

TC

Trusteeship Council



LASALLECUNMUN
2026

“Illicit trade of small arms and
light weapons”

BACKGROUND GUIDE





Dear delegates,

"Growth begins at the end of your comfort zone."

– *Tony Robbins*

Illustrious young people, bearers of minds with great intellectual capacity and creativity, you are welcomed to LASALLECUNMUN2026; my name is Kira Bibiana Acosta Castillo and I am very excited to invite you to the annual model to serve you in our committee of Trusteeship Council as your President and together with your Moderator Vida Mena Gonzales and your Conference Officer Fabrizio Soldi Esparza, we are happy to welcome you. We know it will be full of excitement, laughter, and, above all, learning!

Currently, I am 16 years old and a student in the economic administration area. My group is 5c1. I don't know what career I am going to study yet, but I know I will try my best and work every day to achieve my goals. I want to share with you that I have many hobbies, among them I share with Vida the love for drawing, and with Fabrizio I share the love for sports, especially Basketball, I'm good at it, and I play on several teams. We love animals. My favorite animals are dogs, and I have two of them. Fabrizio has a peculiar taste and attraction for tigers, and Vida loves all types of animals.

I feel prepared to be president since in LASALLECUNMUN2024 I participated as a delegate, and in 2025 I had the honor of chairing the WTO. Both experiences gave me the knowledge and confidence to now take on this new challenge in TC. Just like the rest of this chair, I can promise you that we are fully capable of guiding you to a successful model this year.

Finally, I would like to add that MUN is a beautiful and unique experience that should not be missed. Many people avoid challenges because of fear, but I encourage you to face them, just as the phrase at the beginning says: "Dare to do new things! I know that you can, dear delegates. I am sure that you will do an excellent job, but if at any point along your extraordinary path you get stuck, do not hesitate to ask your chair for help; we will be here for you.

Wish you the best of luck.

Kira Acosta
Trusteeship Council (TC)

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COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The Trusteeship Council was established by the UN Charter as one of the six main organs of the United Nations, with the responsibility of supervising the administration of Trust Territories under the International Trusteeship System. The main objectives of this system were to promote the advancement of the inhabitants of the territories and to ensure their progressive development toward self-government or independence. The Council was composed of the five permanent members of the Security Council: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Topic: “Illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.”

INTRODUCTION

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons has become a global concern due to its direct impact on peace and security. Each year, millions of firearms are produced worldwide, and a significant portion of them enter illegal markets. According to the Small Arms Survey, over 100 million weapons circulate without proper registration, making them easily accessible to rebel groups, criminal organizations, and terrorist networks. Their uncontrolled proliferation intensifies violence, fuels terrorism, and undermines national and international stability.

This issue has severe humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. Armed violence claims thousands of lives every day, while millions are displaced from their homes due to conflicts caused by the presence of illicit weapons. Beyond civilian casualties, this trade obstructs development, perpetuates inequality, and increases insecurity at local, national, and global levels. The black market and the dark web have also facilitated access to these weapons, even for criminal gangs and minors, also magnifying the threat to international peace and safety.

The United Nations has promoted frameworks such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Programme of Action (PoA) to regulate the production, circulation, and transfer of arms. However, major challenges persist several of the world’s largest arms exporters, including the United States, Russia, and China, have not ratified the ATT, and many States that are parties to these agreements fail to fully implement their commitments. Addressing this issue requires not only stronger international cooperation but also effective transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure that weapons do not continue to reach those who use them to commit war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other human rights violations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons has been a global issue for decades, with roots that go back to colonial times. Back then, European powers often supplied weapons to groups within their colonies, creating divisions and instability that lasted for years. Later, during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union used arms transfers as part of their political rivalry, sending large amounts of weapons to allied groups in places like Vietnam, Afghanistan, Central America, and Africa. When the Cold War ended, many of

these weapons were left as surplus and ended up being sold or trafficked illegally, especially in regions such as the Balkans and Sub-Saharan Africa, which only made conflicts worse.

