and terror among civilian population across the world.

### Definition of Key terms

**Confiscation** = which includes forfeiture where applicable, shall mean the permanent deprivation of property by order of a court or other competent authority

**Ammunition** = shall mean the complete round and shall include that are used in a firearm

**Arms dealers** = companies who produce arms for armed forces of states or civilians

**Firearms** = Any portable weapon that expels, is designed to expel or may be readily converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive



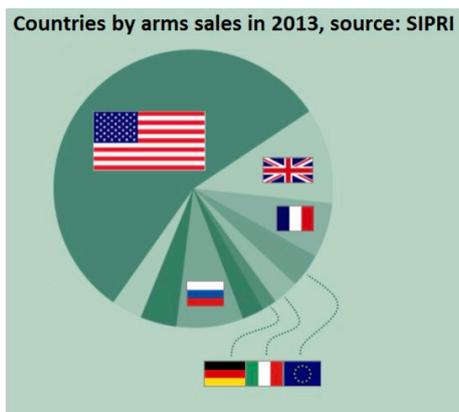
**Illicit manufacturing** = The manufacturing or assembly of firearms, their parts and components or ammunition

**Illicit trafficking** = The import, export, acquisition, sale, delivery, movement or transfer of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition from or across the territory of one state party to that of another State party if any one of the States parties concerned does not authorise it

## Background Information

The arms industry, also known as the arms trade, is a global industry which manufactures and sells weapons and military technology. It consists of a commercial industry involved in the research and development, engineering, production, and servicing of military material, equipment, and facilities.

There are different types of arms; land-based weapons, Aerospace systems and Naval systems. Each sector is specialised in different weapons. The Sector of the Land-based weapons includes everything from light arms to heavy artillery, and the majority of producers are small, with many located in third world countries. The international trade is substantial and only little regulated at the international level. As a result many weapons fall into the hands of Organizer crime, rebel forces, terrorists, or regimes under sanctions. Small arms also belong to this category. The Control Arms Campaign estimated that in 2003 there were over 639 million small arms circulating in the world.



The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimated the military expenditures for 2018 at \$1822 billion. This represented a relative decline from 1990, however they still are high. The five largest exporters between 2014 and 2018 were the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China, whilst the five biggest importers were Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and Algeria.

Next to SIPRI there are several other sources that provide data on international transfers of arms. These include national reports by national governments about arms exports and the UN register on conventional arms and an annual publication by the US Congressional Research Service.

Even Though there is a lot of data available, there is still an increase in the number of weapons being sold. This is why there needs to be a control of the arms.

Arms control refers to international restrictions upon the development, production, stockpiling, proliferation and usage of small arms, conventional weapons, and weapons of mass destruction. It is typically exercised through the use of diplomacy, which seeks to persuade governments to accept such limitations through agreements and treaties, although it may also be forced upon non-consenting governments.



Importing and exporting weapons is not illegal itself, if the weapons are used for national security reasons. Organised criminal groups often rely on the availability of weapons to carry out their activities. However, the market for firearms in the EU remains modest in size. Trafficking occurs on a small scale, and the weapons trafficked are intended for either personal use or to meet specific orders.

**The main reasons of illegal weapons:**

- the reactivation of neutralised weapons
- burglaries and thefts
- the embezzlement of legal arms
- the selling of legal arms on the illegal market, including the Darknet
- the reactivation of decommissioned army or police firearms
- the conversion of gas pistols

In 2014, Europol estimated that there were almost half a million lost or stolen firearms in the EU.

The relatively high risks associated with weapons trafficking act as a disincentive for organised criminal groups. However, where demand exists, criminals will exploit vulnerabilities in legitimate supply chains to obtain weapons and ammunition.

Through the increased usage of social media and the internet this in many cases happens through online business on the dark web. The dark web is an enabler for the circulation of illegal weapons already on the black market, as well as a potential source of diversion for legally owned weapons.

Although the arms trade is small in volume compared to other products trafficked online, its potential impact on international security is significant.

**Notable international arms control treaties**

- **Geneva Protocol** on chemical and biological weapons, 1925
  - Accessible at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/bio/1925-geneva-protocol/>
- **Outer Space Treaty**, signed and entered into force 1967
  - Accessible at <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/outerspacetreaty.html>
- **Biological Weapons Convention**, signed 1972, entered into force 1975
  - Accessible at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/>
- **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**, 1987
  - Accessible at
- **Chemical Weapons Convention**, signed 1993, entered into force 1997
  - Accessible at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missile\\_Technology\\_Control\\_Regime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missile_Technology_Control_Regime)



- **Ottawa Treaty** on anti-personnel landmines, signed 1997, entered into force 1999
  - Accessible at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/anti-personnel-landmines-convention/>
- **New START Treaty**, signed by Russia and the United States in April 2010, entered into force in February 2011
  - Accessible at <https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-between-the-united-states-of-america-and-the-russian-federation-on-measures-for-the-further-reduction-and-limitation-of-strategic-offensive-arms/>
- **Arms Trade Treaty**, concluded in 2013, entered into force on 24 December 2014
  - Accessible at [https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/att/att\\_e.pdf](https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/att/att_e.pdf)

### Major countries and Organisations Involved

- **Control Arms Campaign** , founded by Amnesty International, Oxfam, International Action Network in Small Arms
- **SIPRI** Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
- **UNODA** , United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
- **OSCE** , Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- **Europol**, it is the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
- **India, Saudi Arabia, China and United Sta**

### Possible solutions

- Manufacturers need a licence to produce arms
- Control the trafficking weapons through new laws and regulations
- Further develop the UNODA norms
- Promote disarmament in post-conflict regions in particular, including the investigation of illegal flow of weapons by the UN

### Bibliography:

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/att/>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arms\\_industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arms_industry)  
<https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-statistics/crime-areas/illicit-firearms-trafficking>  
<https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/international-arms-trade-on-the-hidden-web.html>  
<http://www.warpp.info/en/m5/articles/illegal-arms-trade>  
[https://www.unodc.org/documents/e4j/Module\\_04 -  
\\_The Illicit Market in Firearms FINAL.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/e4j/Module_04_-_The_Illicit_Market_in_Firearms_FINAL.pdf)