



The international combat against the
illicit trade in and misuse of small arms
and light weapons

Switzerland's strategy 2017 – 2020



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

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List of abbreviations

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
BBl	<i>Bundesblatt</i> , Federal Gazette
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport
EAER	Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research
EAPC	Euro-atlantic Partnership Council
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Community
FCA	Federal Customs Administration
FDF	Federal Department of Finance
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FDJP	Federal Department of Justice and Police
Fedpol	Federal Office of Police
HSD	Human Security Division
IATG	International Ammunition Technical Guidelines
IDWG-SALW	Interdepartmental Working Group on Small Arms and Light Weapons
IEDs	Improvised explosive devices
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organisation
ISACS	International Small Arms Control Standards
ISIS	"Islamic State of Iraq and Syria"
ITI	International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons
MANPADS	Man Portable Air Defense System
MSAG	Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PSV	Post-shipment Verification
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG16	Sustainable Development Goal 16
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SR	<i>Systematische Rechtssammlung des Bundes</i> , Classified compilation of federal law
UN Comtrade	United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database
UNFAP	Protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition (UN Firearms Protocol)
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UN PoA	United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
UNSCAR	United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation
WA	Wassenaar Arrangement
WCO	World Customs Organization

Foreword



Images of the victims of armed violence in various parts of the world reach us almost daily. They highlight the devastating consequences of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons. News about the illicit arms trade, huge arsenals controlled by insurgents or terrorist organisations, the looting of arms and ammunition depots and tragic accidents involving such depots confirm the ongoing relevance of the issue. They bring into focus the need for concerted action in the international fight against the illicit trade, excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition (small arms proliferation for short).

That small arms proliferation foments armed conflicts has been known for a long time. The escalation of armed conflicts in recent years underscores the extent of the problem and its impact at the regional level. Small arms proliferation outside armed conflicts also has devastating and sometimes criminal consequences both in countries of the South and in Europe, hampering efforts to promote peace, security and sustainable development as well as humanitarian action and the protection of civilians. Coupled with unstable state structures and a lack of control over the security apparatus, small arms proliferation often leads to a vicious cycle that puts human security at risk. The armament of various actors with different interests, in turn, exacerbates national or even regional instability.

The interdependence between peace, security and development is therefore at the core of the international fight against small arms proliferation. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014, the ongoing implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, relevant regional instruments, and more recently, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, testify to the will of the international community to break this vicious cycle. Illicit arms flows must be reduced and ideally stopped so that human and international security, as well as sustainable development can be strengthened.

For over 15 years, Switzerland has been involved in efforts to combat small arms proliferation through comprehensive working methods and well-established cooperation between the various federal agencies. The described problem calls for holistic approaches and the coordinated deployment of existing instruments for promoting peace, security policy and

development cooperation. In close partnership with states, international and regional organisations, and civil society, Switzerland supports specific projects and initiatives designed to promote capacity building in particular. Through the deployment of civilian and military expertise, Switzerland strives to achieve a sustainable impact in the field. At the same time, Switzerland supports the efforts of the international community at the political level to enhance the effectiveness of multilateral instruments.

The 2017–2020 strategy is based on lines of engagement that have proven effective in previous efforts to combat small arms proliferation, and at the same time adapts activities and priorities to current challenges. The strategy also takes into account synergies with thematically related areas, especially with regard to the safe and secure management of ammunition or the prevention of violent extremism.

As a result, Switzerland will continue to position itself as a reliable partner of the international community and will contribute to peace, security and development.

Didier Burkhalter
Federal Councillor
Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

1 The issue of small arms

1.1 Destabilisation resulting from the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms

More than half a million people worldwide meet a violent death every year. This figure has been rising even more since 2010, with increasing numbers of men, women and children dying in armed conflicts.¹ No other type of weapon causes more violent deaths worldwide than small arms.

The illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons (referred to below as “small arms” or SALW) continues to represent a threat to peace, security and sustainable development in many regions of the world. Small arms are simple to use and to move, and can be easily concealed. They are durable, readily available and inexpensive. These characteristics explain their widespread use in a variety of contexts. While small arms are generally used in police and military operations for the legitimate protection of the public and to maintain law and order, they are often misused by criminals, warlords, rebels and repressive security forces as well as non-state groups and criminal and terrorist organisations in the oppression of civilians and in violations of human rights. This backdrop also makes small arms the object of a lucrative illicit trade. This trade is fed from poorly regulated production facilities, illegally diverted stockpiles of armed forces and security services, and from private holdings, and is flourishing above all in those countries where the rule of law is weakened and corruption is widespread. From being traded legally, small arms and ammunition stockpiles pass through grey zones into illegality and illicit possession. Misuse of small arms by non-state actors violates the state’s monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and can impede or undermine law enforcement. Furthermore, the availability of small arms and ammunition coupled with the willingness to use force can lead to disregard for the rule of law, as well as the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law. The direct impact of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms on the security situation, including human security, in the regions affected is reflected in some troubling figures. The estimated number of people dying each year in armed conflicts rose from an average of 70 000 in the period from 2007 to 2012 to

1 Small Arms Survey, Research Note Number 59, 2016: http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-59.pdf.

90 000 in the period from 2010 to 2015. These are largely attributable to the armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.² Added to this are the numerous people who have been injured, or subject to forced displacement or sexual violence, etc. However, the vast majority of deaths still occur outside conflict zones. According to *the Small Arms Survey*, in the period from 2010 to 2015, 83% of violent deaths took place outside of conflict zones.³ Over and above the direct impact such as deaths and injuries, the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse have profound and far-reaching socio-economic consequences in areas such as health, security and education.

The international community recognised the destabilising effect of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms at the beginning of the 1990s. Over the past two decades, it has been actively advocating effective and efficient regulation within the framework of international and regional instruments and also as part of sustainable cooperation and assistance. Switzerland has given its active support to these efforts from the outset. With this strategy, Switzerland presents how it intends to continue its commitment to the international combat against the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms. The strategy contributes to achieving the objectives set down in the Federal Constitution⁴ and is based on the binding provisions under international law as well as national legislation. It doesn’t deal however with the legally regulated acquisition, possession and trade of small arms in Switzerland.

