

Small Arms Survey 2012

MOVING TARGETS



The *Small Arms Survey 2012* seeks to increase our scrutiny of what is changing, and not changing, in relation to armed violence and small arms proliferation. Chapters on firearm homicide in Latin America and the Caribbean, drug violence in selected Latin American countries, and non-lethal violence worldwide illustrate that security is a moving target; armed violence, both lethal and non-lethal, continues to undermine the security and well-being of people and societies around the world. The goal of curbing small arms proliferation, embodied in the UN Programme of Action, appears similarly elusive. Chapters on illicit small arms in war zones, trade transparency, Somali piracy, and the 2011 UN Meeting of Governmental Experts highlight some of the successes, but also the continuing challenges, in this area. Country studies on Kazakhstan and

Somaliland, along with the final installment of the authorized transfers project, round out the 2012 edition.

The *Small Arms Survey* is produced annually by a team of researchers based in Geneva, Switzerland, and a worldwide network of local researchers. Policy-makers, diplomats, and non-governmental organizations have come to value it as a vital resource for topical analysis of small arms-related issues and armed violence reduction strategies.

Praise for the 2012 *Survey* from Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations:

'Like previous editions, the *Small Arms Survey 2012: Moving Targets* provides original research and analysis that can improve policy-making. It can also contribute to the development of measurable goals for small arms control. I commend the *Small Arms Survey 2012* as an authoritative volume to Member States and all stakeholders committed to reducing the devastating toll that small arms inflict on individuals, communities, and entire countries and regions.'

Key findings

Armed violence in Latin America and the Caribbean

- In 21 of 23 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean for which data has been reviewed, proportions of homicides committed with firearms were higher than the global average (42 per cent). The exceptions were Cuba and Suriname.
- Having experienced increases in homicide rates between 1995 and 2010, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, and Venezuela all suffer from very high homicide rates (>30 per 100,000). Together with Brazil, Colombia, Panama, and Puerto Rico, these countries also exhibit very high proportions of homicides committed with firearms (>70 per cent).
- In contrast, Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Peru, Suriname, and Uruguay report low homicide rates (<10 per 100,000), improving or stable trends between 1995 and 2010, and a proportion of firearm homicides below 60 per cent.
- Like the rest of the world, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean appear to show a positive relationship between the national homicide rate and the percentage of firearms used in homicides. That is, higher homicide rates are usually accompanied by higher percentages of firearms used in homicides.

Drug violence

- In Mexico, a blanket crackdown has led to numerous arrests and fragmented some of the larger cartels; however, violence both among cartels and between cartels and the state has risen dramatically and continuously since President Felipe Calderón brought in the Mexican army to combat drug trafficking in late 2006.
- Mexican cartels—responding in part to the crackdown in Mexico—are establishing footholds in Central America, especially Guatemala and Honduras, destabilizing local relations among 'native' organized crime groups and threatening to overrun weak police and armed forces.
- In Rio de Janeiro, the state has regained control over more than 20 *favelas*, including some of the city's largest, from the prison-based drug trafficking syndicates that previously controlled them. These syndicates appear to be shifting from strategies of armed dominion and confrontation to non-violent low-level dealing. But it is too early to tell if this systematic 'pacification' programme will result in sustained reductions in armed violence.

Non-lethal firearm violence

- Worldwide, at least two million people—and probably many more—are living with firearm injuries sustained in non-conflict settings over the past decade. Their injuries generate considerable direct and indirect costs, such as those incurred through treatment, recovery, and lost productivity.

- Available data suggests that shooting victims in countries with lower overall levels of firearm violence have a better chance of surviving their injuries.
- Whether a firearm injury leads to severe disability or death is influenced by firearm type, ammunition velocity, and calibre, as well as the availability and quality of medical care, among other factors.

Case study: Kazakhstan

- Civilians in Kazakhstan owned an estimated 190,000 to 225,000 firearms in 2010, which translates into a low per capita rate by international standards. Civilian firearm ownership appears more prominent among young men and in urban areas; it seems to be motivated by a perceived need for protection against criminals.
- Although the country's homicide rate has decreased significantly since the 1990s, it remained above the world average in 2010, at more than 8 per 100,000. The percentage of homicides and robberies committed with small arms has increased in recent years, but it remains low when compared with rates elsewhere.
- Kazakhstan's overall positive security outlook is clouded by an increase in crime rates since 2010, as well as recent incidents of armed violence with terrorist, ethnic, and political undertones.
- Kazakhstan has been disproportionately affected by unplanned explosions at munitions sites, with six major incidents known to have occurred since 2001.

