

UNGA DISEC

Use of Small Arms & Light Weapons in Conflict Zones

Letter from Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations General Assembly DISEC at The KIITis MUN 2017.

At the very outset, we'd like to state that this background guide is to serve merely as a framework for discussion; it is by no means exhaustive, however ideal to begin your research with. Much time and effort has gone into the making of this document and we hope that you will find it comprehensive and useful.

Given the nature of this agenda and committee, we'd like to bring to your attention that our aim is to examine the topic from an international strategy/policy standpoint collectively with comprehensive problem and solution based approach, may it be region specific or problem specific.

The agenda at hand stresses upon the need for international cooperation in combating the rise of illicit trading/use of SALWs in Conflict Zones, thereby promoting peace, nation building and consequently a proper economically and politically stable world.

As stated above, our view of armed uprising focuses on the need to develop a cohesive international policy or framework in order to combat the challenges that it poses to international peace and security.

Our objective, as the executive board of the committee, will be to facilitate debate as a means to developing a common understanding of what entails SALWs, its effects of the global political scenario and finally, a solution for the same.

Also please note that documents from the following sources will be considered as credible proof for any allegations made in committee or statement that requires verification.

1. Reuters: Appropriate documents and articles from the Reuters News agency will be used to corroborate or refute controversial statements made in the committee.
2. UN Document: Documents by all UN agencies will be considered as sufficient proof. Reports from all UN bodies including treaty bodies will be accepted.
3. Government reports: Government reports of a given country used to corroborate an allegation on the same aforementioned country will be accepted as proof.

Research Well,

Best Regards

Executive Board

Aman Johri,

About the United Nations General Assembly

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, the only one in which all member nations have equal representation, and the main deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the UN. Its powers are to oversee the budget of the UN, appoint the non-permanent members to the Security Council, receive reports from other parts of the UN and make recommendations in the form of General Assembly Resolutions. It has also established numerous subsidiary organs.

The General Assembly meets under its president or secretary-general in annual sessions, the main part of which lasts from September to December and resumed part from January until all issues are addressed. It can also reconvene for special and emergency special sessions. Its composition, functions, powers, voting, and procedures are set out in Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter.

Voting in the General Assembly on important questions, namely, recommendations on peace and security, budgetary concerns, and the election, admission, suspension or expulsion of members is by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Other questions are decided by a straightforward majority. Each member country has one vote. Apart from approval of budgetary matters, including adoption of a scale of assessment, Assembly resolutions are not binding on the members. The Assembly may make recommendations on any matters within the scope of the UN, except matters of peace and security under Security Council consideration. The one state, one vote power structure potentially allows states comprising just five percent of the world population to pass a resolution by a two-thirds vote.

Although the resolutions passed by the General Assembly do not have the binding forces over the member nations, pursuant to its Uniting for Peace resolution of November 1950 (resolution 377 (V)), the Assembly may also take action if the Security Council fails to act, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member, in a case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression. The Assembly can consider the matter immediately with a view to making recommendations to Members for collective measures to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Conflict Zones

Small arms are considered to be any weapons that can be carried by one or two people, from pistols and submachine guns to mines, grenades, and even small missiles. By their nature these weapons are **easy to conceal and transport**, which has allowed for a black market of small arms to grow and thrive worldwide. **Small arms are responsible for over 50,000 deaths per year** (UNODA), from armed rebels attacking civilians in Mali to gang members shooting law enforcement officers in Chicago.

The majority of small arms is in private hands, and because of this it is impossible to accurately estimate the number of small arms actually in circulation—although the total is believed to be almost 900 million. Due to the lack of regulation surrounding the small arms trade, less is known about these guns than about the global nuclear weapons supply (Small Arms Survey). Small arms are rarely moved in large, observable quantities. There are over one thousand weapons manufacturers in over one hundred countries, any of which could be stolen from or involved in **illicit gun trading** on a small scale. Small arms trickle into conflict zones slowly and under the radar, but large amounts of weaponry can accumulate nonetheless and upset the balance of power in fragile social and political environments. The problem should be approached at least in part from the production side, as proper marking and tracing can help to identify trade routes and finding the sources of leakage of arms into the black market (UNIDIR). Work must also be done with governments to tighten regulations and security around the legal arms trade, as many illegal small arms brokers are able to exploit legal loopholes and falsify documentation to obtain weapons from legitimate suppliers.