The strategy forms an integral part of the Confederation’s humanitarian and peacebuilding commitment, as well as its efforts in respect of development policy, human rights policy and security policy, and is to be seen as complementing other federal strategies, such as the Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2016–2019⁵ and the Strategy on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts⁶.

2 *ibid.*

3 *ibid.*

4 Art. 54, para. 2 of the Federal Constitution.

5 https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/eda/en/documents/aussenpolitik/sicherheitspolitik/HMR-Strategie-2016-2019_EN.pdf.

6 https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/publications/MenschenrechtshumanitaerePolitikundMigration/Strategie-zum-Schutz-der-Zivilbevoelkerung-in-bewaffneten-Konflikten-2013_en.pdf.

Examples

The collapse of the Gaddafi regime in Libya in 2011 resulted in huge unrestricted arms flows into neighbouring countries and a subsequent reflux.⁷ This case demonstrates how the illicit transfer, excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms can contribute to heightening the prevailing tensions on the ground, to sparking armed conflict, and to destabilising entire regions. Owing to the disintegration of the government and the armed forces, coupled with the failure of the international community to introduce the necessary stabilisation measures in good time, the security of the immense national stockpiles of weapons and ammunition could no longer be guaranteed. Arms depots were plundered by members of Gaddafi’s armed forces and security services, as well as by opposition forces, fleeing loyalists and tribal groups. These weapons did not only foment domestic conflict within Libya, but were also transferred illegally to other states such as Mali, Niger, Syria and Tunisia. There they fell into the hands of radical groups, or were used in conflicts. The influx of these large amounts of arms has had an additional destabilising effect on the region, causing considerable suffering.

A second example is the recurring number of terrorist attacks, not just in Africa and the Middle East but lately also in Europe. The attacks in Tunisia (Bardo Museum and Sousse) and in Paris, for instance, were carried out with small arms. The easy access to this category of weapons not only has an exacerbating effect in conflict regions, making peaceful resolution more difficult, they also facilitate the committing of crimes outside conflicts, such as terrorist and criminal acts.

A third example is the increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) for example in Iraq or Syria. Built using components from ammunition and from explosive remnants of war among others, such devices have recently been used above all in fighting in urban areas, such as Kobani, Ramadi and Mosul. IEDs, which are also used by ISIS and other groups in particular, claim increasingly high numbers of victims, both among the members of the armed forces and civilians, and remain a major threat even after the cessation of hostilities.

7 For more background information see *the Security Assessment in North Africa* on www.smallarmssurvey.org/sana.

Baghdad
Improvised Explosive
Devices (IEDs)
© US military



Definitions

The term “small arms and light weapons” (SALW) used in this strategy is based on the definition in the 1997 Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, which was drawn up at the request of the UN General Assembly. According to that definition, SALW include the following small arms, light weapons, ammunition and explosives:

a) Small arms:

- revolvers and self-loading pistols;
- rifles and carbines;
- sub-machine guns;
- assault rifles;
- light machine guns;

b) Light weapons:

- heavy machine guns;
- hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers;
- portable anti-aircraft guns;
- portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles;
- portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems;
- portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems;
- mortars of calibres of less than 100 mm;

c) Ammunition and explosives:

- cartridges (rounds) for small arms;
- shells and missiles for light weapons;
- mobile containers with missiles or shells for single-action anti-aircraft and anti-tank systems;
- anti-personnel and anti-tank hand grenades;
- landmines⁸;
- explosives.

The international efforts to combat the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons include all activities to combat the illicit transfer, excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation of the above categories as well as their illegal use (in accordance with the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms).

⁸ This strategy does not cover those weapons already addressed in the Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2016–2019.

1.2 Successes in recent years

At the regional and multilateral level, various politically and legally binding instruments have been established over the past two decades to address the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms. These focus in particular on the availability of these weapons and feature provisions on their regulation.

The international community therefore already has at its disposal a broad array of measures that can be applied, and these have delivered some notable successes in recent years. For example, the regional assistance projects of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) have resulted in the destruction of more than 670 000 small arms and more than 55 000 tonnes of conventional ammunition since 2000. Safety and security have also been upgraded at more than 100 weapons and ammunition storage sites.⁹

At the national level, an increasing number of countries have improved their infrastructure and legal bases with a view to countering the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse. For example, by 2012 67% of African states had established a national commission on small arms dedicated to policy guidance, research, and monitoring of efforts to address the illicit trade in small arms, in accordance with the commitment in Paragraph II.4 of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA).¹⁰ Some countries have also integrated small arms action plans in their national development strategies.¹¹

There have also been some promising regional initiatives launched to tackle this issue, particularly at the normative level. Since 2017 the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has a legally binding convention for the control of small arms,

⁹ For data on the OSCE see: OSCE Ministerial Declaration on OSCE Assistance Projects in the field of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, MC.DOC/3/16, 9 December 2016. For data on the EAPC see: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50082.htm.

¹⁰ Small Arms Survey, Occasional Paper 30, 2012: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/B-Occasional-papers/SAS-OP30-PoAIM.pdf>.

¹¹ The Secretary General's report on the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, 2016 (A/71/438–A/CONF.192/BMS/2016/1).

their ammunition, parts and components, so joining the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the member states of the Nairobi Protocol in this respect. The Kinshasa Convention, as it is known, was adopted in 2010 and entered into force in March 2017 with the deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification. In the European area, the EU Firearms Directive has been adapted in March 2017 to improve the traceability of firearms and strengthen the exchange of information between the competent authorities of the Schengen states, while also introducing stricter conditions for the acquisition of firearms. The revision aims at reducing the risks for firearms to fall into the wrong hands and to be misused for terroristic purposes. Additionally, the OSCE also has a robust normative framework coupled with the corresponding assistance mechanism to provide technical support and assistance to partner states on the ground.

