Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

Issue: Tackling the development of improvised firearms

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Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Manos Alevras, I am 16 years old, and I am an IB1 student at HAEF-Psychico College. It is my utmost honor and pleasure to be serving as a Co-Chair of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1) of ACGMUN 2023.

From a very young age, I have been interested in joining any endeavor that strives to tackle global problems. MUN was a truly unique opportunity for this, and I could not help but grasp it. Ever since I touched upon this academic simulation, I have been given a valuable platform that fosters various skills. I feel like it has forged my perspectives, establishing a foundation for a more confident and globally aware version of myself. As a delegate, I have had to research my assigned countries in depth, analyzing and understanding their foreign policies and considering which factors would influence their behavior at an international level. I find this conference a unique opportunity to enrich my exciting MUN career.

Through this study guide, I hope to introduce you to the topic of "Tackling the development of improvised firearms" and offer you critical information on the issue that will help you draft resolutions. Nevertheless, I recognize that it is not a very easily comprehensible topic, so, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at malevras2006@gmail.com. I am looking forward to working with all of you at the conference!

Kind regards,

Manos

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Improvised firearms are homemade or makeshift weapons that are not manufactured by a legitimate, verified firearms manufacturer. These weapons can be made using a variety of materials and methods and can range from crude, single-shot designs to more sophisticated weapons that are able to fire multiple rounds. Improvised firearms can be very dangerous and are often unreliable, as they are not subject to the same quality control standards as legitimate firearms. It is illegal to manufacture, possess, or use improvised firearms in many countries. In some cases, there are specific laws that target improvised firearms. Otherwise, they may belong to the broader category of gun and armament restrictions. The existence of these weapons poses a significant threat to public safety. Their production usually does not follow established safety protocols or standards, leading to poorly made or defective firearms. Additionally, the lack of regulation and oversight of this production makes it difficult to trace the ownership and use of these firearms. As a result, they can easily fall into the hands of criminals, terrorists, or other dangerous individuals who could use them to commit violent acts or fuel conflicts, compromising international security. Furthermore, the widespread availability of these firearms undermines efforts to control them. This is because they can be produced and sold without any regard for international or national laws or restrictions, such as embargoes on the sale or transfer of weapons to certain countries or groups.

Improvised firearms have been developed in many countries throughout history, often because of a lack of access to legitimate firearms. In some countries, the creation of improvised firearms has been driven by economic and political factors, such as poverty and civil unrest. In developing countries, improvised firearms are often made by individuals or small groups using simple tools and materials that are readily available. Their structure is often very simple and unpolished, but they can still be lethal. In countries with strict gun control laws, such as the United Kingdom or Japan, the development of improvised firearms is usually driven by a desire to possess firearms regardless of the existing legal framework. In these cases, the weapons are often more sophisticated and advanced than those made in less economically developed countries (LEDCs), but their use is more limited in civilian settings. Meanwhile, in countries with a long history of political or civil unrest, improvised firearms have also been used by armed groups and non-state actors, such as paramilitaries, guerilla groups, or criminal organizations. These weapons are often made using materials and methods that are not readily available to the general public and can be very complex. Overall, the development of improvised firearms is a complex issue that is influenced by a variety of factors, including economic, political, and social conditions. The unregulated production and distribution of firearms by semi-professional and craft manufacturers is a serious threat to public safety and security and can contribute to the spread of violence and instability.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Improvised firearm

"An improvised firearm is a firearm manufactured by someone who is not a regular maker of firearms (such as a firearms manufacturer or a gunsmith) and is typically constructed by adapting existing materials to the purpose. They range in quality from crude weapons that are as much a danger to the user as the target, to high-quality arms produced by cottage industries using salvaged and repurposed materials".[1]

3D-Printed firearm

"A 3D printed firearm is a firearm that is primarily produced with a 3D printer." They are classified as plastic, metal, or both. "While plastic ones are usually used as improvised firearms that evade gun control, 3D-printed metal guns are more commonly thought as a way for legitimate gun manufacturers to exceed traditional design limitations".[2]