The presence of large numbers of small arms can aggravate existing tensions and turn what could have been peaceful political processes into armed uprisings and civil wars. Although guns are not the direct cause of these conflicts, it

is undeniable that the casualties resulting from them are markedly higher owing to the prevalence of small arms. Only by working closely with producers and traders and learning the nuances of the illegal arms trade will DISEC be able to form plans of action to combat this worldwide epidemic of violence.

Sales and Stats about SALWs

More than 1,000 companies from some 100 countries produce small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Only about a dozen countries produce advanced guided light weapons. Procurement analysis suggests that within a 50 year period, world production of military assault rifles, carbines, pistols, and light and heavy machine guns would range between 36 million and 46 million units, with an annual production of small arms alone (firearms, rather than light weapons) averaging 700,000—900,000. Research suggests that close to 80 countries currently produce small arms ammunition for pistols, revolvers, rifles, carbines, sub-machine guns, and machine-guns. Producers with the capacity to make the equipment necessary to manufacture small arms ammunition are far less numerous, however.

In 2010, the number of countries exporting at least \$100 million of small arms annually rose from 12 to 14. The exporters' list was led by the U.S., followed by Italy, Germany, Brazil, Austria, Switzerland, Israel, Russia, South Korea, Belgium, China, Turkey, Spain and the Czech Republic. Sweden dropped off the list because its exports fell from \$132 million in 2010 to \$44 million in 2011.

The eight countries that imported at least \$100 million of small arms in 2011 were the United States, Canada, Germany, Australia, Thailand, United Kingdom, France and Italy. South Korea dropped from the list because its imports fell from \$130 million in 2010 to \$40 million in 2011.

Table 8.2 Share of imports, by weapon category and type, 2009

Weapon category (HS code)	Weapon type	Percentage of imports ¹⁴
Military firearms (930190)	Small arms	41%
Grenade launchers, rocket launchers, etc. (930120)	Light weapons	33%
Self-propelled artillery (930111)	Larger conventional weapons	11%
Mortars, non-self-propelled artillery (930119)	Larger conventional weapons but mixed with some light weapons	14%

Table 8.3 The average annual value of transfers of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, parts, and accessories (USD million)

	Annual average value of documented transfers	Annual average value of undocumented transfers	Overall average annual value
Small arms	1,560	102	1,662
Light weapons	256	555	811
Parts of small arms and light weapons	1,282	146	1,428
Accessories of small arms and light weapons (weapon sights) ¹⁹	350	n/a	350
Ammunition	1,903	2,363	4,266
All small arms and light weapons, their parts, accessories, and ammunition	5,351	3,166	8,517

Analysis of SALW proliferation:

Small arms can enter the illicit market in nine different ways:

1. The first and most serious transfer of illegal arms occurs when states and organizations defy weapons trade embargos on nations. By doing so, they directly fuel the conflict in nations that have already been pre-identified as war-torn. Cases on regional, national and international scales can be found where the embargos were not monitored closely enough, such as the embargos on Angola and Liberia.
2. Another important transgression occurs because of corruption in the system. In many countries, such as Russia, the illegal passage of weapons is allowed through and across the border of a country as officials are bribed to cooperate. These officials will often accept payoffs, especially in countries where government officials receive meagre salaries and have little to no incentive to enforce the law.
3. The inadequate management of weapons stockpiles has meant that many legal weapons, often stored once they are out-dated, leak into the black market. It is in this way that most legal arms leach into illicit trafficking networks.
4. Another important source of illegal weapons can again be linked to the poor management of weapon caches. During times of civil unrest, many opportunists find the time to raid weapon arsenals. In 1997, for example, Albanian government arsenals emptied as the country descended into chaos and more than half a million weapons flowed into the hands of Albanian citizens. Many of these guns made their way throughout the Balkans and into other regions. In the most extraordinary case, that of Iraq, the loss of control of millions of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives helped to undermine the stability of an entire country.
5. Often times, weapons are also lost from military stocks. Each year, approximately 1 million light weapons are stolen or lost from military arsenals.

