



# UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



## Global Firearms Programme

## ILLICIT MANUFACTURING OF AND TRAFFICKING IN FIREARMS —A GLOBAL PROBLEM

*“We believe that the devastating effects of the manufacturing of and illicit trafficking in firearms undermine good governance and the promotion of human rights, as well as the social and economic development of peoples.”*

Governmental representative during the General Assembly meeting on the adoption of the Firearms Protocol, 31 May 2001

Illicit firearms constitute a lucrative merchandise. They are durable commodities whose lengthy lifecycle allows them to be reused on multiple occasions. Demand is high as they are frequently used as tools to commit violent crimes, to facilitate the commission of other crimes and to obstruct the legitimate exercise of power. Illicit transfers of firearms fuel armed conflicts and have negative human rights, humanitarian and socio-economic consequences. Furthermore, the negative impact that organized crime and illicit trafficking in firearms has on development has been acknowledged at the international level, including in the new United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNSDG), whose target 16.4 aims at significantly reducing illicit financial and arms flows and combating all forms of organized crime by 2030. Still, strategies to counter organized crime and terrorism do not always appropriately address the issue of arms. Weapons found at crime scenes are not routinely subjected to investigation and tracing in order to confirm and address their potentially illicit source. Not enough is known about illicit trafficking routes, trends and modus operandi, neither at global nor at regional levels.

## THE ORGANIZED CRIME CONVENTION AND ITS FIREARMS PROTOCOL —A GLOBAL RESPONSE

*“The Firearms Protocol [constitutes] a seminal instrument in our collective fight against th[e] phenomenon [of illicit transfers of firearms]. As the first treaty of its kind, it creates, we believe, a global standard for the transnational movement of firearms to prevent their theft and diversion and provides law enforcement officials with tools effectively to detect, investigate and prosecute illicit manufacturing and trafficking offences.*

*It is remarkable how the broad participation in the negotiations and the consensus demonstrated here today are an acknowledgement that, in an age of globalization, we cannot operate in isolation to counter the illicit firearms trade.”*

Governmental representative during the General Assembly meeting on the adoption of the Firearms Protocol, 31 May 2001

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Convention) and its Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol) were adopted by General Assembly resolutions 55/25 of 15 November 2000 and 55/255 of 31 May 2001 and entered into force on 29 September 2003 and on 3 July 2005, respectively. They are the main international legally binding instruments in the fight against transnational organized crime and the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and constitute valuable tools for addressing linkages between organized crime and terrorism. The Protocol's provisions relate to three main areas which are essential for addressing and preventing organized crime: (a) Criminal provisions and measures of confiscation, seizure and disposal; (b) Preventive and security measures; and (c) International cooperation.

