



NTS ALERT

"The proliferation of small arms, and munitions and explosives has also aggravated the violence associated with terrorism and organized crime. Even in societies not beset by civil war, the easy availability of small arms has in many cases contributed to violence and political instability. These, in turn, have damaged development prospects and imperilled human security in every way."

~ Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General

Weapons of mass destruction -- Disguised

The widespread devastation that has resulted from the unabated production and exploitation of **small arms and light weapons (SALW)** led former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to term them 'weapons of mass destruction in slow motion'. In the wake of an increasingly dynamic yet under-regulated global arms trade, SALW threat to human security is set to worsen unless significant action is taken to curb its proliferation.

The Small Arms Survey estimates that small arms are responsible for up to 90% of the 80,000 to 108,000 deaths caused by direct conflict each year. Of 49 major conflicts in the 1990s, 47 of them were waged exclusively with small arms. On top of this, the survey estimates that a further 200,000 people are killed from homicide or suicide by firearm in non-conflict areas.

Small Arms

Since 1983, the conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan government has caused the death of at least 65,000 people. In Nepal, at least 10,000 people have been killed since 1996 in the conflict between the Maoist insurgency and the local Royal Nepalese Army. Both these conflicts are waged almost entirely with SALW.

Deaths that indirectly result from armed conflicts continue years after the conflict ends. The lack of basic healthcare for the injured in conflict areas leads to higher infant and maternal mortality. Widespread disease mortality also results from malnutrition, starvation, and limited access to clean water. More often than not, surplus small arms not demobilized post-conflict continue to perpetuate violence in communities through opportunistic crime and organized crime groups.

Beyond the overwhelming death counts, the Small Arms Survey highlights that the unquantifiable costs of armed conflict are borne by those who survive with non-fatal injuries, disability, economic privation, and psychological trauma for the rest of their lives.

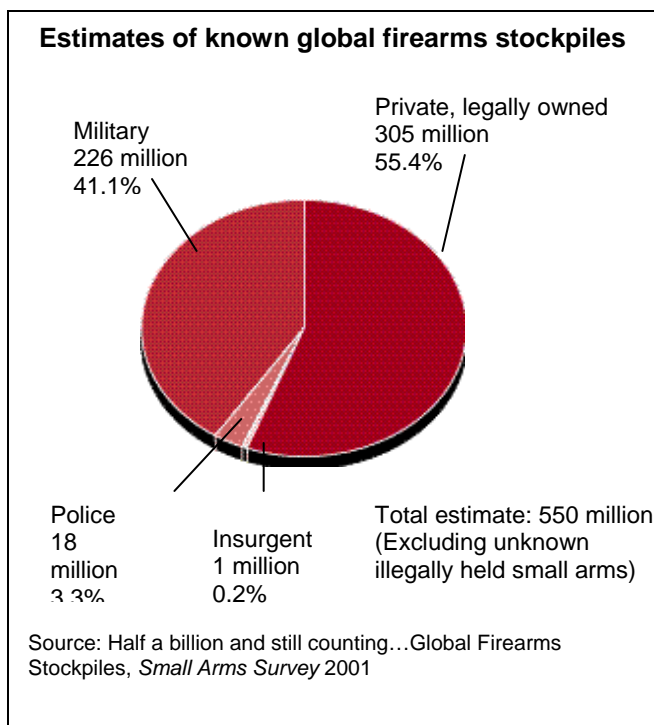
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Why does the problem of SALW persist?

SALW are particularly lethal because they are portable, easy to use, relatively low-cost and easily concealable. Most critically, these arms are extremely durable. An assault rifle can be circulated from conflict to conflict for 20 to 40 years with little maintenance. Currently, there are 550 million known firearms around world; this number could be higher by tens to hundreds of millions if all privately and illegally owned firearms were accounted for.



SALW numbers rise significantly each year due to a flourishing arms trade. The total value of the legal global small arms market is estimated at US 4 billion, and that of the illegal small arms market at US 1 billion. The annual production of 7 to 8 million small arms is legally sanctioned by governments. Current top small arms exporters are the United States, Italy, Brazil, Germany, the Russian Federation, and China. The United States, Cyprus, Germany, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Canada featured frequently as top small arms importers.

