



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT**

**By the Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre on the OSCE Activities to  
Contribute to the UN Programme of Action**

at the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Implementation of the Programme  
of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light  
Weapons in All its Aspects (BMS7)

26-30 July 2021, New York

delivered on 28 July 2021 via video conferencing

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE participating States continue to work at the forefront of international efforts to curb illicit trafficking in weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, which remains an international threat to security in the OSCE area and beyond. By strengthening the complementarity with international processes, the OSCE actively contributes to the implementation of the Programme of Action on SALW and aims to reduce illicit arms flows in line with the Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.4.

The fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and conventional ammunition is an integral part of the OSCE's wider efforts in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation. Securing weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition against theft and preventing their diversion to illicit markets are important preconditions for stability and security in the OSCE area. The proliferation of illicit small arms and ammunition contributes to conflict in many ways. It can exacerbate tensions and ignite violence, and it contributes to transnational organized crime and terrorism. Illicit trafficking of SALW also undermines respect for human rights and makes efforts to address gender-based violence more difficult. It is also a hindrance to sustainable development. It is therefore essential to continue strengthening global, regional and national control practices.

Uncontrolled access to SALW and SCA, improvised explosive devices and poor export control, all create distrust and insecurity in local communities. In recent years, we have also seen growth in the use of converted, 3D-printed, and reactivated weapons. Each one of these weapons can kill or injure innocent people. A better control of illicit weapons, and reducing proliferation and access to them, directly contributes to saving lives.

Last year the OSCE marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [the OSCE Document on SALW](#). The document sets the norms, principles and measures to control these arms. [The OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition](#) addresses the security risks in the OSCE area arising from SCA, explosive material, and detonating devices in surplus or awaiting destruction. These two documents provide a framework for preventing diversion of SALW and stockpiles of conventional ammunition into illicit markets.

The OSCE conducts regular assessments of the implementation of its framework documents through its biennial meetings on normative aspects and practical assistance projects. This review process has proved valuable in identifying strengths and weaknesses in our normative framework and its practical application. These assessments have also helped participating States, the Field Operations take effective action to address excessive accumulation and spread of SALW, and conventional ammunition, built on informed and agreed recommendations.

The OSCE Best Practice Guides cover most stages of the SALW and conventional ammunition life-cycle in the OSCE area and beyond. They also provide useful guidance for assistance projects and other capacity-building initiatives. On a voluntary basis, participating States continue to apply the commonly agreed standards, and to incorporate them in national legislation and procedures. OSCE Partners for Co-operation are also encouraged to follow OSCE good practices.

In 2019, the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation launched a comprehensive review and update process to ensure that the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW and SCA covering each stage of the life-cycle of SALW remain relevant and applicable.

The OSCE has [updated the Best Practice Guide on Deactivation of SALW](#), whereby all 57 OSCE participating States recommitted to addressing the risks and challenges caused by reactivated, converted or otherwise illegally modified weapons. The updates are based on the outcome of the UN 3<sup>rd</sup> Review Conference [Third United Nations Conference to Review

Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects] recognizing important elements on ensuring irreversible SALW deactivation or destruction.

Another Guide that has been reviewed and updated most recently is [on National Procedures for the Destruction of SALW](#) cross-referencing MOSAIC 05.50 on planning, risk management, and destruction techniques. The Guide provides information and analysis for developing policy and designing general guidelines and procedures for the destruction of SALW from the time of identification for destruction until the final disposal of scrap material.

The OSCE continues its work on reviewing and updating the Best Practice Guides on Marking, Record-keeping and Traceability of SALW; on National Procedures for Stockpile Management and Security; National Procedures for Stockpile Management, Security and Destruction of Man-portable Air Defence Systems; on SALW in Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) processes; on Procedures for Management of Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition; on Ammunition Transportation; on Ammunition Marking, Registration, and Record-keeping. The review and update process is led by the OSCE participating States and supported by the OSCE Secretariat.

Tackling the proliferation of illicit SALW requires a comprehensive and co-operative regional approach based on commonly agreed norms, principles and measures. We must also take into account the impact of new technologies and how these challenge the traditional approach to SALW control. Close co-operation with international organizations and stakeholders enables the illicit trafficking in SALW and SCA to be tackled more effectively.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE continues to deliver results through more than 20 assistance projects with a financial volume of about EUR 33 million. Participating States have provided support to projects ranging from building humanitarian demining capacity, ensuring the application of physical safety and security measures at weapons and ammunition depots, providing training that enables personnel to work according to international standards, to disposing of cluster and aviation bombs and highly toxic rocket fuel components.

An overarching project on strengthening OSCE action against the illicit proliferation of SALW and SCA is up and running, with the aim of assisting participating States to ensure more effective planning and implementation of their work in this area.

In recent years, the focus in the area of SALW and SCA has shifted from securing depots and managing surplus of weapons and ammunition towards the illicit trafficking of these materials by criminal and terrorist entities. This shift requires multi-level approaches to the assistance mechanism as well as funding. The interests of the donor community have also expanded, requiring comprehensive co-ordination and networking. To help make this transition, it can be useful to draw on lessons learned from current practices in implementing the assistance mechanism and from managing the life-cycle of OSCE SALW and SCA projects. This can also strengthen the capacity-building of all stakeholders involved in requesting and implementing assistance projects.

In October this year, the OSCE will hold a biennial meeting to review the implementation of the assistance projects in the field of SALW and SCA. The focus will be on the assistance mechanism, challenges and trends in the projects' implementation, as well as application of OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW and Conventional Ammunition and other international standards to the assistance projects.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, I wish to highlight two particular issues that are vital to our work on SALW and SCA. The first is the integration of a gender dimension into SALW and SCA-related policies. Mainstreaming gender aspects into SALW and SCA-related policies, as well as into standards and practical assistance frameworks, would [This will] contribute significantly to common efforts to effectively combat illicit trafficking in SALW and SCA.

In this context, let me highlight the OSCE and UNODA joint initiative on the annual conduct of [the Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme](#) on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation for young professionals, in particular women. The training is aimed at empowering women and increase women's participation in policymaking, planning and implementation processes in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

These activities help to advance the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality, and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

The second issue is the importance of transparency, including the provision of detailed reporting, to strengthen international efforts to control the proliferation of small arms and ammunition. Building such transparency is a confidence- and security-building measure in itself. We can optimize our actions by ensuring complementarity in reporting, as we do with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. The OSCE is always looking for synergies with other actors, and in areas where we have expertise, we continue to offer our comparative advantages at both the regional and the global level.

Mr. Chairperson,

Through our good practices, transparency measures and the accumulated expertise of our project activities, the OSCE will continue to contribute to the fight against illicit trafficking in SALW and SCA.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.