



UNODC GLOBAL STRATEGY ON ILLICIT FIREARMS AND INTERCONNECTED THREATS 2023-2030

21 years ago, at the turn of the 21st century, the General Assembly adopted **the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition**, as the third Protocol that supplements the **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)**. Today, UNTOC and its Firearms Protocol continue to provide a solid framework for action to address the challenges of illicit firearms in the context of transnational organized crime and terrorism inter alia.

As we look to the next decade, significant challenges remain for our society and planet, while we are only seven years away to achieve the essence of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. **With over 12 years of experience and lessons learned, and identified good practices** acquired through its Global Firearms Programme, and a renewed vision for the years to come, UNODC decided to take stock of the past successes and weaknesses and to look ahead at the years to come. In a fast-changing world, where sudden external factors can have a major impact on the global dynamic of illicit arms flows, it is important to remain agile and to adapt fast, not only to better serve Member States' needs and expectations, but also to live up to our own ambition of remaining a trusted and reliable partner.

The **UNODC 2023-2030 Global Strategy on Illicit Firearms and Interconnected Threats** reflects this ambition. Reducing illicit arms flows is a complex undertaking that **requires multiple and integrated responses, that address both prevention and control** at global, regional and national level. Starting point is the acknowledgement of the cross-cutting and transversal nature of illicit firearms, their direct impact

on Peace and Security, and on Sustainable Development, and their central role in new and emerging crime and conflict scenarios around the globe. A global strategy must take these intersections into account and develop around multiple, mutually reinforcing, building blocks, to help countries effectively prevent and counter these threats, and restore peace, security and justice for all.

Comprehensive **legislative and regulatory frameworks** and policies are indispensable to ensure adequate controls over legally manufactured and owned firearms throughout their life cycle, while **effective criminalization and enforcement measures** are required for the system to work, and to uphold accountability and the rule of law.

It also requires addressing the transnational nature of the phenomenon, with the aim to **disrupt illicit trafficking flows, dismantle criminal networks and bring perpetrators (and their leaders) to justice**.

But we cannot close the circle if the human dimension and impact of the problem of armed violence and illicit trafficking is not adequately acknowledged and addressed, through **human rights and people centred approaches**, and through investments in the human capital, to promote more **peaceful and inclusive communities**.

Addressing the **transnational nature of illicit firearms and emerging challenges requires advanced forms of cooperation** among countries and international organizations. It requires overcoming the traditional logic of working in siloes, understanding the **need to contextualize** the threats and its responses, by addressing the interlinkages between illicit arms flows and other threats.

The **UNODC Global Strategy** on Illicit Firearms and Interconnected Threats promotes a **new paradigm in the criminal justice response** that streamlines the objective of preventing and countering illicit firearms as a critical crime and violence enabler, asset and connecting link to multiple crimes including organised crime and terrorism, with a more people and victim-centred approach, and sets out the priority actions and targets for the next seven years to come.

AMBITION

The overarching ambition of the Strategy is (a) to contribute to the overall reduction of the illicit proliferation and acquisition of firearms and ammunition and related violence, (b) serve as guidance for Member States to apply international instruments and standards, and cooperate with each other to prevent and counter diversion, misuse and trafficking of the firearms and connected threats; (c) reinforce UNODC's and its partners' contribution to the Peace and Security Agenda, building resilient, safer and peaceful societies, with improved protection of human rights, leaving no one behind.

The Strategy builds on UNODC's overall strategic vision and action, takes new and emerging technological and geopolitical challenges into account, and builds on a stronger result-based intervention logic, to address the problem of illicit firearms and its links to transnational organized crime and terrorism at global, regional and national levels. The new Strategy will play a pivotal role in **shaping and informing UNODC's future programming work**, while **serving also as a reference tool for Member States** when dealing with the subject matter.

VALUE PROPOSITION

UNODC's overall mission is to contribute to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism by working for and with Member States to promote justice and the rule of law and build resilient societies.

UNODC is uniquely suited to fulfil this mandate, being the guardian of international conventions and secretariat to global policy bodies; providing strong research and policy analysis; and combining global expertise and a wide field presence to provide specialized assistance to Member States.

The Strategy will enable UNODC to effectively delivery on following outcomes through enhanced coordination and synergies:

Outcome 1: Member states have adequate firearms control regimes and robust technical and legislative standards in place to prevent and counter the risk of illicit manufacturing, diversion, and trafficking of firearms and their criminal use.