The significant involvement of numerous powerful states in the arms trade has been cited as reason for the lack of political will to further small arms proliferation controls. Indeed, the heart of the problem lies in the absence of national, regional and global standards, laws, and procedures to regulate the transfer and use these weapons. Well-established supply networks exploit legal loopholes to facilitate the diversion of SALW into conflict zones. Small arms have legitimate military, police and civilian uses and thus also cross borders relatively easily compared to larger arms

In fact, the movement and use of small arms are particularly hard to control because a large proportion of known arms lie in civilian possession. While global estimates of private, legally owned firearms stand at 55.4%, in some countries the proportion of private firearms ownership versus state and police firearms ownership are more skewed. In the United States and Argentina for instance, 98% and 94% of their respective populations privately own small arms. Moreover, out of the latter number of Argentinians, only 41% are licensed ownership while 53% are unlicensed ownership. Indeed, the presence of firearms in community and home settings beyond conflict zones also puts women

What are small arms and light weapons (SALW)?

Small arms are broadly speaking, **weapons designed for individual use**. Examples include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns.

Light weapons are broadly speaking, **weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew**, although some may be carried and used by a single person.

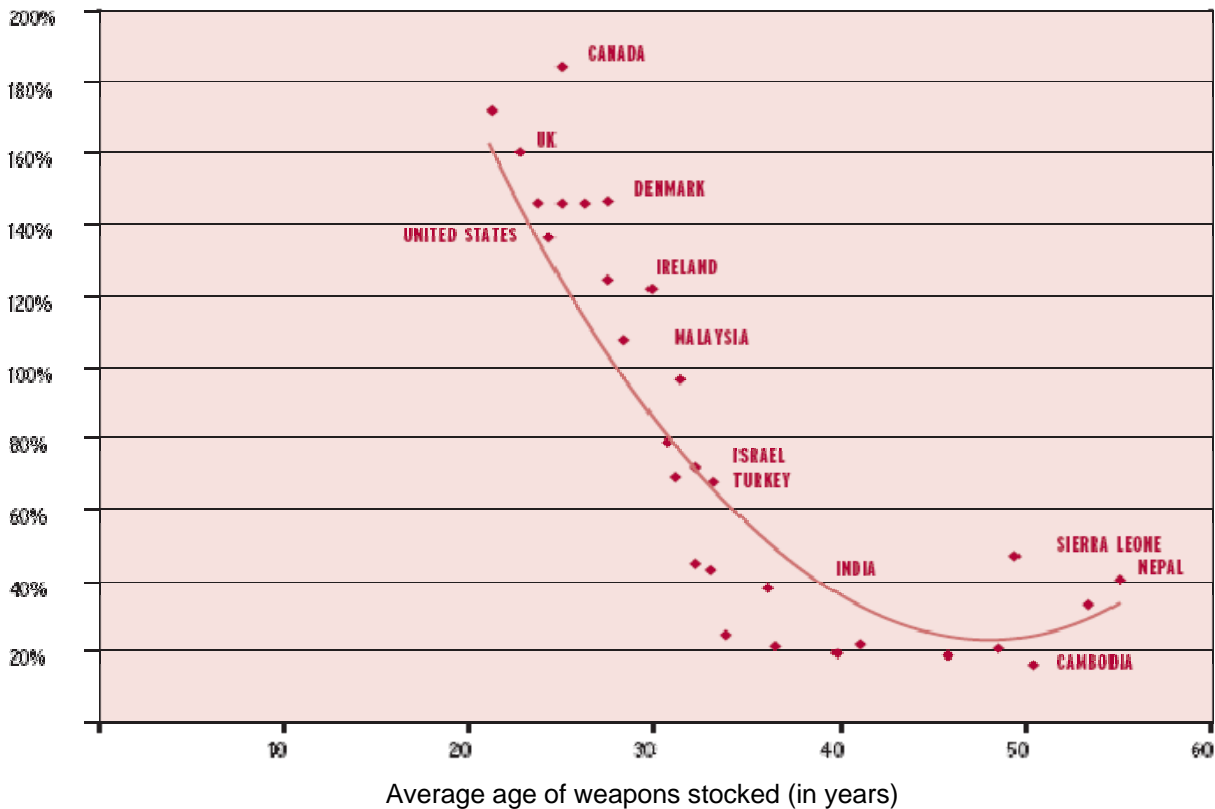
Examples include: heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 millimetres.

