

## A New Development Agenda: Bridging the Development-Security Divide

**W**eapons play a pivotal role in violence and insecurity worldwide: around 44 per cent of all violent deaths involve the use of firearms (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2015, p. 2). Given their typically long life spans, small arms can circulate in a region or between regions over decades, while in the wrong hands even small quantities of arms and ammunition can have destabilizing effects. In particular, the illicit proliferation of arms and ammunition is a driver of modern armed conflicts, often prolonging their effects (Anders, 2015; Diehl and Jenzen-Jones, 2014; Florquin and Leff, 2014). Flows of illicit arms also affect countries supposedly 'at peace', contributing to high levels of violence (Schroeder, 2013; 2014; 2016).

International arms control instruments, such as the 2001 UN Programme of Action (PoA), respond to these concerns. In the PoA, UN member states undertook to implement a range of measures designed to enhance control over small arms and light weapons at various points in their life cycle—in most cases in order to minimize the risk of legal weapons becoming illicit (UNGA, 2001). More recently, the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty enhances the regulation of international arms transfers in order to curb the risk of transferred arms being misused (Parker, 2015; UNGA, 2013).

The uncontrolled spread of illicit arms poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, and stability—and ultimately to sustainable development (UNGA, 2015b; UNODC, 2010). The negative impacts of armed violence on development were at the core of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and

Development (Geneva Declaration, 2006, para. 1). In adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) in September 2015, UN member states confirmed that 'Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development' (UNGA, 2015a, para. 35). The 2030 Agenda specifically aims at reducing illicit arms flows in order to advance development (UNGA, 2015a, Target 16.4).

This Research Note examines the concept of illicit arms flows in order to better operationalize the 2030 Agenda, building on this important new opportunity to bridge the security–development divide.

### Reducing armed violence, increasing development

Addressing the burden of armed violence on states and societies requires attention to a broad range of related issues, including, for example, governance, access to justice, and fundamental socio-economic factors. Studies such as the World Development Report (World Bank, 2011), the Global Burden of Armed Violence (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008; 2011; 2015), and the States of Fragility Report (OECD, 2015) highlight the complexity of the violence–development nexus and the challenges faced in addressing it.

The new 2030 Agenda, adopted in 2015, includes 17 new sustainable goals (SDGs) with 169 supporting targets for the 15 years leading to 2030 (UNGA, 2015a).

#### Box 1 SDG 16



**SDG 16:** 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels' (UNGA, 2015a).

Through its 12 targets, SDG 16 covers a broad range of issues considered to be relevant to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, including access to justice, human rights, the effective rule of law, and good governance, as well as violence reduction, combating organized crime and corruption, and reducing illicit arms flows. It thus places considerable emphasis on both effective institutions and security for sustainable development. These targets include:

- **Target 16.1:** 'Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere';
- **Target 16.4:** 'By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime' (UNGA, 2015a).

Replacing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the new development agenda is a broader, more ambitious programme. Firstly—in contrast to the MDGs—the new SDGs emphasize that a range of phenomena interacting at the national, regional, and global levels influence sustainable development. They include violent conflict, climate change, financial shocks and volatile markets, epidemic diseases, organized crime, and corruption. Reaffirming Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration, the 2030 Agenda stresses the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities in pursuing sustainable development (UNGA, 1992; 2015a, para. 12). It recognizes that no goal can be achieved without accompanying progress in the realization of the other goals. Linkages among peace,

security, and development appear throughout the 2030 Agenda, especially in SDG 16, which is dedicated to ‘promoting peaceful and inclusive societies’ (UNGA, 2015a).

Specifically through Target 16.4, SDG 16 places arms control within a development framework, thus offering an unprecedented opportunity to address illicit arms proliferation in a broad, holistic way (see Box 1).

### **Illicit arms flows and the implementation of SDG 16**

There is very limited information on the quantities, types, and value of the illicit arms circulating worldwide (Schroeder, 2012; 2013; 2014). The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

is often concentrated in areas afflicted by armed conflict, violence, and organized crime, where the demand for illicit weapons is highest. Arms of various origins may be trafficked across borders, supplying armed groups involved in large-scale conflicts and/or violent crime.

But the supply of illicit arms arises not only from transborder trafficking. Arms may also be diverted from their authorized end users and enter the illegal market locally after their lawful delivery (Schroeder, 2008). Firearms and ammunition may be stolen or leaked from government stockpiles or civilian holdings (Bevan, 2008). Other arms may be illegally produced (for example, as craft-produced weapons) or legally marketed as replicas and subsequently converted into functioning,



but illicit, firearms (Berman, 2011; King, 2015). In some cases firearms components are trafficked separately and assembled locally. Each type of illicit arms supply has different, negative impacts on communities and states.

