General Assembly, First Committee, Disarmament and International Security (DISEC)

Background Guide

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The General Assembly First Committee: Disarmament and International Security (DISEC) deals with issues relating to disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime. It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments. The Committee comprises of all member nations of the United Nations, and even though its mandate is limited to recommendations, it has proven to be one of the most influential bodies in the United Nations, as its resolutions deal with some of the most complex topics in the international community. The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.

I. Combatting Global Terrorism

Statement of the Issue

While there is no single accepted definition for terrorism, generally, terrorism is the use of violence and intimidation as a tactic or strategy to inspire fear and cause terror to further political or social objectives.\(^1\) Terrorism is a problem that captivates the entire international community. Its consequences are both short- and long-term, ranging from the extreme loss of life to the destruction of a country’s infrastructure, and the demoralization of a society. One aspect that

makes terrorist groups so hard to defeat is the fact that they do not attempt to “play by the rules” that would be established in war; instead launching surprise attacks with devastating blows, like the September 11th attacks in the United States.

History

The first recorded act of terrorism is found in the first century. The Sicarii, meaning “dagger men” known today as “Zealots”, were a Jewish sect who attempted to topple Roman rule in Biblical Palestine. They later committed mass suicide at their fortress Masada rather than surrender. More recently, terrorism emerged once again as a significant global issue at the 1972 Munich Olympics with the murder of 11 Israeli athletes by a Palestinian group to highlight the occupation of their homeland and to call for its end. To better understand the history of terrorism, terrorist activity has been broken down by region in the section below.

Terrorism by Region

Europe

Tsarist Russia, which has repeatedly been called the cradle of modern terrorism, saw the rise of modern terrorism tactics in which many revolutionaries and insurgents around the world borrowed what was called “the Russian method” of bombings and assassinations, particularly in Europe. Between 1970 and 1990, approximately 150 people died per year in terror attacks in Western Europe, while from 2000-2015 approximately 50 people died each year from terrorist activity. Notable terror groups in Western Europe include Northern Ireland’s Irish Republican Army, the Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), and Italy’s Anni di Piombo (Years of Lead). Significant terror attacks include the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988; the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris; the 2016 bombing of the Brussels airport; the 2011 shooting in Norway killing 77; and the 2004 Madrid train bombings.

Middle East

Much, but not all of the terrorism present in the Middle East is based in Islamic Fundamentalism. It is a common misconception that the majority of terrorism originating in the

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2 https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zealot
3 http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/topic_display.cfm?tcid=94
4 http://edoc.unibas.ch/17637/1/JGO%202010-2_Einleitung.pdf
5 https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/terrorism-in-europe-at-historical-high/
7 https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/terrorism-in-europe-at-historical-high/
Middle East is directed towards the Western world; however, when analyzing the targets and impact of terrorism in the region, it becomes clear that this is untrue. From 2001 to 2008, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Israel alone constituted more 45 percent of the attacks in the top ten most attacked countries of that period.\(^8\) Notable terrorist groups in the Middle East include: Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, the Al-Nusra Front, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Taliban.\(^9\) Notable terror attacks in the Middle East include: 2007 Iraqi car bombings where 520 were killed and 1500 were wounded in a single day; 2015 plane bombing in Sinai, Egypt; 2014 shooting and bombing of Peshawar, Pakistan; and the 2015 Yemen mosque bombings.\(^10\)

**North America**

According to a Global Terrorism Index in 2015, through the Australian Institute of Economics and Peace, North America as a region is the least likely to be affected by terrorism of any kind.\(^11\) However, the little terrorism that North America does see is mostly home grown or domestic terrorism. Notable terrorist groups in North America include: The Phineas Priesthood; the Jewish Defense League; the Earth Liberation Front; Army of God; and the Ku Klux Klan.\(^12\) Notable terrorist attacks in North America include: the 9/11 attacks; 1999 Massachusetts plane crash; the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing; 1984 Oregon salmonella attacks leaving 651 people injured.