Source

International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, *United Nations*, June 2006

Average Age of Weapons Stocked and Procurement Rates in major initiatives for 29 countries

Pp/S Percentage of weapons procured per capita active member of armed forces



This graph highlights that of the arms procured by the world's militaries, not all of the acquisition is of newly produced weapons. This Small Arms Survey study demonstrates that production and surplus transfers are linked. There is a significant cascade effect as wealthy states renew their arms and displace older weapons via surplus transfers to less wealthy states. Unless these surplus stocks are destroyed, more weapons will be diverted to the poorer states where security of these weapons stockpiles is often weak, regimes are unstable, and armed conflict more prevalent, increasing the chances of SALW exploitation.

Source: *Military Demand and Supply, Products and Producers, Small Arms Survey 2006*

and children at a significantly higher risk of being abused and murdered. According to a report by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), access to guns increases the risk five-fold of a woman's chances of being killed by her partner.

Traditionally the small arms problem has been approached primarily from the perspective of weapons supply and availability. However, recent literature on the topic has expanded in emphasis to consider the demand optic, as successful intervention of small arms proliferation remains limited when confined to a supply-side perspective.

Studies on small arms demand in Papua New Guinea for instance, reveal that while their isolated

populations have been introduced to firearms relatively late, deep-seated cultural and societal factors led to an astonishingly high demand for the arms. Years of poverty, weak and dysfunctional police and justice systems, accompanied by a strong tradition of tribal rivalry sowed the seeds for an eruption of violence. The high demand for firearms resulted in locals devising numerous alternative methods of acquiring arms, which include producing home-made guns and bartering property, even women, for manufactured firearms. Once firearms infiltrated local communities, more saw it necessary to take up arms as a necessary means of self-defence, perpetuating the cycle of violence.





The combination of supply and demand of small arms precipitates the destruction they cause. Small arms proliferation interventions inevitably need to snuff out both ends of the equilibrium to be sustainable and effective in the long-term.

Sources

- Half a billion and still counting... Global Firearms Stockpiles, *Small Arms Survey*, 2001
- Behind the Numbers, Small Arms and Conflict deaths, *Small Arms Survey*, 2005
- An update on small arms transfers, *Small Arms Survey*, 2005
- Armed violence and poverty in Sri Lanka, *Centre for International Co-operation and Security*, Nov 2004
- Demanding Attention: Assessing the Dynamics of Small Arms Demand, *Small Arms Survey* and the *Quaker United Nations Office*, Jan 2006
- The Impact of Guns on Women's Lives, *International Action Network for Small Arms*, September 2003

AK-47: The Kalashnikov Rifle



The AK-47 was first introduced in 1947, and has since become one of the world's most popular and easily accessible small arm. Estimates for AK-47s in the world range from 50 million to 100 million, and they are found in the state arsenals of at least 82 countries. In parts of Africa, an AK-47 can be bought for as little as US\$15 (or a large sack of maize).

In automatic mode, the AK-47 can be fired at a **rate of 600 bullets per minute** with a maximum range of **800 to 1000 metres**. The bullets cause severe, non-fatal wounds that result in disability even at excessive ranges. Their relative simplicity and lightness also encourages insurgent groups to recruit women and children as fighters.

On top of uncontrolled unlicensed production of these weapons, widespread licensed production of modern variants of the original AK-47 continues in countries such as Russia, China, North Korea India and Venezuela. The continued availability of new rifles alongside unregulated rifles left over from old conflicts, permit unlawful groups and individuals to easily accumulate these weapons and perpetuate violence and suffering through their use.

