

# **Introduction**

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In conflict and post-conflict areas Small Arms and Light Weapons pose an ever increasing problem. Although they are not a primary source of conflicts, they have very negative consequences on a society: They contribute to civil wars, crime, insecurity, even terrorism and they severely impede development, thus creating a vicious cycle of violence and underdevelopment.

## **Defining Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)**

First it has to be clarified what we actually mean by Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Broadly speaking, “Small Arms” are weapons designed for individual use. The category of Small Arms includes: revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, submachine guns and light machine guns. “Light weapons” are, again broadly speaking, weapons designed for the use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and small calibre mortars. However, the definitions used by different organisations still differ in significant details. The OSCE and the EU, for example, limit the term SALW to military weapons, thus excluding sport and hunting weapons.

Every weapon is useless unless sufficient ammunition is available. This aspect has gained importance in international agreements and programs which now increasingly pay attention to the collection, storage and destruction of ammunition.

## **The Importance of the SALW Issue for Conflict and Crisis Management**

To give some basic figures on the extent of the problem: There are an estimated 600 Mio SALW worldwide. They are responsible for 85-90% of persons killed and injured globally. More than 50% of those weapons are not held by governments, but by non-state actors. This leads to long, protracted conflicts that are difficult to pacify and have disastrous consequences: Humanitarian catastrophes, mass displacements, weakening of state structures, collapse of health and education services, high costs for treatment of injuries, rise in organised crime, declining economic activity, damage to the social fabric and reduction/decrease of funds for development.

The aims pursued by those using SALW are often short-termed and primarily profit-oriented (e.g. control over natural resources, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, etc.). Also, the dividing line between armed conflicts and crime becomes increasingly blurred. Even when the international community succeeds in brokering a peace agreement, in more than 50% of all cases the respective country relapses into civil war after a short period of truce and development. SALW also pose a threat to international peace-keepers. After the end of a particular conflict, SALW tend to be transferred to other crisis areas and thus contribute to the spreading of low intensity conflicts. One of the most obvious examples for this phenomenon is the conflict in West Africa that moved back and forth between Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

## **Collecting and Destroying SALW**

The primary aim in tackling the Small Arms problem is obviously to reduce the number of SALW in crisis areas. This can be done by Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programs that aim at taking the weapons from combatants, to either merge the fighters into a newly created unified national army or to demobilize and integrate them into civil life. If SALW have already trickled into the civilian

population, they have to be collected by means of specifically designed programs, which differ in several aspects from DDR programs. In regional conflicts a regional approach is needed, which means that SALW collection and destruction programs should take place simultaneously in all states involved. Reintegration programs always require good cooperation between international military forces, civilian UN agencies and NGOs.

In all SALW reduction programs it is essential to destroy the weapons promptly, effectively and verifiably. Since none of the following articles focuses on the technical aspects of weapons destruction, the different possibilities to destroy SALW shall be mentioned here: 1) **Burning**: This method is highly visible, cost-effective, but possibly inefficient, if not enough heat is produced; 2) **Melting in foundries**: This is arguably the best method, but relatively complicated. It requires a fixed facility, involves transport of the weapons and requires the weapons to be stripped of all non-steel components; 3) **Open-pit detonation**: Also provides for high visibility, but requires skilled technicians; 4) **Cutting** is widely used and can be done in different ways: the simplest way is cutting by blades, other methods such as oxygasoline cutting require much more high tech; 5) **Bending/Crushing**: Is also a simple, inexpensive, and highly visible option, but not necessarily 100% effective. Crushing can be done by hydraulic press, or by vehicles; 6) **Shredding** is simple, guarantees 100% destruction, but the shredder machine is so expensive that it can only be cost-effective for high quantities of weapons; 7) **Dumping at Sea** is a rather theoretical option.

Destroying existing weapons is essential, but not enough. International efforts also have to aim at regulating the influx of new weapons. The problem consists basically of two sides: The supply and the demand. In order to successfully curb the spreading and use of SALW both aspects have to be addressed: We have to have a look at the countries of origin as well as the crisis areas.

## **The Reasons for Production and Export of SALW and Possible Counter-Measures**

During the Cold War the main reason for SALW exports were strategic interests of the exporting powers. Today economic interests are much more important. Since the 1990s many SALW originate from Eastern European states, affected by the collapse of the Soviet Union: After the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, those countries were left with weak state structures, and large parts of their civil economy collapsed, leaving weapons production a lucrative field of income. Furthermore, the reduction of the armed forces and/or the radical modernization process led to a significant surplus of old SALW that were either exported by the state or, due to bad stock-keeping, found their way into the hands of criminals or illicit arms traders.