6. There are also known cases where members of the military who have legal access to guns and other weapons sell them or provide them to the black market. Israeli soldiers are known to sell weapons to Palestinians with the full understanding that these weapons will be used against Israeli soldiers and citizens.
7. Weapons have been stolen from owners, a case that occurs in countries where it is legal to carry firearms, such as the U.S.
8. Ambiguous or unclear domestic laws can allow persons to own and purchase multiple guns. These owners then go on to sell these weapons to other parties.
9. Lastly, there are many organizations in the black market that make their own weapons directly.

Need for a framework: Case study of South Sudan

SALW have many uses beyond their primary function as weapons of war. As a consequence, the effects of their proliferation are widespread. The first cluster of effects is connected with **conflict** and **insecurity**, and includes both the direct costs (deaths and injuries in conflicts) and the indirect costs (post-conflict insecurity, inter-communal tensions, etc.) of SALW proliferation and use. Although the presence or proliferation of small arms and light weapons does not *cause* the conflicts that are evident around the world, they do contribute to their level of violence, and generally therefore make the resolution of these conflicts more difficult.

The second cluster relates to **development** and governance issues. Investments of time and money – by governments, the international development community, major international aid agencies and NGOs – often have little impact in conflict-affected environments because gains are undermined by violence and insecurity. Up to 1.5 billion people live in countries that are affected by conflict and fragility, and 70% of fragile states have experienced conflict since 1989. SALW misuse is one of the factors that cause insecure situations and therefore undermines development. At the same time, a lack of development and a state that does not

provide security to its people are some of the factors causing people to have weapons.

For this reason, international focus on SALW issues has often been cast more broadly to address the roots of conflict and strengthen security provision through processes like security sector reform.

