

small arms survey 2013

everyday dangers

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FOREWORD

Wherever violence is a means to achieve a criminal objective, illegal firearms are usually involved—fuelling violence and empowering criminal groups worldwide. We are now confronting larger-scale, more systematic forms of violent crime, including those perpetrated by gangs and transnational criminal syndicates. Trade in illicit small arms and light weapons is also opening new markets, making firearms one of the main commodities to be exchanged in illegal markets. These dynamics shape an ever-evolving landscape, requiring constant cross-border action by law enforcement.

Reliable data and analysis, both national and international, are critical to the success of law enforcement action against violent crime involving the use of firearms. The *Small Arms Survey 2013: Everyday Dangers* offers valuable new information on the use of firearms around the globe. This includes domestic violence; the structured, rule-based use of firearms by organized crime groups; as well as the evolution of gang violence in response to internal and external factors. This volume also presents an analysis of illicit small arms and light weapons through selected case studies, casting new light on the kinds of weapons held by armed groups and their key role in driving armed violence.

Law enforcement must address and anticipate new trends in the illegal acquisition, use, and transfer of firearms to ensure the safety of our communities. Evidence-based research provided by the *Small Arms Survey 2013* can help us better understand the problem of violent crime involving the use of firearms. In turn, having a better understanding of the problem can bring law enforcement a step closer to meeting the challenges of fighting violent crime in the 21st century.

I invite all those organizations, authorities, and services tasked with preventing and combating crime worldwide to draw full benefit from this new edition of the *Survey*.

—Ronald K. Noble
INTERPOL Secretary General

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ABOUT THE SMALL ARMS SURVEY

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and current contributions from the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Survey is grateful for past support received from the Governments of France, New Zealand, and Spain. The Survey also wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance it has received over the years from foundations and many bodies within the UN system.

The objectives of the Small Arms Survey are: to be the principal source of public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence; to serve as a resource centre for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists; to monitor national and international initiatives (governmental and non-governmental) on small arms; to support efforts to address the effects of small arms proliferation and misuse; and to act as a clearinghouse for the sharing of information and the dissemination of best practices. The Survey also sponsors field research and information-gathering efforts, especially in affected states and regions. The project has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

NOTES TO READERS

Abbreviations: Lists of abbreviations can be found at the end of each chapter.

Chapter cross-referencing: Chapter cross-references are fully capitalized in brackets throughout the book. One example appears in Chapter 2, which reviews the relationship between firearms and intimate partner violence: ‘Stricter gun controls regulating general gun purchase and use were introduced in legislation in 2000, and more recent research suggests that the proportion of gun-related intimate partner homicides between 1999 and 2009 declined from 34 to 17 per cent, along with a similarly steep drop in all homicides (Abrahams et al., 2012; SOUTH AFRICA).’

Exchange rates: All monetary values are expressed in current US dollars (USD). When other currencies are also cited, unless otherwise indicated, they are converted to USD using the 365-day average exchange rate for the period 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012.

Small Arms Survey: The plain text—Small Arms Survey—is used to indicate the overall project and its activities, while the italicized version—*Small Arms Survey*—refers to the publication. The *Survey*, appearing italicized, relates generally to past and future editions.

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Police cordon off a woman's home after a murder-suicide in Kansas City, Missouri, December 2012. © Dave Kaup/Reuters

Introduction

Many states are beset by forms of armed violence that do not rise to the level of armed conflict (war), but that nevertheless generate serious health, social, and economic consequences. In fact, *non-conflict armed violence* claims far more lives worldwide than do ongoing wars. But it is a complex phenomenon, involving a mosaic of actors driven by diverse motivations and conditions. Curtailing its many manifestations requires tailored interventions developed from a sound evidence base.

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

The 2013 edition of the *Small Arms Survey* explores different aspects of non-conflict armed violence, focusing on some broad categories as well as specific countries and regions. Individual chapters highlight, wherever possible, improving or deteriorating conditions and existing knowledge concerning the underlying drivers and dynamics of armed violence in those environments. This volume emphasizes that, while successes exist, policy outcomes are more mixed in many other contexts.

