



Committee: International security and disarmament

Question of: Measures to reduce International Weapons Trafficking to Radical Terrorist Organizations

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Introduction

In the last decades, the escalation of terrorist attacks perpetrated by radical organizations has brought the attention of the international community toward the threat of terrorism as a disruptive element to the social fabric. While Western nations have been experiencing these phenomena only in the recent few years, terrorism originated a long time ago, rooting in the drastic ethnic and religious conflict in Africa, Middle East, Asia and several other areas. Even if terrorism tactics are continuously evolving, acquiring weapons remains, however, a basic and common element within these criminal associations and the satellite activities related represent a severe danger to the developing economies as well as a threat to human rights. Generally, terrorist organizations are characterized by internal hierarchy, a recruiting system, funding resources and ideological doctrine to act upon. Internet, as well as social media, nowadays plays a fundamental role in these fields. Sold on specialized websites, weapons are still the main mean to instill terror. With the illicit trafficking of weapons being an extremely complex phenomenon, it is often difficult to trace back to the original perpetrators. In order to stop it, international cooperation on security, economic and legislative levels is fundamental to prevent the further enlargement of weapons flux as well as effectively acting upon the arms trade.

The Issue

General overview

Weapons are generally the primal fuel of local conflict or extended war zones all around the globe, especially light weapons. Due to their weight and other characteristics, they are extremely easy to transport. Even if in the last decade several treaties, as well as agreements, have been drafted regarding this issue, light weapons and military complex devices are smuggled, sold and transported daily in every continent, more abundantly in Africa, Middle East, South and Eastern Asia, South America and Eastern Europe. According to the alarming data provided by the Small Arms Survey in Geneva currently, there are 875 million small weapons and around 75% are in the hands of civilians. The consequences of the lax control on these weapons on the civilian population are a constant reminder of the necessity of UN member states to remain focused on the matter.

Effects of weapons on society

The clearest example of the destabilizing effect of light weapons and other military equipment are the African war zones. Uncertain amounts of light weapons illegally possessed by civilians or militia members have been jeopardizing constantly the stability of any form of political or social institution. The lack of effective legislation and often the absence of any kind of border controls, help weapon smugglers carry out their activities. These merchants have been profiting for decades from the power vacuum created by the constant local wars between various religious and ethnic groups. Their



annual turnover is the result of repeated violations of international laws and agreements. Often, national governments or international resolutions established bans or border checkpoint which seldom are effectively applied by local authorities. In the international arms smuggling scenario, a fundamental role is played by local governments which have proved in some instances to be corrupt.

Key terrorist organizations

In Africa among the several terrorist organizations defined by the United Nations the most active are Boko Haram and the various Jihadi affiliated groups. Boko Haram is a terrorist organization founded in 2009 active mostly in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. This terrorist organization was declared as the deadliest one in 2015 by the Global Terrorism Index due to their criminal acts which were initially aimed at soft targets and then shifted toward more complex acts such as suicide bombings and kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls in 2014. The Nigerian government declared the state of emergency in 2012 due to the increase of Boko Haram's actions in the Northern part of the country. This organization is responsible for the death of ten thousand people and displaced roughly 23 million refugees who fled mostly to Chad. Their weapons supply come directly from stealing from the Nigerian military's old stocks or purchasing on the flourishing African black market.

The ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant), which briefly collaborated with Boko Haram in 2015 and 2016, became prominent in 2014 and declared the Islamic Caliphate is currently facing major military defeats on its previously seized territory. According to Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL, although the caliphate is experiencing funding shortages in a general declining financial situation, it is investing its remaining possessions in weapons. Since 2014, the ISIL is in possession of military drones used to target buildings. In addition, away from the current war zones, their propaganda is encouraging radicalized individuals to commit terrorist acts targeting western nations leading to attacks, including in Belgium, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some of these attacks have been performed by returning fighters, while other perpetrators never even visited the conflict areas.

The main opponent of ISIL in the Syrian conflict is the YPG Kurdish group also known as the People's Protection Units. The militia members are mostly of Kurdish origin and they have been receiving armament support mostly from the United States and partially from the Russian Federation. In 2015, with the American support the YPG established the Syrian Democratic Forces in order to launch the military campaign to seize the Caliphate's capital city Raqqa. The victories against the ISIL militants are partially due to the PKK military efforts as well. Unlike the YGP, this group is considered a terrorist force by the United States and the European Union. Operating in the same premises, the two groups have been sharing troops and armaments for a long time, which has originated controversy in the diplomatic international community.