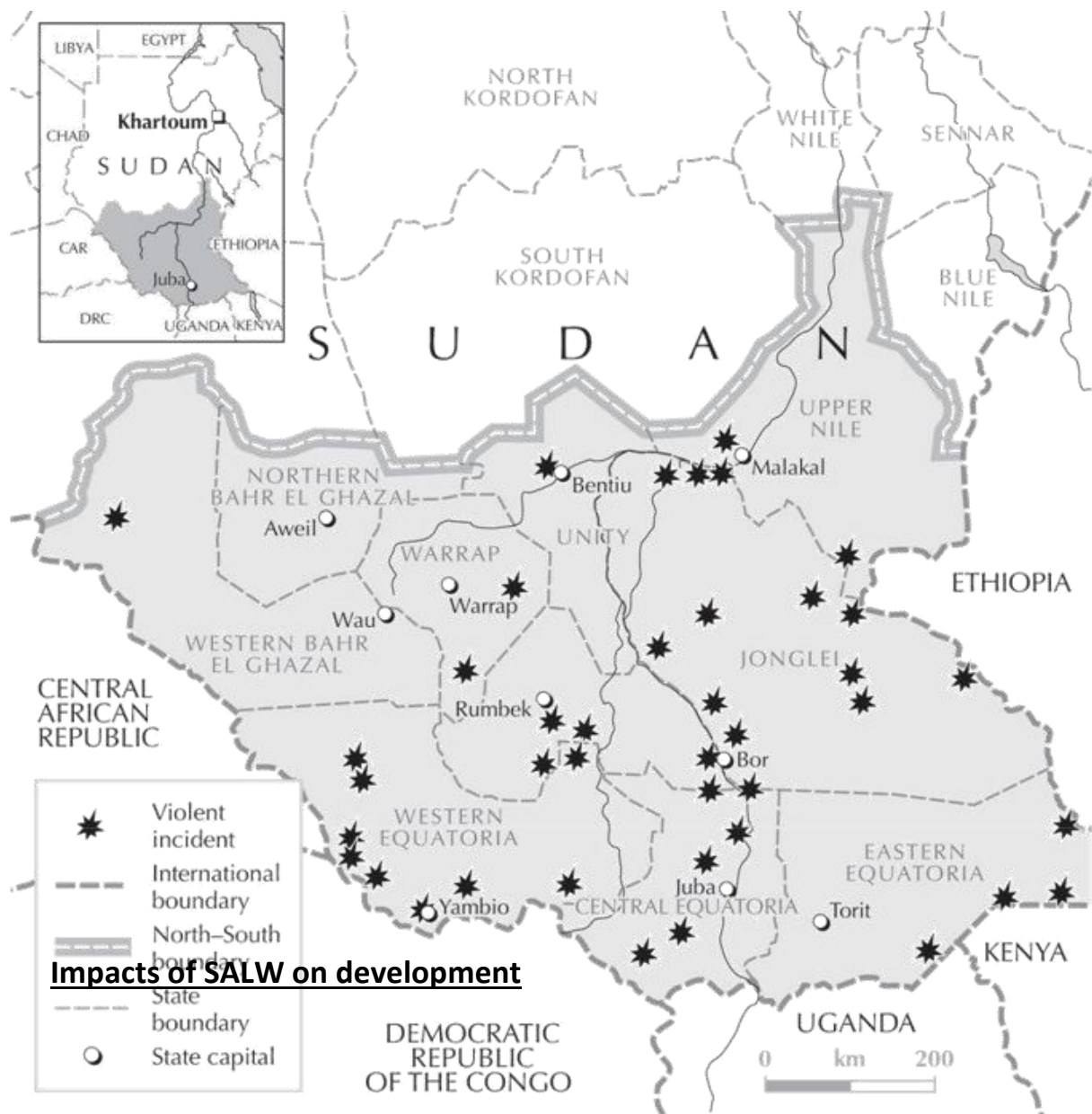


South Sudan

Until the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, South Sudan experienced decades of armed conflict, and was in 2011 still suffering from the consequences, including underdevelopment, large-scale displacement and continuing armed conflict at the community level. There are many different causes and levels of conflict in South Sudan, ranging from conflicts between individuals and groups over such things as marriage, cattle, water and pasture to conflicts at the political level. The presence of small arms contributes to these conflicts and makes them more deadly. For example, violence between pastoralists and crop farmers or among pastoralists over cattle rustling or grazing rights has historically occurred in South Sudan. Traditionally, these conflicts were fought with spears and sticks. However, this has changed due to the circulation of small arms during the civil war. Cattle raids with the use of guns can now lead to dozens or even hundreds of deaths. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as negotiations between

community elders, are also less effective, as power is now often wielded by well-armed young men.

In 2009, South Sudan experienced a major spike in armed violence, causing some 2,500 deaths and displacing 350,000 (see Map below). The violence took place as implementation of the CPA reached crisis point, with the (then) Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) almost exclusively preoccupied with countering perceived Northern aggression, at the expense of security and governance issues closer h



Impacts of SALW on development

Socio-economic underdevelopment presents both a breeding ground for and a consequence of the proliferation and misuse of SALW. The long-term impacts and costs of SALW in terms of human and economic development affect societies as a whole, and the adverse effects of armed violence on poverty, social spending and economic development perpetuate human suffering. SALW can have a negative and destructive impact on human development, including health and mortality, knowledge and education, income and standard of living, and community participation. SALW also play a key role in criminal activities and damage to property and can become an integral part of day-to-day business and commerce, which have a negative impact on employment, investment and growth of post-conflict countries. Widespread use of small arms in business and commerce frequently has a detrimental effect on business activity and employment which in turn fuels poverty. As a result, there may be less opportunity to work and earn an income as investment declines – not only large-scale Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), but also by local or regional entrepreneurs who may not want to take the risk.

International framework to combat the issue: Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

The ground-breaking Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) adopted in April 2013, is the first global treaty to regulate the conventional arms trade. The Treaty creates a new global norm against which states' practice will be measured, by other states and by international civil society. A global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) became international law on 24 December 2014. The ATT means that every state that has signed-up must now obey strict rules on international arms transfers. This will at last help to stem the flow of weapons that fuel bloody conflicts, atrocities and state repression around the world. The Treaty's rules are simple – if a country knows that the arms about to be sold will be used for genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes, then they must stop the transfer. The ATT provides crucial ground rules for the global arms trade. It is important to ensure strict implementation of the ATT and further encourage states not party to the same to sign and ratify it.

