

# About the Small Arms Survey

 Search

## The Small Arms Survey in Brief

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the [Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies](#) in Geneva, Switzerland. It serves as the principal international source of public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence and as a resource for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists. The project has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, international public policy, law, economics, development studies, conflict resolution, criminology, and sociology. The staff works closely with a worldwide network of researchers and partners.

## Objectives

- To serve as the principal international source of impartial and public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence.
- To act as a resource for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists in terms of information and research on small arms and armed violence issues.
- To be an independent monitor of national and international governmental and non-governmental policy initiatives on small arms and armed violence.
- To be an outlet for policy-relevant research on small arms and armed violence issues.
- To act as a forum and clearinghouse for the sharing of information as well as the dissemination of best practice measures and initiatives dealing with small arms and armed violence issues.

## Drivers behind the Idea

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons represents a grave threat to human security. The unchecked spread of these weapons has exacerbated inter- and intra-state conflicts, contributed to human rights violations, undermined political and economic development, destabilized communities, and devastated the lives of millions of people. The future success of efforts to deal with small arms and light weapons depends in large part on the development of accurate information concerning the global flow of these weapons and on reliable analyses of the causes and consequences of their proliferation.

Effective governmental or non-governmental action depends on a correct diagnosis of the problem, yet policy-makers, analysts, and activists around the world often lack basic information concerning the production, transfer, stockpiling, and use of small arms and light weapons. The strengths and weaknesses of various policy instruments (such as gun buy-back schemes, strengthening of export controls, codes of conduct, firearms, or ammunition marking) also need to be assessed on an ongoing basis so that best practices can be disseminated from region to region.

Recognizing the need to address these complex issues, the Swiss government, in conjunction with other interested governments, established the Small Arms Survey project in 1999. Administered and produced in Geneva by a small, dedicated team, the work of the project is targeted at the widest possible audience of researchers, policy-makers, governments, and activists. It uses its location in Geneva and its international network of partners to foster broad-ranging understanding and in-depth research on small arms and armed violence.

## Project Activities

- The *Small Arms Survey* is an annual review of global small arms issues such as production, stockpiles, brokering, legal and illicit arms transfers, the effects of small arms, and national, bilateral, and multilateral measures to deal with the problems associated with small arms.
- The Survey presents detailed country and regional case studies as well as research findings on data, methodological, and conceptual issues. Publications explore the following themes: weapons and markets, armed violence, armed actors, regulations and controls, and security programmes.
- The Small Arms Survey commissions research and conducts collaborative projects with independent researchers, international

organizations, UN agencies, research organizations, NGOs, and partner institutions throughout the world. Findings from resulting field research are presented in the project's various publications.

- The Resource Centre at the project's office in Geneva contains a comprehensive collection of electronic and print material, including books, journals, magazines, official publications, and 'grey' literature. Researchers and other interested parties are welcome to use the Centre.

## Contributing Partners

Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and by sustained contributions from the Governments of Canada, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Survey is also grateful for past and current project support received from the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, New Zealand, Spain, and the United States, as well as from different United Nations agencies, programmes, and institutes.

## International Programme Council

The International Programme Council is the Small Arms Survey's oversight body. It includes representatives from governments, research institutes, and non-governmental organizations. It meets twice a year and is responsible for approving the broad strategic direction, administration, and budget of the project, as well as for offering advice and counsel to the Programme Director and Managing Director.