

DISARMAMENT & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Committee Background Guide

General Assembly

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Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

Whilst NYUMUNC is committed to maintaining as educational and historically accurate an experience as possible, we recognize that any debate around historical events will incorporate sensitive issues. Delegates are expected to discuss these issues maturely and appropriately. NYUMUNC is committed to promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion in line with NYU's values; in the spirit of this commitment, NYUMUNC will not tolerate any bigoted symbols, statements, or attitudes.

Committee Background

The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime. It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.

Topic A: Access to Weapons of Mass Destruction

Introduction

The prospect of non-state actors, including terrorists and their supporters, gaining access to and using Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials is a serious threat to international peace and security. Over the years, terrorist groups have tested new ways and means to acquire and use more dangerous weapons to maximize damage and incite terror, including weapons incorporating CBRN materials. With advancements being made in technology and the expansion of legal and illegal commercial channels, including on the dark web, some of these weapons have become increasingly accessible.^[7]

Historical Context

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons are often considered the most dangerous weapons on earth. Although only having been used twice at the end of WWII, the threat of atomic destruction continued into the cold war and remains to this day. One can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations through its long-term catastrophic effects.

A number of multilateral treaties have since been established with the aim of preventing nuclear proliferation and testing, while promoting progress in nuclear disarmament. These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon

Tests In The Atmosphere, In Outer Space And Under Water, also known as the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) , which will enter into force on 22 January 2021.

A number of bilateral and plurilateral treaties and arrangements seek to reduce or eliminate certain categories of nuclear weapons, to prevent the proliferation of such weapons and their delivery vehicles. These range from several treaties between the United States of America and Russian Federation as well as various other initiatives, to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and the Wassenaar Arrangement.^[2]

There are four scenarios under which a nuclear weapon could theoretically be used by terrorists.

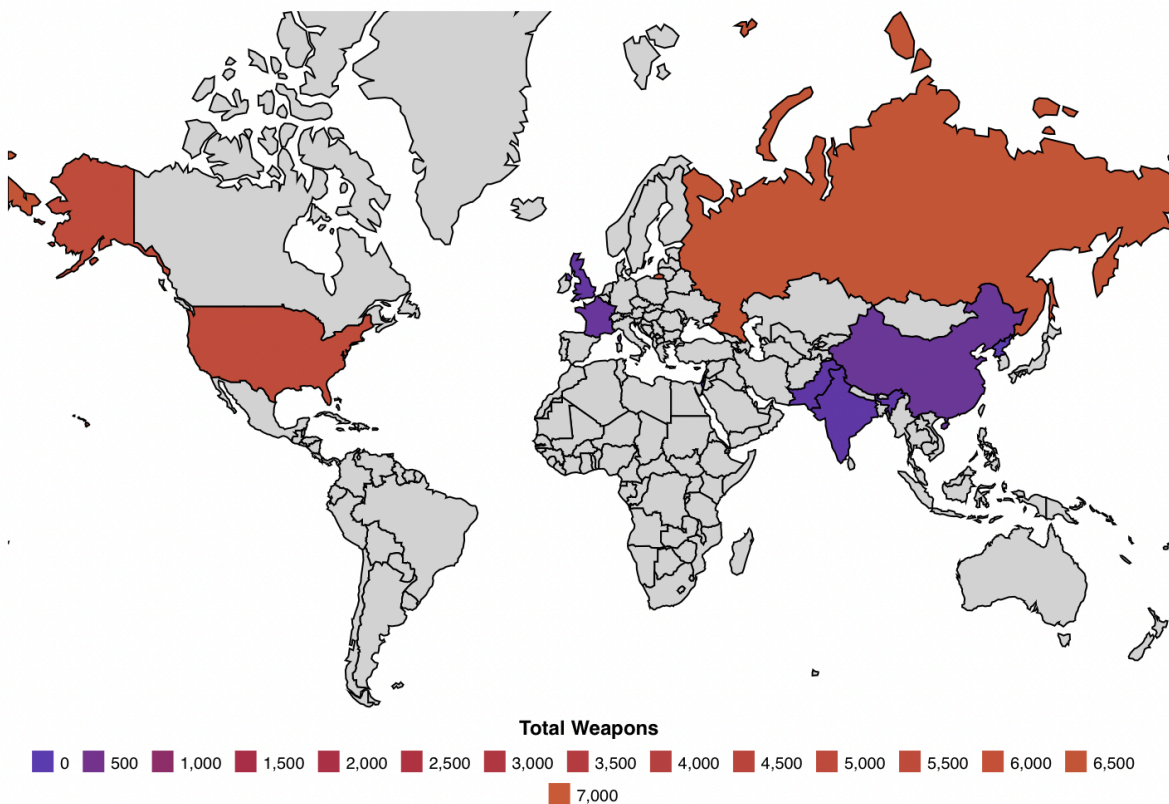
1. The theft and detonation of an intact nuclear weapon from a military nuclear facility.
2. The theft or purchase of fissile material leading to the fabrication and detonation of an improvised nuclear device (IND).
3. Attacks against and sabotage of nuclear facilities, in particular nuclear power plants, causing the release of large amounts of radioactivity.
4. The unauthorized acquisition of radioactive materials contributing to the fabrication and detonation of a “dirty bomb.”^[9]