How does the ATT regulate the conventional weapons trade?

At the heart of the ATT is the obligation on countries that have joined it to make an assessment of how the weapons they want to transfer will be used. They must determine if the arms would commit or facilitate genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and serious human rights violations. Each state must assess if there is an overriding risk that a proposed arms export to another country will be used for or contribute to serious human rights abuses. If so, those arms must not be sent. This is the key element of the Treaty, found in Articles 6 and 7. Other parts of the Treaty set out guidelines for states that are importing weapons, and requires importers and exporters to cooperate in sharing information necessary to make the above assessment. It also includes obligations for countries that have weapons transiting through their borders and for brokering activities.

Why is it ground-breaking?

The ATT is the first time that human rights and humanitarian concerns have been so deeply integrated into a global arms control agreement. It introduces a notion of responsibility into the global arms trade that was absent before. While certain regional and national export laws did include these considerations others did not. These gaps are what enabled weapons to fall into the wrong hands or be diverted onto black markets. The ATT has helped to level the playing field and close the loopholes used by arms dealers and unscrupulous governments.

What weapons does it include?

The Treaty covers conventional weapons (meaning not nuclear, chemical or biological). The arms specifically mentioned in the Treaty are battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles and missile launchers and small arms and light

weapons. Ammunition, as well as the parts and components that make up weapons systems, also fall under its regulation.

What about the illicit trade in weapons?

Bringing the licit trade under control is the first necessary step toward addressing a reduction in the illicit trade. This has always been one of the motivating factors behind the ATT.

When was it adopted and how long did it take?

The ATT is the outcome of over a decade of advocacy and diplomacy. After years of preparation, a UN diplomatic conference was formally convened in July 2012, but fell short of reaching consensus on a final text and another two week-long diplomatic conference was convened in March 2013 to complete work on the treaty. However, Iran, North Korea, and Syria blocked consensus on the final treaty text, leading treaty supporters to move it to the UN General Assembly for approval. On April 2, 2013, the UN General Assembly endorsed the ATT by a vote of 156-3, with 22 abstentions. The treaty opened for signature on June 3, 2013. The ATT requires 50 ratifications before it can enter into force.

Who has joined it?

There are currently 82 States Parties and a further 51 are signatories.

What is the Conference of States Parties?

The Conference of States Parties (CSP) is the annual meeting for states that have joined the Treaty. It is an important place to report on progress made in implementing the Treaty as well as address challenges or concerns. The first CSP took place in Cancun, Mexico from 24-27 August 2015.

Conference of States Parties

As called for by Article 17 of the Treaty, a Conference of States Parties (CSP) was convened by the Provisional Secretariat one year after the Treaty entered into force.

Mexico hosted the First Conference of States Parties from 24-27 August 2015 in Mexico City.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty was a historic victory. However, its humanitarian impact will depend on the effectiveness of its implementation. The CSP is an important part of this, since the annual forum is where States Parties, signatories, UN bodies and civil society meet to assess and discuss implementation progress.

Extraordinary Meeting of States Parties

Geneva

29 February 2016

Over 75 governments – including 52 States parties, 22 signatories, and 3 observers – attended the Geneva meeting, along with more than 30 NGO and UN representatives.

The meeting did make progress on some procedural issues, including administrative and budget arrangements for the ATT Secretariat, and arrangements for the second Conference of States Parties (CSP), to be held in August later this year. The meeting also agreed to the re-establishment an Informal Working Group on Reporting, with the aim of making progress on templates for States Parties official reports.

Despite irrefutable evidence of serious violations of international law in a conflict that has killed more than 35,000 people, several States Parties and

Signatories to the ATT have continued sending weapons to Saudi Arabia, in violation of the Treaty's obligations.