On the other side of the world, The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) fought in Colombia for over decade following the Marxist-Leninist political ideology, adopting condemned measures such a kidnapping, taxation of the local population, terrorism and smuggling of drugs. In 2017 the UN operation conducted in all 26 FARC camps to extract and dismantle the guerrilla movement weaponry including anti-personnel mines, grenades, homemade explosives and gunpowder. As underscored by Mr. Arnault, Head of the UN Mission in Colombia, this operation represents a fundamental step towards the elimination of individual weapons as well as the gradual return to a peaceful environment in the country. On July 10th 2017, the Security Council adopted a resolution to verify the former combatants' disarmament to proceed with their political and social reintegration. Previously, the Revolutionary Forces and the Colombian government signed a peace deal after 50 years of conflicts.



International arm suppliers

Regarding the arms control and trade, terrorist organizations are the main buyers of military goods and therefore the purchasing, delivering and funding system is fundamental in order to have a full understanding of the scenario. According to several UN reports as well as the annual SIPRI report (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), the main suppliers of light weapons to the Middle East conflict areas are Western nations. USA, Russia, China, Germany, France and the UK represent collectively 75% of the world suppliers. The United States alone sells 33% of the weapons sold worldwide in a year.

Apart from influencing conflict zones, arms trade plays a major role in the organized crime scenario. The illegal smuggling of weapons is complementary to the trading of drugs and human beings. Moreover, the gun supply is fundamental in urban gang conflict which endangers greatly civilians on a daily basis. Over 10.000 deaths only in Europe are connected to firearms every year as homicides, while there is an average of 4000 related to suicides.

The major difficulty in providing a legal framework for arms trade is defining precisely the legal boundaries of illicit trafficking. A weapon purchase can be considered illegal if the supplier gives the weapon to a state or an organization whose intention is to employ these tools for illicit purposes. Approaching this topic, delegates must not neglect the sovereign right of member states on their national territories and local legislation. However, reducing the trafficking of weapons, remains an effective step to be taken to ensure the respect of humanitarian international laws.

Impact of the Internet on trade

Several attackers use weapons purchased on the internet, more specifically on the darknet. Media covered attacks such as the Charlie Hebdo attack or the Munich shooting saw the employment of disused weapons bought on the internet. The darknet is a concealed part of the Internet not accessible by normal servers. To access it, it's necessary to be invited by another user. These portals are an ideal environment where terrorist cells proliferate every day. Recruiting, sharing information and selling military devices are the most common actions carried on by these organizations. Explosives, guns, automatic rifles, grenades and other firearms are available on the Internet to be acquired on the black market via bitcoin payments, which obstruct any possible tracing to the source. According to a research of the University of Manchester in 2016, 60% of the firearms available on the black market came from the US, while Europe accounted roughly 25% and 12% came from other countries.

ISIL and other extremist organizations used online recruitment to convince foreign fighters to join their cause in Syria and Iraq while encouraging cells or individuals to act immediately. To provide another example, before the Munich shooting the attacker hacked a Facebook profile to lure more people to the attack location. The impact of the social networks remains extremely high on terrorist groups' proliferation.

Key Events

1988-1994 Cali Cartel Killings	The Colombian Cali cartel killed around 400 people suspected to be guerrilla supporters of unionist
1 September 2004 Beslan School siege	The Chechen and Angush Islamic group kept under siege a school in Chechnya to demand its independence. 355 victims

2007 Yazidi communities bombing	In Iraq several suicide bombings targeted the Yazidi communities killing 500 people. No organization claimed responsibility.
11 September 2001 Twin Towers	Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist hijacked four airplanes. Two were intentionally crashed into the World Trade Center in New York, one on the Pentagon and the remaining one never reached its target.
4 -5 May 2014 Boko Haram attacks	In Nigeria in the cities of Gaboru and Ngala 366 people were killed by Boko Haram and 8 girls were abducted
24 December 2014	The Arms Trade Treaty enters into force
13-14 November 2015 Bataclan attack	Several coordinated attacks occurred in six different locations in Paris. 130 people were killed in the Bataclan theatre
3 July 2016 Karrada attack	The Islamic state targeted the Shia minority in Baghdad killing 341 people
2016 Brussels bombing	Three suicide bombings occurred in the Brussels Airport and in a metro station.
28 June 2016 Ataturk airport attack	At the Ataturk airport in Istanbul 45 people were killed in a series of suicide bombings and shootings
12 December 2016	The SC resolution on the question of the Small Arms is approved
1 January 2017 Istanbul nightclub shooting	39 people were killed in a nightclub on New year's eve. Islamic state claimed responsibility.
10 January 2017 Afghanistan bombings	Several UAE diplomats were killed by the Islamic State and the Taliban
15 April 2017 Aleppo suicide car bombing	126 people were killed by the Islamic State terrorists
21 April 2017 Camp Shaheen attack	256 Afghan soldiers were killed by the Taliban in northern Afghanistan
22 May 2017 Manchester Arena bombing	22 people were killed at the end of a pop concert in Manchester Arena
10 th July 2017	Security Council Authorizes Creation of United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2366 (2017)

