

HISAR SCHOOL

JUNIOR MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2019

**“Protecting Freedom in the Global Age ”**

## **Disarmament Committee**

*Prevention of Arms Trafficking in South America*



**RESEARCH  
REPORT**



# RESEARCH REPORT

**Forum: Disarmament Committee**

**Issue: Prevention of Arms Trafficking in South America**

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## **Introduction**

The increase in the number of small arms would interrupt with a country's whole development and rebuilding process. The illegal arms trade will not only assist the organized crime groups in the country but also provoke conflict between civilians. Although the number of armed conflicts has weakened in recent years, the number of people dying due to armed conflict has increased. Every year, armed violence kills around 500,000 people in the world. With this issue being significant as it is the Latin American Countries are far more likely to have gun-related violence than to the rest of the world. Approximately 75% of all homicides in Latin America are generated by guns compared to the Global average of 40%. The reason behind this eye-opening difference stands as the lack of precautions adopted by the South American governments and although considerable improvements have been made in the past decade, with the presence of corrupt governments the issue remains unanswered.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### ***Arms Trafficking:***

The illegal act of trafficking or smuggling contraband ammunition or weaponry.

### ***Conflict-Affected Areas:***

Conflict-Affected Areas are areas where Conflict is widespread. The area may be a region, a country, an area within a country, or an area that crosses one or more country boundaries.

### ***Gun-Related Violence:***

Gun-related violence is violence committed with the use of a gun. Gun-related violence may or may not be considered criminal. Criminal violence includes homicide, assault with a deadly weapon, and suicide, or attempted suicide, depending on the jurisdiction.

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## General Overview

Small arms were being traded tremendously to South America during the cold war, most significantly during the Central American civil wars throughout the 1980s. Although various motives and suppliers have had a hand in gun proliferation, the Cold War bears most of the responsibility. Both the Soviet Union and the United States supplied their allies with various small arms ranging between pistols to grenade launchers. Both supported their allies with the help of proxy arms dealers which provided them with mass quantities of weaponry. The Soviet Union and their Warsaw pact allies sent weapons to the Cuban Government which provided them to Sandinista's in Nicaragua. In response, the United States supplied weaponry to the counter revolutionist Nicaraguan Contras but mainly Soviet weaponry such as AK-47 in order to maintain official deniability of Its involvement. Today most weapons in Latin America come from the United States, Europe or the small but growing regional arms industry. Because the international small arms trade lacks transparency and a major portion of the trade is illicit it is difficult to track and control this weaponry.

Over the last few decades, small arms have grown to be a problem for the world society. There are various reasons for this increasing problem. First of all, the trade of small arms has switched from government-related business to private sectors and individuals. Furthermore, the current civil wars lead to the extreme use of weapons. It is very unlikely and difficult for governments to manage countries affected by civil wars.

One of the main effects of small arms to come to Latin America is the Collapse of the Soviet Union. Before the Soviet Union collapsed it was the leading small arms supplier of the world after the Soviet Union Collapsed these Large Arms companies were transferred to individuals becoming part of the private sector. Which some of the individuals lacked to follow international guidelines by selling guns illegally

The trade-in small arms are one of the least transparent trade systems worldwide due to the fact that Although it happens worldwide the demand is much higher in areas of organized crime and armed conflict. It is majorly traded in small amounts which is why is sometimes referred to as "ant trade" which is why it so difficult to trace.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### *United States:*

Being the world's leading arms exporter the United States has an undeniable presence in Arms trafficking in South America. Having a 2,000-mile border with Mexico allows illegal weapons to be trafficked quite easily. It is also reported that 9 in 10 illegal arms in Mexico are Originated from the U.S.

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and with Mexico selling these weapons to South America it would be valid to say The United States of America has an important role in Arms Trafficking in South America.

### ***Colombia:***

Colombia has one of the highest homicide rates in the world which is mainly because of illegal arms. Being swarmed by various organized crime groups, mafias, and paramilitary groups. The Colombian government is therefore challenged to disarm such organizations.

### ***Brazil:***

Brazil is the largest arms exporter in the Western hemisphere. Amongst 17 million arms in Brazil, more than half remain unregistered. In 2005 Brazil held a referendum in which 63% of people voted against the ban of Firearms, even though the UN and the Catholic church were in favor this showed how the Brazillian population was in need of guns because of their own safety. The Current President Bolsanaro is strongly in favor of repealing the disarmament law and allowing citizens to own and carry guns for defense.

### ***Russian Federation:***

Exporting 23% of all firearms to the world Russia is the second-largest arms dealer of the world. After the fall of the Soviet Union the illegal arms trade in Russia increased sending guns all over the globe. Russian originated guns such as "Kalashnikov" is widely common among various organized crime groups due to being easy to use.

## Timeline of Events

<b>1991</b>	The collapse of the Soviet Union
<b>2001</b>	<i>Programme of Action is adopted</i>

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<b>2002</b>	<i>IANSA (International Action Network on Small Arms) is founded</i>
<b>2005</b>	<i>A referendum is proposed and denied on the topic of banning gun ownership in Brazil</i>
<b>2006</b>	<i>A/RES /61/89 is adopted by the UN General Assembly</i>
<b>2018</b>	<i>Second Review Conference of Programme of Action</i>

### Treaties and Events

Secretary-General Report 2011

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

A/RES/61/89 Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export, and transfer of conventional arms

### Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In 2001 the “Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects” was proposed to fight this issue, the Programme wanted the Countries to; Criminate of those involved in the making of an illicit weapon, Identify and destroy stocks of surplus weapons, Mark guns at the point of manufacture for identification and tracking, Keep track of officially-held guns and various laws which will prohibit the use of illicit firearms. Although these laws were promising the “Programme of Action was discontinued because the U.S. would not cooperate.

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In 2005 Brazil held a referendum that will allow the government to seize possessed firearms which are not acquired with a valid reason but later were denied by 63% of the vote.

After the Programme of Action (POA), the Arms trade treaty was signed by 130 member states which included every country in South America except Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela. The treaty is a legally binding agreement that monitors the arms sales and establishes standards for international trade. Its main purpose is to oblige countries to regulate the flow of weapons across their country. “designate competent national authorities in order to have an effective and transparent national control system regulating the transfer of conventional arms”. It also prohibits transfers that do not follow the requirements in the treaty

### Possible Solutions

While this issue is being resolved the line between illegal firearms and legal firearms must be well drawn in order to avoid damaging countries' arms trade. Possible Solutions should be towards regulating gun use. Such regulations should not aim to decrease gun ownership for reasons such as (self-defense, hunting). But rather should aim to prevent guns from traveling into “bad hands”. An example of a regulation is increasing Background checks.

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