Outcome 2: Practitioners have an increased level of expertise, tools and understanding of the phenomena and put this knowledge into practice to effectively prevent and counter illicit firearms proliferation, trafficking and misuse, and interconnected threats.

Outcome 3: Local communities, including women and youth representatives, actively engage in finding collective responses and policies to reduce illicit proliferation, trafficking and misuse of firearms, and interconnected threats.

Outcome 4: Public bodies and private stakeholders contribute and collaborate in finding innovative responses to put pressure on the illicit markets.

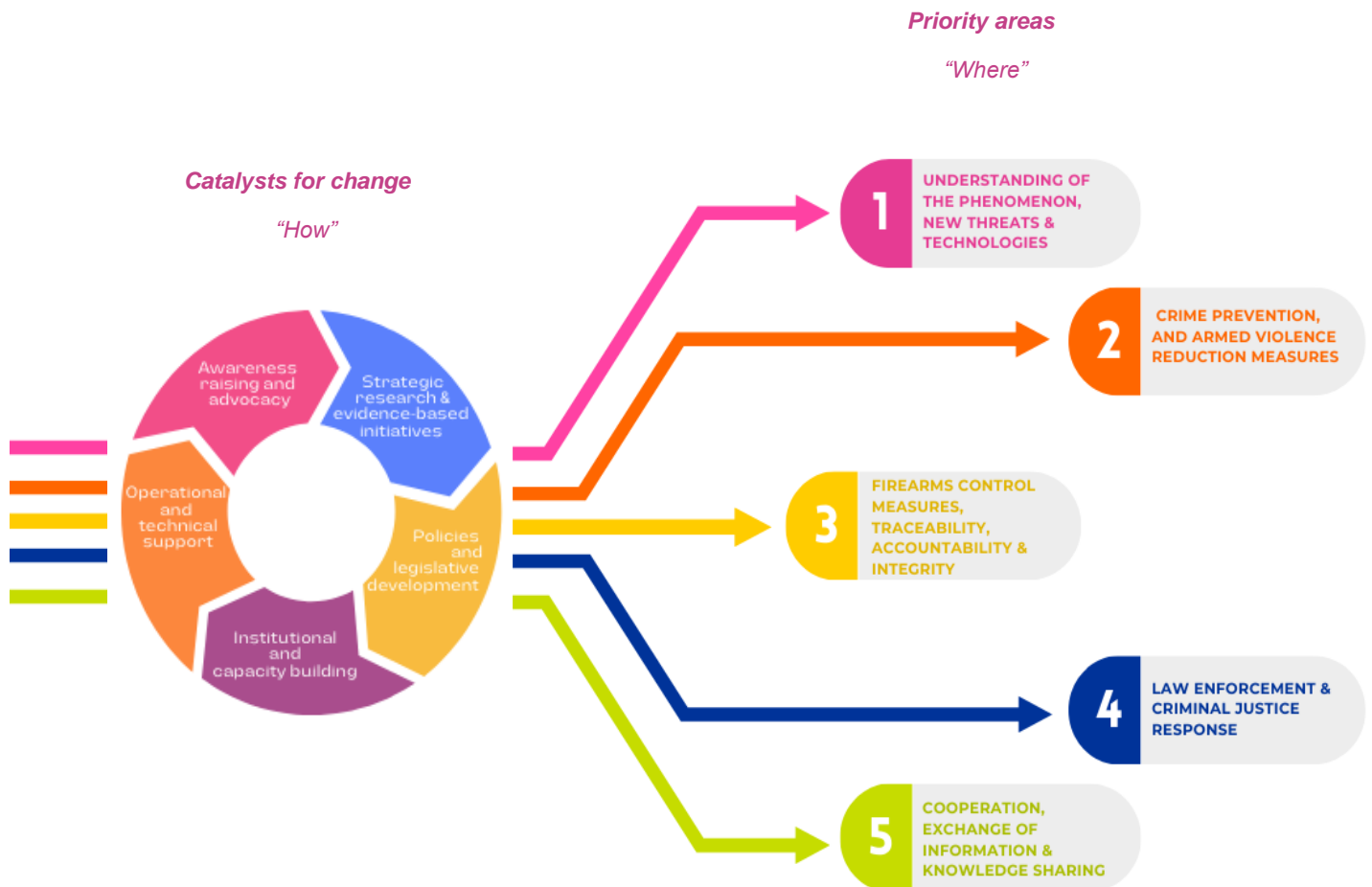
In pursuing these objectives, the Global Firearms Programme will be a key vehicle toward the achievement of target 4 of the Sustainable Development Goal 16 which is calling for *“By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime”*