States with Nuclear Weapons

1. Russia — 6,257 (1,458 active, 3039 available, 1,760 retired)
2. United States — 5,550 (1,389 active, 2,361 available, 1,800 retired)

3. China — 350 available (actively expanding nuclear arsenal)
4. France — 290 available
5. United Kingdom — 225 available
6. Pakistan — 165 available
7. India — 156 available
8. Israel — 90 available
9. North Korea — 40-50 available (estimated)^{[10][11]}

Nuclear Weapons by Country 2022



[11]

Biological Weapons

The usage of disease in warfare can be traced back to Antiquity, with the usage of rotting animal carcasses or plague ridden corpses being common practice in combat and sieges. Since WWII, however, the field of biological weaponry has largely been relegated to the field of research.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. It was the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

For the Biological Weapons Convention there is no implementing agency, and thus the UNSGM, which is distinct and independent from the BWC, is the only international mechanism to investigate the alleged use of biological weapons. As such, UNODA's efforts in recent years to strengthen the readiness of the UNSGM have focused on biological weapons events.^[5]

Chemical Weapons

Since the end of World War II, chemical weapons have reportedly been used in only a few cases, notably by Iraq in the 1980s against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Covering a wide range of weapons, from irritants like tear gas to nerve agents like sarin gas, development of new forms of chemical warfare have continued and have seen less regulation than other forms of WMDs.

Its use in acts of terrorism, however, as well as its continued proliferation in conflict zones, and the risks such warfare pose to civilian populations have led to it remaining within international discussion.

Past Action

Security Council Resolution 1540

In resolution 1540 (2004), the Security Council decided that all States shall refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes. The resolution requires all States to adopt and enforce appropriate laws to this effect as well as other effective measures to prevent the proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery to non-State actors, in particular for terrorist purposes.^[1]

IAEA Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM)

The CPPNM entered into force in 1987, ratified by 112 member states. It recognizes that physical protection is the responsibility of sovereign states, i.e. the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) member states are required only to implement measures deemed necessary in accordance with national security requirements.^[6] Furthermore, the CPPNM requests from member states to criminalize certain acts (e.g., unlawful receipt, use, transfer, alteration, disposal, or dispersal of nuclear material; threat to use nuclear material to cause death or serious injury).

Concerning the issue of controlling non-state actors from gaining access to nuclear material the CPPNM and its amendment have a major deficiency: the level of physical protection necessary to prevent such access is decided by the national authority and its assessment of the threat level.

There is no realistic possibility for other member states, disagreeing with this assessment, to demand the strengthening of physical security.

Deficiencies in CPPNM and its Amendments:

- The views on security threats due to non-state actors differ widely among member states, therefore the actions taken to counter the security risks reflect these divergent threat assessments
- Measures taken to strengthen physical security are considered confidential and therefore are not subject to an objective external assessment
- There is no internationally legally binding minimum standard for physical security
- The financial means available for physical security of nuclear material and facilities are inadequate in a number of member states (e.g., developing countries housing research reactors fuelled with HEU; some CIS-countries with extensive nuclear infrastructure inherited from the former USSR)^[6]

Security Council Resolution 2325

Ahead of an open debate on keeping weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of terrorists and other non-State groups, the Security Council called today for intensified efforts to ensure the development of a secure international framework for that purpose in the face rapid technological advances and increasingly ambitious malefactors.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2325 (2016), the Council called on all States to strengthen national anti-proliferation regimes in implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) — which seeks to keep non-State actors from acquiring nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass

destruction — and to submit timely reports on their efforts. It called for greater assistance for building State capacity in that regard, including through voluntary contributions, and for greater cooperation among all stakeholders, civil society and academia among them.