In South Africa, for example, the introduction of stronger gun laws following the end of the apartheid era appears to have helped drive down gun homicides and non-fatal assaults, although rates still remain high by global standards (SOUTH AFRICA). Law enforcement pressure is similarly a factor in the significant reductions in armed violence committed by Italian mafia groups in recent years. For many such groups, the use of violence has simply become too risky (MAFIA VIOLENCE).

The picture is more complex in some of the poorest neighbourhoods in Managua, Nicaragua, where original research suggests that barrio gangs' use of violence is influenced by a variety of factors. Changing policing practices and community interventions, combined with decisions by key gang leaders—or their arrest and incarceration—appear to have been important in the 'pacification' of *pandillas* (gangs). Another lesson is that gang violence fluctuates and security improvements may be erased, depending on the actions of influential actors, the rise of other armed actors, and changes in surrounding dynamics (GANG EVOLUTION).

Extending beyond country-specific examinations, two chapters look at types of armed violence that cut across borders. 'Land conflict' is a label that can be applied to different types of violent events, from fragmentary riots and protests, to community clashes and semi-organized conflict. In the African context, land conflict takes many forms, yet it is common across the continent and very often deadly. At the same time, while most violent conflicts in Africa have a land component, they tend to involve an array of other grievances (LAND CONFLICT IN AFRICA).

The victimization of women at the hands of intimate partners is widespread across many cultures and countries. Research reviewed in the 2013 *Survey* shows that the presence of guns in the home further increases the risk of serious

injury and death. We are still at the early stages of understanding and addressing the many factors that underpin men's violence against women; yet it is clear that such danger is a daily fact for many women (INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE). It is hardly surprising, then, that the Second Review Conference for the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms highlighted the need both to combat violence against women and to facilitate their involvement in small arms policy-making (UN UPDATE).

The first six chapters of this volume—the 'non-conflict' section—generally emphasize that efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence need to take account of firearms types, characteristics, and sources. The following six chapters, which comprise the 'weapons and markets' section of the book, build on this observation by presenting new information on illicit guns and ammunition in certain countries. Some of the conclusions of this research challenge conventional wisdom.

A chapter analysing data on the prices of weapons in illicit markets in Lebanon, Pakistan, and Somalia finds that arms prices depend on more variables than ammunition prices. In Lebanon, ammunition prices tracked changes in regional security conditions particularly closely (ILLICIT MARKET PRICES).

A chapter on the sources of recovered illicit guns in Mexico and the Philippines provides surprising findings about the kinds of weapons criminals and armed groups hold and use in those countries. For example, while well-financed Mexican drug-trafficking organizations possess extensive arsenals, the types of weapons that they have acquired do not differ significantly from those in the hands of other, less wealthy groups—nor do they include the more sophisticated portable missiles used by governments and some state-sponsored groups (ILLICIT SMALL ARMS).

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) comprise a weapon class developed and used almost exclusively by insurgent groups. Like land mines and cluster munitions, many types of IEDs are highly indiscriminate. Many of the victims of these weapons are civilians, especially in Iraq, where IEDs injured nearly 4,300 people and killed well over 1,000 in 2011—accounting for 41 per cent of the global civilian IED casualties that year (IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES).

One important way to limit the IED threat is to prevent access to the military ordnance used to create them, through effective stockpile management and security, disposal, and demilitarization of surplus and obsolete munitions. Ministries of defence typically engage private and public contractors to dispose of large quantities of surplus ammunition on an industrial scale, but this industry is not well understood by outsiders. A dedicated chapter opens industry processes and challenges up to examination for the first time (DEMILITARIZATION).

Definitions

The Small Arms Survey uses the term 'small arms and light weapons' to cover both military-style small arms and light weapons as well as commercial firearms (handguns and long guns). Except where noted otherwise, it follows the definition used in the *Report of the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms* (UNGA, 1997):

Small arms: revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns.

Light weapons: heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, recoilless rifles, portable anti-tank missile and rocket launchers, portable anti-aircraft missile launchers, and mortars of less than 100 mm calibre.

The term 'small arms' is used in this volume to refer to small arms, light weapons, and their ammunition (as in 'the small arms industry') unless the context indicates otherwise, whereas the terms 'light weapons' and 'ammunition' refer specifically to those items.

