



**SMALL ARMS  
WORKING GROUP**

**THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS:  
ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF DIVERSION**

BY WENDY CUKIER



## **About this Paper**

This paper was prepared for the Small Arms Working Group of Peacebuild. The paper is part of a series that explores key policy areas for Canadian government attention at the July 2008 United Nations Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the PoA (programme of action on small arms and light weapons). The papers were first presented at a meeting between SAWG and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada in April 2008. The support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is gratefully acknowledged.

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SAWG seeks to engage the Canadian peace, disarmament, human rights and development NGO communities in the development and promotion of national and international policies and measures to reverse the diffusion and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Project Ploughshares is the coordinating agency of the working group.

Through meetings, workshops and roundtables on small arms, the Working Group provides a forum, which encourages members to exchange information, share lessons learned and explore specific areas of collaboration and serves as a link between the NGO community and the Canadian government by engaging in small arms policy dialogue with relevant departments.

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Peacebuild

1 Nicholas Street, #1216, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7B7, Canada

Tel: (613) 241-3446 Fax: (613) 241-4846

[www.peacebuild.ca](http://www.peacebuild.ca)

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Project Ploughshares

57 Erb Street West

Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6C2 Canada

519-888-6541 Fax: 519-888-0018

[plough@ploughshares.ca](mailto:plough@ploughshares.ca)

[www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca)

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Published May 2008

ISBN 978-1-895722-65-9

# The Illicit Trade in Small Arms: Addressing the Problem of Diversion

By Wendy Cukier

## Executive Summary

Over the last decade, considerable attention has been paid to the global problem of the illicit trafficking of small arms. This paper will analyse the points of diversion and potential mechanisms to prevent diversion using a demand-and-supply framework. Concrete cases are examined to understand the contributing factors and ways in which the Programme of Action addresses these. The paper is structured in four parts: 1) Background, 2) Mechanisms of Diversion, 3) Measures to Reduce Diversion, and 4) Conclusions.

The principal findings of the paper are:

1) Increasingly the evidence reaffirms the importance of understanding the root causes of political and criminal violence that drive the demand for illicit small arms. Where demand is strong because of acute insecurity, efforts to reduce diversion by increasing controls over the licit supply are less likely to be successful. Factors driving the demand for small arms include demographics, governance problems; weak and corrupt law enforcement; human rights violations; civil and identity conflicts and the failure of states to protect the vulnerable; social and economic disparities; inadequate post-conflict disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants; and cultural attitudes.

2) Although the definitions vary by context, “licit” small arms are those possessed by states, police, and civilians in accordance with existing international conventions as well as national laws. “Illicit” small arms are those which are possessed in violation of existing international conventions and/or national laws. These may include small arms in the hands of states that are subject to UN Security Council sanctions or regional/subregional embargos or moratoria, or small arms in the hands of non-state actors, as well as small arms illicitly possessed by civilians. The distinctions and interactions between licit and illicit are complex. Distinguishing between licit/ illicit small arms sales is a function of

- the status of the buyer (entitled or proscribed);
- the status of the seller (licensed or unlicensed);
- the status of the weapon (licit or illicit model, licitly acquired or stolen, licit/illicit manufacture); and
- the details of the transaction (formal or informal).

3) While in some regions there is local craft production of illicit small arms, most illicit small arms begin as licit small arms. Diversion occurs through a variety of means, including: illegal manufacture or reactivation of deactivated weapons, illicit sales by states, illegal brokering, illegal sales by dealers, illegal sales by civilians, theft from state and civilian stockpiles, and illicit importation.

4) A review of cases reveals a wide variety of mechanisms to facilitate illicit sales, including the absence of appropriate controls, falsification of documents and inadequate implementation, and a limited capacity for enforcement.

5) Measures that address licit trade, possession, and use—whether by states, police and other public security agents, or civilians—are essential to reduce the risk that licit small arms will be diverted to licit markets or purposes. A principal purpose of international sanctions and embargos, conventions, programs of action, and national regulations that follow from them is to reduce the risk that licit small arms will be diverted to illicit markets and purposes.

- When the demand for small arms is strong, measures controlling supply will be less effective. The demand for illicit small arms is driven by factors such as socio-economic-political disparity, culture, and insecurity and an effective strategy must also strike at the root causes of small arms violence.
- The PoA includes a number of elements intended to reduce the diversion of small arms, including import/export/transit controls, end-use certificates, controls on brokering, and national legislation.
- Marking small arms at manufacture and at permanent import is essential to ensure that illicit small arms can be distinguished from licit small arms, to support tracing of illicit small arms that helps identify points of diversion, and to support prosecution of violations.
- Without effective follow-up, the fact remains that implementation, enforcement mechanisms, international embargoes, conventions, and programs of action, as well as regional agreements and national laws, are essentially words on paper.
- Follow-up and review are essential to ensure that countries fulfill their obligations. Enforcement is critical. This includes measures to support the detection, investigation, and prosecution of violations.
- Support for implementation is essential to ensure that appropriate economic, operational, technical, and political issues are effectively addressed.
- Policies, practices, and resources must be in place to ensure that illicit small arms are collected, stored securely, inventoried, traced, and eventually destroyed.
- There is still limited empirical evidence. More data collection and analysis are required to refine our understanding of the methods and mechanisms of diversion, as well as the interventions most effective in reducing small arms trafficking.

## Background

The illicit small arms trade affects virtually every region of the world, whether peaceful or embroiled in conflict. “Embargoed governments and insurgent movements are so numerous that they create a market for illicit weapons possibly rivalling the scale of legal demand.”<sup>1</sup>

The illicit trade occurs both within and between countries when licit small arms are diverted to illicit markets. The extent of the problem is difficult to assess as the illicit small arms that are recovered represent only a small fraction of illicit small arms in circulation. While the licit global small arms market is estimated at \$4-billion a year, the illicit trade is estimated at close to \$1-billion.<sup>2</sup> Compounding the problem is the fact that many countries do not trace illicit weapons recovered and many recovered weapons lack the markings needed to trace them to sources. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence that the problem is large and complex.

There is little empirical analysis of the problem of illicit trafficking on a national level and even less on the international level. The nature of illicit trafficking limits the availability of reliable data about the sources of weapons used in crime and conflict. Studies to date are based on analyses of weapons recovered, which represent a small portion of weapons used, as well as on qualitative and anecdotal information. While INTERPOL collects and aggregates data annually through the INTERPOL Weapons Electronic Tracing System (IWETS), participation in IWETS is voluntary and the number of incidents reported is relatively low.

Illicit trafficking operates through networks that are transnational. Small arms often are transferred through multiple points before reaching their final destination and flows of weapons follow demand. There has been very limited empirical or theoretical work done that examines the interactions of supply and demand and licit and illicit national and international markets. Analysts have suggested that the licit and illicit markets are inextricably linked, with diversion from licit markets being one of the major sources of illicit small arms.