The Biological Weapons Convention

Article	Provision
Article I	Undertaking never under any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile, acquire or retain biological weapons.
Article II	Undertaking to destroy biological weapons or divert them to peaceful purposes.
Article III	Undertaking not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone to manufacture or otherwise acquire biological weapons.
Article IV	Requirement to take any national measures necessary to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of biological weapons within a State's territory, under its jurisdiction, or under its control.
Article V	Undertaking to consult bilaterally and multilaterally and cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective, or in the application, of the BWC.

Article VI	Right to request the United Nations Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC, and undertaking to cooperate in carrying out any investigation initiated by the Security Council.
Article VII	Undertaking to assist any State Party exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the BWC.
Article X	Undertaking to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and information for peaceful purposes.

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction

After 12 years of negotiations, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was adopted by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on 3 September 1992. The CWC allows for the stringent verification of compliance by State Parties. The CWC opened for signature in Paris on 13 January 1993 and entered into force on 29 April 1997. The CWC is the first disarmament agreement negotiated within a multilateral framework that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under universally applied international control.^[4]



Chemical Weapon Elimination Facility in Russia^[12]

Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons (UNSGM)

With resolution A/42/37 C (1987) the UN General Assembly established, and the Security Council reaffirmed with resolution 620 (1988), the Secretary-General's Mechanism (UNSGM) to carry out prompt investigations in response to allegations of the possible use of chemical and bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons that may constitute a violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol or other relevant rules of customary international law. If any Member State provides the Secretary-General with a report of such allegations, the Secretary-General is authorized to launch an investigation to ascertain in an objective and scientific manner the facts of the matter, including dispatching a fact-finding team to the site(s) of the alleged incident(s), and to report the results of the investigation to all Member States.

Current Issues

Indonesia:

In mid-October 2019, the Indonesian police discovered that a cell of Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD) – the largest pro-Islamic State (IS) network in Indonesia – had plotted a suicide attack using a bomb that contained the abrin poison in Cirebon, West Java. The cell had targeted a local police station and a place of worship in Cirebon. Police seized 310 grams of rosary pea seeds, which is the main ingredient of abrin. The police's forensic test revealed that around 0.7 micrograms of abrin could kill 100 people.



Abrin Poison- ^[13]

This was the first assembled bomb in Indonesia that used a biological substance as one of its ingredients. However, this was the second terror plot in eight years that used biological agents. The first plot was in 2011, when a militant group in Jakarta attempted to kill policemen by poisoning the latter's food using ricin, another biological agent.

Indonesian terrorist groups currently do not seem to have the intention or capability of using a category A biological agent such as anthrax to launch an attack. The last known effort to develop anthrax was in mid-2000, when Hambali, the Indonesian group Jemaah Islamiyah's liaison officer to al-Qaeda (AQ) introduced Malaysian JI member Yazid Sufaat to al-Qaeda. According to the 9/11 Commission Report, Yazid – a member with a degree in medical technology and biochemistry from a U.S. university – led AQ's biological weapons program. Yazid helped set up the AQ laboratory in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and would spend several months cultivating anthrax for the terror outfit. Despite AQ's generally unsophisticated laboratory, Yazid claimed that he had been successful in developing some pathogens. He asserted that anthrax was not his “favorite” as it was good for sabotage but not enough to kill people. The laboratory was eventually destroyed when NATO bombed Kandahar in 2001. Yazid returned to Malaysia and was arrested in the same year. He was released in 2008 and rearrested in 2013.^[10]

Tokyo Subway Sarin Attack

Aum Shinrikyo, whose name means "supreme truth", began in the 1980s as a spiritual group mixing Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, later working in elements of apocalyptic Christian prophecies. The group's founder, Shoko Asahara, declared himself to be both Christ and the first "enlightened one" since Buddha. The group, whose name is often shortened to just Aum, gained official status as a religious organization in Japan in 1989. Asahara picked up a sizable global

following, speaking at universities and writing books. At its peak, Aum had tens of thousands of members worldwide.

