

# About the Small Arms Survey

## About the project

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. It serves as the principal international source of public information on all aspects of small arms, and as a resource centre for governments, policy-makers researchers, and activists. The project has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, and sociology who work closely with a worldwide network of researchers and partner institutes.

## History of the project

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons represents a grave threat to human security. The unchecked spread of these weapons has exacerbated inter- and intra-state conflicts, contributed to human rights violations, undermined political and economic development, destabilized communities, and devastated the lives of millions of people.

The future success of efforts to deal with small arms and light weapons will depend in large part on the development of accurate information concerning the global flow of these weapons, and on reliable analyses of the causes and consequences of their proliferation. Effective governmental or non-governmental action depends on a correct diagnosis of the problem, yet policy-makers, analysts, and activists often lack basic information concerning the production, transfer, stockpiling, and use of small arms and light weapons around the world. The strengths and weaknesses of various policy instruments (such as gun buy-back schemes, strengthening of export controls, codes of conduct, firearms, or ammunition marking) also need to be assessed on an ongoing basis so that “best practices” can be spread from region to region.

Recognizing the need to address these complex issues, the Swiss government, in conjunction with other interested governments, established the Small Arms Survey project in 1999. The project is located at the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland. It is also linked to the Graduate Institute’s Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies (PSIS).

## Donors

The Small Arms Survey project is funded by contributions from the following governments:

- Switzerland
- Belgium
- Canada
- Denmark
- France
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

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## Contacts

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Chapters of the yearbook are a result of extensive peer review, consultation with experts and research with partner organisations.

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### Introduction

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## Project objectives

The Small Arms Survey aims to:

- Serve as the principal international source of impartial and public information on all aspects of small arms and light weapons;
- Act as a resource for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists in terms of information and research on small arms issues;
- Be an independent monitor of national and international governmental and non-governmental policy initiatives on small arms;
- Act as a conduit for information and dialogue on small arms issues between North and South and between East and West;
- Serve as the nexus for an international network of researchers, research institutes, and NGOs working on small arms issues;
- Be an outlet for policy-relevant research on small arms issues; and
- Act as a forum and clearinghouse for sharing of information, as well as the dissemination of best practice measures and initiatives dealing with small arms issues.

## Project activities

**Occasional Paper Series** published periodically, presents substantial research findings on data, methodological, and conceptual issues related to small arms or detailed country and regional case studies. The series is published in hard copy and is also accessible on the project's website.

**Commissioned Research** carried out by independent researchers, collaborators, and partner institutions is integrated in various Small Arms Survey publications. Field research has been commissioned in Southern Africa, Central Africa, West Africa, South Asia, South East Asia, East and Central Europe, the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union, Central America, and Latin America.

**Joint Projects** are undertaken with independent researchers, international organizations, UN agencies, research organizations, NGOs, and partner institutions.

**The Resource Centre** at the project's office in Geneva contains a comprehensive collection of both electronic and print material, including journals, magazines, official publications, and "grey" literature. It is accessible to researchers and other interested parties.