**Africa**

In recent years Africa has experienced significant levels of terrorist activity especially in North and West Africa, and specific parts of East Africa, such as Kenya, Sudan, and Somalia. Fatalities from terrorism in Africa total as many or more as those in the Middle East. Notable terrorist groups in Africa include: Boko Haram in Nigeria; Al-Shabab in Somalia; Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda; Soldiers of Egypt; Ansar Dine in Mali, Senegal and Mauritania; Al-Barakat in Somalia; Tunisian Combatant Group; Armed Islamic Group of Algeria. Notable terrorist attacks in Africa include: 2009 attacks in Nigeria; 1997 Algerian attacks; 2008 attacks in the Congo; 2001 Angolan train attacks; 2015 Garissa attacks in Kenya.\(^13\)

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\(^8\) [https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism/](https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism/)

\(^9\) [https://www.nctc.gov/site/groups.html#](https://www.nctc.gov/site/groups.html#)

\(^10\) [http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wrjp255i.html](http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wrjp255i.html)


\(^12\) [http://listverse.com/2013/03/24/10-terrorist-organizations-operating-in-the-us/](http://listverse.com/2013/03/24/10-terrorist-organizations-operating-in-the-us/)

\(^13\) [http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wrjp255i.html](http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wrjp255i.html)
Central and South America

Central and South America has dealt with a fair amount of terrorism in recent decades. Colombia for example ranks 17th most affected by terrorism on the Global Terrorism Index in 2015.14 Notable terrorist groups in Central and South America include: FARC in Columbia; National Liberation Army in Colombia; and Shining Path in Peru. Notable terrorist attacks in Central and South America include: the 1998 FARC attacks in Colombia; the 2002 church attacks in Colombia; and the 1989 flight bombing in Colombia.15

Asia

Asia suffers from a great deal of terrorism especially in its south and southeastern regions that include India, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Bangladesh. Notable terrorist groups in Asia include: Jemaah Islamiyah; New People’s Army in the Philippines; Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan; Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid in Indonesia; and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Notable terrorist attacks in Asia include: 1993 Bombay, India bombings; 2002 Kuta, Indonesia car bombings; 2010 Bengal train attacks; 2004 Manila bombings; 1995 Tokyo nerve gas attacks; and the 1990 Sri Lankan mosque attacks.

Current Situation

Unfortunately, terrorism is a danger in essentially every part of the world, meaning that every nation in this body has a vested interest in combatting Terrorism. Below are some of the most notorious and prevalent Terrorist groups in the World.

The Islamic State

The so-called Islamic State (also known as ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh) dominates media attention in regards to terror. Their incredible presence in Iraq and the Levant occupies an area nearly the size of the state of Texas. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi heads the organization, a self-proclaimed caliphate in the Middle-East stemming from a radicalized branch of al Qaeda.16 The organization’s most effective asset, however, is their ability to control media, be it Twitter or mainstream cable news, in Western countries. Their propaganda manipulates civilians’ minds into thinking that they are more powerful than they actually are and demonstrate a moral guide to improving the lives of Muslims; this both draws a network of “lone wolves” as well as incites fear in the general public.

15 http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wrjp255i.html
16 http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2016/04/how-should-world-respond-terrorism/127196/?oref=search_terrorism
Though their abilities are certainly magnified, they still command a sizeable presence in the Middle East which demands attention. They are most notable for last year’s attacks in Brussels and Paris, carried out by lone wolf extremists, showing their powerful and vast network.

The Islamic State’s Western Africa Province

This organization formerly known as Boko Haram pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State in mid-2015. Currently lead by Abu Musab al-Barnawi, the most dominant group in Western Africa was declared the most dangerous organization in the world in 2015. The organization is on edge due to political tension within its ranks, given the IS’s direct hand in choosing leaders and successors. The group, however, is still in possession of some 150 girls and women captured two and a half years ago; despite severe tensions within the administration, they are still a dedicated and capable power which dominates northern Nigeria and poses a direct threat to civilians of the nation.