The Tokyo subway sarin attack was the first large-scale disaster caused by nerve gas. The cult released sarin gas into subway commuter trains during morning rush hour. Twelve passengers died and about 5500 people were harmed. Sarin is a highly toxic nerve agent that can be fatal within minutes to hours. It causes the clinical syndrome of cholinergic hyperstimulation by inhibition of the crucial enzyme acetylcholinesterase. In the months after the March 1995 attack, the group made several failed attempts to release hydrogen cyanide in various stations.

The subway atrocity shocked Japan, a country that prides itself on low crime rates and social cohesion. It also raised questions about police failures to investigate previous allegations of criminal activity by the group. Scores of Aum members have faced trial over the attack, and 13 were sentenced to death, including Asahara.



Victims of Tokyo Subway Sarin Attack-^[14]

Al-Qaeda

From the moment of its foundation in 1988, al-Qaeda had a military subcommittee on nuclear weapons and tried to purchase fissile material from former Soviet Union and its former satellite states. After al-Qaeda merged with Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad the new Shura Council held internal discussions on the matter of nuclear weapons, and in 1998 Osama bin Laden issued a fatwa declaring that it was his religious duty to acquire and use nuclear weapons.

While pressure from a wide range of counter-terrorist activity has hampered Al-Qaeda's ability to manage such a complex project, there is no sign that it has jettisoned its goals of acquiring fissile material. Statements made as recently as 2008 indicate that Al-Qaeda's nuclear ambitions are still very strong. The Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism issued a report that al-Qaeda would attempt to use.^[17]

ISIS

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has demonstrated ambition to use weapons of mass destruction. Although the chances of them obtaining a nuclear bomb are small, the group have been trying/suspected of trying to obtain a nuclear dirty bomb.^[16]

North Caucasus Terrorists

North Caucasus terrorists have attempted to seize a nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine. They have also engaged in reconnaissance activities on nuclear storage facilities and have repeatedly threatened to sabotage nuclear facilities. Similar to Al-Qaeda, these groups' activities have been hampered by counter-terrorism activity; nevertheless they remain committed to launching such a devastating attack within Russia.^[15]

Recommended Reading:

- 1) Statements Record of all Member States
- 2) Report of the Secretary General on Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction
- 3) Statements of all Member States Regarding WMD

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- 16) https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-risk-of-a-nuclear-isi_b_8259978
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Topic B: Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weaponry

Introduction

With the end of the Cold War, global attention turned to the prevalence of localized armed conflict - or “low-intensity conflict” - estimated to have caused over a million deaths in the past decade, 90% of which are civilian casualties from the indiscriminate use of violence. SALW lies at the heart of such violence, as such weapons are easily obtainable and operable. Not only are they used by militias, insurgents and combatants in conflict zones around the world, they are often widespread amongst crime syndicates and terrorist groups as well. This has had severe impact on developing countries-- government resources are diverted from crucial public services such as health and education, foreign investment and economic growth take a dive, and society is deprived of the skills and labor of small arms victims, some of whom are even recruited into gangs and militias since young.

Historical Context

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) refer to any weapon that can be carried or operated by one or two individuals. These range from guns--pistols, assault rifles, and light machine guns--to rocket launchers, grenade launchers, mortars and shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile launchers. By definition, these weapons are mobile, portable and relatively easy to operate, rendering them accessible to the average civilian.



Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/genevadeclaration/frank-boateng-asomani-national-commission-on-small-arms-light-weapons-ghana>

The proliferation of small arms is no doubt a pertinent issue in developed nations such as the US, where gun control has been a topic of much controversy. However, the nature of SALW trade in developed countries differs significantly from the rest of the world. Thus for the purposes of a more structured debate, we will focus on the SALW trade in developing nations faced with weak state protection, feeble law enforcement and protracted conflict zones.

The infographic on the next page is illustrative of the impact and distribution of small arms around the world and gives a good idea of which developing nations are most adversely affected by the trade.