Multilateral measures have been established at the global level to combat the illegal proliferation of small arms, and the corresponding instruments allow for regular dialogue between countries on new challenges. In April 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by an overwhelming majority, making it the first binding treaty under international law on the international trade in conventional weapons. The ATT obliges States Parties to control among other things the export, import and transit of the conventional weapons defined in

Albania
Demilitarisation of
ammunition
©NSPA



the treaty, including small arms and light weapons as well as their ammunition. These controls include checking various criteria and risks. If any risks exist, the State Party concerned is obliged to refuse in particular the export of the goods in question. The States Parties are also obliged to submit an annual report on their imports and exports of conventional weapons. Through these measures, the ATT aims to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability, reduce human suffering, and promote cooperation, transparency and accountable action by States Parties.¹²

The International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and the International Small Arms Control

Standards (ISACS) developed by the United Nations are two sets of voluntary, practical guidelines on the management and control of ammunition and small arms, respectively (e.g. technical measures for their safe and secure storage and disposal). The increased visibility of challenges associated with small arms on the international level also prompted the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution on small arms for the first time in 2013.¹³ Updated in 2015, the resolution focuses on the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms.¹⁴ It calls for better coordination within the UN, and encourages the implementation of UN arms embargoes, including by means of measures relating to the safe and secure storage and disposal of small arms and ammunition. The resolution also makes stronger reference to the gender component and calls upon strengthening the role of women in decision-making and project

implementation in the field of small arms control. In its resolutions on peacekeeping operations, the United Nations Security Council has also increasingly included a mandate to combat the illicit arms trade, and in particular to ensure the safe and secure storage and disposal of small arms and ammunition. The United Nations Human Rights Council as well as the High Commissioner for Human Rights also address the impact of the arms trade and the misuse of small arms on human rights. States are urged to take necessary measures to enhance the protection of human rights.¹⁵

In the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR), which was established in 2013, the international community also has a dedicated fund aimed at promoting the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and the ATT, as well as coordinating assistance and cooperation. Since 2016 there has also been a dedicated Voluntary Trust Fund for financing ATT implementation projects, this being available primarily to States Parties of the ATT but also to signatories and other states.

The World Customs Organization (WCO) adopted a Small Arms and Light Weapons Strategy in 2015, with a view to assisting its 181 members in combating the illegal cross-border transfer of arms and their parts. These recommendations and a multi-year programme of action are aimed at increasing the detection rate of arms trafficking through more efficient border controls and at preventing illicit imports and exports.

Another of the key achievements in recent years has been the formal recognition of the link between peace and sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, with a significant reduction of illicit arms flows being included as a specific target to be reached until 2030. Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) thus addresses the underlying causes of fragility, and in conjunction with other measures promotes peace-

ful, just and inclusive societies. The recognition of the reciprocal relationship between armed violence and development in the 2030 Agenda can be seen as an important and positive sign in the fight against the illicit trade in arms. The international community has thus succeeded in placing the underlying goals of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms in a context that is measurable, focused on development, and has a specific time frame. The global efforts in combating the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms should thus be intensified and made measurable.

Mexico
First Conference of the States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty in Cancún
© ATT Secretariat

Switzerland
Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter together with former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in the margins of the annual Swiss development cooperation conference on the topic of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
©SDC



Côte d'Ivoire
Ceremony held by the National SALW-Commission in collaboration with UNMAS to destroy small arms and light weapons
©UN Photo/Basile Zoma



¹² For details on all the obligations arising from the ATT and their implementation, please see *the Arms Trade Treaty* (SR 0.518.61), *the Interpretative Declaration for the ATT*, which the Federal Council deposited together with the instrument of ratification (<https://www.news.admin.ch/news/message/attachments/38163.pdf>) and *the Dispatch on Ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty* (BBl 2014 1541).

¹³ See UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2117.

¹⁴ See UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2220.

¹⁵ See resolutions of the Human Rights Council e.g. A/HRC/RES/29/10 and A/HRC/RES/32/12.

Instruments of the international community¹⁶

The recent successes have been made possible by the following instruments in particular. Together – and often complementing each other – these address many aspects of the illicit trade in small arms:

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA) was adopted in 2001 and applies to all UN member states. It has since provided the political basis for tackling the issue at the national, regional and global levels. Although not legally binding, as the first universal instrument in this area the UN PoA plays an important role in setting norms, fostering political commitment, and raising awareness of the current challenges with regard to small arms.

In the framework of and complementing the UN PoA, *the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons* (ITI) was adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly in 2005, and sets down politically binding measures in the areas of marking, record-keeping and tracing of these weapons as well as reporting on these activities.

The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition (also referred to as the United Nations Firearms Protocol or UN FAP) supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and was adopted in 2001 as the first legally binding instrument against the illicit manufacturing of man-portable firearms (as well as their parts, components and ammunition) and their illegal trade.

An important step in the ongoing development of international law in respect of arms trading came in 2013 when the UN General Assembly adopted *the Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT). The ATT, which entered into force on 24 December 2014, sets out binding provisions under international law for the States Parties in respect of the international transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and ammunition.

The Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) was established in 1995 with the aim of preventing destabilising accumulations of conventional arms and dual-use goods. It also sets common standards for trade controls on the import, export, transit and brokering of tangible and intangible goods. The WA guidelines were most recently expanded in 2016 to counter the heightened threat of small arms proliferation as a result of terrorist activity.

Instruments such as *the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons* (2000) and *the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition* (2003) provide specific regional provisions to supplement the international instruments. These politically binding documents include assistance mechanisms, and have in turn been supplemented by principles and best practice guidelines. All of the OSCE's instruments and best practice material shall be further developed and revised in 2017.