The demand for illicit small arms is complex, whether in the context of conflict or crime. The World Health Organization proposes an ecological model that links individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. Factors include demographics (particularly age and gender), substance abuse, socio-economic disparity, political grievances, insecurity, culture, and criminal enterprises; studies have examined the effects of these in a variety of contexts. In general, there is evidence to suggest that mechanisms that limit availability of licit small arms may reduce lethal violence. However, when demand is strong, and the licit supply of small arms is curtailed, highly motivated individuals will seek illicit small arms, even when the effective price is high. In some contexts, states may simply lack the political will or resources to effectively enforce the regulation of licit supply. In others, suppliers may “push” illicit weapons into the market.

The users of illicit drug and small arms networks often intersect at the local and international levels.<sup>3</sup> These links have been documented by a number of researchers and law enforcement agencies.<sup>4</sup> Narcotics trafficking generates a demand for illicit arms both directly and indirectly by developing an infrastructure that is also used for gun trafficking. This international infrastructure, particularly the distribution and money-laundering components, can also be used to support the illicit gun trade. The networks used to distribute illicit drugs, stolen goods, and other illicit products are often the same ones used to distribute illicit guns. Often guns are traded for drugs and many of the same people who are involved in the illicit drug trade are also involved in the trade in illicit small arms. Such links are well known and include shared transit routes and the funding of gun-running through drug trade profits. The links between drugs, guns, and illicit activities such as credit card fraud have been made in other contexts as well.<sup>5</sup> Organized crime, for example, has been implicated in using Italy as a

transshipment point for large sales to countries such as Libya.<sup>6</sup> Recent cases in Canada also link the drug trade to gun smuggling. While marijuana moves south and its value increases from two to four times, handguns move north, increasing their value up to eight times.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, there are significant differences between drug and small arms trafficking. Illicit drugs are generally illicit from the point of production to the point of consumption. In contrast, most small arms are manufactured licitly but become illicit by virtue of the conditions of their possession or their misuse. The problem with guns is further compounded by the fact that they are not consumed but are durable and are therefore resold and reused.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the small arms market has a dual structure, including substantial licit government and commercial markets as well as illicit markets. There are recognized legitimate purposes for small arms in most countries, which make dealing with the problem of misuse particularly difficult.

Globalization of supply and criminal infrastructure has been widely discussed.<sup>9</sup> The relaxation of border controls and the growing scale of transnational organized crime are also believed to have contributed to the expansion of the problem on a global basis.<sup>10</sup> Added to this is the globalization of finance, which enables money used in illicit small arms deals to be deposited in bank accounts without question.<sup>11</sup>

Some key findings on the nature of illicit small arms markets follow.<sup>12</sup>

Recent studies suggest that most conflicts worldwide have been fuelled by licit small arms but that illicit arms also play a significant role.<sup>13</sup> Illicit small arms also play a significant role in fuelling crime and are distributed by sophisticated transnational organized criminal networks. However, they are also distributed by small scale criminal “entrepreneurs.” The so-called “trail of ants” carrying small numbers of arms across borders is a significant threat to security in many regions.<sup>14</sup>

Arms supplied through covert operations during the Cold War have created a durable infrastructure to distribute illicit weapons for conflicts and crime worldwide. The US Central Intelligence Agency’s Afghan pipeline was the source of many of the weapons later used to fight against the US forces and have fuelled violence throughout the region. Air America, one of the largest private airlines in the 1960s, was secretly owned by the CIA to camouflage its clandestine missions in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia.<sup>15</sup> There are numerous examples of government agencies and politicians, on both sides of the Cold War, implicated in complex international smuggling networks.

Not only did the former Soviet Union arm its allies through similar mechanisms, but following the end of the Cold War and the deterioration of the economic conditions in the region, small arms became a source of hard currency. The sale of weapons by former Soviet bloc military and police personnel has fuelled violence throughout the region. With the expansion of the European Union and the erosion of trade and customs barriers, these weapons have flowed west as well as east. The diversion of military weapons to markets is commonplace, with recent cases being reported of weapons smuggled home by British military personnel and subsequently traced to high-profile crimes.<sup>16</sup>

High-profile scandals have shed light on the complex networks of brokers, many of them

created during the Cold War for covert state security operations. Adnan Khashoggi, reputed to be one of the richest men in the world, was a key player in the Iran-Contra case as well as numerous smaller scandals involving the arming of dictatorships and US-favoured guerrilla movements in the Third World. Rakesh Saxena, an acquaintance of Khashoggi and a former adviser to the Bangkok Bank, is alleged to have financed the \$10-million consignment of arms that was sent to UN-embargoed Sierra Leone by the British private military company Sandline International. Syrian dealer Monzer Al-Kassar was under investigation in Switzerland for violating the arms embargo on Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He was involved in the illicit sale of weapons to Libya in 1983, was sought by INTERPOL for swapping weapons supplied by the Italian mafia for drugs in 1977, and was suspected of supplying weapons to the commando group that hijacked the Achille Lauro in 1985. He was also named as a suspect in the 1998 terrorist attack on the passenger jet over Lockerbie.<sup>17</sup>

In March 2008, Viktor Bout was arrested in Thailand while allegedly attempting to obtain weapons for the US-designated terrorist organization Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia. Bout is accused of obtaining or providing at rock bottom prices guns from rusting Soviet and Eastern bloc stockpiles that were later used to fuel both sides of many conflicts in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, and Congo. Between July 1997 and September 1998, Bout is reported to have smuggled weapons worth an estimated \$14-million into African conflict zones, often in contravention of embargoes. Between 1992 and 1995, Bout made an alleged \$50-million from supplying several Afghan groups, enabling him to globalize his operations. At the height of his operation, he owned a fleet of 40 to 60 planes registered under a dozen front companies and employed at least 300 people, working with a network of associates and intermediaries across the globe. Some of his shadow companies also did business with the UN. In May 2006, one of his planes carrying a shipment of 200,000 AK-47 assault rifles went missing while allegedly flying from Bosnia to Iraq.<sup>18</sup>

The interaction between illicit guns for “criminal” and “political” purposes is nowhere more evident than in an examination of the weapons sources of “terrorist” organizations. On September 10, 2001, Ali Boumelhem was convicted on a variety of weapons violations plus conspiracy to ship weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon. He and his brother Mohamed had purchased an arsenal of shotguns, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, flash suppressers, and assault weapon parts from Michigan gun shows. Mohamed had a clean record, but Ali was legally prohibited from purchasing small arms as a result of a felony grand-theft conviction. An al-Qaeda manual recovered in Afghanistan entitled *How Can I Train Myself for Jihad*, contained an entire section on “Small arms Training.” The United States was identified as a good source for illicit weapons and al-Qaeda members living in the United States are instructed to “obtain an assault weapon licitly, preferably AK-47 or [other] variations.”<sup>19</sup> American gun shows were also a major source of small arms channelled to the Irish Republican Army during the conflict there.<sup>20</sup>