SMALL ARMS MASS DESTRUCTION

FAST FACTS

Small arms kill an estimated half a million people every year. That's nearly one person every minute.



In some parts of Africa, a bag of grain or a chicken can be traded for a rifle.



In the African nation of Mozambique, the AK-47 is so prevalent and symbolic it's depicted on the flag.



There are approximately 875 million small arms worldwide—one for every 10 people on earth.



THE ADVANTAGES

Compared to generalized armaments, small arms and light weapons are easier to...

✗ OBTAIN

✗ TRANSPORT

✗ CONCEAL

✗ OPERATE

These features make them the primary tools of violence for civil wars, terrorism, organized crime and gang warfare.

PREVALENT WEAPONS



The Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifle originated in Russia but has been produced all over the communist and post-communist world. Osama Bin Laden spread his message of terror with an AK-47 by his side.



The M60 machine gun, produced in the U.S., has been used in many of the world's conflicts. The crew-served weapon has a sustained rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute.



The IMI 9mm Uzi is a compact sub-machine gun designed in Israel. It is used by at least 50 countries and was a preferred weapon of the infamous Colombian Cartels.



The RPG-7 is a Soviet-designed handheld anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launcher. It's simple, effective and can be equipped with a variety of warheads. A street in Northern Ireland was renamed RPG Avenue because it was chosen many times by the IRA to launch rocket attacks.



The SA-7 Grail, originating from the Soviet Union, is a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile weapon. The SA-7 has been used in insurgent attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. The infrared homing system makes it particularly threatening to low-flying aircraft.

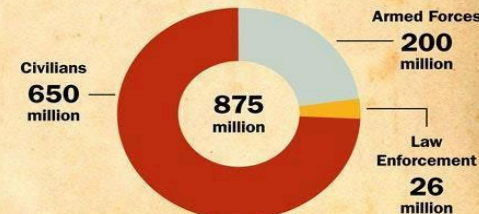
THE FLOW OF ILLICIT FIREARMS

Nearly 1 million of the 7 to 8 million firearms produced every year are lost or stolen. Here's an example of how guns end up in the wrong hands:



WHO OWNS THE MAJORITY OF SMALL ARMS

Most of the world's 875 million small arms are in the hands of civilians.



At 8.9 firearms for every 10 residents, the United States has the biggest ratio of firearms.



Yemen is second to the U.S. with 5.5 firearms per 10 residents.



THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC

U.S. The nation produces most of the world's small arms with at least \$700 million in annual exports. Despite the country's stable government and economic strength, the U.S. has the highest rate of firearm deaths among 25 high-income nations.

More than 1,000 lives are lost each day to small arms violence. Many of the victims are civilians.

COLOMBIA The country's constant conflicts between drug cartels, guerrillas and security forces make it a prime destination and source of demand for weapons. There are as many as three illegal weapons for every legally registered weapon in Colombia.

SUDAN Two rounds of civil war cost the lives of 1.5 million people, and a continuing conflict in the Darfur region has driven two million people from their homes and killed more than 200,000. Sudan has served as a major passageway and source of small arms and light weapons to Somalia, Uganda and other countries in the region.

AFGHANISTAN Civilians suffer the most from the ongoing conflict in this country. Insurgents were responsible for 75% of civilian deaths in 2010 — up from 28% in 2009.

Average annual violent death rates per 100,000 people, 2004-2009



MEXICO The illegal drug trade is fueling increasing brutality. The violent death rate in Ciudad Juarez, near the Texas border, is 170.4 per 100,000 people — more than 20 times the global rate.

GUATEMALA The percent of homicides caused by firearms in 2005 was 82%. Of the country's one million firearms, it's estimated that 800,000 are illegal.

LIBERIA Within a 14-year period, Liberia endured two consecutive civil wars that left approximately 250,000 people dead. The conflict left the country in economic ruin and overrun with weapons. Despite the ongoing disarmament program, arms and ammunition are finding ways into criminal hands.

SOMALIA For two decades, the conflict in Somalia has increased the spread of small arms and bloodshed. Approximately 74% of households in the country own small arms. Of the small arms in private ownership, 73% are AK-47 assault rifles.