'Armed violence' is defined as 'the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death, or psychological harm' (OECD, 2011, p. ii). When employing the term, the Survey focuses on the use of firearms by state and non-state actors.

Non-conflict section

Chapter 1 (Non-conflict violence): International attention to armed violence has tended to focus on interstate or civil wars. But the burden of *non-conflict* armed violence on people, societies, and states outstrips, by a wide margin, that generated by armed conflict and its aftermath. The opening chapter in the thematic section outlines some defining aspects of non-conflict armed violence, its forms, and its drivers, highlighting how different types of violence and violent actors overlap, interact, and change over time. It notes that addressing devastating forms of armed violence is often beyond the means of public sector institutions, especially where governance is weak. Multilateral and multi-sectoral initiatives for armed violence reduction are only now emerging.

Chapter 2 (Intimate partner violence): Between 40 and 70 per cent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner, often with a gun. In contrast, most male victims of gun violence die outside the home at the hands of individuals who are not their intimate partners. This chapter reviews how the possession of guns, personally and professionally, is strongly associated with particular notions of masculinity. It analyses data on the use of firearms in intimate partner violence, the gendered nature of firearm ownership and use, and the cultural underpinnings of gun possession by men. It underscores that the presence of guns in the home increases the risks of death, intimidation, and long-term abuse for female partners—as well as murder followed by suicide—and considers some of the policy options for reducing such risks to women in the home.

Chapter 3 (Gang evolution): Gangs are often considered a major security threat in Central America, but the specific dynamics of the gang threat are not well understood. This chapter offers an overview of the development of gangs in two *barrios* in Managua, Nicaragua. Gangs in these neighbourhoods arose in the aftermath of the 1980s Contra war, then institutionalized as they exerted control over local territory. Their subsequent development has not followed any simple trajectory, however. This chapter, based on original field research, shows how unique evolutionary dynamics affect gang use of firearms and violence. Internally, specific individuals can influence the way a gang evolves and how violent it becomes. Externally, the presence of other armed actors strongly influences gang use of firearms.

Chapter 4 (Mafia violence): Italian mafias have always used armed violence and intimidation to resolve disputes, strike at competitors, enhance their reputations, and seek advantage in both legal and illicit markets. The professionalized use of firearms and explosives represents one of their characteristic features. This chapter presents original research on patterns, rules, changes, and variations in the acquisition, storage, and use of firearms by traditional Italian mafia-type organizations during the past 20 years. Although quantitative data on firearm-related crime in Italy remains weak, this chapter indicates that mafia power rests on the availability of large arsenals and sophisticated weaponry as well as the ability to rely on specialized ‘fire group’ teams.

Chapter 5 (Land conflict in Africa): Land is the basis of security and survival for much of Africa’s population. It is also intimately tied to national politics, community dynamics, and status, power, wealth, and security. Given its importance, as well as its scarcity, competition for land resources—and the inability of governments to manage competition effectively—has sown the seeds of violence for decades. This chapter reviews the factors that have contributed to the increasing costs of land conflict in Africa in recent years. It suggests that land disputes are most volatile, and most likely to erupt into violence, when grievances are high, security is threatened, mechanisms for adjudication are absent, and violence entrepreneurs are able to mobilize aggrieved populations.

Chapter 6 (South Africa): In the 19 years since South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, the country has made progress in a number of areas. Many South Africans are materially better off than they were in 1994 and certain aspects of public safety have improved; moreover, homicide rates in South Africa have dropped significantly. Yet, despite these gains, South Africa's income inequality and homicide rates remain among the world's highest. This chapter explores these problems, paying particular attention to the factors that drive or inhibit armed violence in the country, as well as the interventions that might further reduce levels of armed violence.

Weapons and markets

Chapter 7 (UN update): In 2012, at the Second Review Conference for the UN Programme of Action (PoA), UN member states reached consensus agreement on a substantive outcome that is designed, above all, to strengthen implementation of the PoA and its companion International Tracing Instrument over the coming years. This chapter analyses the substantive outcome of the Conference, but also the process that allowed it to succeed where the First Review Conference, convened in 2006, had failed—in particular, by giving a largely impracticable mandate a more forward-looking interpretation. The chapter also notes some of the missed opportunities at this latest UN small arms meeting, concluding that its legacy appears to be positive, although this largely depends on concrete follow-up.