By the 20th century, the international community began to see the problem more clearly. Weapons were not only used in wars, but they were also used by organized crime and rebel groups that often obtained them through illegal methods or corrupt officials. Sometimes these weapons were even traded for natural resources like diamonds and oil, which made the conflicts last longer. In response, the United Nations organized the 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, which created the Programme of Action (PoA). This plan asked countries to make stronger laws, improve border security, and work together to trace and recover illicit arms.

Another important step was the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which was adopted in 2013. This set international rules for the trade of conventional weapons to prevent them from reaching groups that could commit war crimes or human rights abuses. While this was a big achievement, the problem is still far from solved. Some of the largest arms exporters, including the United States, Russia, and China, have not ratified the treaty, and even countries that did sign sometimes fail to fully apply its measures. These efforts show that progress has been made, but also that there is still a long way to go to stop the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

CURRENT SITUATION

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) continues to be one of the main drivers of violence in both armed conflicts and urban areas. In conflict zones, these weapons supply rebel groups, militias, and other non-state actors, prolonging wars and making peace processes more difficult. Outside of wars, SALW strengthen organized crime networks involved in drug trafficking, extortion, and human smuggling, contributing to high homicide rates and forced displacement. Trafficking routes are complex and often combine land, sea, and air smuggling, with the involvement of arms dealers, corrupt officials, and black-market operators. In recent years, the internet and even the dark web have also been used to coordinate illicit transactions, making the networks even harder to trace.

The United Nations has repeatedly emphasized the urgency of controlling these flows. Key recommendations include effective marking and record-keeping of firearms, faster cross-border tracing, stricter export controls, and stronger cooperation with international organizations such as INTERPOL. Frameworks such as the Programme of Action (PoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) continue to be central, while the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) sets minimum standards to regulate the legal arms trade and prevent diversion to unauthorized users. However, enforcement remains inconsistent: some of the world's largest exporters have not ratified the ATT, and many States lack the resources or political will to fully implement these measures, limiting their effectiveness.

Recent events show how diverse the problem can be depending on the region. In Eastern Europe, the war in Ukraine has raised concerns that military equipment could be diverted to illicit markets. In the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, porous borders, insurgencies, and weak

governance make the flow of SALW almost impossible to control. In Latin America, especially in Central America and Brazil, illegal firearms are one of the main factors behind the highest homicide rates in the world. Some governments have introduced reforms to strengthen export controls, modernize marking and registration systems, and conduct joint border operations, while others remain reluctant due to the economic and political costs involved.

The humanitarian and security consequences are severe. Civilian populations are the most affected, facing higher levels of violence, displacement, and obstacles to receiving humanitarian aid. At the same time, illicit arms flows undermine state institutions and weaken development. If current challenges are not addressed, armed groups and criminal networks will continue to grow stronger, making conflicts last longer and increasing global insecurity. On the other hand, consistent implementation of the PoA, ITI, and ATT, together with greater international cooperation and technical support for states with fewer resources, could reduce illicit flows, improve accountability, and create more stable conditions for peace and sustainable development.

COUNTRY BOX

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
Commonwealth of Australia
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Federal Republic of Germany
French Republic
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Kingdom of Spain
People's Republic of China
Republic of Argentina
Republic of India
Republic of Iran
Republic of Pakistan
Republic of Serbia
Republic of South Africa
Republic of Turkey
Russian Federation
State of Israel
The Italian Republic
United Mexican States
United States of America

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- I. What is your country's position on the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons?
- II. How has this problem affected your country in terms of security, society, or economy?
- III. What actions has your country taken to regulate or prevent the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons?
- IV. What international treaties or initiatives has your country signed or rejected regarding arms control?
- V. What realistic solutions can your country propose to strengthen international cooperation and reduce the illicit arms trade?

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