

## International Fire/Small Arms Control: Finding the Common Ground

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Although the twin problems of controlling firearms and small arms have been traditionally approached from two distinct tracks, there are important linkages between these seemingly separate efforts which lead to a comprehensive analytical and policy framework. More specifically, this framework draws from the public health perspective according to which the context in which death and injuries occur from firearms and small arms is disregarded. Instead, access to firearms and small arms is identified to be at the root of conflicts and violence at all societal levels, without discriminating among domestic violence, civil wars, and international conflicts. Firearms and small arms can be accessed and used in a variety of threatening situations by way of the misuse of legally-acquired firearms, the illegal transfer of legal firearms, and the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms. As a result, the problem of conflict and violence can be addressed in part by reducing access to firearms and small arms through the international co-ordination of supply-side controls of these weapons and ammunition. Such controls would include the following: common standards regarding domestic regulation and international transfers, transparency, greater standardisation of import and export controls. These controls may be carried out in tandem with other approaches to control the use of firearms and small arms, in particular peacebuilding strategies which target the demand for firearms and small arms. At the same time, issues of sovereignty and civil rights are exploited by opponents of efforts to control firearms and small arms and require responses.

### Policy Recommendations:

- a Canadian strategy can arise from this recognition of linkages between domestic and international efforts to control firearms and small arms and, thereby, pursue international agreements that include:

- data collection and sharing (surveillance, compliance);
- target root causes of violence to reduce demand for firearms/small arms;
- control the supply of arms;
- deterrence/enforcement;
- implementation (establish roles and coordinate work of relevant departments, promote information sharing and coordination of efforts).