However, large-scale covert operations and smuggling are only a piece of the picture. Diversion of weapons to markets happens on a smaller scale as well. In Brazil, where it has been estimated that there are about seven million licit small arms and even more illicit small arms, an analysis of small arms recovered in crime showed that most of the guns recovered were domestically manufactured.<sup>21</sup> Some had been exported to neighbouring states and then reimported to Brazil, but many had simply been diverted from the civilian markets. Similarly,

a study of small arms recovered in crime in South Africa showed that post-conflict military weapons were a relatively small part of the problem and most of the guns were at one time licitly owned handguns diverted from civilians and, to a lesser extent, police.<sup>22</sup> More than two-thirds of illicit handguns recovered by police in Toronto are believed to originate in the US, where they enter the market through sales, theft, gun shows, and straw purchases.<sup>23</sup> Not only are these small arms used to fuel crime, but there are many examples of weaknesses in domestic regulations being exploited to arm non-state actors, such as the Irish Republican Army, as well as alleged terrorists.

The complex structure of licit and illicit markets, the links between civilian and military markets, and the interplay between domestic and international markets have been the subject of much analysis. Studies have examined Africa,<sup>24</sup> Central America,<sup>25</sup> South Asia,<sup>26</sup> and Canada.<sup>27</sup> Most large manufacturers and brokers serve domestic, international, civilian, and military markets.<sup>28</sup> Links, interactions, and dependencies among different networks suggest that there are no simple solutions to the problems of the proliferation and misuse of these weapons. Licit, covert, and illicit networks for large-scale distribution of small arms and ammunition share various transportation, banking, and personnel networks, thereby creating a complex global system. Changes in one network may result in changes in the global distribution pattern of small arms and ammunition and in the distribution of risk of death or injury. When one network is constrained, often by political forces, another network may assume some of the distribution function. When arms embargoes are instituted against licit transfers, for example, the covert and illicit networks may become operative. Although the end of the Cold War lessened state-sanctioned illicit trading, the transportation, storage, banking, and personnel elements of the illicit networks remained intact for private entities to use.<sup>29</sup>

## The Sources of illicit Small Arms: Methods of Diversion

Illegal sales and transfers, illegal importation, and theft are the principal paths by which small arms licitly held by states, brokers, dealers, and civilians are diverted to illicit markets. Illegal manufacture from components and reactivation are also part of the problem, but to a lesser extent.<sup>30</sup> Appendix I contains examples of incidents collected from a database of several hundred cases of small arms trafficking.

### *1. Illicit manufacture, assembly, and re-assembly*

Most countries regulate the manufacture and sale of small arms and ammunition, but enforcement of regulations is often difficult, particularly in countries with widespread “craft” production. In addition, illicit or unauthorized manufacture of weapons is sometimes facilitated by the use of components that have been imported or stolen. There have also been cases of widespread operations to reassemble and reactivate deactivated weapons. Modification of devices such as airguns and bb-guns has also been seen to fuel the illegal trade—in Great Britain, for example. Weak deactivation standards or verification processes have sometimes allowed such weapons to be reactivated and resold.

### *2. Illegal sales by states*

We have already noted many cases in which states have facilitated illicit sales of small arms to further their political or economic aims, relying on covert operations and complex

networks to help cover their tracks. There is also considerable evidence that while countries may not violate embargoes directly, inadequate controls may implicate them in arms shipments that have been diverted to conflicts.<sup>31</sup>

### *3. Illegal sales by brokers*

As described above, government officials and private companies, working in complex global networks, operate as “middlemen” in the distribution of small arms worldwide. Arms brokering itself is not illicit, but arms brokers often exploit loopholes and weak regulation to bypass arms embargoes and supply arms to regions in which they are likely to be misused. Currently arms brokers skirt existing laws and often operate with impunity.

### *4. Illegal sales by legal dealers*

In many countries there are examples of legal small arms dealers who violate national and local laws to provide guns to juveniles and adults otherwise prohibited from making licit gun purchases.

### *5. Illicit sales by civilians*

“Straw purchases” are instances in which small arms are bought licitly by someone with a clean record and then sold or given to a second owner. This is particularly a problem in jurisdictions without strong licensing and registration regimes governing both sale and resale. Such regimes reinforce the accountability of gun sellers and civilian owners and reduce the likelihood of diversion. Moreover, diversion from private security firms, which often operate with limited regulation, is a problem in many jurisdictions.<sup>32</sup>

### *6. Theft of state-owned small arms*

Reports from around the world illustrate the ways in which state-owned small arms leak into illicit markets through theft, corruption or other forms of diversion from military and police stockpiles. Recently a probationary police officer in Britain was shot with a firearm traced back to the British army.<sup>33</sup>

### *7. Theft of civilian-owned firearms*

As many as 500,000 small arms are stolen each year from the US, by definition falling into the hands of criminals.<sup>34</sup> Theft of licit guns is also a major source of illicit guns in South Africa. In many countries the majority of small arms recovered in crime appear to have been at one time licitly owned by states or by civilians.

Countries that establish strict controls on possession of small arms are still vulnerable to weapons diverted from licit to illicit markets in other countries.

## Factors facilitating illicit transfers

Our analysis of trafficking cases has identified a range of complex factors that contribute to or facilitate illicit transfers. In some cases controls and regulations do not exist; in other cases they are inadequately enforced because of a lack of will or capacity. The context is also important: strong demand may render futile efforts to control the illicit supply. Among the factors facilitating the illicit trade in small arms are:

### *1. Strong demand*

While the focus of this paper is on the methods used to divert licit small arms to illicit markets and purposes, it is important to stress that supply-side interventions are bound to have less impact where demand for illicit weapons is particularly strong. The root causes of political and criminal violence involving small arms are complex and there are no easy solutions. The drivers of small arms demand include social, economic, and political insecurity; failures of states and security sector abuses; inadequate opportunities for education and economic development, and embedded cultures of violence. Corruption and impunity have also been factors. Widespread availability of small arms fuels a cycle of violence—arming produces violence that fuels insecurity that encourages arming—that is difficult to break, whether in the context of political conflict or inner city gangs.<sup>35</sup>

### *2. Limited scope and effectiveness of arms embargoes*

Arms embargoes have been largely ineffective in stemming the flow of weapons to conflicts. Embargoes are binding on state members of the organizations imposing the embargoes (for example the European Union), but not on all states engaged in the weapons trade. The UN Security Council imposes embargoes only on a fraction of conflicts. Moreover, the enforcement of embargoes has been relatively weak; embargoes are easily circumvented through indirect covert operations. For example, after the imposition of an embargo French aid to Rwanda continued covertly from 1990-1994.