PHILIPPINES With extensive maritime boundaries, the multi-island nation is susceptible to small arms smuggling. Around 93% of gun-related crimes from 1993 to 2006 involve unlicensed guns.

SOURCES: Small Arms Survey; United Nations; Oxfam; IANSA; Religions for Peace; Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development; Stimson Center; GunPolicy.org. Graphic by Troy Oxford for PBS/Women, War & Peace©

Current Issues

Producers of SALW

According to the Global Small Arms Survey, more than 1000 companies from 100 countries worldwide produce small arms and light weapons as well as their ammunition. As seen below, the largest exporters of global arms include the US, Russia, China, France, Germany, the UK, Spain, Italy and other countries with significant industrial capacities able to meet both international and domestic demand. These companies could be either state-owned, private, or a mix of both.

Case Study: Small Arms in Somalia

Somalia has experienced two decades of continuous civil conflict and is considered emblematic of a failed state, where the government has lost its authority over society. In 1991, civil war broke out across Somalia after rebels ousted President

Mohammed Siad Barre. As part of the Cold War proxy theatre, the USSR and US had been sponsored NATO-caliber arms (weapons with cartridges that were designed as a common standard amongst NATO countries) in Somalia ever since 1960. When the Barre regime collapsed, militias and insurgents looted the state's ammunitions stockpiles, leading to a large proportion of such weapons falling into the hands of non-state actors. The Red Cross estimated in 1999 that in Mogadishu alone, its 1.3 million residents owned more than a million guns. In addition, arms were trafficked to Somalia through neighboring countries such as Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. When the Cold War ended, a large surplus of small arms stockpiles flooded the international market, often reaching developing countries like Somalia where demand was

exceedingly high. The conflict persisted till 2006, when the Transitional National Government splintered after denying the Islamic Courts Union its electoral victory. More radical offshoots of the ICU, such as Al-Shabaab, began waging jihad and igniting a new round of civil war. As a result, neighboring Ethiopia has become one of the largest weapon suppliers in sub-Saharan Africa, supplying SALW to opponents of Al-Shabaab.

Somalia is an example of the vicious cycle between the arms trade and civil conflict. In many other parts of Africa, however, small arms impose huge costs even in post-conflict situations. While heavy weapons are “difficult to obtain and operate and easier to decommission or monitor” , the circulation of small arms does not end with the cessation of war. According to a 2002 study titled *Development Held Hostage: Assessing the Effects of Small Arms on Human Development*, “the durability of small arms ensures that once they are present in a country they present a continuous risk - especially in societies where there are large accumulations of weapons...They frequently outlast peace agreements and are taken up again in the post-conflict period by criminal gangs, vigilantes, dissidents and individuals concerned about personal security”. [to put in quote bubble] This creates a “culture of violence” where gun ownership is not just a symbol of power and status, but becomes a requisite for survival and the intuitive response to settling political and personal disputes. In South Africa, for instance, state sponsorship of arms during the apartheid led to a massive arms buildup that spun out of government control post-apartheid.

Case Study: Flow of Arms to South Sudan

South Sudan has one of the highest rates of population armament in the entire world. This is closely- related to its history of violent conflict. Civilian ownership of arms proliferated as early

as the 1950s, where the South Sudan Secessionist movement gained traction during the First Sudanese Civil War. This was further aggravated by the Cold War theatre, where foreign governments provided both incumbent and rebel forces with weapons as a tool for proxy warfare. Moreover, Sudan's immediate neighbors were instrumental in its armament. As state law enforcement weakened and borders turned porous, foreign armed groups began to move into South Sudan, bringing weapons, conflict and instability. For instance, the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army set up operational bases in South Sudan and left many weapons in the hands of non-state actors. Foreign governments also had a vested interest to sponsor particular sides of the civil conflict - Eritrea, supported the rebel Eastern Front in South Sudan; Chad and Libyan governments likewise armed rebel groups in Darfur. This shows how the proliferation of SALW are often a direct result of larger geopolitical tensions. Please refer to [this link](#) for an interactive map of the SALW supply flows to South Sudan. You can play around with the controls to look at statistics for different countries, time periods and type of arms.