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda has commanded the attention of the international community since before the turn of century, and after their attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 they created a new era of war in over seven countries in the Middle East in campaigns against them. Attacks have been carried out against the group in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in the 21st century’s “war on terror.” It comprises the largest terrorist networks in history, with significant branches across the Middle East, as well as North and East Africa, especially Somalia’s al Shabaab. Ayman al-Zawahiri has led the organization since the assassination of Osama bin Laden in 2011, with a force of approximately 75,000 to 91,000 soldiers in over 22 countries.

FARC

The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) have waged war against the Colombian government in Colombia and Venezuela since 1964. They began as an extremist branch of Colombia’s Communist party in the Cold War Era, and now comprise some six to seven thousand soldiers, with a vast support network of around 8,500 civilians. Though they do not fit into the modern conception of “terrorists,” the rebels have killed tens of thousands of civilians through conflict with the Colombian government, and displaced nearly six million. FARC is led by a network of leaders, namely Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri (also known as Timochenko), who met

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19 http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2016/08/war-against-al-qaeda-next-us-president-will-inherit/130542/?oref=search_al%20qaeda
recently with Colombia’s president to negotiate a peace deal and end the brutal guerilla war. However, after a majority of Colombian citizens failed to support the treaty, the group and Colombia have reentered negotiations.\textsuperscript{20}

Other Major Terrorist Groups

Though the Middle East is plagued by terrorist organizations, it is necessary to recognize that other areas face significant conflict with terror groups. In 2014, the Donetsk People’s Republic claimed responsibility of the death of 298 civilians aboard a Malaysian Airlines flight. 287 casualties were reported in South Sudan after the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement in Opposition bombed a mosque being used as a shelter, as one of only five attacks that day. Myanmar has been plagued by anti-Muslim lone-wolf extremists carrying out devastating attacks against innocents.\textsuperscript{21} There are nearly countless other terrorist or deadly extremist groups which pose a significant threat to civilian populations.

Analysis

One of the most daunting aspects of dealing with terrorism is the ability to fight these groups with the assistance of the nations that they are present in. Many of these terrorist groups have been able to find homes in nations that possess weak central governments. As a result, foreign entities such as developed nations or bodies like NATO who have the means to help either have to attempt to work with a semi-functional government or try and subvert the government altogether. Either way, this can cause quite a messy situation between the countries involved, which has been one reason why fighting Terrorist groups has been so difficult.

Conclusion

Terrorism is possibly the greatest risk the world faces today. However, one aspect that makes this issue unique is that it is something that affects the entire world, and it is generally in the favor of the entire international community to effectively deal with this issue. While it is almost impossible to eradicate terrorism altogether, this committee is poised with the unique opportunity of taking significant steps to making Terrorism a threat that the world is better equipped to deal with. The willingness and ability of this committee to work together and break regional barriers will prove paramount in its ability to achieve this.

\textsuperscript{20} http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36605769
\textsuperscript{21} http://static.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/2015%20Global%20Terrorism%20Index%20Report.pdf
Questions to Consider

- What roles can developed and developing nations play in the fight against terror?
- How can the financial networks of terrorist be stopped?
- What action can be taken without infringing on national sovereignty?
- What can be done about Islamic Jihadists who are misinterpreting the words of Islam?
- What can be done for children to lessen the possibility of them becoming terrorist in the future?
- What are the motivations behind people becoming terrorists?
- What measures can be taken to prevent terrorist attacks?
- What measures can be taken to lessen the impact of terrorist attacks?
- What measures can be taken to assist nations in recovering from terrorist attacks?

II. Addressing the Issue of Small Arms and Light Weapons

Statement of the Issue

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is one of the greatest contributing factor to violence across the globe. Playing a role in not only conventional armed conflict, SALW use has far-reaching impacts when not in complicity with international law. These issues stem to acts of terrorism, humanitarian abuses, and illicit trade among many others. This is an issue which commands the attention of the international community, especially seeing as the majority of those negatively affected are civilians caught in the cross-fire. With over 38 million people displaced within their home country, as well as nearly 20 million refugees, in 2016 an increasing civilian population is not already put in danger by SALW violence, but also represent the most vulnerable and exposed groups.