### *3. Poor and inadequate import/export and transfer controls*

Millions of small arms cross national borders annually. Some are imported for sale by dealers, for police and military purposes, or for civilian use. Some are imported and re-exported by the importer or brokers. While many countries have implemented import, export, and transfer controls, loopholes in the regulatory frameworks in some countries have been exploited by corrupt officials, brokers, criminal organizations, and others. Though not officially sanctioned by government officials, in some cases, high-level government personnel have been implicated in black market transfers.<sup>36</sup>

### *4. Poor and inadequate end-user controls*

Inadequate end-user controls, lack of due diligence, corruption, and poor enforcement have allowed brokers and others to sell weapons in violation of arms embargoes.<sup>37</sup>

### *5. Inadequate controls on brokers*

Brokers often operate in jurisdictions with weak laws or beyond the reach of national laws. Because of the nature of their business, they are highly mobile, often changing locations to avoid prosecution under one country's laws by doing business in and through other, less-regulated countries. Their activities are often facilitated by negligent or corrupt officials or government complicity.

### *6. Poor recordkeeping and verification*

Recordkeeping on the levels of imports and exports of commercial small arms shipments is uneven. Inadequate verification has allowed shipments to proceed using false, forged, or misleading documentation. For example, a major consignment of parts for M2 automatic rifles originating in Vietnam and destined for Mexico was found in a sealed container in San Diego, falsely labelled as hand tools and strap hangers.<sup>38</sup> In another case, shotguns, pistols, and rifles were imported to Northern Ireland from the United States, labelled as toys.<sup>39</sup> A

retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer has been convicted of 10 small arms offences, including transferring guns to a dealer who placed guns on the small arms registry, then deregistered them after falsely claiming that they had been deactivated.<sup>40</sup>

*7. Absence of standards for marking*

Enforcement has been hampered by the lack of standardized marking, which allows weapons to be uniquely identified and so traced back to their source.

*8. Limited capacity or will for tracing*

Many countries do not systematically trace small arms recovered in conflict or in crime, thus hampering global law enforcement. Lack of cooperation among agencies in different jurisdictions has also stymied investigations.

*9. Gaps in the regulation of civilian sales and possession*

There is ample evidence that small arms flow from unregulated jurisdictions to regulated jurisdictions and that the efforts by individual states to constrain licit access to small arms may be undercut by the inadequacy of controls in other countries. Weapons bought in the United States are illicitly imported into Canada, Japan, and Mexico. Even within the US, guns flow from less regulated states to regulated states. Studies suggest that strong regulation of legal small arms can curtail the flow of small arms to illegal markets, and that where regulations are strengthened, the growth in informal or illicit markets seldom is large enough to offset the decline in licit or formal markets.<sup>41</sup> In regions where small arms are more readily available from licit sources, without licensing or registration, civilian weapons are a significant source of supply to the licit markets.<sup>42</sup>

In a number of countries, including the United States and South Africa, initial sales of small arms are regulated, but secondary sales are not. In addition, gun shows, which are largely unregulated, have proved to be a major source of illicit guns within the United States and also for international illicit markets.

*10. Inadequate stockpile management and storage*

Theft of small arms is facilitated by uneven standards for storage and recordkeeping of state and civilian stockpiles and the lack of accountability.

*11. Limited capacity for enforcement*

Resource constraints, limits to technical capacity, and gaps in training may inhibit implementation and enforcement of laws.

*12. Little risk of apprehension or prosecution and the absence of meaningful penalties*

In Canada, individuals caught illicitly importing small arms into the country can face a fine of only \$500 if charged under the Customs Act rather than the Criminal Code. Often the street value of an illicit small arm is considerably higher than \$1,000.

*13. Inadequate border controls*

In Southeast Asia, illicit weapons transfers are driven by numerous conflicts. Military small arms can easily be obtained as a result of past conflicts. These problems are made worse by the fact that the area is home to several weak nations that have difficulty controlling their borders.<sup>43</sup> Illicit gun transfers in South Africa are also made easier by the lack of capacity to

control the borders. In 1996, a team of researchers conducted a study on South African borders and determined that “volumes pertaining to the movement of both cargo and persons, illicit crosses, the smuggling of small arms, vehicles and drugs... seems to be the order of the day.”<sup>44</sup> Compounding the problem is the lack of information-sharing on weapons imported and exported in the country. Other problems include the lack of proper screening equipment in the Johannesburg International Airport and unscheduled flights, security loopholes, and baggage problems in the Durban Airport, the Lanseria Airport, and the Richards Bay Harbour.<sup>45</sup>

## Measures to Prevent Diversion and Obligations under the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms in All Its Aspects

It is clear that at every stage in the small arms value chain there are opportunities for licit small arms to be diverted to illegal markets. The Programme of Action (PoA) includes a number of commitments that provide the foundation for a strong and integrated strategy to address the problem of diversion. Even where the PoA has been silent, states have, in their reporting on the implementation of the PoA, identified specific actions needed to reduce the illicit trafficking of small arms. The following section identifies some of the elements of an effective, fact-based strategy to reduce the diversion of licit small arms to illicit markets.

1. *Continue to focus energy on addressing the root causes of violence and on building sustainable and secure communities.* There is little doubt that where demand factors are strong, measures aimed only at limiting the supply of illicit weapons are unlikely to be successful. More research is needed to explore these interactions. A focus on integrating small arms considerations into development priorities is critical.

2. *Strengthen the imposition and enforcement of arms embargoes.* The PoA requires that states “take appropriate measures, including all legal or administrative means, against any activity that violates a United Nations Security Council arms embargo in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.” Governments must adhere to regional and international arms embargoes and they must punish violators. It has been suggested that the United Nations should develop an arms embargo-monitoring unit to provide the infrastructure to monitor compliance, supervise enforcement, and suggest punitive measures for violations. Canada should support this. In April 2008, reports of a ship of arms from China en route to Zimbabwe sparked international cries for action. South Africa, a transshipment point for the shipment, has vowed to block the shipment but the outcome is uncertain.<sup>46</sup>

3. *Implement a common international system for the marking and tracing of weapons to ensure the ability to track weapons to their sources.* In addition to markings required when a small arm is manufactured, the PoA also requires that states “adopt where they do not exist and enforce, all the necessary measures to prevent the manufacture, stockpiling, transfer and possession of any unmarked or inadequately marked small arms and light weapons.” Subsequent to the PoA, Canada signed on to the politically binding International Tracing Instrument (ITI), which requires “marking on each import[ed] small arm or light weapon, permitting identification of the country of import and, where possible, the year of import and enabling the competent authorities of that country to trace the small arm and light weapon; and

require[s] a unique marking, if the small arm or light weapons does not already bear such a marking.”