Even then, not all blame can be attributed to historical events. As much as foreign governments can provide arms, it remains a fact that Western countries, Russia and China are the largest current producers of such arms as seen in the interactive graphic above. The US exported around \$550 million worth of civilian arms alone to South Sudan in 2010. Likewise, China and Russia are two of the largest buyers of Sudanese oil - reportedly consuming over 80 percent of its oil exports - giving them an interest in sponsoring Sudanese movements. According to a UN report, China has sold over \$20 million in military equipment to South Sudan. As part of the arms embargo, China has stopped selling arms to South Sudan in 2014. Even then, large numbers of them remain in circulation, many in the hands of non-state actors through redistribution, re-capturing or the black market.

Thus, we can see that stemming the flow of SALWs is not just a question of conflict governments, but also one of addressing developed/more powerful states with a clear vested interest in the region.

Case Study: Mexico - Gun Smuggling and Cartel Violence

A large proportion of US firearm flows to Mexico is completely legal through direct commercial sales, but more than a quarter (2009 numbers) are diverted into the hands of non-state actors such as drug cartels. Some of them arise as many Mexican military members defect to the cartels, bringing their weapons with them. Others are stolen, intercepted or lost, thus entering the black market trade. These SALW fuel cartel violence-- Mexico's homicide rate is five times that of the US.

Local law enforcement is weak in the face of such rampant violence. The government struggles to provide its police officers with enough resources, funds and protection from the dangerous drug cartels. Moreover, police corruption is a serious problem - an estimated 63 percent of Mexicans do not trust their municipal police force, while 66 percent view them as corrupt. In the face of tempting bribes and more importantly, threats to themselves and their family, police officers often find it easier to collaborate with cartels instead . This makes it even more difficult to monitor the sales and circulation of SALW.

Mexico's case is not unique. The corruption of domestic security forces often exacerbate violence. In Cambodia for instance, police officers often "rent out" their police arms to boost incomes. Likewise, Human Rights Watch reported that the Indonesian military was the largest source of weapons for rebel forces, as members of the security forces actually sold weapons during the Aceh insurgency.

Past Action

SALW have been a key focal point in disarmament. The subject was first broached by the UN in 1991, where Resolution A/RES/46/36 mandated an expert panel surveying the type and flow of illicit small arms around the world. In 1998, the UN Office on Disarmament (UNODA) was created both to promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in conventional weapons such as landmines and small arms.

Arms Trade Treaty

The ATT was a landmark UN treaty adopted by the General Assembly in April 2013. The resolution encompassed provisions for regulating legal international trade in many types of conventional weapons, including SALW. All states are obliged to establish controls with regards to such arms trade such that they do not contribute to human rights abuses such as genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes . It has been signed by 130 states to date. This includes the top few arms exporters such as the US, the UK, Germany, Italy, France and Spain. However, this treaty explicitly states that it does not interfere with existing national arms regulations or the right to bear arms. It thus focuses mainly on the monitoring of arms exports such that they do not violate existing arms embargoes, and tracking of export destinations for greater data on SALW flows.

This treaty has important implications especially for ongoing conflict states like Syria : many countries sponsor Syrian rebels against Assad's forces. Arms belonging to rebel groups are especially vulnerable to theft and loss, falling into the hands of more radical forces. Hence, it becomes particularly difficult to define what qualifies as a contribution to crimes against humanity, since the flow of weapons is so fluid and non-state actors exist on a wide spectrum.

Many countries like Syria have explicitly voted in opposition to the ATT, most governments generally agree in principle that trade in SALW must be regulated. However, the degree and form of regulation is a matter of controversy. Russia and China - two leading weapon exporters - and 23 other states abstained from voting, believing that a UN treaty on such matters may be a breach on national sovereignty. Much pushback also arises in civil society. In the US, for instance, there is overwhelming opposition to treaties like the ATT from the right--organizations such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the American Heritage Foundation have explicitly spoken out against the treaty. These groups are cautious about any regulation on gun trade - even if it technically concerns only international trade - fearing it would infringe on rights to individual gun ownership as well.

Questions to Consider

- Is your country a net importer or exporter of arms?
- What are they and why is it so important to stem their proliferation?
- What other issues (e.g. civil conflict, crime, culture of violence) do they intersect with, and how does that complicate the problem?

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