The NATO/Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust Funds facilitate the provision of specific support to NATO partner countries, including capacity building measures, in the safe and secure storage and disposal of arms and ammunition, and defence reform. This support is based on NATO's robust munitions management standards, which were drafted and developed with significant input from Switzerland.

¹⁶ Please see the annex for the full list.

1.3 Challenges

Despite successes in combating the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse, many challenges still persist. Continuing the commitment nationally and at the international political level therefore remains a necessity.

The national **implementation** of the provisions of the international and regional instruments remains inadequate in many countries. There is often a lack of effective international mechanisms to assess the implementation, or of the necessary knowledge for national implementation and national ownership. This applies in the case of both legally binding instruments (e.g. the ATT) and politically binding instruments. The application of international guidelines (e.g. IATG, ISACS) is also insufficient, not least due to a lack of common understanding on their applicability and operationalisation. As a result, the countries in question seek to make improvements using approaches that are inadequate for achieving the desired objectives and results. Coupled with this, the international community's assistance measures lack cohesion. The enforcement of arms embargoes

and other sanctions poses further challenges, as do measures in response to violations.

Additionally it is necessary to continue to actively promote the **universalisation** of the existing international instruments. While many of the politically binding instruments are applied universally, there are deficiencies especially in the application of the two legally binding instruments (UN FAP and ATT), in particular in the Middle East and Asia. 91 states have thus far ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (as of 19 May 2017). Some of the largest arms-exporting countries have still not joined the ATT and also show no intention of doing so.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the global trade in small arms increases and is characterised by considerable opacity. The effective and universal implementation of the ATT, including its annual reporting obligations, would foster transparency.

¹⁷ The US, Brazil, South Korea, Turkey, Russia, Israel and China as the main exporting nations have not ratified the ATT, despite annual exports in excess of USD 100 million.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since 2011 experts of the Swiss Armed Forces together with Sweden and Austria train the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the field of the safe and secure management of weapons and ammunition in the framework of the EUFOR ALTHEA Mobile Training Team ©DDPS



Many countries still lack the **capabilities and capacities as well as political will** to manage small arms and their ammunition safely and securely over their entire life cycle, thus increasing the risk of proliferation markedly. The effectiveness of international assistance measures is often curbed massively by weak security sector institutions, a lack of expertise and resources on the part of responsible authorities and persons, and in some cases even corruption. If effective, transparent institutions and legal certainty do not exist within countries, the result is a major risk of proliferation. For example, if customs, border and security controls are inadequate, not risk-adjusted or non-existent, arms, ammunition and their parts can be transferred unhindered from one country to another.

The **illegal manufacture of small arms** and conversion (in particular the reactivation of deactivated weapons) also continue to present a major problem in controlling the possession of small arms and their cross-border trade in many regions. Another factor in this context has been the **technological developments** of recent years. These are posing new challenges with regard to the manufacture, marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms, and will continue to do so in the near term, but are opening up possibilities in these areas as well. Examples include on the one hand technologies for the additive manufacturing of weapons (3D printing), being addressed by first attempts for regulation. On the other hand new technologies for marking or preventing unauthorized use, such as fingerprint recognition systems, can contribute inter alia to reducing the misuse of weapons.

While **markings** are now in principle affixed in the regular manufacturing of small arms, this is often not undertaken on import, entailing further difficulties when it comes to tracing.

There is also a lack of procedures for an effective operational **information exchange** between investigative and law enforcement authorities of states and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). INTERPOL offers various tools for the identification, record-keeping and tracing of small arms, as well as corresponding data analysis and

capacity building measures, including in the area of cross-border trade. Security forces are often also unable to enforce relevant arms laws to provide safety to their communities.¹⁸

Finally, small arms and light weapons play a pivotal role among non-state actors in particular in areas with fragile or weak statehood to exert and maintain their power. The fuelling of **conflicts, violent extremism, terrorism and organised crime** by weapons emerging from illicit trade, represents a major challenge, which needs effective and efficient national institutions and strong international cooperation to be addressed sustainably.

The increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in particular in densely populated areas and cities, gives rise to further challenges. The explosives of these IEDs often originate from plundered storage sites or from explosive remnants of war. Explosions in ammunition depots in urban areas caused by inadequate storage procedures or because they have come under attack also pose humanitarian challenges. A further difficulty that presents itself in this context is the long recognised operational interrelationship of requirements in demining and the management of ammunition, specifically with regard to the clearance of mines, explosive remnants of war and IEDs, in particular in urban environments. At the multilateral level, these areas have thus far been covered by separate instruments on mines, cluster munitions, small arms and light weapons, explosive remnants of war and ammunition. Tackling challenges in the various areas calls for a holistic approach to be applied to field operations with a view to ensuring human and state security. Mine clearance programmes thus now increasingly address the defusing, securing and destruction of mines, explosive remnants of war and IEDs, seeking to harness their expertise to promote the safe and secure storage and disposal of arms and ammunition. Accordingly, donor countries and international organisations are increasingly adopting **interdisciplinary approaches**. However, these in turn also entail challenges. At the

multilateral level, some countries are not prepared to engage with related issues in forums devoted to specific topics. In the case of operational, field-level implementation, there is the particular threat of the expertise required for dealing with one issue being different from that required for dealing with a related issue – this despite their thematic proximity. This difficulty is compounded by the lack of established norms with regard to the skill sets of relevant experts. With regard to the operational implementation the safety and security of personnel is highly relevant as well. The perception of the organisation and of the states which are deploying experts plays an important role, which can be influenced by these increasingly interdisciplinary approaches. Equally important is the basis of the deployment and if the mission takes place during armed conflict or in a post-conflict situation.

Mali
Explosive risk analysis of
damaged ammunition
boxes
©UN Photo/Marco Dormino



¹⁸ SG report on the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, 2016 (A/71/438–A/CONF.192/BMS/2016/1).