Marking and tracing are essential to enforcement and to preventing the diversion of licit guns to illicit markets. Under current international law, states may adopt different weapons marking systems, complicating the identification of the country-of-origin of a weapon. An international treaty on marking and tracing would require every country to adopt the same standard. If done properly, this system would allow investigators to identify sources and routes of weapons in case of criminal diversion and allow law enforcement to punish those responsible.

The international community must also provide mechanisms for sharing information about small arms that have been recovered to identify points of diversion and aid in prosecutions.

Currently the United States has one of the best developed regimes for marking small arms. A recent report by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATF) illustrates the multitude of means of cost-effective marking at manufacture as well as for import.<sup>47</sup> While Canada is signatory to several marking and tracing agreements, in the fall of 2007 the federal government once again delayed implementation of the *Firearms Marking Regulations* for two years.<sup>48</sup> The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, and the Canadian Association of Police Boards, in an unprecedented move, responded by asking the Federal Government to proceed with implementation.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, commitments to marking have been implemented even in low income countries. The Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region recently announced that small arms are to be marked with serial numbers and country codes, according to a renewed agreement made by states at a meeting organized by RECSA (Regional Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States). The markings will be added at the point of manufacture, import, or transfer. This information will then be entered into a national database. National Focal Point Coordinators from each of the 12 states were instructed in the marking process, stockpile management, and database creation during the meeting.

4. *Trace all small arms recovered in crime and illicit activities.* Currently the analysis of the illicit gun trade worldwide is based, to a large extent, on anecdotal information. Few countries have comprehensive systems for systematically tracing guns back to their source. In 2000, the US government’s BATF received 18,000 requests from foreign countries to trace small arms recovered in crimes, accounting for approximately 9 per cent of all trace requests received.<sup>50</sup> Even within Canada, the practice is uneven. Some jurisdictions trace all small arms recovered in crime. Others do not. For example, Ontario has required crime gun tracing for many years and the Province of Quebec recently implemented a comprehensive system to track illicit small arms. Tracing is critical to identify the sources of illicit guns and to develop appropriate interventions across domestic police jurisdictions and national borders.

5. *Regulate the activities of arms brokers nationally and internationally.* The PoA requires that states “develop adequate national legislation or administrative procedures regulating the activities of those who engage in small arms and light weapons brokering.”<sup>51</sup> The result of many years of study this requirement is intended to reduce the extraterritorial activities of brokers who

deliberately skirt the law. The Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on brokering calls on states to develop laws, regulations, and procedures to register and screen potential brokers, keep records on brokers, institute broker licensing, and set penalties and fines for violations of national laws and regulations.<sup>52</sup>

Canada should support the development of international standards to regulate arms brokers and to ensure that middlemen cannot move weapons from conflict to conflict without fear of prosecution.

6. *Support an international treaty to establish common international export criteria to prevent arms from being supplied to those likely to abuse human rights.* Currently, while Canada observes arms embargoes, it sells arms to countries that are at war and that have records of violating human rights and redistributing arms to countries that violate human rights. For example, the latest report on the arms trade shows that recipients again include countries at war (e.g., India, Israel, Thailand, Colombia) and human rights violators (e.g., Saudi Arabia, China).<sup>53</sup>

7. *Improve the effectiveness of the implementation of import, export, and transfer controls.* The PoA requires states “To assess applications for export authorizations according to strict national regulations and procedures that cover all small arms and light weapons and are consistent with the existing responsibilities of States under relevant international law, taking into account in particular the risk of diversion of these weapons into the illegal trade. Likewise, to establish or maintain an effective national system of export and import licensing or authorization, as well as measures on international transit, for the transfer of all small arms and light weapons, with a view to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.”

Often weaknesses in import, export, and transfer control regimes are exploited and states must ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to reduce the risks that transfer controls are forged or not properly authorized, that statements of the end-use and end-user are misleading or unconfirmed, and that verification of documentation is insufficient. There are standards and good practices that have been documented and shared and attention should be focused on strengthening implementation. As well, ongoing monitoring and verification at every step of the shipment are important to prevent “leakage.”<sup>54</sup> Above all, states have responsibilities to seriously and systematically assess the risks of diversion before deciding whether or not to authorize a transfer and this requires comprehensive guidelines and defined risk assessment tools to make these determinations. Recently Canada has shipped small arms to Afghanistan in spite of concerns that these may be diverted to illegal markets.<sup>55</sup>

8. *The PoA commits states to using “authenticated end-user certificates and effective legal and enforcement measures.”* Improved procedures are required, however, to ensure that these certificates are authenticated. It has been suggested that end-use monitoring is needed to ensure that exported weapons are used properly and that exporters follow all laws, policies, regulations, and procedures to verify that a foreign government or the authorized foreign recipient of defence articles is using and controlling them in accordance with the terms and conditions of a transfer. Because many countries have nonexistent or weak end-use monitoring provisions, international standards that require end-use monitoring on a more systematic and complete basis—at both pre-shipment and post-shipment points—are required. In addition, a

common international end-user certificate that cannot be easily forged or duplicated must be developed.<sup>56</sup>

9. *Implement and ratify existing agreements, including the UN Firearms Protocol, which in 1998 established standards for the import, export, and transshipment of arms, as well as marking and tracing.* Canada is a signatory to the agreement but has never ratified it claiming that it will ratify only after the provisions are implemented.

10. *Improve standards for stockpile management, including regulations governing police arms.* The PoA requires that states ensure, “subject to the respective constitutional and legal systems of States, that the armed forces, police or any other body authorized to hold small arms and light weapons establish adequate and detailed standards and procedures relating to the management and security of their stocks of these weapons. These standards and procedures should, inter alia, relate to: appropriate locations for stockpiles; physical security measures; control of access to stocks; inventory management and accounting control; staff training; security, accounting and control of small arms and light weapons held or transported by operational units or authorized personnel; and procedures and sanctions in the event of thefts or loss.” While the 1995 legislation included regulations of public agents, the regulations requiring registration of these firearms have never been implemented. In Canada, there have been several cases in which large numbers of small arms in the custody of police have been diverted from property rooms to illicit markets.<sup>57</sup>

11. *Support enforcement and security sector reform.* Continue to strengthen training and cross-sectoral cooperation to combat the illicit trade in small arms. The work that has been done in Canada by the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST) and Ontario’s Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit (PWEU) has been exemplary. Efforts should be expanded within Canada—for example, many provinces still do not systematically trace recovered small arms. Best practices should continue to be shared internationally and Canada should lead in supporting security sector reform. Strict regulation of private security is also essential but varies significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

12. *Continue to cooperate with the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and INTERPOL to track the sources of illicit weapons, share information, and cooperate on investigations to increase the apprehension and prosecution of traffickers.* With the globalization of crime, there is a need for the globalization of crime prevention strategies and, in particular, a need for harmonization and information sharing. For example, an MOU between the US Department of Justice and the Canadian Ministry of Public Safety allows for the electronic exchange (in real time) of ballistics information between the US and Canada.<sup>58</sup>

13. *Align the policies of agencies, including law enforcement, border security, and customs officials, to identify and eliminate trafficking.* These agencies must use random checks as well as intelligence to seize weapons at their points of entry and transshipment and to ensure prosecution to the fullest extent of the law. In Canada, for example, there have been cases in which individuals bringing illicit small arms and components into the country have been charged under the *Customs Act* rather than the *Criminal Code*.