Sources

- The AK-47: The World's Favourite Killing Machine, *Control Arms*, June 2006
- Small Arms, Big Problems by Kofi Annan, *Child Soldiers and the Arms Trade*, *Amnesty International Australia*,

How do legal small arms end up in conflict zones?

80% to 90% of small arms that are traded on the black market were originally traded legally. Legal-illicit transfers occur in a variety of ways, such as through the grey market, arms brokers, looting or theft of military stockpiles and the ant trade; these transfers also frequently involve corruption.

Each year, an estimated 1 million light weapons are stolen or lost around the world. Soldiers may sell their arms for cash, and in other instances, armed groups acquire weapons through raiding poorly guarded military stockpiles. Often, they bribe military personnel to let them enter restricted compounds housing the weapons.

In 2000, gunmen disguised as inspection officers entered the Malaysian military compound and took with them 100 automatic assault rifles, grenade launchers, and thousands of rounds of ammunition. While these gunmen were eventually forced to surrender, this incident is a stark reminder of the loss of legal arms to armed groups that often occur in similar situations, but where the arms are instead never recovered.

The costs in destroying weapons are high. Governments on tight defence budgets may irresponsibly export their older surplus arms stocks to other countries experiencing conflict, instead of destroying them. Corrupt government officials may issue export licenses for the surplus arms to areas ineligible under domestic or international law, allowing arms to be transferred to conflict zones.

Small arms transfers often bypass arms brokers who work for governments or private actors. They navigate the 'grey' market, making transfers that circumvent national or international law in some way. Brokers arrange or facilitate the transfer of weapons and usually work in networks with arms transporters, financiers and state officials. Few countries have laws regulating arms brokering activities.

A case in point: just this March, former Indonesian military General Erick Wotulo pleaded guilty in the United States Federal court in Baltimore to the charges of conspiring to supply sophisticated arms to the LTTE in Sri Lanka. Wotulo was supposed to supply machine guns, ammunition and surface to air missiles to the LTTE.

Federal undercover agents had arranged for a Singapore arms broker to test fire the weapons he was planning to buy at a camouflaged police shooting range in Baltimore. Wotulo was apprehended when he later flew to Guam to liaise with the broker regarding the loading of arms and munitions.

Arms producing companies can also trade on the grey market by evading their national laws regarding arms exports. Some companies license production to other countries with less stringent export criteria.

Arms producer Heckler & Koch avoided German laws on arm exports by selling arms production licenses to other countries including Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, Thailand, Turkey, and Mexico to produce the G3, a submachine gun. The German government had no control over the exports of weapons produced abroad.

Arms also enter the illicit market through the ant-trade, or small scale cross border arms trafficking. These arms are often bought legally, but smuggled out of the country through illicit means. This slow but steady supply of arms eventually accumulates to significant numbers that may cause substantial damage, especially when used by individuals with such intent. Furthermore, groups with small numbers of arms need only a constant supply of ammunition, which is far easier to traffic, to continue their carnage.

Sources

Former Military General accused guilty in LTTE arms supply – Indonesia, *Ministry of Defence Sri Lanka*, March 2007
Malaysia Arms, *Global Security*, June 2000
Deadly Diversions: Illicit Transfers of Ammunition for Small Arms and Light Weapons, *Small Arms Survey*, June 2006
Fighting the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms, May 2005
The Real Weapons of Mass Destruction, *Global Policy Forum*, May 2006

Beyond the Death Counts: The Impact of Small Arms on Women and Children

The lethality of firearms is the crux as to why these weapons are so effective in causing rampant fear, destruction and pain, both within and outside conflict zones. Gun shot wounds severely damage human tissue and are more likely to be fatal than other wounds, such as those from knives.

In conflict zones, children are at times forced to kill under the threat of facing torture or death. All parties of the conflict in Liberia in 1999, abducted thousands of children to become fighters, hundreds of them were girls. Girls that did not fight were forced to provide sexual services for the soldiers. Eventually, some female combatants grew up to capture other girls to provide sexual services for the male soldiers.