2 Resulting areas of activity

The negative consequences of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and ammunition not only hamper the Confederation's humanitarian and peace-building commitment, and its efforts in respect of development policy, human rights policy and security policy, but have also a direct effect on Switzerland's security. They are a contributory factor in the migration flows from conflict regions and provide a means of violence for organised crime and terrorism. The Federal Council has underscored the importance of combating the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and ammunition in various foreign policy and security policy reports.

With its commitment, Switzerland has played its part in many of the areas concerned in recent years, gaining international recognition for its pragmatic contributions.¹⁹ However, as the overview of the current context set out before shows, numerous challenges remain for the international community despite successes in certain respects. It is therefore essential that Switzerland continues in its efforts. This commitment is to be set out in specific detail in this strategy covering the coming four years from 2017 to 2020, and shall be incorporated in its foreign policy priorities.

Based on the overview of the current context presented before, action is required in the following areas in particular:

- **universalisation** and the political recognition of the existing global instruments, since these represent the most stable basis for an effective and coordinated commitment on the part of the international community to combating the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse;
- the **ongoing review** and, where appropriate, **amendment and further development** of existing international and regional instruments in line with new challenges (including technological developments), since sustainably curtailing the illicit trade in small arms and the negative consequences this entails hinges on taking new developments and threats into account;
- the full and effective **implementation** of existing international and regional instruments **coupled**

¹⁹ cf. Implementation report on Switzerland's strategy for the international combat against the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons 2013–2016.

3 Vision

Over the long term, Switzerland will continue to pursue the vision of a world in which people no longer suffer from the negative consequences of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and in which peace, security and sustainable economic and social development are possible.

South Sudan
Children in South Sudan celebrating the International Day of Peace and fighting against armed violence
©UN Photo/Jc McIlwaine



4 Strategic objectives

Taking a long-term horizon extending beyond the period covered by this strategy, the following strategic objectives have been defined for achieving this vision:

Strategic objective 1: The multilateral conventions are implemented effectively and comprehensively, and, where relevant, universally applied.

Switzerland advocates measurable, transparent and full implementation of the obligations of all States Parties and Member States. It promotes and supports further ratifications and accessions to the relevant treaties and instruments, as well as their ongoing amendment and development.

Strategic objective 2: Human security is increased through the reduction and prevention of armed violence and the conditions for peace, security and sustainable economic and social development are improved.

The measures Switzerland takes and the assistance it provides make an effective contribution to the security of the people affected, to preventing and addressing conflicts, and to the respect for human rights and the rule of law. In so doing, it improves the conditions for sustainable economic and social development. Switzerland also promotes viewing the small arms issue in a broader perspective encompassing policies on peace, security, human rights and development, in particular against the backdrop of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically Goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Strategic objective 3: All states take full ownership of the process to address the small arms issue sustainably.

Switzerland primarily encourages and supports state authorities responsible on the ground that assume and can sustainably bear full responsibility for the sustainable management of small arms and combating the illicit trade in and misuse of these weapons.

5 Switzerland's commitment – priorities

In collaboration with its partners, the Confederation has set itself various priorities for the period through to 2020, seeking to contribute to achieving the strategic objectives at the normative, operational and institutional levels.²⁰

For **strategic objective 1**, the Confederation has set the following priorities:

Priority 1.1: Bolstering compliance with legal and political obligations.

- As part of its political contacts, both bilateral and multilateral, Switzerland will actively appeal for strict and full compliance with the international legal framework. It will also call on countries that are not States Parties to comply with the fundamental principles of the relevant treaties.
- Switzerland will support relevant organisations (e.g. the UN, WCO, OSCE, INTERPOL) to ensure the provision of effective controls (in particular customs and security controls) in respect of possible treaty violations.
- Switzerland will promote compliance by advocating the clarification of the legally and politically binding obligations.

Priority 1.2: Transparent and timely reporting by states.

- Switzerland will support efforts to standardise and simplify reporting processes within the framework of existing treaties. It will also seek to ensure that reports remain meaningful and contribute to transparency.
- On request, Switzerland will provide states with support on reporting.

Priority 1.3: Accession of additional states to the existing treaties.

- In addition to its multilateral commitment, Switzerland will foster political dialogue with countries that are not States Parties with regard to joining the relevant treaties (specifically the ATT and the United Nations Firearms Protocol). It will provide such countries with advice in this process, where appropriate in collaboration with civil society organisations.
- With a view to promoting universalisation, Switzerland will advocate inclusive processes and will contribute to funding programmes aimed at assisting financially weaker countries to participate in meetings of states.

Cameroon
Sensitization workshop with members of the Cameroonian parliament on the ratification and domestication of the ATT
©CAMYOSFOP

²⁰ Some activities contribute to the implementation of several strategic objectives and are therefore listed multiple times.



Priority 1.4: Amend the existing treaties and instruments in line with new challenges and developments.

- Switzerland will ensure principled approaches in multilateral forums with a view to promoting international law, in particular human rights and international humanitarian law.
- Switzerland will continually review the adequacy of the pertinent treaties and instruments, and will, where appropriate, participate actively in multilateral forums and make constructive contributions to amending and developing such instruments in line with new challenges and developments. It will do so in particular within the framework of the UN Programme of Action and ITI, the ATT, the pertinent resolutions of the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, the OSCE documents and the relevant political guidelines as part of the NATO/Partnership for Peace (PfP).
- Switzerland will do its utmost to ensure that the mandates of peace missions will, where appropriate, contain an element on how to address the issue of small arms and their ammunition.
- Switzerland will advocate incorporating the safe and secure storage and disposal of arms and ammunition in the pertinent treaties, instruments and processes.

For **strategic objective 2**, the Confederation has set the following priorities:

Priority 2.1: Reduce and prevent armed violence through activities to combat the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms.

- Switzerland will support multilateral projects within the framework of the UN, OSCE, NATO/PfP and regional organisations with regard to building capacity for the safe and secure storage and disposal of arms and ammunition, both by providing specialist expertise as well as with equipment and financing. Priority will be given to supporting states that themselves make a considerable contribution in this respect nationally.
- Switzerland will support the implementation of the ATT in countries where the structures for controlling cross-border trade in conventional weapons are weak.