Chapter 8 (Authorized trade): This chapter presents information on the largest exporters and importers of small arms and light weapons in 2010, based on UN Comtrade data. It identifies the top exporters in 2010 (those with annual exports of at least USD 100 million) as (in descending order) the United States, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Switzerland, Israel, Austria, the Russian Federation, South Korea, Sweden, Belgium, and Spain. Top importers in 2010 (those with annual imports of at least USD 100 million) were (in descending order) the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Australia, South Korea, France, and Thailand.

The chapter also includes the 2013 Transparency Barometer, which assesses the transfer reporting practices of the 55 countries that have been major exporters during at least one year since 2001. It identifies Switzerland, Romania, and Serbia as the most transparent of the major exporters, and Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates as the least transparent for 2011 export-related activities.

Chapter 9 (Demilitarization): In many countries, excess stockpiles of obsolete or unserviceable munitions have reached a level requiring industrial demilitarization—that is, the process of safely dismantling or destroying large quantities of ammunition using industrial processes and recovering reusable materials. Since states rarely have the capacity to demilitarize all of the surplus ammunition stockpiles of their security forces, they turn to the demilitarization industry. US and Western European contractors routinely process significant amounts of conventional ammunition and are important participants in international, donor-funded arms control and ammunition demilitarization programmes. This chapter provides an introductory overview of the world's major industrial demilitarization contractors by examining their activities, technologies, and markets, along with some of the challenges they face.

Chapter 10 (Improvised explosive devices): Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have had a devastating impact in recent years, with at least 13,000 civilians killed or injured in IED incidents across 44 countries in 2011, mostly in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. The increase in civilian casualties over the past decade can be largely attributed to the use of larger IEDs and indiscriminate tactics. At the same time, the widespread use of improvised land mines in some parts of Afghanistan has restricted civilian access to governance, health care, markets, and education.

This chapter finds that it is possible to make it harder for militants to source the materials most commonly used to make large IEDs, but the necessary measures are expensive and difficult to implement. A more determined campaign to stigmatize the use of indiscriminate weapons and tactics, and a concerted effort to gather better data on the toll inflicted by IEDs, could complement such measures.

Chapter 11 (Illicit market prices): The prices of illicit firearms and their implications for security have attracted interest among journalists and researchers for some time. Most quantitative research has relied on second-hand reports, often prices quoted in media articles. Prices for illicitly sold ammunition are poorly documented. This chapter uses new data collected in Lebanon, Pakistan, and Somalia to refine our understanding of arms and ammunition prices at illicit markets. It shows that they generally follow similar trends, although arms prices often depend on a larger number of factors than ammunition prices, such as technical features and local perceptions. Notably, ammunition prices in Lebanon were strongly correlated with reported conflict casualties in neighbouring Syria.

Chapter 12 (Illicit small arms): This chapter presents the findings from the second instalment of the Small Arms Survey's multi-year study on illicit small arms and light weapons. The study, launched in 2012, seeks to improve public understanding of illicit small arms by acquiring and analysing new and hitherto under-utilized data on illicit weapons from a variety of countries. The chapter looks at illicit weapons in countries affected by high-intensity organized criminal violence and low-intensity armed conflict.

Information gleaned from more than 6,000 illicit small arms and light weapons in Mexico and the Philippines suggests that armed groups in these countries have acquired few, if any, technologically sophisticated light weapons, including portable missiles. Also notable is the large percentage of seized weapons of US design in the Philippines; meanwhile, in Mexico, authorities recovered only small quantities of what government officials and journalists often refer to as drug cartels' 'weapons of choice'.

CONCLUSION

Non-conflict armed violence holds many regions in the grip of insecurity, preventing development and undermining livelihoods. The *Small Arms Survey 2013* draws a number of strands together to assist states to better understand, and ultimately address, its many facets.

As the chapters in this volume show, the challenges are complex and progress to date is uneven. States working in isolation are bound to struggle. Multilateral frameworks and cooperation mechanisms to reduce armed violence, including initiatives such as the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, have potential multiplier effects. The burden of armed violence is shared; so, too, are the likely solutions. ■

—Emile LeBrun and Glenn McDonald

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