Sten gun

A sten gun, in full, Sten Submachine Gun, is a "9-millimetre submachine gun that became the standard such weapon in the British Commonwealth armed forces during World War II".[3]

Liberator pistol

"The FP-45 Liberator (Flare Projector Caliber .45) was an American single-shot pistol that was produced by the General Motors Guide Lamp Division during World War II".[4]

Submachine gun

"A submachine gun is lightweight automatic small-arms weapon chambered for relatively low-energy pistol cartridges and fired from the hip or shoulder. Developed during World War I, the submachine gun came into great demand during

[1] Military History Wiki. "Improvised Firearm." Fandom, 5 Apr. 2013, https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Improvised_firearm.
[2] "3D Printed Firearm - History." Wikipedia, 18 Jan. 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3D_printed_firearm#History.
[3] "Sten Gun." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 15 May 2018, https://www.britannica.com/technology/Sten-gun.

[4] "FP-45 Liberator." Gun Wiki, 21 Jan. 2021, https://guns.fandom.com/wiki/FP-45_Liberator.

World War II because of the need to increase the individual soldier's firepower at close quarters".[5]

Militia

A militia is a "military organization of citizens with limited military training, which is available for emergency service, usually for local defence".[6] Militias have used improvised firearms throughout history as they are comparatively the strongest armaments which require the least costly and sophisticated materials.

Arms embargo

"Arms embargoes are a type of sanction that can be used to coerce states and non-governmental actors to improve their behaviour in the interests of international peace and security".[7] Arms embargoes often entail improvised firearms so they can be effective in limiting their use.

Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) are explosives that are constructed using non-conventional materials such as agricultural fertilizers, household chemicals, and other easily obtainable components, which can cause significant harm to people and property. They are often used in terrorist attacks and insurgent warfare due to their ease of production and low cost.[8]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

Improvised firearms have been used in many conflicts throughout history, often by non-state actors such as guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and criminal organizations. These groups may use improvised firearms because they lack access to legitimate firearms or because they are trying to circumvent strict gun control laws. This infringes international security since it contributes to the spread of violence and instability, especially due to how accessible and widespread these firearms are.

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[5] "Submachine Gun." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 19 Aug. 2019, https://www.britannica.com/technology/submachine-gun.
[6] "Militia." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 8 July 2020, https://www.britannica.com/topic/militia.
[7] SIPRI. "Arms Embargoes." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 18 June 2021, https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes.
[8] "Mansoor, Peter. "Improvised explosive device". *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc, 10 Feb. 2023, https://www.britannica.com/technology/improvised-explosive-device.

In some conflicts, improvised firearms are used by individuals or groups who are fighting against a more powerful, better-equipped enemy. These weapons can be made using simple tools and materials that are readily available, and they can be used to launch surprise attacks or to ambush enemy forces. Improvised firearms can also be used by groups that are trying to overthrow a government or gain control of a particular region. These weapons can be used to launch attacks on government buildings, military bases, and other strategic targets. In addition, improvised firearms have been used by groups that are trying to gain control of natural resources, such as oil fields, or to control trade routes. These weapons can be used to protect these resources and to attack rival groups or government forces.

Improvised firearms were used by some resistance groups and during World War I (WWI), particularly in the Eastern and Southern fronts. These weapons were often made using simple tools and materials that were readily available in the war-torn areas. They were used by resistance fighters who lacked access to legitimate firearms, as well as by groups who were trying to circumvent strict gun control laws. One example is the use of "stick grenades" by the German army. The stick grenade was a simple, cheap, and easy-to-manufacture improvised explosive weapon that was used by the German soldiers against the enemy trenches. In addition, some resistance groups and partisan units also used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against the enemy, such as the "shrapnel bomb" used by the Russian soldiers. In general, the use of improvised firearms during WWI was limited, as the majority of resistance fighters were not able to manufacture or acquire these weapons in sufficient numbers to challenge the well-armed and equipped occupying forces. However, they were used by some resistance groups to carry out sabotage and guerrilla operations against the enemy. The widespread use of these weapons testifies to how they pose a genuine threat to international security and how the limitation of their proliferation can increase civilian safety. This limitation could happen through either strong regulation in countries where improvised firearms are legal, or by strengthening the ways in which the ban is enforced in countries where they are illegal but still prominent.