14. *Strengthen the regulation of small arms issued to individuals—civilian, military, police, and other government employees—to reduce the chances that licit small arms will be diverted to illicit markets.* As

Ernie Regehr has noted, several paragraphs in the PoA explicitly require controls over civilian possession. States undertake “to adopt and implement” the legislative or other measures required to “establish as criminal offences under their domestic law the illegal manufacture, **possession** [emphasis added], stockpiling and trade of small arms and light weapons within their areas of jurisdiction, in order to ensure that those engaged in such activities can be prosecuted under appropriate national penal codes” (II.3). They also agree to establish “national coordination agencies or bodies and institutional infrastructure” to take responsibility for policy guidance, research, and monitoring of efforts designed to halt the illicit trade in SALW. These measures are to be directed against “the illicit manufacture, control, trafficking, circulation, brokering and trade” of SALW (II.4). These explicit references to illicit manufacturing, control, circulation, and so on of arms assume domestic laws to regulate and control SALW and to define licit manufacturing and control to apprehend illicit activity. Then states undertake to “identify ... groups and individuals engaged in the illegal manufacture, trade, stockpiling, transfer, **possession** [emphasis added] ... of illicit small arms and light weapons,” and pledge to “take action under appropriate **national law** [emphasis added] against such groups and individuals” (II.6).

The final PoA implies that all states should ensure sufficient controls on civilian possession to enable implementation of the explicit commitments that are contained in the PoA. These include the commitments to prevent and reduce illicit manufacture and trafficking of SALW; ensure adequate marking, recordkeeping, and tracing of illicit SALW; and so on.<sup>59</sup> Specifically the PoA requires measures “to ensure that comprehensive and accurate records are kept for as long as possible on the manufacture, holding and transfer of small arms and light weapons under their jurisdiction. These records should be organized and maintained in such a way as to ensure that accurate information can be promptly retrieved and collated by competent national authorities.” The Canadian Firearms Registry is essential to fulfilling these obligations.

When reporting on progress on the PoA, most countries have reported on changes to national firearms legislation as part of their strategy to reduce the illicit trade.<sup>60</sup> The European Union’s Firearms Directive is only the most recent initiative aimed at harmonizing national gun laws and establishing minimum standards for proof of legitimate purpose, licensing, and registration.<sup>61</sup> However, in recent years Canada has eroded these laws and their enforcement.<sup>62</sup> For example, the Government of Canada has introduced legislation to repeal the necessity of registering unrestricted rifles and shotguns and has extended for a third time an amnesty for failure to renew licenses or register rifles and shotguns.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, the enforcement of existing laws is variable. There are currently several thousand Canadians known to be in illegal possession of firearms, have failed to obtain the necessary license, or to register their firearms, but police lack the resources to enforce these provisions. Similarly, there is evidence that many purposes for which restricted licenses were issued no longer apply. There is also evidence that ammunition provisions are weakly enforced. Finally, the list of prohibited semiautomatic firearms has not been updated since 1995 in spite of evidence that many lethal weapons not reasonably used for hunting or target shooting have entered the market.

Gun traffickers often exploit loopholes in regulation. For example, a substantial proportion of illicit guns entering Canada, Mexico, and locations worldwide from the United States have

been traced back to ‘dirty dealers’, straw purchases, and gun shows in states with inadequate regulations.<sup>64</sup> Systematic approaches to ensuring that regulations are properly enforced are key. It has also been suggested that strengthening controls over the production and distribution of ammunition may be one of the possible choke points in limiting the utility of illegal weapons, particularly those requiring high performance or specialized ammunition.

15. *Strengthen stockpile controls.* The PoA requires “effective stockpile management and security, in particular physical security measures, for small arms and light weapons.” It also requires that states “ensure responsibility for all small arms and light weapons held and issued by the State and effective measures for tracing such weapons.” Governments must regularly account for military stocks and holdings, and licit small arms owners must report stolen or lost weapons to the proper authorities in a timely manner. Canada has delayed its public agent regulations, which would enter into the Firearms Registry the firearms currently in the possession of police. Thefts from police stocks in Canada have been reported and more recently there have been reports of small arms stolen from government stockpiles.<sup>65</sup> This is an underappreciated commitment. In the absence of secure storage/access control, no small arms control regime can be effective. Stockpile management needs to extend to seized/recovered small arms, as well as those in government stocks.

16. *Destroy surplus and illicit weapons.* Weapons collection programs in post-conflict areas are critical to the establishment of lasting peace; if weapons are not collected, the risk of high levels of violence remains.<sup>66</sup> To date, Canada has had a number of amnesty programs aimed at collecting and destroying unwanted and unused small arms; however, these programs have tended to be local and uneven in their effectiveness. A concerted campaign with national support to collect and destroy surplus small arms reduces the chances that these guns will be misused or diverted to illicit markets. Most Canadian police services destroy confiscated and surplus weapons in the absence of specific requirements dictating that they do so.

17. *To continuously improve policy, we must invest in improving our understanding of the nature of the problem, the causal factors, major actors, leading practices, and, most importantly, the effectiveness of interventions.*

## Conclusion

Given the enormity of the problem of illicit trafficking in small arms, both from the perspective of crime and conflict, it is surprising that there has been so little research on its dimensions and effects. One of the major challenges in understanding the problem, quite apart from the limited availability of empirical evidence, results from the inherent complexity, diversity, and political sensitivity of the issue in many contexts. The dynamics of the problem, the types of small arms, the sources, and the use/misuse of small arms vary considerably from region to region. The research to date, while limited, does suggest some potential intervention points, but clearly, more research is required to learn more about the problem of illicit trafficking and propose possible solutions. Illicit trafficking is a transnational phenomenon that requires transnational solutions. Only with the political will and commitment of states to address their own licit trades in these weapons will any meaningful change occur.