The majority of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) is targeted towards stemming the illicit trade of such weapons, and can only recommend their use following international law. Chief among their foci are transparency registries and abolishing the use of landmines, both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle. Established in 1991, the UN Register has collected data on munitions stockpiles from over 170 States; with this registry, Groups of Governmental Experts provide a report to the UN General Assembly, in an attempt to incorporate

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24 http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures
ideas on excessive or destabilizing accumulations of SALW into an effective resolution.26 UNODA also puts a heavy emphasis on discouraging the use of landmines by States. Since 1997, the UN has prohibited anti-personnel mines under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (or Mine Ban Convention) due to the drastic impact on civilian life which anti-personnel land mines have had.27 To date, 162 States have ratified the Convention; however, the Convention fails to address the issue of anti-vehicle landmines, which the Secretary-General has called upon all countries to regulate.28

Non-state actors still pose a significant threat in regards to SALW production, despite not having major arms manufacturing capabilities. Though the majority of SALW are produced by major industrial facilities, there remains a sect of craft producers of firearms. These firearms, because they are civilian crafted, are used extensively in crime and attacks against government targets. Many nations in West Africa, for example, are hotbeds for craft gun production; though primarily pistols and shotguns are manufactured, some gunsmiths are able to produce even assault rifles. There is also clear, extensive use of craft manufacturing by terrorist organizations – as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has capabilities of reproducing Italian semi-automatic pistols and US sub-machine guns.29 These productions are small scale; however, if craft production goes unmonitored it could prove to have drastic consequences for the international community.

Beyond direct armed conflict, SALW have the potential for incredibly detrimental consequences to the health of the civilian population. According to the US’s Center for Disease Control, approximately half of all suicides in 2016 were the result of a death by firearm.30 Worldwide, gun deaths are the leading cause of suicide.31 In the interest of protecting the civilian population, this is an important facet to address in regards to SALW.

**History**

After the end of the Cold War in 1991, the devastating impact of light arms came to worldwide attention in areas with high poverty and extreme inequality. That same year, the United States called on the P5 countries (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States) to discuss the establishment of protocols for the transfer of small arms. However, disagreements among the actors ended the initiative.

At the same time in 1991, The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was

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27 http://www.apminebanconvention.org/overview-and-convention-text/
28 https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/landmines/
30 http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/suicide.htm
31 http://www.who.int/gho/publications/world_health_statistics/2016/whs2016_AnnexA_Suicide.pdf?ua=1
established to promote predictability and transparency in the arms trade. Four years later, the first set of SALW guidelines was made by the International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers, which was developed by Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Dr. Oscar Arias, the former president of Costa Rica. In collaboration with seven of his fellow Nobel laureates, such as Elie Wiesel and the Dalai Lama, Arias compiled a proposal to prohibit the trade of small arms in certain countries if they failed to meet certain criteria, such as transparency in military spending, promotion of democracy and protection of human rights. By 1998, with Western Europe as the second largest arms exporting region, the EU became the first group of states to adopt the regional Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. However, the topic of arms trafficking was an issue particularly in Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The following year, the International Committee of the Red Cross conducted a study that came to the conclusion that so long as there was an availability of unregulated arms, human rights violations would only increase. This same condition is seen as the main attribution to the forced displacement and economic collapse in a myriad of nations.