World War II (WWII) was an event during which improvised firearms were both developed and extensively used. One example is the use of sten guns by the British resistance during WWII. The sten gun was a simple, cheap, and easy to manufacture submachine gun that was used by the British resistance fighters to launch surprise attacks and ambushes on the German troops. In addition, some resistance groups and partisan units also used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against the enemy, such as the "Molotov cocktail," which was made from a glass bottle filled with gasoline and a rag as a wick, used by the Soviet and Finnish resistance to attack tanks and other armored vehicles.

During the Korean War, small, improvised firearms such as rifles, pistols, and submachine guns were used by both sides of the conflict. These weapons were used in a variety of roles, including as individual infantry weapons, as well as in support roles such as anti-tank and anti-aircraft. Meanwhile, small, crafted firearms such as pipe guns and zip guns were used by North Korean and Chinese partisan units to launch surprise attacks and ambushes on UN troops. The pipe gun was a simple, improvised firearm that was made of metal pipes, and the zip gun was a single-shot firearm that was made of metal tubing and used a striker or a nail as a firing pin. In addition, some resistance groups and partisan units also used IEDs against the enemy. These weapons were often made using locally available materials such as dynamite or captured enemy ammunition.

Case studies of improvised firearms

3D-Printed firearms

3D printed firearms, also known as "ghost guns," are firearms that are manufactured using a 3D printer. This technology allows individuals to create their own firearms at home using digital designs and plastic or metal filaments. These firearms are often highly unreliable and illegal in multiple jurisdictions. 3D-printed firearms are dangerous because they can bypass traditional background check and registration requirements, making them accessible to individuals who would not legally be able to purchase a gun. Additionally, 3D-printed firearms can be difficult to detect with metal detectors and x-ray machines, making them a potential security concern. In the United States, the federal government has passed a law that makes it illegal to manufacture, possess, or sell firearms that do not have serial numbers. This applies to 3D-printed firearms as well, but some people have found ways to circumvent this regulation. In some countries, possession, manufacture, and use of 3D-printed firearms is outright banned. However, as 3D printing technology becomes more accessible, the ability to manufacture these firearms has become easier, making it harder to enforce the laws. Overall, 3D-printed firearms are a new and evolving issue with legal, ethical, and security implications. It is important to be informed about the laws and regulations related to this technology, as well as the potential risks and dangers associated with 3D-printed firearms.

While the technology for 3D printing firearms has existed for several years, its use has not yet been expanded to war or armed conflicts. The main reason for this is that 3D-printed firearms are not yet durable or reliable enough for use in a combat setting. They also require specialized equipment and knowledge to manufacture, which is not readily available to most armed groups or individuals. However, it is possible that in the future, 3D printing technology will become more advanced, and 3D-printed firearms may become

more prevalent in war and armed conflicts. This could have significant implications for the proliferation of weapons and the ability of non-state actors to acquire firearms.

Submachine guns

Submachine guns, also known as SMGs, are firearms that are designed to fire handgun cartridges and are typically smaller and more compact than a rifle or a machine gun. Submachine guns are often equipped with a magazine that holds between 20 and 100 rounds, and they are capable of firing at a high rate of speed, typically between 600 and 1,200 rounds per minute. They have been used in various conflicts around the world, including both WWI and WWII. During WWII, submachine guns were used by both Axis and Allied forces in a variety of ways, including as individual infantry weapons, as well as in support roles such as anti-tank and anti-aircraft. They were particularly useful in close-quarters combat, such as in urban warfare and trench warfare. Examples of submachine guns used during WWII include the German MP40, the British Sten gun, the American Thompson, and the Soviet PPSh-41. After WWII, submachine guns have been used in various conflicts around the world, including the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and various other conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Submachine guns were known for their high rate of fire, compact size and lightweight, but have a relatively short effective range when compared to rifles. In modern warfare, submachine guns are less common than before, as they have been largely replaced by assault rifles and carbines. However, they are still used by some special forces, police units and in some cases, by criminals. They are also used in close-quarters combat, such as in urban warfare and trench warfare.