Women may also become perpetrators of violence when they experience gender discrimination or when they lose their families in conflict. In Nepal, Maoist insurgencies capitalised on this to attract women into their armed forces, convincing them of the ‘power’, ‘respect’ and ‘equality’ they would experience, otherwise denied in male-dominated Nepalese culture.

Most of the time, however, women and girls are the unlikely users of these weapons. They are instead subject to slavery and numerous forms of sexual violence, atrocities perpetuated under the threat of death by SALW. In some conflict zones in Africa, such as Eastern Congo, there is a gruesome practice of armed groups of shooting into the vagina of their rape victims. This results in a humiliating condition in the girls where the walls separating the bladder, rectum and vagina are blown apart. These girls live the rest of their lives with this nightmarish condition and pain; the obvious physical deformity creates a social stigma that prevents them from reintegrating into their communities post-conflict.

Women also often have to pick up the pieces in the conflict’s aftermath in extremely difficult (and still unsafe) conditions, earning income to



Main effects of misuse of small arms on Women and Children

Women

Direct Effects:

- Physical injury
- Loss of family member/ main income earner
- Widowhood/ single parenthood
- Loss of access to livelihood resources, property
- Reduced income earning capacity, if injured
- Loss of face/ low social status/ looked down upon
- Worry, anxiety, fear
- Increased responsibility for earning income
- Primary responsibility for child care/ home care for injured family member

Indirect Effects:

- Children drop out of school
- Changed residence/ family displacement/ separation of family members
- Increased participation of young family members in income earning
- Family indebtedness, distress sale of family property, family becomes poorer
- Food shortages, malnutrition among family members :
- Decline in woman's health due to worry, anxiety, added burdens of income earning
- Increased spending for treatment of injuries

Children

Direct Effects:

- Reduced interaction with others
- Dropping out of school
- Inability to access local livelihood resources, leading to migration
- Reduced income earning capacity, if injured or threatened
- Loss of face/ looked down upon
- Fear, trauma, worry, anxiety, anger
- Increased participation in income earning
- Partial responsibility for child care/ home care for injured family member

Indirect Effects:

- Change residence/ family displacement/ family disintegration
- Loss of family member/ income earner
- Loss of friends
- Drug addiction, commercial sex work, affiliation in street gangs (in some cases)

take care of the children and the injured men. Healthcare, education services and infrastructure often destroyed during conflict, hinder the rebuilding of societies and stall children's development. Many women and children remain displaced from their homes, even after the conflict ends. In some situations, surviving male combatants may return to their families with firearms on the pretext of needing the weapons for protection. However more often than not, these arms are eventually used against their wives and children.

A study on the impact of SALW on women and children in *Cambodia* indicated that instances of weapons misuse and abuse occur mostly through a

range of criminal activities. These include kidnapping, robbery, intimidation and threats, extortion, assault, and homicide. Perpetrators of weapons misuse often involve uniformed men, particularly from the police and the military.

In 2005, Cambodia's national gun laws were revised and arms control strategies were implemented, strictly limiting civilian ownership of guns. The moves led to a 17.5% drop in gun-related crime in 2006 as compared to 2005.

Women and children who live in societies where human security is low may ironically indirectly support gun-related violence. They may equate power to the use of arms, encouraging men to

fight and carry arms as a symbol of their masculinity. Unfortunately, this cultural conditioning only leads to a greater demand for and misuse of small arms

Sources

Cambodia: Gun Incident's dropped in 2006, *International Action Network on Small Arms*, 23 February 2007

Congo's Wounds of War, *More Vicious than Rape*, Newsweek, June 2007

How to Fight, How to Kill: Child Soldiers in Liberia, *Human Rights Watch*, February 2004

I Live in Fear, *Working Group for Weapons Reduction*, June 2001

The Impact of Guns on Women's Lives, *International Action Network for Small Arms*, September 2003

Under the Gun, Children and Small Arms, *African Security Review*, 2002

What is the UN Firearms Protocol?