First Conference of States Parties

Cancun

24-27 August 2015

The first Conference of States Parties (CSP) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) took place from 24-27 August 2015 in Cancun, Mexico. It followed five informal and formal preparatory meetings that took place over the previous 12 months, and represented a critical opportunity for States Parties to make decisions to guarantee that the ATT will be implemented robustly.

It was overall a successful meeting, with decisions made including the adoption of the Rules of Procedure; agreeing Financial Rules; agreeing the location, Head and remit of the ATT Secretariat, and agreeing the President, Vice-Presidents and Management Committee for CSP 2016.

Disappointingly, however, despite a considerable amount of work being done ahead of the CSP, States Parties could not agree on templates that they could use as the basis for either their initial or first annual reports that will be falling due starting from 24 December 2015 and on 31 May 2016 respectively. Additionally some debates and decisions highlighted political tensions and a North-South divide in approach and perspectives. Going forward, States must show greater ambition and courage if the ATT is to really make a difference and fulfill its potential.

Illicit Trafficking

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons occurs in all parts of the globe but is concentrated in areas afflicted by armed conflict, violence, and organized crime, where the demand for illicit weapons is often highest. Arms trafficking fuels civil wars and regional conflicts; stocks the arsenals of terrorists, drug cartels, and other

armed groups; and contributes to violent crime and the proliferation of sensitive technology.

Black market trafficking usually takes place on a regional or local level; publicly available data suggests that the multi-ton, inter-continental shipments organized by the ‘merchants of death’ account for only a small fraction of illicit transfers. Among the most important forms of illicit trafficking is the ‘ant trade’—numerous shipments of small numbers of weapons that, over time, result in the accumulation of large numbers of illicit weapons by unauthorized end users. Data analyzed in the [Small Arms Survey 2013](#) indicates that thousands of firearms seized in Mexico are traced to the United States annually. These weapons are often purchased from gun shops in small numbers and then smuggled over the border. While individual transactions occur on a small scale, the sum total of the weapons trafficked into Mexico is large.

While most arms trafficking appears to be conducted by private entities, certain governments also contribute to the illicit trade by deliberately arming proxy groups involved in insurgencies against rival governments, terrorists with similar ideological agendas, or other non-state armed groups. These types of transfers, which are prevalent in Africa and other regions where armed conflict is common, are often conducted in contravention of UN arms embargoes and have the potential to destabilize neighbouring countries. In recent years, governments have covertly delivered tens of thousands of small arms and light weapons to various armed groups in Somalia despite a long-standing UN arms embargo. As revealed in the [Small Arms Survey 2012](#), these weapons range from Kalashnikov-pattern assault rifles to third-generation SA-18 MANPADS, one of which was used to shoot down a Belarusian cargo aircraft delivering supplies intended for peacekeepers in March 2007.

The prices of illicit firearms and their relation to security dynamics have attracted interest among journalists and researchers for some time. In the [SmallArms Survey 2013](#) finds a clear link between illicit market prices in Lebanon and reported fatalities during the first 19 months of the conflict in Syria. The particularly strong correlation between ammunition prices in Lebanon and fatalities in Syria

underlines the value of monitoring ammunition prices. Yet available reporting from conflict zones has tended to neglect this important piece of the puzzle, focusing on prices for the most common weapons instead. The [Small Arms Survey 2014](#) reveals that newly produced ammunition is circulating in conflict-affected countries in Africa and the Middle East. Tracing investigations presented in this edition conclude that Sudan government stockpiles are the primary source of weapons for non-state armed groups of all allegiances in Sudan and South Sudan—both through deliberate arming and battlefield capture. Such arms monitoring is, however, increasingly hampered by the production of unmarked ammunition and the deliberate removal of weapons' markings.

Questions A Resolution Must Answer

1. Are the existing treaties pertaining to SALWs comprehensive and potent? Do they need to be reworked? How?
2. How can trade routes and mechanisms leading to proliferation be curtailed and effectively choked?
3. Is there a need/ way to regularize and legitimize global sales of SALWs? How will it be accomplished?
4. How are each of the causes for proliferation of SALWs being tackled and mitigated?
5. Is there a need for a stronger document governing SALWs and the mitigation of their prevalence? What will it include?