## Appendix 1: Methods of diversion of small arms to the illicit market

Method of Diversion	Examples
<p><i>Illicit manufacture and assembly</i></p>	<p>A secret arms factory allegedly producing small arms and ammunition destined to Africa and Iraq was recovered in the Czech Republic. The company's owner did not possess an export permit and was allegedly part of a network of 12 Czech citizens suspected of trading arms. Police uncovered almost 200 small arms, 10,000 rounds of ammunition, and other weapons components, as well as three large-scale drug-producing operations.<sup>67</sup></p> <p>An underground weapons factory producing submachine guns with 30-round clips and fitted with silencers was discovered in Melbourne, Australia.<sup>68</sup></p> <p>In Danao City, Philippines, two unlicensed gun makers, whose families have made guns for generations, were arrested for allegedly manufacturing guns commonly used by criminals in the area. Among the guns seized were high-powered guns, eight unfinished KG-9 automatic pistols, some improvised shotguns, a .38-calibre revolver, gun parts, and ammunition.<sup>69</sup></p> <p>Employees of Para-Ordnance, Canada's only handgun manufacturer, were implicated in a trafficking ring when unmarked handguns reassembled from parts stolen from the plant were found on the streets of Toronto and in the US. Several of the small arms seized had no serial numbers, making them attractive weapons for use by criminals.<sup>70</sup></p> <p>Up to 100 deactivated machine pistols were legally exported as collectors' items from the United States before being reactivated and sold to criminals in Britain.<sup>71</sup></p>
<p><i>Illicit sales by states and officials</i></p>	<p>Clandestine arms deals involving officials in many countries attempting to defend their political and economic interests have been well documented, and complex transactions often involve many countries<sup>72</sup> and public/private "partnerships." A report on the US-backed Contra guerrillas in Nicaragua revealed that at least 10 privately operated airlines and crews were involved.<sup>73</sup></p> <p>Western intelligence agencies, including the US Iran-Contra arms and money networks, used IMES and the East German structure for secret weapons supplies to guerrilla movements in Central America. In December 1989, a huge secret arms and ammunition depot was uncovered in Rostock, East Germany. This had been under the control of IMES GmbH, a little-known East German state company that was run by East Germany's deputy foreign trade minister, Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski. The East German company had been a key part of an international smuggling network with secret bank accounts and shell companies in West Germany, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein.<sup>74</sup></p> <p>Hundreds of thousands of small arms and light weapons from Bosnia and Herzegovina's wartime stockpiles, as well as tens of millions of rounds of ammunition were shipped clandestinely to Iraq between July 31, 2004 and June 31, 2005. The weapons passed through a chain of private brokers and transport contractors, under the auspices of the US Department of Defense. It is not known if the weapons reached Iraq or went to a subsequent destination.<sup>75</sup></p> <p>In addition, corrupt state agents may be motivated by private gain to circumvent legal controls. The former chief of Peru's intelligence service, Vladimiro Montesinos, was charged in 2004 with providing 10,000 assault rifles to rebels in Colombia. In Jordan,</p>

	<p>where the rifles originated, it was originally believed that they were destined for the Peruvian military. Montesinos was accused of orchestrating a plan in 1999 in which four shipments of rifles were air-dropped by a Ukrainian-registered cargo plane to the rebels, who paid more than \$750,000 in cash, which allegedly came from an \$8-million cocaine deal with Brazilian traffickers. Meanwhile, in his official role, Montesinos was pushing the United States to provide a \$1.3-billion aid package to support Colombia's war against guerrillas.<sup>76</sup></p>
<p><i>Illicit sales by brokers</i></p>	<p>Dealers in Guatemala and Panama arranged for a shipment of 3,117 AK-47s and 2.5 million rounds of ammunition to be sent to an illicit group in Colombia. They claimed to be buying the weapons, purchased from the Nicaraguan police, for police in Panama. Those brokering the deal were Israeli nationals who claimed to be official representatives of the Israeli government. Nicaragua's officials did not verify the end use of the weapons. Described as children's plastic balls on the manifest of the ship that transported them, the weapons managed to avoid detection and were finally delivered to a remote northern point in Colombia.<sup>77</sup></p> <p>On June 24, 2003, a naturalized US citizen and former Danish Member of Parliament pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy, with a partner, to ship arms to the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia in return for \$25-million in cash and cocaine.<sup>78</sup></p> <p>On June 28, 2003, a Cyprus-flagged ship arrived in Portland, Oregon from Vancouver, British Columbia. Its cargo was previously on board a Liberia-flagged ship that had departed from Shanghai, China 22 days earlier. The cargo on the non-refrigerated container had been labelled "chilled rainbow trout" and included 450 shotguns, 780 handguns, 950 ammunition magazines, 150 pistol-grip shotguns, and 300 pump shotguns. The weapons were from a Chinese arms manufacturing company already on the US Office of Foreign Asset Control's list of companies denied the right to conduct business with the US and were destined for a Salvadoran arms dealer.<sup>79</sup></p> <p>Canada has served as a transshipment point in the international distribution of illicit weapon, as the notorious Montreal-based Century Arms Inc. cases illustrate. In a secret deposition, a former manager at Century Arms Inc. said that Trans World Arms Ltd. and Century International Arms Ltd., which share an office in Montreal, were involved in the 1985 shipment of grenades, SAM missiles, rifles, and ammunition to Guatemala. The shipment was a violation of Canada's policy of non-military intervention in the Americas.<sup>80</sup> In 1994, a shipment of 2,000 illicit Chinese AK-47 replicas was seized as it was being imported by Century Arms Inc. into Canada from the United States.<sup>81</sup></p>
<p><i>Illicit sales by dealers</i></p>	<p>Recent evidence indicates that more than half of the weapons submitted by local and state police to BATF for tracing originated from less than one half of one per cent of the 180,000 licensed dealers in the US.<sup>82</sup></p>
<p><i>Illicit sales and resales by civilians</i></p>	<p>Organized crime in the Southeast Asia area, including Taiwanese, Japanese, and American triads, is extensively involved in the illicit gun trade in China. One indication of the extent of the problem is that, according to the Chinese police, 600,000 guns have been confiscated. Claims have been made that a staggering 2.4-million weapons have been confiscated over the past five years. Surplus weapons from the conflicts in Cambodia, Myanmar, and, in some cases, China are trafficked along with drugs.<sup>83</sup></p> <p>According to the National Police Agency, most of the handguns recovered in crime in Japan are illicitly imported. An analysis of illicitly imported small arms seized by police and customs indicated that 30 per cent originated from the United States and 21 per cent from mainland China.<sup>84</sup></p>