• In the relevant multilateral forums (ATT, UN FAP, UN PoA, OSCE, NATO/PfP, INTERPOL) Switzerland will actively support processes for effective implementation as well as for international cooperation and assistance by providing expertise, where appropriate by taking on a coordinating role or seconding experts.

• Switzerland will actively participate in international priority actions to combat the illicit cross-border trade in small arms. It will also engage in bilateral and multilateral capacity building for customs personnel and make corresponding secondments to international organisations (e.g. UN, WCO, OSCE, INTERPOL).

• Switzerland will support projects in respect of preventing undesirable end-users such as criminal or terrorist organisations gaining access to small arms and ammunition.

• With regard to the mandates of peacekeeping operations, Switzerland will advocate the integration of activities to combat the illicit trade in small arms and ammunition, and in particular to ensure their safe and secure storage and disposal.

• Switzerland will support the enhancing of gender specific aspects in the combat of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms to reduce armed violence including sexual and gender based violence. It will also promote the role of women in projects and activities in the field of small arms control.

• Switzerland will support action-oriented research into the supply of and demand for small arms and the impact of armed violence on development, in particular in regions heavily affected by armed violence and illicit trade.

• Switzerland will contribute to the development of concepts and operational instruments that address current threats and challenges (e.g. integrated approaches on the ground with regard to small arms, ammunition and landmines, use of IEDs, etc.) and to fostering synergies with related areas such as demining. To this end it will, in particular, work with its partners in Geneva, specifically in the Maison de la Paix, and promote the latter as an international hub for disarmament.

• Switzerland will support the civil society as an important actor for the prevention and reduction

of armed violence, in particular in the context of human rights violations through the misuse of small arms and light weapons through States.

Priority 2.2: Make the communities affected aware of the risks and negative consequences of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

• As part of its peace policy commitment, Switzerland will contribute to raising awareness of the issue of small arms in regions that are particularly affected, doing so through the organisation and financial or technical support of (sub)regional and international conferences and meetings of experts.

Priority 2.3: Where relevant and feasible, carry out activities to address the issue of small arms as a contribution to peaceful and inclusive societies in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the framework of development programmes.

• As part of its focus on fragile contexts, Switzerland will be involved in the field of security sector governance, in particular in respect of the national authorities responsible, and in this regard will also engage in specific activities relating to the issue of small arms, in accordance with its policies on

peace, humanitarian causes, development, human rights and security.

• In exercising its multilateral commitment, Switzerland will promote justice and human rights in the reform of the security sector, and in its efforts with regard to development cooperation.

• Within the framework of specific cooperation strategies, Switzerland will contribute over the long term to security sector reform, and in this regard will also engage in activities to combat the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse.

Côte d'Ivoire
Deployment of a Swiss customs expert to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire for capacity building of local customs authorities
©FCA



6 Guiding principles

For **strategic objective 3**, the Confederation has set the following priorities:

Priority 3.1: Local authorities can take ownership of the management of small arms and of efforts to combat the illicit trade in and misuse of such weapons.

- Switzerland will support multilateral projects within the framework of the UN, OSCE, NATO/PfP and other regional organisations with regard to building capacity for the safe and secure storage and disposal of arms and ammunition, both with specialist expertise as well as with equipment and financing. In doing so, it will focus on compliance with international standards. Priority will be given to supporting states that themselves make a considerable contribution in this respect nationally.
- Switzerland will support selected bilateral and multilateral measures aimed at building customs authorities' capacity to combat the illicit cross-border trade in weapons, parts of weapons, ammunition and parts of ammunition.
- Together with its international partners and foreign training centres, Switzerland will support the

coordination, development and implementation of training projects and programmes that harness synergies between the safe and secure storage and disposal of arms and ammunition and demining.

Priority 3.2: Processes for establishing norms and standardisation are adapted in line with national circumstances, and are therefore relevant and accepted locally.

- Switzerland will contribute to global and regional processes to establish norms and standardisation.
- It will support the universal implementation of international guidelines (ISACS and IATG). Switzerland will also support efforts to involve states that are affected and states that are particularly relevant for the process of establishing norms and standardisation.
- Switzerland will be committed to ensuring that training is provided (both for local personnel and international experts) in the safe and secure storage and disposal of small arms and ammunition in accordance with international standards.

Switzerland's political and operational activities to combat the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms follow the (general) guidelines for action set out below:

- Switzerland promotes the curtailing of the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms as a political and operational contribution to conflict prevention, the protection of civilians, peace and security, and sustainable development. It integrates into these activities the call for compliance with international law, namely the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.
- Switzerland supports projects to combat the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms also in the context of achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Switzerland's primary focus is on supporting projects with a high degree of local ownership, and it adheres to the principle of "helping others to help themselves". Decisive factors in Switzerland providing support are a state's efforts to accede to the relevant treaties and implement their provisions. Switzerland encourages national commitment and local ownership.
- The humanitarian, social, environmental and economic needs on the ground are also important criteria, as are gender equality, combating corruption, and ensuring that Switzerland's efforts adhere to the principle of a "do no harm" approach.
- Switzerland focuses its support on areas in which it has specific and recognised expertise and in which it can provide assistance for projects with a high degree of visibility. In so doing it promotes South-South cooperation as well as trilateral cooperation. Its preference is for commitments of a medium to long-term nature.
- Switzerland supports the combating of the illicit trade in small arms as well as the prevention and reduction of armed violence pragmatically and in accordance with its interests. Ideally it seeks to concentrate the resources of the partner services of the interdepartmental working group on small arms and light weapons (IDWG-SALW) in selected regions and countries. Opportunities for cooperation and assistance with other countries of particular interest to Switzerland will be taken as they arise.