Zip guns

A zip gun, also known as a crude homemade firearm, is a type of improvised firearm made by hand from common materials, such as pipes, bolts, rubber bands, and electrical tape. This type of firearm is often associated with gang activity and other criminal behavior, as they can be easily and cheaply produced and are difficult to trace. The design and construction of a zip gun varies, but it typically consists of a single-shot mechanism with a barrel, trigger, and firing pin, with a projectile held in place by a rubber band. While the production of zip guns is illegal in most countries, they have been found and confiscated by law enforcement agencies around the world. Zip guns have been used in a variety of criminal activities, from gang violence to terrorist attacks. In the 1970s, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) used zip guns as part of their arsenal in their fight against British rule in Northern Ireland. Zip guns have also been used in several high-profile crimes, including the 1981 assassination

attempt on US President Ronald Reagan. One of the most notorious examples of zip gun use was during the "Zip Gun War" in New York City during the 1950s and 60s. At the time, the city was plagued by street gangs, and many youths turned to zip guns as a means of self-defense and intimidation. The production of these crude firearms became so prevalent that they were often used in inter-gang warfare, resulting in numerous injuries and deaths. While the use of zip guns has declined in recent years due to increased gun control measures and the availability of more advanced firearms, they remain a persistent threat to public safety. Law enforcement agencies continue to monitor the production and use of these improvised firearms, as they can be used in criminal activities ranging from armed robbery to terrorism.

Methods of production

Unskilled production

Individuals or small groups who manufacture improvised firearms and basic craft-produced weapons typically have a limited set of tools and possess only basic skills and knowledge. They often operate in residential settings and produce a small quantity of weapons that are intended for use by individuals or small groups such as criminal gangs, and sometimes for profit. These weapons are generally crude, single-shot firearms, but with the availability of detailed plans in books or on the internet, manufacturers can create more technically advanced firearms using the same basic tools. They may also adapt common items, such as staplers or nail guns, into weapons or create simple light weapons like improvised mortar tubes. These homemade or makeshift weapons are often made with poor quality and can be unreliable and dangerous.

Local artisan production

Local artisan production of weapons refers to the manufacturing of firearms and other weapons using traditional methods and locally available materials. This type of weapon production is often found in countries or regions where legitimate firearms and other weapons are difficult to obtain, either due to strict laws or economic and political instability. Artisanal production of weapons can take many forms, including the use of simple tools such as hammers and files to shape metal parts, the use of traditional techniques such as casting and forging, and the use of locally available materials such as wood, metal, and plastic. The finished products are often passed on to other artisans for finishing and engraving to add value to the final product. This type of production is often a livelihood for families, particularly in developing countries, and it can be a faster way to make income. The

demand for weapons can also increase prices, making it more attractive for artisans to pursue this trade. This kind of weapons production is a major challenge for many countries as these weapons are often poorly made and can be unreliable and dangerous. They also contribute to the proliferation of weapons and fuel armed conflicts. Governments and international organizations have tried to tackle this issue by providing support to local communities to develop alternative livelihoods.

Semi-professional production

Semi-professional manufacturing operations, manned by skilled workers, sometimes engage in the production of improvised firearms, illicitly and under a partially legitimate guise for local markets. The scale of such enterprises ranges from larger facilities that employ industrial machinery, such as computer numerical control (CNC) lathes and milling machines, to smaller workshops that rely mostly on manual labor and rudimentary equipment. These endeavors may yield a significant quantity of firearms, frequently distributed in bulk through intermediaries. Firearms may even be crafted in commercial factories that produce other goods, regardless of the owner's cognizance of this illicit activity. Such operations often contravene local and national laws, with sales occurring without any registration or record-keeping, hence hindering accountability for the circulation of these firearms. On a larger scale, this can endanger international disarmament and security.

