

34. Small arms

Overview

During the period, the Security Council held one meeting relating to small arms. On 30 April 2008, the Council considered the report of the Secretary-General on small arms,⁶⁶⁶ which contained his analysis, observations and recommendations on various aspects of the issue of small arms, with an emphasis on the negative impact that illicit small arms had on security, human rights and socioeconomic development, in particular in areas of crisis and post-conflict situations. The report was introduced by the Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Speakers concurred with the Director's observations on the role of small arms in stirring up and prolonging conflicts, in particular the adverse effects of illicit trade and the proliferation of small weapons on socioeconomic development, including the recruitment of child soldiers and disruption of peacebuilding. A number of speakers, in particular, expressed the concern that the majority of the victims were among the most vulnerable, including women, children and non-combatants. Some urged that the issue of small arms should be addressed even more urgently, given its implications for cross-border crimes and international terrorism.

A number of speakers welcomed the recommendations of the Secretary-General, such as

strengthening coordination among various bodies of the United Nations, curbing illicit trade and brokering, enhancing end-user certification and verification, strengthening national capacities in data collection and sharing, and addressing the issue of the destruction of surplus stocks. While affirming the role of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects⁶⁶⁷ in stemming the proliferation of small arms, many speakers noted its slow and inadequate implementation. They called for the establishment of an international legal framework by adopting a legally binding instrument to regulate the conventional arms trade. Several delegations also stressed the need to recognize the right of self-defence in dealing with the issue of small arms.

Many speakers welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendations directly relating to the work of the Council, including improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions mandated to monitor arms embargoes. However, the representative of the United States held that the inclusion of arms embargo monitoring functions in the mandate of peacekeeping operations should not be applied as a general rule, as the recommendation was drawn from the most complex cases. He also stressed that the enforcement of arms embargoes should rest with Member States, not with the Council, or the peacekeeping operations authorized by the Council.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁶ S/2008/258, submitted pursuant to S/PRST/2007/24, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on small arms to the Council biennially, beginning in 2008.

⁶⁶⁷ See A/CONF.192/15, sect. IV.

⁶⁶⁸ See S/PV.5881, p. 15.

Meetings: small arms

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
5881st 30 April 2008	Report of the Secretary- General (S/2008/258)		Rule 37 32 Member States ^a Rule 39 Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs	All Council members and all invitees	

^a Argentina, Australia, Austria, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland (on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland), Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Slovenia (on behalf of the European Union), Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda and Uruguay.

35. Women and peace and security

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held five meetings and adopted three resolutions and one presidential statement in connection with women and peace and security. The decisions and accompanying discussions dealt primarily with sexual violence and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

19 June 2008 to 30 September 2009: resolutions on sexual violence

At the meeting on 19 June 2008, there was widespread consensus on all major aspects of the draft resolution before the Council.⁶⁶⁹ Speakers highlighted the need to fight sexual violence during all aspects of conflict, including in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and transitional justice, and to provide treatment for victims. Many delegations made reference to the International Criminal Court in connection with fighting impunity, and called for situations involving sexual violence to be referred to the Court. One representative opined that a reference to the Court should have been included in the draft resolution.⁶⁷⁰

The draft resolution was adopted as resolution 1820 (2008), in which the Council stressed that sexual violence, when used as a tactic of war or as part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, could significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and might impede the restoration of international peace and security. The Council also stressed the need for the exclusion of sexual violence crimes from amnesty provisions in the context of conflict resolution processes, affirmed its intention to take into consideration targeted and graduated measures against parties responsible for sexual violence.

On 7 August 2009, the Council heard a briefing by the Secretary-General in which he stated that despite some progress in implementing resolution 1820 (2008), the deliberate targeting of civilians through sexual violence continued and had become part of the arsenal to pursue military, political and socioeconomic aims. He called for concrete action to prevent and respond to sexual violence, including through: (a) a multisectoral response; (b) a consistent focus on sexual violence in the planning and implementation of mission mandates; (c) conclusion of the General Assembly's deliberations on a United Nations institution to advance gender equality and women's human rights, which he proposed to support by appointing a new senior system-wide official to address sexual violence; and (d) improvement of the monitoring, investigation and documentation of sexual

⁶⁶⁹ S/2008/403.

⁶⁷⁰ S/PV.5916 and Corr.1, p. 31 (Liechtenstein).