- Exploiting possible synergies between activities in the areas of small arms and light weapons and international police cooperation, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, military peace support, arms control and disarmament measures, and peacebuilding on the ground is of pivotal importance.
- Switzerland analyses and anticipates the developments in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse with a view to exploiting synergies with thematically related areas, in particular humanitarian demining, and adapts its array of intervention instruments accordingly. It also analyses the connections with the prevention of violent extremism.
- Switzerland promotes the mainstreaming of gender equality in its political and operational activities, in line with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1889, 1820, 1888, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242 on women, peace and security.
- Switzerland conducts its efforts in a spirit of partnership with countries, international organisations and civil society actors, using the relevant multilateral and bilateral instruments. Its positions and actions are led by any relevant frameworks and/or action plans of third countries that are in place.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Since 2013 the Swiss Armed Forces deploys the advisor for arms and ammunition of the EUFOR commander
©DDPS



7 Implementing Switzerland's commitment

7.1 Distribution of tasks within the Federal Administration

Various federal departments work together on a coherent, coordinated and complementary basis to deliver a whole of government approach in combating the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse. Accordingly, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, the Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP, the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport DDPS, the Federal Department of Finance FDF and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER coordinate their efforts in performing the following tasks:

The **FDFA** is responsible for policy-making and coordinates the monitoring of the implementation of this strategy.

Within the Directorate of Political Affairs, the **Human Security Division (HSD)** is responsible, in consultation with the geographic divisions, for the coordination of all the activities allocated to the FDFA with regard to small arms and armed violence and takes the lead role in all political aspects. It chairs the inter-departmental working group on small arms and light weapons (IDWG-SALW) and is responsible for the coordination throughout the Federal Administration of enquiries forwarded to the HSD via the national point of contact for small arms. The implementation of this strategy is achieved through the financing of specific programmes and projects and the launching of relevant initiatives. Together with the DDPS, it leads the Swiss initiative on the safe and secure management of ammunition.

The **Division for Security Policy** provides support in the form of security policy expertise and offers a broader overview of questions relating to arms control and disarmament. It coordinates matters relating to the ATT and export controls within the FDFA, matters relating to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, and activities related to small arms as part of the NATO/PfP. It supports NATO Trust Fund projects addressing the safe and secure storage and disposal of arms and ammunition. Switzerland's **Mission to NATO** supports the management of these projects, particularly those where it serves as co-lead. It also represents Switzerland in the Ad hoc Working Group on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Mine Action.

The **Europe, Central Asia, Council of Europe, OSCE Division** is responsible on the part of the FDFA for the OSCE's first and second dimensions. The first dimension comprises politico-military aspects of security, and thus also covers small arms and light weapons, as well as conventional arms control in general.

The **United Nations and International Organizations Division** coordinates the safeguarding of interests in the field of small arms in the appropriate multilateral forums by **Switzerland's permanent representations** (in particular to the United Nations in New York, but also to Vienna and Geneva). The permanent representations also analyse and anticipate relevant political developments, and provide this information to head office.

The **Directorate of International Law** monitors the relevant developments in international law with regard to small arms and ammunition, and advises the federal offices involved on legal issues. It is committed to compliance with and the clarification and ongoing development of the legal framework.

The **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** contributes to the implementation of Goal 16 (peace, justice, strong institutions) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and supports the peacebuilding and statebuilding goals of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. In fragile situations, the SDC integrates measures aimed at long-term peacebuilding through strengthening civil society and governance at all levels. Wherever possible, it contributes to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and to combating the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse.

As the competent office for civil law on weapons in Switzerland, the **Federal Office of Police fedpol based within the FDJP** is responsible for the licensing of the transfer of weapons to Switzerland, the non-commercial exporting of firearms to a Schengen state, and processing applications to trace Swiss firearms. Fedpol also serves as the central reception centre and reporting office for the exchange of information with other Schengen states. It undertakes revisions of the weapons law, contributes to the ongoing developments of the EU Firearms Directive, and transposes these into Swiss law. Fedpol also operates the arms information platform ARMADA, which facil-

itates simplified data exchange for police authorities, the Federal Customs Administration and military on information on the refusal or withdrawal of weapons licences and on the confiscation of weapons.

The **DDPS** supports the implementation of the strategy through the specific provision and financing of personnel and specialist expertise (e.g. staff officers or specialists from the Small Arms Expert Pool) and equipment (e.g. decommissioned military equipment) for the safe and secure management and disposal of arms and ammunition in areas of interest. This support is provided primarily multilaterally as part of military peace support and arms control and disarmament measures within the framework of the corresponding programmes of the UN, OSCE and EAPC. It coordinates the deployment of resources nationally and with partner states within the framework of the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG). The DDPS also runs training courses and contributes to developing the corresponding norms. Lastly, the DDPS can on request provide specialist expertise in arms control and disarmament issues to other federal offices.

The **Federal Customs Administration FCA within the FDF** monitors compliance at Switzerland's borders with the pertinent legal requirements regarding the import, export and transfer of small arms, ammunition and their parts. It participates in international priority actions with a view to combating the illicit cross-border transfer of small arms. The FCA also contributes to efforts for the development of standards and their implementation with regard to combating the smuggling and illicit transfer of small arms in the framework of international organisations such as WCO, OSCE etc.

The **State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, which comes under the EAER**, is responsible for Switzerland's policy on export controls and sanctions. It is the licensing authority for the export of small arms, which it assesses in conjunction with the FDFA. SECO checks compliance with the non-re-export declarations of the importing countries on the ground (post-shipment verification, PSV). It also reports regularly on the import and export of war material, and publishes a detailed annual report on the export of small arms. SECO heads the Swiss delegation in negotiations within the framework of

Mali
The Swiss Armed Forces deploys experts to MINUSMA since 2013 to support the Malian forces in the safe and secure management of arms and ammunition
©MINUSMA





Albania
Destroyed small arms
ammunition
©NSPA

the Wassenaar Arrangement as well as the ATT, and takes the lead with regard to the implementation and ongoing development of the ATT. SECO also provides technical support to countries in implementing the ATT, and specifically in establishing national measures for import and export controls.