What kind of measures can be taken in the countries of origin? Possible counter-measures include: Preventing illicit production, taking steps to facilitate the tracking of arms transfers (“marking and tracing”), ensuring safe storage and assistance in the destruction of surplus weapons, and, of course, measures to limit the transfer (i.e. regulation of legal, and prevention of illegal exports).

## **Reasons for the Demand for SALW and Possible Counter-Measures**

Weak state structures and bad governance lead to a lack of legislation and unsatisfactory implementation of existing laws. If rules on SALW stock-keeping are inexistent or not enforced, weapons tend to disappear from official stocks. Inefficient, corrupt police and justice systems and a general environment of insecurity motivate civilians to arm themselves for the purpose of self-defence.

Hence, what measures can be taken in those countries? Apart from limiting the access to SALW, measures have to focus on reducing the subjective perception that SALW are needed to improve one's security.

One of the means are campaigns to raise public awareness about the consequences of SALW misuse and uncontrolled circulation. Another one is improving national legislation and assisting in the implementation (e.g. concerning weapons registration). Probably the most important means is designing and implementation of reforms of police, justice and penitentiary systems in order to increase popular confidence in the rule of law, thus eliminating the need for the local population to arm themselves. One of the problems that frequently occur in the process of Security Sector Reform is the supply of the military and the police with new weapons to increase their efficiency, while the need for democratic oversight is neglected.

## **The Structure of this Book**

In the first chapter, **Glenn McDonald** of the Geneva-based research institute Small Arms Survey gives an overview of the different aspects of the SALW problem. He looks at the supply side as well as the social factors that drive Small Arms acquisition and misuse, touches upon issues like the life-cycle of SALW, and examines the disproportionate role of young men as perpetrators as well as victims of SALW-related violence. He stresses the importance of research as a basis for designing adequate SALW programs.

**Dorothea Auer** gives a concise introduction into the most important international efforts to reduce the number of SALW in circulation and to counter their proliferation. She describes the role of the UN, OSCE, EU and NATO-PfP and highlights the importance of regional initiatives, such as the Wassenaar Arrangement, the ECOWAS Convention and the Nairobi Protocol for the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

Basically, there are two approaches: The first one is setting norms, particularly the creation of ethical standards for weapons exports. The second approach is to implement concrete projects for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of combatants as well as the Small Arms collection programs. All those efforts have to be accompanied by

other measures designed to improve the local population's confidence in the police and law enforcement agencies.

**Andreas Strub** provides the reader with an introduction into the SALW Strategy of the European Union which is the key policy document of the EU, providing for a comprehensive plan of action to combat the illicit trade in SALW and their ammunitions. The document aims at a coherent approach of EU security and development policies.

**Claes Nilsson** in his article describes some of the OSCE activities in the field of SALW and Conventional Ammunition. He gives an introduction into the OSCE *Best Practice Guide on SALW* and then focuses on OSCE activities in SALW-affected states that have requested assistance in dealing with the surplus stockpiles of SALW and Conventional Ammunition. OSCE assistance may, for example, consist of the destruction of arms and ammunition, in enhancing the security and/or improving the management of stockpiles or in creating project proposals.

**Tobias Pietz** looks at the factors that have to be taken into account when planning and executing DDR programs. He also highlights the challenges that may occur in the course of such processes, such as: How to ensure prompt and effective destruction of the collected weapons, how to facilitate effective reintegration of combatants through training programs and the creation of jobs, and last but not least how to ensure timely and sufficient funding.

The last three articles of this book concentrate on three specific examples of DDR or weapons collection and destruction programs, respectively. The authors, all practitioners, analyse the concept and provide the reader with basic lessons learned.

At first **David de Beer** presents the European Union Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EU ASAC), a program which he led for four years. The EU-ASAC was the most comprehensive disarmament program ever conducted by the European Union. It consisted of five major elements, focusing on strengthening the legal framework, voluntary weapons handover, largely using the

“Weapons for Development” strategy, assisting in registration and safe storage of weapons, destroying surplus weapons and raising public awareness. The program is to be considered a success, and Cambodia today is a far more secure country than at any time since the end of the 1960s.

**Erwin Kauer** provides an analysis of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina more than 10 years after the end of the civil war. All attempts of weapons collection and destruction have been hampered not only by a long tradition of people carrying arms, but also by the complicated political structure that emerged from the Dayton agreement.

Finally, **Juergen Rathner** and **Peter Hazdra** present the European Union Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) as a recent example of a successful DDR process that helped end a long-lasting conflict between the Indonesian government and separatist rebels on the northern tip of Sumatra. The mission was unique because it was the first EU civilian crisis management mission under the authority of the European Council and because it established cooperation between the EU and ASEAN. The article describes which factors in the preparation and implementation led to the mission’s success.