The United Nations Firearms Protocol entered into force on 3 July 2005. Prior to the adoption of this protocol, no international treaties or legal instruments regulated firearms production and spread. The Protocol sets out a comprehensive monitoring system, to promote, facilitate and strengthen cooperation among States Parties to reduce trafficking in firearms.

Member States of the UN who ratify the Protocol are legally-bound to adopt crime control measures and implement three sets of provisions in their domestic legislation:

1. Establishing criminal offences related to illegal manufacturing of or trafficking in firearms
2. Setting up a system of government authorizations or licensing, to ensure legitimate manufacturing of firearms
3. Marking and tracing firearms

To date, 49 member states have ratified the Firearms Protocol.

Source: United Nations Firearms Protocol Enters into Force, *United Nations Information Service*, 6 July 2005

International efforts to control small arms: United Nations Initiatives

The United Nation's efforts to curb the spread of SALW were initiated in 1995 by then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The UN convened a **Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects in July 2001** after conducting preliminary investigation on the impact of small arms on civilians and societies around the world. The main objective of the conference was in establishing a procedure in which nations should follow to prevent illicit small arms trading. The conference culminated in a unanimously agreed upon **Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA)** by UN member states.

The principle requirements of the PoA among others include:

- Make illicit gun production/possession a criminal offence
- Identify and destroy stocks of surplus weapons
- Keep track of officially-held guns
- Issue end-user certificates for exports/transit
- Disarmament, Demobilisation & Re-integration (DDR) of ex-combatants, including collection and destruction of their weapons
- Mark guns at point of manufacture for identification and tracing
- Maintain records of gun manufacture
- Ensure better enforcement of arms embargoes

In July 2003 and July 2005, UN member states met at the Biennial Meetings of States (BMS) at UN Headquarters in New York. However, both meetings revealed that governments barely made any progress in implementing the PoA. Almost no measures to control small arms were put into place across the Middle East, North Africa and much of Asia.

Subsequently, the UN Small Arms review conference was held in June 2006 to review the





PoA and to achieve consensus on global measures to tighten controls on the international SALW trade. Due to the consensus decision making process of the conference, the conference collapsed without an agreement. The United States consistently voted against key issues while states such as Cuba, India, Iran, Israel and Pakistan abstained from voting.

In October 2006, at the UN General Assembly, the First Committee of disarmament and

international security managed to achieve resolution to forward an international Arms Trade Treaty and the UN process in small arms. The next UN meeting for member states to update on progress on SALW issues will convene in 2008.

Sources

Small Arms at the UN, *International Action Network on Small Arms*
United Nations Small Arms Review Conference

Independent efforts to curb SALW proliferation

The Small Arms Survey (SAS)

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project started by the Swiss government in 1999. The project seeks to develop accurate information concerning the global flow of small arms and form reliable analyses of the causes and consequences of their proliferation. It is also an independent monitor of national and international governmental and non-governmental policy initiatives on small arms.

The annual small arms survey review provides updates on production, transfer, stockpiling, and use of small arms and light weapons around the world.

Source: Small Arms Survey homepage

The Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer

Trade and production of small arms are particularly difficult to monitor due to the lack of transparency of governments on their trading partners, and import and export data.

The Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer compares states based on transparency. It assesses the transparency of the major reported small arms exporting states on a 25-point scale on the basis of the information states publish on their small arms exports in national arms export reports and in

customs data as reported to UN Comtrade (United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database).

According to the barometer, among the major exporters of small arms and light weapons, the most transparent are the United States (20.5) and Germany (19), while the least transparent include Israel, Iran, North Korea and Bulgaria, all scoring 0. Russia and China scored at 7.5 and 10.5 respectively.

Source: An Uphill Battle, Understanding Small Arms Transfers, *Small Arms Survey*, 2006

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) is a network of 700 civil society organizations working in 100 countries to stop the proliferation and misuse of SALW.