UN Progress in overseeing and regulating small arms trade became apparent in the 2001 Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons, an initiative that resulted in a Programme of Action to prevent, combat, and eradicate illicit trade. In 2006, with the support of the Nobel Laureates, seven governments (Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya, UK) sponsored the first UN General Assembly resolution on arms trade in 2006, which recognized the absence of common international standards on the import, export, and transfer of conventional arms and their role in displacing people, undermining peace, and jeopardizing security. In July 2012, a negotiating conference on the establishment of an Arms Trade Treaty took place and resulted in the failure to reach a consensus. The second conference in March resulted in the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. The UN Office of Disarmament Affairs cites that the treaty does not interfere with the right to bear arms or domestic arms commerce, nor does it infringe on the exports of weapons or the right to self-defense. Advocates of the treaty claim that it specifically targets the international arms trade and does not affect the laws of countries.

Current Situation

The Americas

Today, most legal weapons mainly come from the U.S. and Europe. According to the Small Arms Survey, only about 4% of small-arms producing companies come from Latin America, particularly from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile. On top of legitimate small arms transfers,

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32 New York Times: Nobel Peace Laureates Draft a Plan to Govern Arms Trade
34 UN Office for Disarmament Affairs
35 Arms Control Association: Arms Trade Treaty at a Glance
illegal trade proves to still be thriving, thanks to the vast coastlines, dense forests, porous borders, and widespread governmental corruption. A lucrative example of this would be the tri-border area of Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, which facilitates the flow of $3 billion worth of small weapons and narcotics annually.\(^{36}\) Hezbollah runs much of this operation to finance activities in the Middle East. However, the most sophisticated example of small arms-trafficking is present in the Colombian region, where 37 routes from Panama, 26 from Ecuador, and 21 from Venezuela are present. Domestic production is most important in Brazil, where about 80% of the illegal guns in Rio are domestically made.\(^{37}\) The U.S.-Mexican borders is also a central route for small arms to enter. A study by the Mexican government suggests that 2,000 guns are crossing the border daily.

**Africa**

As of today, only 10 countries in the continent have ratified the Small Arms Treaty. The global small arms trade has grown by 16% over the past decade. Between 2010-14 Africa has received only 9% of all global arms, the least of all regions but still a 45% increase in recent years.\(^{38}\) The growing violence and destruction associated with rising arms imports into the continents has incurred around $18 billion dollars in costs a year, as infrastructure is destroyed, businesses are closed, and children are kept from school. “Burundi spends on average $4 a year for the healthcare of each citizen, but the cost of treating a victim of armed violence averages $165 a year,” Martin Butches of Oxfam says. In 2014, the leading African importers of small hardware were Algeria, Morocco, and Sudan. States in sub-Saharan Africa have received 42% of all small arms imports into the content, thanks to the rivalry between Sudan and Uganda. Sudan is battling rebels internally, while Uganda has assumed the role of regional policeman in countries, such as South Sudan, DR Congo, and Central African Republic.

**Europe**

In 2016, the UN found that Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands are the most transparent top and major small arms exporters. In 2013, the top exporters of small arms and light weapons from Europe included Germany, Austria, Russia, Czech Republic, Belgium, Croatia, Switzerland, and Spain. In the Western Balkans, the level of handgun ownership remains abnormally high. Around 1.6 million households possess a firearm, and while the homicide rate has drastically decreased since 1995, the rate is still marginally higher than other places in Europe. In Southeast Europe, UEMS (unplanned explosions at munition sites) have been of particular importance, with seven countries in the particular region accounting for over 10% of these events in the last 35 years, showing that UEMS events yield a socio-economic impact in the region.

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\(^{36}\) North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA): *The Small Arms Trade in Latin America* by Rachel Stohl and Doug Tuttle

\(^{37}\) Small Arms Survey: *Production, Trade, and Holdings in Brazil*

\(^{38}\) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: *International Arms Transfers Database*
Middle East

Within the last year, Middle Eastern countries have nearly doubled their imports of guns. The Small Arms Survey notes that some of the Arab states that dramatically increased their imports are also the least transparent in arms trade reports. Despite calls from European states to initiate an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia, its imports have nearly tripled. In the last four years, it has been revealed that Eastern European countries have approved the discreet sale of more than $1.1 billion to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, who are known to ship arms to Syria since the conflict escalation in 2012. In that same year, the weapons pipeline opened when Saudi-purchased Yugoslav-era weapons left Zagreb for Jordan. Despite the surfacing of footage depicting Croatian weapons from Syrian armies, the Croatian government has denied any part in shipping weapons to Syria. Thanks to detailed analysis of airport timetables and cargo carrier history, around 70 flights this past year have carried weapons from Bulgaria and Serbia to the Middle East. From these locations, military operation centers transport the artillery by road to the Syrian border.  