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Framework is encompassing the “where” to focus and the “how” to achieve the mission. The Strategy proposes to focus on five priorities areas where UNODC and its partners, including Member States, would concentrate their work and technical assistance support to ensure an integrated and comprehensive approach towards the achievement of the Strategy’s ambition.

Five Catalysts for Change serve as pathways providing leverage in the fight against illicit firearms and interconnected threats, and as tools to be used in each priority area. These two complementary components as detailed below are the core of the Strategy that will be translated into concrete action in the UNODC’s revised Global Firearms Programme document.



BENCHMARKS FOR ACTION

While global in nature, the Strategy promotes a differentiated approach taking into account different regional and national contexts and realities, and that is flexible enough to allow for sustainable responses tailored to specific needs. Looking at the current and future challenges ahead, key benchmarks for action are to be highlighted:



Tailor the response to context-specificities and prioritizing actions according to needs

Illicit firearms are highly correlated with destabilizing phenomena and bear the risk to severely impact peace and security in a fragile context and hamper sustainable development. Several mutually reinforcing factors have to be considered as influencing the proliferation, availability, accumulation, and misuse of illicit firearms, including new emerging ones such as the change in the geopolitical order, climate change and related security risks, and new technologies. Monitoring the situation in and around global hotspots and being ready to offer urgent mitigating responses while longer-term interventions are being devised will ensure that UNODC will be where it is most needed.



Addressing interconnected threats

Firearms trafficking does not happen in a vacuum but is driven by supply and demand. On the supply side, illicit firearms, their parts and components and ammunition have a price-tag. For criminals and trafficking networks involved in their distribution, they are lucrative trafficking commodities. In contrast, those that purchase illicit firearms need them as tools to perpetrate power and undermine the rule of law and local government as well as facilitators of violent crime and terrorism. As such illicit firearms are intrinsically linked to the activities of petty criminals, organized criminal groups and terrorists



Promoting people-centred approach

The norms, standards and principles of international human rights, gender and youth related instruments and principles need to be applied also in actions aiming at fighting against illicit firearms and reducing armed violence in the communities, by reinforcing the importance of building the capacities of vulnerable and marginalized groups, while increasing levels of transparency and accountability among duty bearers. Participatory approaches and measures aimed at reducing the proliferation of firearms in the communities, and crime prevention strategies based on awareness, early learning approach, skills development and intergenerational collaboration, will contribute to change mind sets and risky behaviours at community level. This includes a stronger engagement with local communities, media, and civil society, as well as the involvement of relevant public and private stakeholders in the fields of education, innovation, research, and social entrepreneurship.



Fostering strategic alliances & partnerships

Multi-stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Firearms Protocol, including constructive dialogues with civil society, academia, think tanks and the private sector is necessary to offer a differentiated, unique value proposition that leverages capabilities to meet Member States specific needs. Promote the role of entities that may play a direct role in hampering notably the misuse of new technologies, contributing to the scientific research creating new solutions to control and detect firearms derived from or trafficked is key to implement the mission.

CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL EFFORTS

The Strategy forms part of the UNODC broader efforts to contribute to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism, by working for and with Member States to promote justice and the rule of law and build resilient societies. In that sense, the Strategy is fully aligned with UNODC's approach and priorities as described in the UNODC 2021-2025 Strategy, UNODC strategic vision for Africa 2030 and UNODC strategic vision for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025. Moreover, the new Strategy is fully aligned with and aims to promote and contribute to the achievement of United Nations' broader frameworks such as:

-  ***The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***
-  ***The United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development, 2020–2024***
-  ***The New Agenda for Peace***

A unified funding mechanism through the Global Firearms Programme Fund will facilitate proper coordination and cooperation within UNODC and with external partners and ensure result-based management, monitoring and evaluation of results. A joint multi-stakeholder steering committee will help keep track of common goals and objectives.