



## General Assembly: Illicit Trade in Small Arms

Hello Delegates, I am your meme lord/Vice Chair, Seth Zehra-London or simply Zebra, Mitch, or really anything that has the slightest relation to my name(s). This is my second year as a member of Mission Viejo High School's Model United Nations programme and it seems to be getting more fun as time progresses. Often times, I find myself reading (it's what all the cool kids do these days) writing, playing games on steam, or searching for pennies on the street. I am highly looking forward to seeing you all at our 2018 conference and I hope you have a great time representing your country! If you have any questions please email me at:

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### I. Background:

The history of the trade of modern small arms weaponry began during the cold war, specifically within the proxy wars fought between the Soviet Union and the United States. For example, in the Afghan-Soviet War the United States sent arms to the Mujahideen, a group which subsequently broke off to form Al-Qaeda. Events like this saw large quantities of small arms consolidated by violence related groups or organizations and sometimes even nations known to fund and arms terror groups. From this, there have been many organizations that receive a large quantity of profit from the trade in arms, often from small arms. In late 2013 and early 2014 the Turkish government helped ship arms to Islamist rebel groups in Syria (not to be confused with the Islamic State) which saw a strong contribution to the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

A stronger accessibility to small arms coupled with the rise of terror globally, gun related violence has sharply increased over the past years. Within the United States for instance, the right to bear arms has become a commonality and there are approximately 300,000 guns most of which being small arms. Statistics, however, are often difficult to have full accuracy due to many small arms often used by child soldiers in the developing world, warlords, and many other violent groups with organizations acquiring such arms regardless of arms embargos. Approximately 25% of the



\$4 billion annual global trade in small arms goes unreported regardless of standing laws in the nation. Small arms are often traded between borders illegally without the knowledge of the nation of entry, with 80% of the guns used in crime in Mexico originate from outside the country and half of the guns used in crime in Canada being smuggled into the country. Small arms and light weapons were responsible for between 60 and 90% of direct conflict deaths, a number between 80,000 and 108,000 people in 2003. Moreover, weapons that were in the hands of criminals were often registered at one period. For instance, the Brazilian government found that only 72% of all small arms found were, at one time, registered. The international community have been gravely affected by the trade in small arms primarily due to the impact the trade has taken in the developing world and the lives cost by trade itself and the result of it.

## **II. United Nations Involvement:**

The efforts to reduce the illicit trade in small arms is a pressing issue and should be addressed with a sense of urgency. The trade in small arms is seen as a strong obstacle to the United Nations in achieving international peace. Within the past, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs has seen the trade in small arms being the cause for human displacement due to conflict between armed groups in conflict along with massive human rights violations. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs as well has worked to remove arms from circulation along with the elimination of nuclear and chemical weapons and other weapons of mass-destruction. There have been many resolutions formed in both the General Assembly and Security Council in order to suppress the illegal trade in arms internationally and to increase efforts to remove illegal arms from circulation. For example, the Security Council 22 May 2015 Resolution on coordinating a stronger effort on the elimination of the illicit small arms trade and the Security Council 18 March 2003 Resolution specifically saw a coordination of the proliferation of small arms in Western Africa and conflicts occurring there. However, many resolutions have simply called for nations to take actions to cease the illegal small arms trade, however, many developing nations are unable to fulfill such requests due to their developing and minute economy. Collaboration, however, has been called for by other resolutions. Curbing the illicit small arms



trade has been a strong issue for the United Nations and is seen as a strong limitation to the actions the United Nations hopes to do in order to increase the general quality of human life.

### **III. Possible Solutions:**

This section will be the most critical aspect of your paper. It should be the longest section and should cover the intricate details of this problem. If your solution regards the creation of a committee within the UN to discuss decreasing the illicit trade through tighter border security checks among nations, for instance, make sure that in your paper you describe when and this committee will convene, why this is a major issue, and the remaining 5 ws (who, what, when, where, why). These solutions should be creative and in depth and will help contribute to an engaging day of debate.

Here is an example:

A definite action should be taken in order to curb the small arms trade, however strong international cooperation should be taken in order to cease the circulation of illegal small arms. Simply declaring the trade in it's entirety initiates a moral issue regarding civil rights and as well would do little to solve the situation itself. A close restriction and monitoring of the arms trade itself can prove to be very effective, however many developing nations lack the resources to do such. Therefore large amounts of funding would have to be provided by international humanitarian organizations along with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and from more developed nations. Furthermore, taking the action of arms monitoring could upstir conflict over the violation of civil and individual rights. Moreover, it is imperative that a solution be found that would be applicable to nations in the developing world that would not cause significant change to the international community as a whole but firm and fast action is still imperative.

### **IV. Bloc Positions:**



**Western Bloc:** Predominantly, the European Union and other Western European nations has upheld strict anti-gun legislation in the past and seems to continue to do so for the general safety of their people. However, this position remains divided with the United States upholding the right to bear arms for means of protection against crime.

**Eastern European Bloc:** Many Eastern Bloc nations have had a relaxed and liberal gun policy without many restrictions of the purchase of small arms and the usage of such.

**Asian Bloc:** Within Asian nations, there is a large restriction on firearms usage and often times, all firearms to restricted to private citizens and can only be used through hunting organizations following state approval. Many unstable Asian experiencing uprising and armed conflict often have a strong weapons flow into their nations, predominantly small arms.

**Latin American Bloc:** Organized crime has been an issue within the Latin bloc for decades and has been furthered by the trade in small arms in the area. Nations like Colombia experienced a large flow of small arms into their nation which is often used for drug related crime.

**African Bloc:** Much like Latin American, uprisings have been the cause of mass atrocities of civilian populace directly due to the small arms trade and the usage of small arms. However, many African nations are considered developing and are unable to have a closely monitored arms trade which therefore affects nations of Africa severely.

#### **V. Questions to Consider:**

1. Is there a way to find a solution that does not restrict civil rights whilst retaining my own country's policy?
2. How can my solution be implemented on an international scale?
3. How do I fully eliminate small arms already in circulation within the arms market?
4. How can I prevent small arms from entering circulation?



## VI. Works Cited:

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