Safety and Normative considerations

Craft-produced small arms and light weapons, which are made by individuals rather than professionals, often pose a greater risk to both users and bystanders due to safety shortcomings. These include the use of poor-quality materials, inconsistent manufacturing, insufficient tolerances, and a lack of quality control or proof-testing. These weaknesses can lead to weapon failure, rendering the weapon useless and potentially causing injury or death to the user. If the ammunition is also improvised or hand-reloaded, it can cause further issues such as too much or too little propellant, incorrect projectile size, and sensitive primers. In addition, controlling the correct cartridge headspace is a serious issue for high-pressure conventional ammunition, as insufficient or excessive headspace can lead to unreliable feeding and catastrophic failure, resulting in harm to the user. Increased regulations on these shortcomings in countries where improvised firearms are legal can be conducive to the maintenance of the security of both users and bystanders.

Users and producers	Primary motivations for acquisition or production	Associated risks
Tribal groups and families	Cultural reasons, limited availability of conventional firearms, hunting, deterrence, self-defence	A decline in access to or production of craft weapons may lead to an increased use of commercial weapons. Craft weapons may be used in conflict.
Hobbyists and collectors	Interest	Minimal direct threat to others, although the sharing of know-how online may facilitate production by and proliferation among criminals and non-state armed groups. If poorly designed, the weapons may harm users if fired.
Gunsmiths and engravers	Livelihood or supplemental income (see Section III)	Production is unregulated and contributes to illicit proliferation, including of semi-professional copies of commercially-available weapons.
Subsistence poachers	Limited availability of conventional firearms, livelihood	Possession facilitates crime. Safety issues may threaten users and bystanders.
Traffickers	Limited availability of conventional firearms, profit (see Box 3)	Trafficking exacerbates illicit proliferation and the arming of non-state armed groups.
Individual criminals	Limited availability of conventional firearms, low cost, limited traceability, easy concealment	Possession facilitates crime. Safety issues may threaten users and bystanders.
Criminal organizations	Limited availability of conventional firearms, low cost, limited traceability, easy concealment	Possession facilitates crime. Safety issues may threaten users and bystanders.
Insurgent groups and militias	Limited availability of conventional firearms, filling capability gaps, supplementing holdings or facilitating capture of industrially-produced weapons	Acquisition facilitates armed conflict, including attacks on civilians and security and military personnel.
States	Limited availability of conventional firearms, circumventing sanctions or embargoes	Acquisition or production may entail the misuse of international aid and can facilitate armed conflict.

Figure 1: Table showing the users and producers of improvised firearms, their primary motivations for acquisition or production, and the associated risks of it.[9]

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

China

[9] Hays, G. and N.R. Jenzen-Jones. "BEYOND STATE CONTROL | Improvised and Craft-produced Small Arms and Light Weapons." *Small Arms Survey*, Nov. 2018, https://smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-improvised-craft-weapons-report.pdf.

China has strict gun control laws, and the production, sale, and possession of firearms are heavily regulated. However, the country has been facing a significant problem with the smuggling of small arms and light weapons, many of which are imported from neighboring countries. The Chinese government has taken several measures to address the problem, including increasing border security and launching a national campaign to crack down on illegal firearms. However, the problem persists due to the porous nature of China's borders and the high demand for weapons in the country.

Japan

Japan has some of the strictest gun control laws in the world, and the possession of firearms is heavily regulated. The country has a low rate of gun violence, and the production and sale of improvised firearms are tightly controlled. The Japanese government has been proactive in promoting disarmament and nonproliferation and has provided funding to organizations working to reduce the number of small arms and light weapons in circulation.