Previous attempts to solve the issue

- **The Arms Trade Treaty (2014) — A/RES/69/49**

The Arms Trade Treaty signed in 2014 by 92 member states and ratified by 89 member states, imposes several restrictions regarding the comprehensive transfer of conventional weapons establishing new directives to avoid the trade of weapons which will contribute to human suffering. The treaty's main objective is to avoid the violation of international convention and humanitarian



laws. It applies to all categories of conventional weapons including battle tanks, warships and combat aircrafts. This treaty does not apply however to all authorized movements of conventional ships which remain in possession of the member states that ordered the transfer.

• **Security Council Resolution on the proliferation of small arms as a threat to peace and security in West Africa, 7 March 2003 ---SC/RES/1467**

This resolution approved by the Security Council addresses specifically light weapons which create thousands of civilian casualties each year. The resolution demands that all member state comply fully with the resolution directives applying monitoring systems to the embargos of light weapons as well as tracing weapon programs in accordance with the International Tracing Instrument. It was approved by 14 votes in favor and one abstaining, the Russian Federation.

• **Security Council Resolution on Question of Small Arms, Light Weapons, (/A/RES/71/48) 12 December 2016**

This resolution approved by the UN General Assembly during the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects aims to eradicate all forms of illicit production and transfer of small weapons to avoid the wide scenario of socioeconomic consequences linked directly to this phenomenon. It concerns explicitly terrorist groups as the second article states: “Recognizes the urgent need to maintain and enhance national controls, in accordance with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including their diversion to illicit trade, illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, taking into account, inter alia, their adverse humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences for the affected States;”

• **Security Council Resolution on small arms that contained new provisions aiming to strengthen UN coordination and action on small arms, promote effective implementation of UN arms embargoes and support the Arms Trade Treaty, 22 May 2015, (SC/RES/2220)**

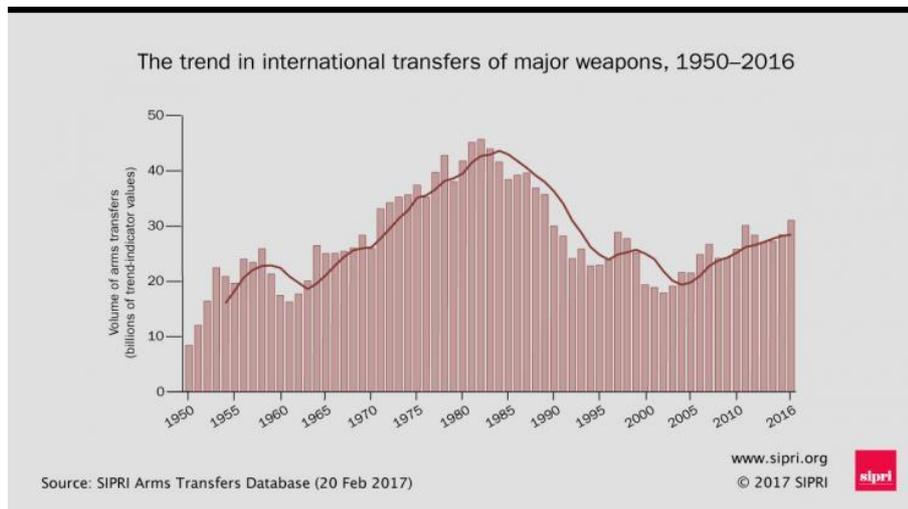
This resolution provides new directives to member states welcoming their efforts to eradicate the small weapons trade. It emphasizes the necessities of all parties involved to comply with the measures adopted to not violate international humanitarian laws and should these preparations continue, the Secretary-General will update the mandate of the UN peacekeeping forces to support the countermeasures where appropriate.

Possible solutions

While elaborating possible resolution to this crucial matter for the safety of civilians, delegates should remain focused on the complexity of weapons trade. Every different area may require customized solutions to be adapted to the current situation. Moreover, weapons are often included in national legislation and sometimes are considered necessary to personal defense.

- Diminish the size of the current organizations' arsenals

- Decrease the supply of new weapons
- Assure that legal sellers do not interfere in the black markets and vice versa
- Reducing the demand for weapons
- Stress member state to start weapons tracing programs
- Increase national and international efforts on cyber net security
- Share data among member states regarding this topic



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