Analysis

Primarily, increased threat of terrorist activity, the drug trade and Police and Soldier modernization efforts are a main contributor to the increasing demand of SALW. Because of this, diverse groups of people are in possession of SALW. The vast majority of the world’s 875 million small arms, 75%, are in the hands of private citizens or civilians. Most of these small arms, both legal and illegal, are used for recreation, self-defense or criminal purposes, although there is a significant gun collecting market. Issues that can arise from such a large number of small arms collected in private hands are increased gun violence such as mass shootings common in the United States, suicides, homicides and other armed crimes. Another major problem is violence against women. Women are three times more likely to die violently if there is a gun in the household than if there is not, and the perpetrators are most often a spouse or a partner.

State Security Forces account for slightly under 25% of SALW. Military forces, hold the majority of this 25%, however, in recent years, police departments have grown increasingly militarized, which is one of the major problems. In the United States the 1033 Program created by the National Defense Authorization Act authorized the transfer of surplus military equipment to local law enforcement. For example, in 2014 and 2015 the Los Angeles County Sheriff acquired

The Guardian: Revealed: the £1bn of Weapons Flowing From Europe to Middle East
http://www.prnewswire.com/
http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-actors/civilians.html
http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-actors/civilians.html
http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-actors/state-security-forces.html
http://www.iansa.org/campaign/disarm-domestic-violence
http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-actors/state-security-forces.html
a total of 1,105 M16 and M14 rifles and two mine resistant vehicles.\(^{45}\)

Private Security Forces hold less than 1\% of the world’s SALW. Private Security Forces are legally registered businesses that provide security or military services on a contractual basis. A major problem with these entities is that information on their stockpiles is scarce and there is minimal regulation. Additionally, some of the companies have been involved in illegal acquisition of weapons and improper usage including on civilians.\(^{46}\)

Gangs are in possession of a little less than 2\% of SALW. This is a particularly pressing issue because gangs typically operate in urban settings, not war zones, where there is an abundance of civilians. Gangs play a key role in non-conflict related armed violence which causes an estimated 2/3 of global violent deaths.\(^{47}\)

**Conclusion**

Globally, the most common problem relating to SALW are the proliferation of weapons to armed groups such as terrorist groups, insurgent groups, militias, and vigilante organizations. Many of these groups are able to recruit children as soldiers because the weapons are small enough for a child to carry. Since 1998, there have been armed conflicts in 36 countries involving child soldiers.\(^{48}\) The incredible humanitarian impact which SALW have on civilian impact is a significant challenge to addressing the issue. Through the discussion of this topic, it may be possible to create lasting and impactful solutions which improve the lives of civilians across the globe. A far-reaching solution to this pressing issue must be found to protect every innocent life possible.

**Questions to Consider**

- What kind of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional bodies can be utilized to better address this problem?
- What has and has not been successful about previous actions? Where can they be improved?
- What are some ways to effectively track the transfer of SALWs?
- What are some measures that can be taken to disarm people that have access to SALWs, particularly children?
- What are the root causes of the proliferation of SALWs?

\(^{45}\) [Link](http://www.forbes.com/sites/adamandrzejewski/2016/05/10/war-weapons-for-americas-local-police-departments/#31e1188b55fe)
\(^{46}\) [Link](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-actors/private-security-companies.html)
\(^{47}\) [Link](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/armed-actors/gangs.html)
\(^{48}\) [Link](http://www.child-soldier.org/)