

## **Tracking Firearms**

Tracking firearms is important in allowing police to take preventative measures. While many police forces now routinely ask about the presence of firearms in the home when making domestic calls, the victims may or may not know and often do not have precise details about the number or location of guns. Often police must rely on information provided by the accused or execute a search warrant in order to locate the guns. Currently, there are about 18,000 individuals prohibited from owning firearms and knowledge about who owns guns is needed to enforce them.

Tracking is also considered important in improving compliance with safe storage regulations by making firearms owners more accountable for what happens to their firearms. This will reduce the misuse and theft of firearms and assist in police investigations.

Improving the tracking of firearms is considered essential to controlling the illegal gun trade because it allows legal and illegal firearms to be distinguished. It also reduces the ability of licensed owners to acquire firearms and transfer them illegally to unlicensed owners. Systems which track firearms from point of entry is considered essential to controlling "leakage" and distinguishing illegal from legal firearms.<sup>33</sup>

## **Prohibiting the sale of Military Firearms and Small Handguns**

Canada prohibited the sale of fully automatic assault weapons in 1978, it added semiautomatic versions of fully automatics in 1993 and has extended the prohibition of military weapons to include some semiautomatic weapons "not reasonably used in hunting or for sporting purposes". While some countries such as Australia have implemented compulsory buy backs to remove prohibited weapons from circulation, Canada "grandfathered" most of the current owners. Canada also prohibited the sale of some small barreled in addition to .25 and .32 handguns because of their concealability and unsuitability for target shooting.

The mix of guns which are misused varies from country to country but all sources must be addressed with a comprehensive regulation scheme similar to the ones in place in many countries and those recently adopted by Canada.

*Recommendation 4. Member states should be assisted in implementing regulatory schemes which include:*

- safe storage regulations for all firearms to reduce inappropriate access
- education and training programs to support compliance and effective implementation
- appropriate enforcement and sanctions for firearms misuse
- a licensing scheme to prevent the possession of firearms by individuals who pose a risk to themselves or others
- a record keeping system to track firearms, reduce illegal trafficking, and support law enforcement