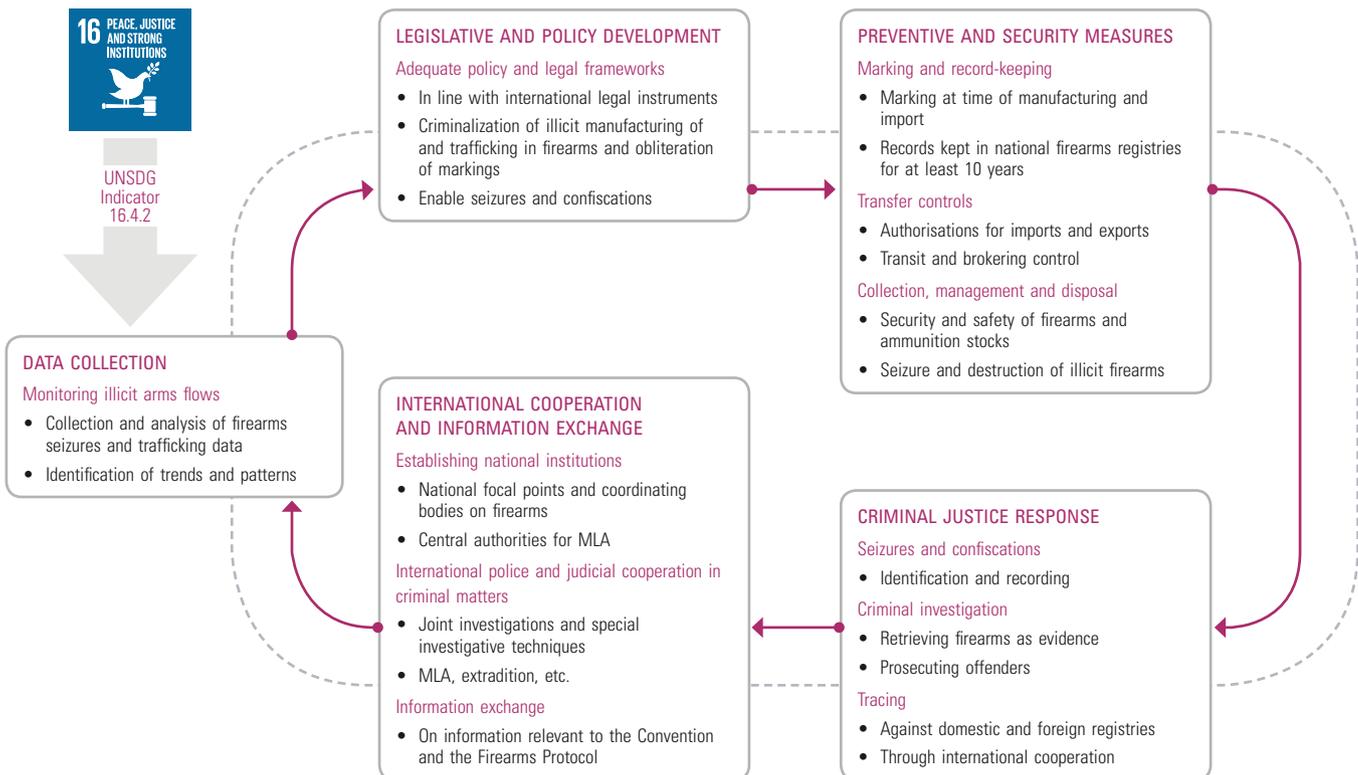
# THE GLOBAL FIREARMS PROGRAMME

## Main areas of work

Through its Global Firearms Programme (GFP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), assists Member States in preventing and combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components, and ammunition. GFP further supports States' efforts to prevent the illicit supply and diversion of firearms into the hands of criminal groups, to effectively investigate

and prosecute firearms-related crimes and their perpetrators as well as establishing links between the illicit trafficking in firearms and other forms of organized crime and terrorism. GFP's efforts are based on advocating for universal adherence to, and assisting States in the effective implementation of the Convention and its Firearms Protocol and related global and regional instruments.

GFP's integrated approach is based on five interconnected pillars:



## RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

■ Over 20 African, Asian and Latin American States have received tailored legislative advice and legal drafting support.

■ Over 700 practitioners from Africa and Latin America have been trained and are applying their knowledge to the investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking and organized crime.

■ Technical advice and support related to the collection and destruction of firearms has been provided to six African and Latin American States.

■ Three African States have received assistance in improving the security and management of seized weapons.

■ An international data collection mechanism for seized and trafficked firearms was piloted to monitor illicit firearms trafficking flows, and in 2015, the first UNODC study on seized and trafficked firearms was published.



■ Five African States have received equipment and 11 States were given specialized training in the marking and record-keeping of firearms, and have started to mark their weapons in line with international instruments and standards.



■ A model law, a comprehensive training curriculum, issue papers on synergies among global arms control instruments and other relevant tools on firearms have been developed and disseminated.



■ Cross-regional and international cooperation and exchange of good practices is being promoted through a global community of practitioners.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Priority areas for the coming years include:

- Continuing and expanding GFP support to requesting States and regions across the globe in countering illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms through its integrated five-pillar approach.
- Supporting the new mechanism to review the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol, established by the 2016 Conference of the Parties to the Convention.
- Strengthening national focal points and coordinating bodies on firearms, as well as specialized firearms hubs.
- Developing, customizing and deploying a comprehensive firearms record-keeping system for requesting Member States, which includes seized and confiscated arms.
- Strengthening States' capacities to address firearms trafficking in the context of organized crime, terrorism and violent extremism.
- Promoting and facilitating international cooperation in criminal matters and exchange of expertise among firearms and criminal justice practitioners in order to enhance their operational response to detect, investigate and prosecute trafficking offences and related crimes.
- Supporting a national and global data collection and analysis on seized and trafficked firearms, with a view to monitoring illicit trafficking flows and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16.4.



# UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500, 1400 Vienna, Austria  
Tel.: (+43-1) 26060-0, Fax: (+43-1) 26060-5866, [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

For further information on GFP or to express interest in receiving assistance, please contact:

### **UNODC Headquarters in Vienna**

Ms. Simonetta Grassi  
Legal Officer, Head of the Global Firearms Programme  
Implementation Support Section  
Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
Tel.: (+43-1) 26060-5484  
Fax: (+43-1) 26060-7-5484  
E-mail: [simonetta.grassi@unodc.org](mailto:simonetta.grassi@unodc.org)  
[gfp@unodc.org](mailto:gfp@unodc.org)

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