	<p>Two hundred small arms were seized in Colombia from “drug lord” Ivan Urdinola. All of the weapons had been licitly purchased and imported from the United States and registered in Colombia before being used by paramilitary assassins to commit a series of murders.<sup>85</sup></p> <p>“Straw purchases” and other mechanisms are used to move guns from US states with lax controls to states with stricter controls. A Georgia resident purchased 32 semiautomatic pistols from a pawnshop in Jonesboro, Georgia. All of the small arms were transported to Boston and were sold to an intermediary, who sold them to other individuals. Twelve of them were recovered from crime scenes, including a murder scene.<sup>86</sup></p> <p>An individual was arrested after purchasing 30 Lorcin pistols at gun shows in Miami, Florida, and Dallas, Texas. The weapons were destined for Romania.<sup>87</sup></p>
<i>Theft of state-owned small arms</i>	<p>Military personnel in Australia falsified records to conceal the theft of small arms from national stockpiles.<sup>88</sup></p> <p>Investigators from the US General Accounting Office discovered that gun parts were routinely stolen from US military bases and resold at gun shows or to gun dealers.<sup>89</sup></p> <p>In 2004-05, some 190,000 US-supplied weapons intended for Iraqi security forces, including 110,000 AK-47 assault rifles and 80,000 pistols, went missing. In 2007, the US military in Iraq lost track of 12,000 weapons, including 800 machine guns.<sup>90</sup></p> <p>Many military weapons from Bosnia-Herzegovina have disappeared without a trace. Warehouses of weapons stockpiled in B-H and the Serb Republic were repeatedly robbed in 2004-2005 and it is not known how many weapons disappeared. A pallet of weapons that were supposed to ship out to Iraq with a group of soldiers from the B-H Army's Unexploded Ordnance Unit disappeared. As well, various caches of hidden weaponry and explosives have been discovered, the purposes and origins of which remain unknown.<sup>91</sup></p> <p>Over 3,000 small arms recovered in crime or surrendered in amnesties to the Metropolitan Toronto Police Service in Canada were discovered to be missing. Officers and civilians working in the police unit were found to have sold them illicitly.<sup>92</sup></p>
<i>Theft from civilians</i>	<p>Often crime guns are traced back to gun thefts.<sup>93</sup> Once in the illicit market they travel the world. In Uruguay, for example, officials recovered 156 9 mm pistols and 15 machine guns that had been stolen in Poland.<sup>94</sup></p> <p>According to police data, about half the guns used in crime in Toronto, Canada, were at one time licitly owned in the country, many of them later stolen in break-ins.<sup>95</sup></p> <p>Small-scale theft of small arms sent via mail order is a problem in countries that include Canada, the United States, and Australia.<sup>96</sup> In 1998 alone, 941 small arms were reported stolen from UPS interstate shipments.<sup>97</sup></p> <p>While the owner was away, gun thieves broke into a safe in Scarborough, Canada, and stole 30 handguns, including semiautomatic pistols, four rifles, and two submachine guns.<sup>98</sup> One of the pistols was used in a murder in Toronto in 2006.</p>
<i>Smuggling across borders from less regulated jurisdictions</i>	<p>Borders in Papua New Guinea are hard to monitor, resulting in a flow of illicit weapons. Those guns that come from other countries typically follow one of three routes: 1) across the Torres Strait, where the large number of islands makes strict border control difficult; 2) from Asia to Papua New Guinea, where the coastal entry</p>

points from cargo vessels are hard to control and anecdotal evidence suggests that Malaysian, Philippine, and Singaporean logging companies may be involved in trafficking; and 3) between Papua New Guinea and West Papua, where, again, lack of border control is the main concern.<sup>99</sup>

Many of the guns smuggled into Mexico arrive via the "ant trade"—small smugglers typically moving from one to a few dozen weapons at a time.<sup>100</sup>

Anecdotal reports suggest that the African ant trade is increasingly common, facilitated by the lack of effective border controls and lubricated by corruption.<sup>101</sup>

Some anecdotal evidence suggests that a substantial portion of the small arms used in crime in the UK are illicitly imported from other countries. Incidents have been reported involving small arms from the US, Austria, and the former Soviet Union.<sup>102</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that illicit trafficking has been facilitated by the relaxation of border controls and the construction of the Chunnel.<sup>103</sup>

Less than 3 per cent of shipments crossing from the US into Canada are actually checked. Between January and September 2007, 500 guns—about four-fifths handguns—were seized at the Canada-US border.<sup>104</sup> The top four types of small arms traced from Ontario back to the US by BATF are all handguns.<sup>105</sup>

The "time-to-crime" of US guns seized in Canada varies. Toronto's Project Rebel in 2007 led to the recovery of a gun used in a crime only two days after purchase in the US. The traces of the small arm led to 10 arrests in Canada and two alleged masterminds in Miami.<sup>106</sup>

The 2006 Toronto Police Initiative that targeted a specific street gang in the northern part of Toronto revealed multiple instances in which small arms were smuggled into Canada from the United States.<sup>107</sup>

The arrest by border guards of two men attempting to smuggle into Canada three loaded handguns duct-taped to their bodies led to charges that allegedly included a plot to bomb Toronto's financial district and behead the Prime Minister of Canada. A total of 17 men and boys were charged.<sup>108</sup>

In 2004, a Montreal man legally purchased 29 handguns at a gun show in Texas and drove the weapons across the border, with the intention of selling the weapons to a Lebanese criminal organization.<sup>109</sup>

In 1989, three Arizona residents purchased 93 assault rifles and 22 handguns for resale to a Mexican drug baron who then smuggled the guns into Mexico.<sup>110</sup>

Since 2006, the BATF Project Gunrunner has targeted a flood of high-powered weapons purchased by Mexican drug smugglers from sellers in the US to deprive the drug cartels of the weapons, suppress small arms trafficking, and stem small arms-related violence on both sides of the border. Thousands of small arms have been seized.<sup>111</sup>

The US is the largest supplier of illicit small arms to Latin America. Much of the illicit trafficking involves small-scale criminals. The smugglers are able to take advantage of the availability of guns in the US and loose US gun control policies.

	<p>Five people linked to Royal Sportsman and Merrica Trading Co. were charged with trafficking in small arms and related offences when it was revealed that the British Columbia company with a contract to import guns for movies allegedly sold the weapons to criminal gangs. The BC Integrated Gang Task Force seized 505 weapons. A total of 1,255 handguns and 658 additional guns are reported missing and have allegedly been sold to gangsters across the country. The type of import license the store held allowed it to licitly import guns normally considered illicit in Canada.<sup>112</sup></p> <p>Toronto's King Sol Outdoor Store was used as a front to smuggle 23,000 rifles and parts destined for the Middle East and Afghanistan via the United States between 1998 and 2000.<sup>113</sup> The weapons were purchased by the Toronto store, broken into parts and shipped to the US falsely labelled as auto parts and truck shafts.<sup>114</sup> While Canadian law restricts the ownership of those weapons, US law allows them to be traded among gun collectors but not to be imported into the country. Canadian police became suspicious when a large quantity of weapons was to be licitly registered at once.<sup>115</sup></p>
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