Case study: Somaliland

- The overall security situation in Somaliland has improved despite the widespread presence of firearms, including military firearms, in private hands.
- Since the mid-1990s, the resolution of major armed conflicts and the corresponding enhancement of state authority have helped to contain large-scale armed violence in central and western Somaliland and facilitate the establishment of a police force within the territory.
- At the local level, neighbourhood watch groups, working with and under the authority of Somaliland police, are improving security in locations such as Hargeisa and Burao.
- Communal tensions in the form of clan-based violence remain a serious threat to safety and security in Somaliland. Their resolution continues to depend on the integration of all relevant clan groups into the state.

Somali piracy and private security

- While the number of attempted attacks by Somali pirates continued to increase in 2011, attacks were less successful than in 2010 and resulted in fewer hijackings.
- Pirate groups are increasingly resorting to lethal violence and abusing their hostages during attacks and captivity periods.
- Somali pirates continue to use primarily assault rifles, light machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers.
- Due to the lack of harmonized regulations, there is no standard 'weapon kit' for private security companies (PSCs) and rules on the use of force vary greatly. Some countries allow maritime PSCs to carry only semi-automatic weapons; in practice, PSCs utilize a range of weapons, including sniper rifles, general-purpose machine guns, light machine guns, fully automatic assault rifles, bolt-action rifles, shotguns, and handguns.

The UN small arms process

- A key recommendation emerging from the UN Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE) was for the establishment of a Technical Committee that would draft recommendations for marking in light of new developments in weapons manufacture and design.
- Although the subject was broached at the MGE, differences between the marking of light weapons and that of small arms remain to be explored in the UN framework.
- MGE delegations highlighted a series of challenges associated with the conversion of paper-based record-keeping systems into electronic form, including a lack of qualified personnel and software problems.
- Meeting participants cited a lack of information in tracing requests, along with the inaccurate identification of weapons and weapons markings, as the leading causes of tracing failures. Weapons produced under licence in a second country were often misidentified because of the incorrect identification of the manufacturer or country of manufacture.

Transparency

- The 2012 edition of the Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer identifies Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Romania as the most transparent of the major small arms and light weapons exporters.

- The 2012 Barometer identifies Iran, North Korea, and the United Arab Emirates as the least transparent major exporters. They all score zero points.
- State transparency on small arms and light weapons transfers improved by more than 40 per cent between 2001 and 2010, but the average score for all states combined remains below half of all available points.
- Switzerland achieved the highest Transparency Barometer score over the ten-year period, gaining 21.00 out of 25.00 points for reporting on 2007–10 activities. It is the only country to have produced a dedicated national report on small arms and light weapons exports.

Authorized transfers

- Authorized international transfers of small arms, light weapons, their parts, accessories, and ammunition are estimated to be worth at least USD 8.5 billion annually.
- The annual value of authorized international transfers of parts of small arms and light weapons is estimated to be worth at least USD 1.428 billion, USD 146 million of which is not documented in publicly available sources.
- The trade in parts for military firearms and light weapons is dominated by weapons-producing countries. The 56 countries that produce military firearms and light weapons imported 97 per cent of parts by value, while the 117 countries that have no known domestic production capacity imported only 3 per cent.
- The value of the authorized international trade in weapon sights is estimated at more than USD 350 million. Available data suggests that sights account for most of the trade in major accessories for small arms and light weapons, but data gaps preclude a definitive assessment.

Top exporters and importers

- In 2009 the top exporters of small arms and light weapons (those with annual exports of at least USD 100 million), according to available customs data, were (in descending order) the United States, Italy, Germany, Brazil, Austria, Japan, Switzerland, the Russian Federation, France, South Korea, Belgium, and Spain.
- In 2009 the top importers of small arms and light weapons (those with annual imports of at least USD 100 million), according to available customs data, were (in descending order) the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Canada, Germany, and France.

Illicit Arms in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia

- The vast majority of illicit small arms in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia appear to be Kalashnikov-pattern assault rifles. Other types of small arms are comparatively rare.
- Most illicit light weapons and light weapons ammunition studied appear to be versions of Soviet- and Chinese-designed weapons first fielded decades ago.
- Data suggests that armed groups in Afghanistan and Iraq have access to very few technologically sophisticated or latest-generation light weapons.
- Newly acquired data on weapons seized in Iraq suggests that a significant percentage of seized Iranian weapons were manufactured recently.

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