Kenya

Kenya has relatively strict gun control laws, but the country has been plagued by gun violence and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The government has implemented several measures to address the problem, including a firearms amnesty program and the establishment of a National Focal Point for Small Arms and Light Weapons. However, the effectiveness of these measures has been limited due to corruption and a lack of resources.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, gun control laws are strict, but they are often not enforced effectively. The country has been grappling with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which have fueled conflicts between ethnic and religious groups, as well as between criminal gangs and security forces. The Nigerian government has taken several measures to address the problem of illegal firearms, including the establishment of a National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The government has also launched a voluntary disarmament program, which provides incentives for people to turn in their weapons. However, the program has not been successful, as many people are reluctant to give up their weapons due to security concerns.

United States of America (USA)

The United States has relatively lenient gun control laws, and the production, sale, and possession of firearms are widely unregulated. The country has one of the

highest rates of gun violence in the world, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been a significant problem. The federal government has implemented some measures to address the problem, such as background checks for gun buyers and restrictions on certain types of weapons. However, these measures have been met with opposition from pro-gun groups, and gun control remains a highly contentious issue in the country. Some states have implemented stricter gun control laws, but these vary widely, and the effectiveness of these measures is debatable.

Venezuela

Venezuela has relatively strict gun control laws, but the country has been experiencing a significant increase in violent crime, much of which is related to the proliferation of improvised firearms and weapons. The government has implemented a number of measures to address the problem, including the establishment of a national gun registry and the launch of a disarmament program. However, the government's efforts have been undermined by corruption, political instability, and economic crisis.

International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

IANSA is directly involved in the process of tackling the development of improvised firearms. It is a global network of civil society organizations that advocates for stronger regulations on small arms and light weapons. The organization works to raise awareness about the dangers of small arms proliferation and promotes policies to prevent their illicit trade.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

ECOWAS is also directly involved in addressing the development of improvised firearms. It has taken steps to strengthen gun control laws, prevent the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, and enhance regional cooperation to combat the problem. In 2006, ECOWAS adopted the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which seeks to regulate and control the transfer of such weapons.[10]

World Customs Organization (WCO)

The WCO works to enhance customs enforcement and cooperation between countries to prevent the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. The WCO also has strict regulations in relation to carriage, embarkation, and disembarkation of

[10] GunPolicy.org. "ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons." *GunPolicy.org*, Sydney School of Public Health, 3 Mar. 2021, www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/citation/quotes/3219#:~:text=The%20ECOWAS%20Convention%20on%20Small,exemption%20from%20the%20ECOWAS%20Secretariat.

firearms and security equipment. This can help reduce the availability of the raw materials and components needed to produce improvised firearms.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
28 July 1914 – 11 November 1918	WWI
26 June 1934	The National Firearms Act (NFA) is passed.
1 September 1939 – 2 September 1945	WWII
25 June 1950 – 27 July 1953	Korean War
21 July 2001	Establishment of UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA).
31 May 2001	Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms is established.
27 January 2002	United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) is put into effect.
14 June 2006	ECOWAS adopts the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons
3 June 2013	The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is signed.
20 September 2013	Adoption of Resolution 2117.
13 March 2015	Adoption of Resolution 2220.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Resolution 2117 (2013)

This resolution calls for the prevention, reduction, and eradication of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. It urges UN member states to implement effective measures to prevent and combat the illegal manufacture, transfer, and circulation of these weapons, and to ensure that the possession and use of these weapons are in accordance with international law. It also calls for increased international cooperation to address this issue. Since this resolution was passed by the Security Council, it is legally binding for all states. However, considering as small

arms and light weapons are still being circulated, albeit illegally, this resolution has not tackled the issue effectively.

Resolution 2220 (2015)

This resolution focuses on the role of women in disarmament efforts and recognizes the importance of including women in all aspects of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes. It also calls for the strengthening of measures to prevent the illicit transfer, diversion, and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA)

The United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) is a program that was established by the UN in 1999 to coordinate international efforts to combat the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.[11] CASA's main goal is to promote international cooperation and aid countries in implementing effective measures to control the production, transfer, and use of these weapons.

UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA)

UNPoA is a comprehensive plan of action that was adopted by the UN in 2001.[12] The program aims to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by addressing the root causes of the problem and implementing measures to control the production, transfer, and use of these weapons. The UNPoA includes a wide range of measures, including the establishment of national control systems, the promotion of international cooperation, and the strengthening of law enforcement and border control efforts.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

US National Firearms Act

The National Firearms Act (NFA) is a federal law in the United States that was enacted in 1934. The law regulates the manufacture, transfer, and possession of certain firearms, including machine guns, short-barreled rifles and shotguns, and

[11] "UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA)." *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*, www.un.org/disarmament/casa/.

[12] "Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects." *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*, www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/.

silencers. The NFA imposes a tax on the transfer of these firearms and requires individuals who possess them to register them with the federal government. The law aims to reduce the availability of firearms that are particularly dangerous and can be easily concealed, such as those that can be used in criminal activities. However, as seen in multiple instances in the US, firearm possession and use is a pressing issue that has yet to be tackled effectively.

Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms

This is an international agreement adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2001.[13] The protocol aims to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms by establishing measures for the regulation, monitoring, and control of firearms and ammunition. The protocol calls for member states to enact national legislation to regulate firearms, including licensing and registration requirements, and to establish effective law enforcement mechanisms to prevent the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms. It is not legally binding since it is a UNGA resolution, therefore the extent of its impact is highly debatable.

Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is an international agreement that regulates the trade of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013 and entered into force in 2014.[14] The treaty aims to prevent the illicit trade in firearms and to promote responsible trade practices by requiring countries to establish and enforce strong national regulations on the trade in arms. The ATT requires states to assess whether the transfer of arms would contribute to the commission of human rights violations or other illegal activities, and to take steps to prevent such transfers. The ATT has only been signed by 113 countries, with the USA not among them. The treaty can only be legally binding for those who have signed it, and since the number of signatories is not great, the ATT has its limits.

Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons

The Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is an international agreement that aims to regulate the production, trade, and transfer of small arms and light weapons. The SALW was adopted in 2001 and has been ratified by over 100

[13] "Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2001, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Firearms/12-56168_Firearm_booklet_ebook.pdf.

[14] "National Firearms Act." *Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives*, www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/national-firearms-act.

countries.[15] The convention recognizes the threat that small arms and light weapons pose to international peace and security and calls for measures to prevent their illicit production, trade, and use. The SALW requires states to establish national controls on the manufacture and transfer of small arms and light weapons, and to prevent their diversion to illicit channels. It also calls for cooperation and information sharing between countries to combat the problem.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Strict gun control laws

Strict gun control laws are often seen as a means to reduce the production of improvised firearms, as it makes it difficult for individuals to acquire legitimate firearms. These laws can include background checks to ensure that individuals with a history of violence or criminal behavior do not have access to firearms, licensing requirements that regulate who can legally purchase or possess a firearm, and restrictions on certain types of firearms that are commonly used to produce improvised firearms. While these measures can be effective in reducing the number of improvised firearms, they also raise concerns about individual rights and may face opposition from pro-gun advocates.

Law enforcement efforts

Another approach to tackling the problem of improvised firearms is to increase law enforcement efforts and provide the necessary resources to local law enforcement agencies. This can involve crackdowns on illegal firearms manufacturers and distributors, as well as targeting the criminal organizations that rely on these firearms. However, this approach may face challenges in areas where law enforcement is under-resourced or corrupt, and it may not address the root causes that drive the production of improvised firearms.

Addressing root causes

In countries with a history of political or civil unrest, addressing the underlying social and political issues that drive the development of improvised firearms is an important step. This may involve addressing poverty and inequality, improving access to education and healthcare, and promoting political stability. By addressing the underlying causes of unrest, governments can reduce the demand for improvised firearms and limit the number of individuals who turn to these weapons out of

[15] "United Nations Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons." *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*, 2001, www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/.

necessity. However, this is a long-term approach that requires sustained investment and political will.

International cooperation

Tackling the development of improvised firearms is a global issue that requires international cooperation. Governments can work together to share information, enforce laws, and develop strategies to reduce the development of these weapons. A characteristic approach that could be taken by many countries is creating an international database of improvised firearms and known fabricators, importers-exporters, etc.

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