IANSA goals:

- Secure stronger regulation on guns in society and better controls on arms exports
- Represent the voices of civil society on the international stage
- Draw on practical experience of its members to campaign for policies that will protect human security

Since 1998, IANSA has created five regional NGO networks covering more than 30 nations. Regional networks are emerging in South Asia, South East Asia and the South Pacific.

Facts and Figures: Small Arms Proliferation in Asia.

South Asia

- ✚ There are 73 million unlicensed firearms throughout Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka; at least 63 million of these arms are in civilian hands
- ✚ India accounts for 40 million arms while Pakistan accounts for 20 million arms

- ✚ SALW sources:
 - ✚ The first Afghanistan war, many of the weapons have since flowed to Pakistan and India.
 - ✚ Cambodia's surplus arms after the Khmer Rouge have been transferred to Sri Lanka, north-eastern India and Kashmir

South East Asia

Cambodia

- ✚ Estimates of Cambodia post-war surplus firearms lie between 500,000 to 1 million, though this number has decreased in recent years due to firearms collection programmes
- ✚ These surplus firearms continue to be a major source of small arms for the region

Indonesia

- ✚ Military holdings: 250,000 to 300,000
- ✚ Police holdings: 14,655 registered and licensed firearms
- ✚ Private holdings: 10,000 weapons (estimate)
- ✚ Sources: Surplus arms from past conflicts in the Indo-china region
Home-made arms

Philippines

- ✚ There are close to 1.3 million small arms in the Philippines as of early 2003; around 439,000 of these firearms are unregistered.
- ✚ Arms in the Philippines have been imported from China, Afghanistan, Libya, North Korea and Pakistan
- ✚ Military rebel groups in the Philippines have stated that their largest source of arms is the Philippines Armed Forces

Thailand

- ✚ A major transit point for firearms in the region
- ✚ A significant channel for Chinese arms to the Cambodian Khmer Rouge of the 1980s and early 1990s; this pipeline leaked significant quantities of weapons onto the regional black market.
- ✚ Up to mid-2000, the Andaman side of Thailand's southern peninsula was still used by the LTTE of Sri Lanka as a base for small arms procurement
- ✚ The Thai military is a principal supplier of small arms in Thailand, as arms leakage supplement the salaries of many military figures

Singapore

- ✚ A major trans-shipment point for arms in the region
- ✚ It has the most sophisticated arms production within the region

Sources

Small is (not) beautiful, The Problem of Small Arms in Southeast Asia, *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, 2004
Curbing the Demand for Small Arms, Focus on South East Asia, *The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Quaker United Nations Office, Quaker International Affairs, Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia*, 2002





IANSA works to raise and unify the voices of NGOs involved in the United Nations Small Arms Programme of Action. IANSA champions meaningful dialogues between governments and the NGO sector over small arms, ensuring that civil society remains effectively engaged in this important programme. IANSA has also been heavily involved in pushing for a global arms trade treaty. In 2006, 153 of the world's governments voted to start work on an arms trade treaty in 2007.

Source

International Action Network on Small Arms homepage

An International Arms Trade Treaty

In October 1995, Dr. Oscar Arias, current President of Costa Rica initiated an international campaign with fellow Nobel Peace Laureates to draft the Nobel Peace Laureates International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers. This document was intended as a challenge to the international community, as the Code of Conduct laid down a stringent set of principles that should govern all arms export decisions: respect for human rights, humanitarian law, sustainable development and peaceful coexistence. Based upon the Code of Conduct principles, this initiative evolved into the current Arms Trade

Treaty, and presently carries the endorsement of over twenty individuals and organisations honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Arms Trade Treaty would be a universal, legally binding agreement that consists of a set of basic rules to regulate the international transfer of conventional arms. It is structured on the principle that it is the responsibility of arms exporters and importers, to ensure that the weapons they provide would not be used in serious violations of international law.

Sources

Arms Trade Treaty homepage

Blog, Control Arms

Small Arms Action: Efforts by the United Nations to Curb the Spread and the Misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Peace and World Security Studies

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