**Abstract**

This background paper will summarize the challenges posed by illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms, delving into global implications of this issue. The document investigates existing international legal frameworks, highlighting gaps and inefficiencies in addressing this complex problem. It also addressing the history of firearms trafficking, the parties affected by this issue as well as suggest possible solutions.

**Introduction**

The United Nations Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) was created as the first of the Main Committees in the General Assembly when the charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945. the purpose of DISEC is to establish ‘general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments

DISEC faces several modern-day challenges in addressing global security issues. Some of these challenges include the rapid development and deployment of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons systems, and missile technologies, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and concerns about non-state actors acquiring nuclear capabilities. In order to overcome these challenges, DISEC hopes to strengthen global security, adapt to emerging threats and advance disarmament diplomacy

**Glossary**

**Trafficking:** the act of selling and buying good illegally

**Conflict:** a serious disagreement or argument, typically a long-lasting one **Proliferation:** rapid increase in the number or amount of something

**Ammunition:** a supply or quantity of bullets and shells

**Illicit:** forbidden by law, rules or custom

**Industrialization:** the development of industries in a country or region on a wide scale

**Current situation**

The illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms stand as pressing challenges, posing a direct threat to international peace, security, and human well-being. The illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms give rise to various problems. One major issue is the exacerbation of armed conflicts, as illicitly produced and trafficked firearms often find their way into conflict zones, fueling violence and prolonging hostilities. This contributes to the displacement of populations and impedes efforts to establish lasting peace. Additionally, the spread of illegal weapons amplifies violent crime rates worldwide, affecting communities and undermining law enforcement efforts. The accessibility of these firearms to criminals enhances the potential for armed robberies, gang activities, and other illicit operations.

The intricate web of illicit arms networks is sustained by a variety of factors, including weak national regulations, corruption, and the porous nature of international borders. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the international community has endeavored to address these concerns through collaborative efforts aimed at strengthening arms control measures, enhancing border security, and fostering international cooperation.

**Groups affected by the issue**

| **Civilian Populations:** |
| --- |

Ordinary citizens are directly affected by the increased prevalence of

illegal firearms, which contributes to higher rates of violent crime, armed robberies, and overall insecurity within communities.

| **Conflict-Affected Regions:** |
| --- |

Areas experiencing armed conflicts are greatly affected as illicit

firearms exacerbate the intensity and duration of conflicts. This not only results in increased casualties but also makes the post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding processes more challenging.

| **Humanitarian Organizations:** |
| --- |

Organizations providing humanitarian assistance and aid in

conflict zones face increased risks and difficulties when illicit firearms are present. These organizations may find it challenging to deliver aid safely and effectively in areas with heightened insecurity.

| **Government Authorities:** |
| --- |

National governments struggle with the destabilizing effects of illicit

firearms on internal security and governance. The presence of these weapons may contribute to political instability, hinder development efforts, and strain the overall social fabric of a nation.

**UN involvement /treaties and agreements currently in place**

The United Nations (UN) plays a crucial role in addressing the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms on a global scale. Recognizing the consequences of this issue on international peace and security, the UN has undertaken various initiatives to establish norms and regulations. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) collaborates with member states, international organizations, and civil society to develop comprehensive strategies for preventing and combating the illicit trade in firearms.

Resolutions such as the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) provide a framework for member states to enhance national controls, regulate firearms transfers, and improve border management. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), adopted by the UN General Assembly, represents a landmark effort to regulate the international trade in conventional arms.

The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol) is the only legally binding instrument to counter the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition at the global level. It was adopted by resolution 55/255 of 31 May 2001 at the fifty fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and it entered into force on 3 July 2005.

**Brief history**

The illicit trafficking and manufacturing of firearms have a complex history spanning centuries. Rooted in pre-modern times, it became more pronounced during the colonial era, influenced by the industrialization of firearm production in the 19th century. Post-World War I and the Cold War era saw significant surges in illicit arms activities, driven by excess weapons and geopolitical tensions. The late 20th century witnessed a rise in illicit arms trafficking due to regional conflicts and the breakup of states. In the 21st century, factors like weak governance and transnational criminal networks continue to fuel this global challenge. While the concept of illicit arms trafficking gained prominence in the latter part of the 20th century, historical records indicate a longstanding and evolving history of illegal firearm activities.

**Possible solutions to the issue**

∙ Implement strict licensing procedures and background checks to regulate legal firearm ownership.

∙ Explore the use of technology, such as tracking systems and tracing mechanisms, to monitor the movement of firearms and identify their origin.

∙ Strengthen and enforce disarmament and arms control agreements, such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), to regulate the international trade in conventional arms.

**Bibliography**

The Firearms Protocol (unodc.org)

Illegal Arms Trafficking — Illicit trade

Module\_04\_-\_The\_Illicit\_Market\_in\_Firearms\_FINAL.pdf (unodc.org) Firearms — combating illicit manufacture and trafficking | EUR-Lex (europa.eu) Global Study on Firearms 2020 (unodc.org)