

PREFACE

Canada views the trade and use of small arms and light weapons to have potentially serious consequences. In particular, excessive accumulations of these weapons can pose significant dangers to internal security and economic development in many countries as well as to international peace and security. The traffic in and possession of such weapons can also have serious consequences for crime prevention as well as public health and safety.

While recognizing that states have a right of self-defence, as articulated in the United Nations Charter, as well as to acquire arms for their security, such rights are not unqualified. Canada firmly believes that the acquisition of small arms and light weapons must not lead to excessive accumulations that threaten international or internal peace and security. Canada also believes that international transfers of armaments should be restricted when such transfers contribute to human rights abuses.

Efforts to control the supply of small arms and light weapons, while important, are not alone sufficient to address satisfactorily the problems posed by these weapons. Such efforts must be accompanied by policies at the national and international levels to address the reasons behind the demand for such arms. These include, among others: social and political conflict, economic deprivation, terrorism, and drug trafficking.

The problems engendered by the trade and use of small arms and the solutions to these problems are multifaceted. There are, among others, non-proliferation, micro-disarmament and firearms regulation dimensions. Moreover, coordinated action by national governments, regional organizations and global bodies including the United Nations are imperative for successfully addressing this issue.

In Canada's view, addressing the negative consequences of the trade and use of small arms and light weapons is a formidable but not an insurmountable problem. The illicit nature of part of this trade itself provides a significant challenge to domestic law enforcement agencies, governments and the world community. While it may be difficult to eradicate completely the illicit traffic in and use of small quantities of small arms and light weapons, there is much that can be done through constructive action at the national, regional and international level to curtail the deleterious consequences of such weapons.

This *Annotated Bibliography* has been prepared to assist government officials and researchers in their work on the subject of small arms and light weapons. It is made available as part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's policy to share the results of independent research undertaken by the Department's Verification Research Program. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade or of the Canadian Government.

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