What are Small Arms & Light Weapons (SALW)?

“... any man-portable lethal weapon that expels or launches [...] a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive...”

International Tracing Instrument (2005)

Small Arms

Designed for individual use

- Handguns
- Rifles and carbines
- Sub-machine guns
- Assault rifles
- Light machine guns

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Light Weapons

Designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew

- Heavy machine guns
- Portable anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns
- Recoilless rifles
- Portable launchers of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missile and rocket systems
- Mortars (calibre < 100mm)

International Tracing Instrument (2005)
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*International Tracing Instrument (2005)*
What’s the Problem?

The death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems - and in most years greatly exceeds the toll of the atomic bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as 'weapons of mass destruction’

Kofi Annan

Misuse

- About 475,000 people are unlawfully killed every year
- About ⅓ of them with small arms (⅓ in low/middle-income countries with high rates of violence)
- Most deaths (about 90%) happen outside of areas affected by armed conflict
- For every person killed with a small arm, many more are injured, traumatized, displaced or left without a means of livelihood

Illicit trade

- Concentrated in areas afflicted by armed conflict, violence, and organized crime, where demand is highest
- Fuels civil wars and regional conflicts; stocks the arsenals of terrorists, drug cartels, and other armed groups; and contributes to violent crime
- Most trafficking conducted by private entities, but governments also involved
- Usually regional or local trade; ‘ant trade’ more significant than large volume trafficking
- A major source in developing countries are inadequately secured national SALW stockpiles
Numbers

- About 875m small arms exist (1 for every 8 people on the planet)
- 74% are held by civilians
- 23% by armed forces
- 3% by police
- 0.1% by non-State armed groups
- About 12 billion rounds of ammunition are produced annually

UN Response

- UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All its Aspects (2001)
- Firearms Protocol to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2005)
- International Instrument to Enable States to Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit SALW (2005)
- Arms Trade Treaty (2014) – includes all conventional arms

What are Voluntary international standards that provide practical guidance on putting in place effective controls over the full life-cycle of small arms and light weapons so as to reduce the risk of their falling into the hands of those who would misuse them

Why were developed?

The initiative to develop ISACS came from UN agencies that participate in the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism.
What do ISACS control standards seek to achieve?

1. Provide clear, practical and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of SALW control.
2. Ensure that the UN as a whole consistently delivers the highest quality advice and support to Member States on putting in place effective controls over the full life-cycle of SALW.

Framework & Foundation

ISACS have a framework and a foundation based on:
- UN Programme of Action
- International Tracing Instrument
- Firearms Protocol
- Arms Trade Treaty
- Regional & sub-regional standards | best practice guidelines | codes of conduct | model legislation | model regulations
Where standards fit in

Global Norms
International Standards
Technical Guidelines
Standard Operating Procedures
Training Materials

General

Specific

Who is developing

International Small Arms
ISACS
Control Standards

In addition to drawing upon expertise within the United Nations system, CASA is collaborating with leading experts worldwide to develop ISACS

ISACS complement and reinforce regional standards and guidelines

How do ISACS relate to regional standards & guidelines?

ISACS Expert Reference Group

Governments
Australia • Canada • Colombia • Ecuador • Germany • Guatemala • Hungary • Iraq • Ireland • Jamaica • Kenya • Liberia • Mexico • New Zealand • Norway • Papua New Guinea • Romania • Serbia • South Sudan • Switzerland • Trinidad and Tobago

International & Regional Organisations
Central American Project on the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CASAC) • Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) • Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) • International Committee of Museums of Arms and Military History (COMAAM) • International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) • International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) • Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Ghana • League of Arab States • NATO Support Agency (NSPA) • Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) • Organization of American States (OAS) • Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons • Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) • South-Eastern and Eastern European Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) • Traceability Solutions

Civil Society
Action on Armed Violence • Action Sécure – République Équatoriale (ASRE) • Action Sécurité Éthique Républicaine (ASER), France • African Strategic and Peace Research Group (AFSTRAG) • Asia Pacific International Centre for Conversion (APICCC) • British Shooting Sports Council • Building Peace Parliamentary Network on SAOLB • Canadian Coalition for Gun Control • Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) • Church Aid • Dush-Dush Demining Group • Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) • Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) • Geneva Forum • Groupe de recherche et d’Information sur la paix et la sécurité (GRI-PS) • Halo Trust • Handling International • Institute for Security Studies, South Africa (ISS) • International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) • International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (ICWSH) • Mines Advisory Group (MAG) • Monterey Institute of International Studies • National Firearms Association of Canada • Nonviolence International • Open Forum Pacific for the Advancement of Women & People with Disabilities, Uganda • Project Ploughshares • Safariland • Small Arms Survey • Small Arms Technical Assistance Research Institute (SITRAIR) • Unitas Foundation, Turkey • University of Calgary, Canada • West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) • Women in Alternative Action, Cameroon

Private Sector
Defense Small Arms Advisory Council (DSSAC) • ESPE Global Consultancy • Eyewitness Capabilities, Ltd. • HBAR Consultancy • National Association of Sporting Firearms and Ammunition Manufacturers, Italy (ANFAMA) • Thierry Jacobs, Independent Technical Expert • Traceability Solutions
Are best practices? **NO**

In the strict sense of the term, **NO**

Are they compulsory? **NO** they are voluntary

Do cover ammunition? **NO** but the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) do

Effectiveness

Achievability

Standard

Getting the balance right
Overview of ISACS modules

6 Series of 24 individual modules

ISACS Modules [Part 1]

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ISACS Assessment Tool

- Developed by UNIDIR with support from ISACS Inter-Agency Support Unit
- Powerful software tool that draws on ISACS to help design, monitor and evaluate SALW control programmes and to conduct national self-assessments
- Regional training-of-trainers conducted in Europe, Latin America, Caribbean, Africa and the Pacific
How are ISACS Control Standards being used?

- by UN Agencies – to provide support and advice to States
- by international and regional organisations – to develop or revise regional standards and guidelines
- by training institutes – to design and update SALW training curricula
- by civil society – as an advocacy tool and to help build local capacity
- by the private sector – to evaluate SALW control programmes

www.smallarmsstandards.org
ISACS Inter-Agency Support Unit
United Nations, New York
support@smallarmsstandards.org

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