Achieving ‘a significant reduction of illicit arms flows’ will require unpacking all the elements referred to above and identifying specific sources of illicit weapons, together with opportunities for measuring, preventing, and combating each type of supply. Indicators should be developed simultaneously with specific policies and programmes in order to measure progress in implementing the latter.

The institutions tasked with implementing arms control policies will be crucial to the effectiveness of these

policies, whether at the local, national, regional, or global levels. In fact, SDG 16 calls for strong, transparent, and accountable institutions as a prerequisite for peaceful and inclusive societies. Thus, reductions in illicit arms flows will depend on progress made in achieving Targets 16.5 (reducing corruption), 16.6 (strengthening institutions), and 16.7 (improving decision making). The measurement of such progress will necessarily rely not only on the global indicators agreed within the UN framework, but also on indicators that governments employ at the national level; for example, those based on existing arms control instruments (De Martino and Atwood, 2015).

The ultimate measure of the impact of policies addressing illicit arms flows is a significant reduction in related violence, as called for in Target 16.1. The UN Statistical Commission has adopted four indicators for Target 16.1 that will provide crucial data on lethal and non-lethal violence and perceptions of safety and security in both conflict and non-conflict settings (UN Statistical Commission, 2016, para. (d); IAEG-SDGs, 2016, p. 57).<sup>1</sup> Of central importance to such an assessment will be the disaggregation of the data, not only by age, gender, and location (IAEG-SDG, 2016, p. 39), but also by instrument of violence (Alvazzi del Frate and De Martino, 2015). However, while this would allow firearms used in committing acts of violence to be identified by type, it would not necessarily establish the licit or illicit nature of the weapons involved.

In undertaking such a violence reduction and arms control programme, capacity for multi-sectoral work will need to be strengthened, for example, through the enhanced coordination of relevant actors at the local, national, regional, and international levels. Good practice dictates the close cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders from various sectors, including governments, international organizations, and civil society (Eavis, 2011). In fact, the 2030 Agenda calls for a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Develop-

ment underpinned by a range of multi-stakeholder partnerships in implementing the SDGs (UNGA, 2015a, Preamble, para. 39, Goal 17).

## Conclusion

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has aligned the global development and disarmament agendas. The inclusion in the 2030 Agenda of a target on illicit arms flows reflects the role of illicit arms in driving conflict and violence. Yet, given the multifaceted nature of the problem and the limited amount of information available, states will need to develop a broad range of indicators reflecting the various types of illicit arms flows. Ultimately, reductions in illicit arms flows (Target 16.4) will influence—and be influenced by—parallel reductions in levels of violence, strengthened institutions, and improved livelihoods. In other words, the impact of the 2030 Agenda will not be measured by single SDG indicators taken in isolation, but by considering the full array of indicators, including those linking arms control to development.

Success in implementing the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, will also depend on cross-sectoral partnerships that effectively mobilize and strengthen the capacities of relevant actors and structures from government, international organizations, and civil society—in keeping with the 2030 Agenda’s stated goal to serve as ‘a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity’ (UNGA, 2015a, Preamble, first para.) ■

## Notes

- 1 These indicators are: ‘16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age; 16.1.2: Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause; 16.1.3: Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months; 16.1.4: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live’ (IAEG-SDGs, 2016, p. 57).



Confiscated weapons hang from a magnet before being destroyed at a foundry in Santiago, Chile, January 2016. © Reuters/Ivan Alvarado

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## About the Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is a global centre of excellence whose mandate is to generate impartial, evidence-based, and policy-relevant knowledge on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. It is the principal international source of expertise, information, and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues, and acts as a resource for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and civil society. It is located in Geneva, Switzerland, at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

The Survey has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

For more information, please visit:

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**Publication date: June 2016**

## Credits

Authors: Anna Alvazzi del Frate and Luigi De Martino

Copy-editing: Alex Potter  
(alex.potter@mweb.co.za)

Design and layout: Rick Jones  
(rick@studioexile.com)

## Contact details

Small Arms Survey  
Maison de la Paix  
Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2E  
1201 Geneva  
Switzerland

t +41 22 908 5777

f +41 22 732 2738

e [info@smallarmssurvey.org](mailto:info@smallarmssurvey.org)

This Research Note has been made possible through the support of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

