

Press Release

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US gang members prefer semi-automatic pistols

Few 'assault rifles' seized from US criminals

Overturning media stereotypes of gang members armed with fully automatic weapons, an in-depth analysis of firearms seized from US felons, drug traffickers, and gang members found that more than three-quarters (77 per cent) were handguns. Most of those handguns (70 per cent) were semi-automatic pistols. Semi-automatic rifles made up just under 7 per cent of all guns seized from these groups, and the number of machine guns was negligible.

The analysis, published today in the *Small Arms Survey 2014*, is based on a sample of 10,435 firearms taken into custody by police in eight US cities and towns. US criminals' preference for handguns appears to contrast sharply with the situation in Mexico, where the Survey previously found that a clear majority (72 per cent) of seized crime guns were long guns.

'While the public continues to associate drug dealing with fully automatic weapons, this is not what police are seizing from criminals in the US municipalities we studied,' said Small Arms Survey Programme Director Keith Krause.

The 2014 *Survey* also reveals that newly produced ammunition, mostly originating from facilities in China and Sudan, is circulating in conflict-affected countries in Africa and the Middle East. Tracing investigations presented in this edition conclude that Sudan government stockpiles are, in fact, 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.

In its first section, the 2014 *Survey* focuses on the complex relationship between women and guns, highlighting the violence that still targets women (and girls) in many places, as well as women's roles in security promotion.

Other 2014 *Survey* findings:

- The value of the global trade in small arms and light weapons almost doubled between 2001 and 2011, according to the UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database. The category of small arms ammunition has seen the greatest increase (USD 959 million or 205 per cent).
- In 2011, the top exporters of small arms and light weapons (those with annual exports of at least USD 100 million), according to available customs data, were (in descending order) the United States, Italy, Germany, Brazil, Austria, Switzerland, Israel, the Russian Federation, South Korea, Belgium, China, Turkey, Spain, and the Czech Republic. Top importers (those with annual imports of at least USD 100 million), were (in descending order) the United States, Canada, Germany, Australia, Thailand, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy.
- The explosions that destroyed several military barracks—and killed, injured, and displaced many civilians—in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, on 4 March 2012 were preventable. Prior to the explosions, a number of warning signs were ignored by the international donor community or, in the case of the Congolese Armed Forces, simply not recognized due to a lack of ammunition stockpile management expertise.
- The adoption, in 2013, of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and several UN Security Council resolutions strengthens important connections between the women, peace, and security agenda and small arms control.
- While the ATT cannot be expected to stop all arms exports that breach treaty norms, it does promise greater scrutiny of national arms transfer decisions as these can now be assessed against ATT standards.

Published by Cambridge University Press, the *Small Arms Survey 2014: Women and Guns* is the Survey's 14th annual global analysis of small arms and armed violence issues. An independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, the Small Arms Survey is the principal source of public information and analysis on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. Summaries and selected chapters from the 2014 edition are available for download from www.smallarmssurvey.org. ■