

**Forum:** DISEC 1

**Issue:** The question of measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons

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**Introduction:**

In recent years, attacks perpetrated by terrorist organizations against civilians throughout the globe have involved firearms. In 2015, the Islamic State used automatic weapons to kill over 150 people in bars; Lethal shootings in Brussels; Attacks on the offices of a magazine and a Jewish supermarket in Paris. All of the aforementioned involved terrorist organizations (mainly ISIS) which had illegally acquired weapons. These events are proof that terrorists are able to obtain different types of firearms, including assault weaponry.

There are various methods by which terrorists can acquire weapons nowadays, regardless of the fact that in many countries it is illegal to buy and trade weaponry. The main supplier of weapons used by terrorists has always been the black market; Knowing that terrorists obtain money mainly through donations and smuggling resources and illegal substances into different countries to access the black market. This makes their sources of revenue not only diverse but extremely difficult to detect and hence stop cash flow.

As it has been the case during the Syrian Civil war and other similar conflicts, third-party countries often donate arms to rebel groups since this can offer them benefits in case that the rebels were to win the conflict, however, the dilemma arises whenever the rebel group radicalizes and engages in other conflicts, using donated weaponry.

Recent studies have confirmed that small and light firearms have now become the most prevalent type of weapons used to carry out the aforementioned atrocities. Having read these alarming studies, policy makers and other professionals in the field have noted their deep concern in regards to the lack of restrictive measures in the EU and the rest of the world.

As of today, it is agreeable that the disruption of arms flow and supply of weapons to terrorist groups are paramount to reducing future attacks on innocent civilians.

**Definition of Key Terms:**

- 1. Weapon** Weapon means anything used, designed to be used or intended for use (a) in causing death or injury to any person, or (b) for the purpose of threatening or intimidating any person and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes a firearm.
- 2. Terrorism** (General definition for the facilitation of debate) An activity that involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, property or infrastructure and appears to be intended.
- 3. Assault weapons** The term assault weapon refers primarily to semi-automatic rifles, pistols, and shotguns that are able to accept detachable magazines and possess one or more other features.

4. **ATT Arms Trade Treaty.** The first document designed to keep track of gun control flow, mainly within Europe and in post-war zones.

### **Background Information:**

Measures to keep track of these weapons were put in place in 2013 when the General Assembly created the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), designed to control the final destination of weapons and guarantee that the trade of weapons wouldn't imply in any way, shape or form, violation of basic Human Rights outlined within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Many can argue that the ATT has not yet reached its full potential given that five of the worlds most prominent arms exporters have not signed nor ratified this treaty, ultimately making it not binding in all situations. Countries including but not limited to: United States, Russia and China.

Moreover, gun production continues to increase exponentially as years pass by, which also makes the task of regulating these weapons extremely difficult.

### **Major countries and organizations involved:**

**United States of America:** The US ranks number one as the world's largest arms exporters. Conflict Armament Research (CAR) has concluded that the majority of the weapons seized by the Islamic State were looted from Iraqi and Syrian armies, originally provided by the US and Saudi Arabia to fight against president Bashar al-Assad.

**Russian Federation:** Russia is the second biggest arms exporters in the world, behind the US. Known for producing and stockpiling automatic assault weapons such as the AK-47, used currently throughout many armed conflicts in the Middle Eastern region.

**China:** One of the biggest suppliers of weaponry to the black market.

**India:** India has been collecting various types of weapons and their stockpiles are now reaching maximum capacity. India has also been actively involved in provisioning of guns within the Kashmir conflict.

**Saudi Arabia:** One of the world's largest gun importer. It is known that they have supplied weapons in the Syrian civil war as well as to Sunni terrorist group Al-Qaeda.

### **Timeline of events and relevant UN treaties:**

2013→ Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was first implemented and fully endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly as well as UNODA.

2013/2014→ Secretary General launches full report on small and light weapons.

2014→ Idea that terrorists might use weapons of mass destruction was first addressed by UNODA in resolution A/69/138.

2015→ Security council resolution S/Res/2220 aims to strengthen coordination within the UN regarding small and light weaponry as well as to promote the complete implementation of arms embargoes.

### **Previous attempts to solve the issue:**

Since 2001, the UN has tried to adopt various measures to stop the proliferation of small arms overall. First, the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms; Followed by the adoption of the International Tracing Instrument and the subsequent firearms protocol. As mentioned earlier the Arms Trade Treaty was also created in 2013 in view of growing illicit arms trade. However, despite all of the aforementioned attempts to solve the issue, the UN has to respect each nation's national sovereignty and hence cannot intervene with domestic laws or policies unless it directly goes against a resolution for example.

### **Possible solutions:**

1. Member states could urge nations that haven't done so yet to sign, ratify and ultimately act upon the ATT in order to restrict illicit flow of weapons into terrorist's hands. Subsequently increasing regulations regarding the issue so that weaponry cannot be easily accessed by terrorist organizations.
2. To approve and apply in countries that haven't done so yet, measures necessary to establish as a crime the illicit manufacture, possession, stockpiling and sale of weapons in their jurisdiction to ensure that those involved in activities mentioned above can be prosecuted in accordance to each countries' domestic laws.
3. Nations could intensify cooperation alongside the World Customs Organization (WCO) and Interpol to identify individuals involved in the illicit arms trade and illicit arms trade with terrorist groups.
4. Encourage the creation of a detailed disarmament program focused specifically on post-conflict situations that could oversee the collection, storage and safe destruction of weaponry so that it doesn't end up being used by terrorist organizations.
5. Encourages that the Security Council enforces punishments, at their own discretion and to be determined whenever the situation requires it, on governments that provide weaponry to terrorist organizations.

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