7.2 Coordinating body

The Human Security Division at the FDFA is responsible for the interdepartmental coordination in respect of this strategy. With regard to Switzerland's policy on small arms, its objective is to ensure a coherent, coordinated and complementary approach in terms of diplomacy, security and development.

Switzerland's foreign policy and security policy in this respect is coordinated in the interdepartmental working group on small arms and light weapons (IDWG-SALW). This group meets three to four times a year and encompasses all offices of the FDFA, FDJP, DDPS, FDF and EAER involved in combating the illicit trade in small arms and their misuse at both the political and operational levels.

7.3 Resources

Over the 2017–2020 strategy period, Switzerland plans to invest some CHF 5 million per year in combating the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons. On the basis of existing resources it provides in addition expertise, advice and training through experts of the Swiss Armed Forces, experts

for civilian peacebuilding and customs and border guard experts. According to the competencies of the relevant offices, these resources are to be made available in particular for operational activities as well as for normative, strategic and institutional efforts.

7.4 Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of this strategy is based on the annual action plans, and is regularly monitored by the interdepartmental working group on small arms and light weapons. Monitoring is based on an analysis of the achievement of the strategic objectives and priorities using the results-based management model. This is aimed at measuring and analysing the effectiveness of Switzerland's efforts as objectively as possible. The corresponding results chains and results framework are developed and regularly reviewed by the IDWG-SALW.

Under the lead of the FDFA, Switzerland will produce a status report on implementation by 2020. To ensure that the strategic objectives underpinning Switzerland's commitment continue to be adapted and developed, an external evaluation of this strategy and its implementation is to be carried out in 2020. The recommendations from this evaluation will then serve as input in the development of any subsequent strategy.

This strategy has been approved by the following high-level representatives of the Swiss administration:

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

Pascale Baeriswyl

Directorate of Political Affairs
State Secretary

Manuel Sager

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Director

Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP)

René Bühler

Federal Office of Police
Deputy Director

Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS)

Christian Catrina

General Secretariat
Security Policy
Chief

Claude Meier

Swiss Armed Forces
Armed Forces Staff
Chief

Federal Department of Finance (FDF)

Christian Bock

Federal Customs Administration
Director General of Customs

Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER)

Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO
State Secretary

Legal basis and other instruments of reference

Swiss law

- Federal Constitution (SR 101)
- Federal Act and Ordinance on Weapons, Weapons Accessories and Ammunition (SR 514.54 & SR 514.541)
- Federal Act and Ordinance on War Material (SR 514.51 & SR 514.511)
- Federal Act and Ordinance on the Control of Dual-Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods (SR 946.202 & SR 946.202.1)
- Federal Act on Measures pertaining to Civil Peace Support and the Promotion of Human Rights (SR 193.9)
- Federal Act on the Armed Forces and the Military Administration (SR 510.10)
- Federal Act on the Implementation of International Sanctions (Embargo Act; SR 946.231)
- Federal Act on Private Security Services provided Abroad (SR 935.41)

National strategy documents

- 2016 Foreign Policy Report
- Swiss Foreign Policy Strategy 2016–2019
- 2016 Report of the Federal Council on Switzerland's security policy
- 2017 Report of the Federal Council on Switzerland's policy on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation
- 2010 Armed Forces Report
- Dispatch on extending and increasing the framework credit for continuing measures to promote peace and human security 2012–2016
- Dispatch on International Cooperation 2017–2020
- Dispatch on the Approval of the Arms Trade Treaty (BBI 2014 1541)

International instruments

Legally binding instruments:

- Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (SR 0.311.544)
- Arms Trade Treaty (SR 0.518.61)

- Directive 91/477/EEC of the Council of the European Union of 18 June 1991 on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons
- Directive 2008/51/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 21 May 2008 amending Directive 91/477/EEC of the Council of the European Union of 18 June 1991 on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons (SR 0.362.380.032)

Politically binding instruments:

United Nations:

- Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (2001)
- International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (2005)
- Voluntary Guidelines:
 - International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG)
 - International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS)

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):

- OSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers (1993)
- OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2000)
- OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (2003)
- OSCE Standard Elements of End-user Certificates and Verification Procedures for Small Arms and Light Weapons Exports (2004)
- OSCE Principles on the Control of Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons (2004)
- OSCE Principles for Export Controls of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) (2004, updated 2008)
- OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2003)
- OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Conventional Ammunition (2008)
- OSCE Best Practices to Prevent Destabilizing Transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons through Air Transport (2008)

Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council/Partnership for Peace:

- Federal Council decree of 30 October 1996 on Switzerland's participation in the Partnership for Peace
- Federal Council decree of 21 October 1998 on participation in the NATO Planning and Review Process (PARP)
- Federal Council decree of 10 March 2017 on Switzerland's PfP cooperation programme for 2017

The Wassenaar Arrangement²¹:

- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Best Practice Guidelines for Exports of Small Arms and Light Weapons (2002)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Elements for Effective Legislation on Arms Brokering (2003)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Elements for Export Controls of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) (2003, updated 2007)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Best Practices to Prevent Destabilising Transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons through Air Transport (2007)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Best Practice Guidelines on Subsequent Transfer (Re-export) Controls for Conventional Weapons Systems (2011)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Elements for Controlling Transportation of Conventional Arms Between Third Countries (2011)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Introduction to End User/End Use Controls for Exports of Military-List Equipment (2014)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Elements for Objective Analysis and Advice Concerning Potentially Destabilising Accumulations of Conventional Weapons (1998, updated 2016)
- The Wassenaar Arrangement: Best Practices for Effective Legislation on Arms Brokering (2013, updated 2016)

²¹ All of the Wassenaar Arrangement documents listed here form part of the Compendium of Best Practice Documents which can be found online at www.wassenaar.org/best-practices/.

Imprint

Editor:
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Directorate of Political Affairs DP
3003 Bern
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Center electronic media CEM (81.216e)

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This strategie is also available in French, German and Italian.

Bern, 2017

