SIDE EVENT

TRACKING THE UNTRACEABLE

THE NEW HORIZON OF WEAPON TRACING

Date
Tuesday 28 June 2022

Time
13:15 – 14:30 EST

Location
Conference Room 6, UNHQ in New York

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INTERPOL

CONFLICT ARMAMENT RESEARCH

german cooperation
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itrace
European Union Funded

CONTEXT

Tracing illicit weapons is a critical counter-diversion tool for national authorities and investigators on the frontlines of combating the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons (SALW) to unauthorised recipients. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) to provide, for the first time, an international framework for cooperation in weapon tracing. Under this framework, governments pledge to enhance weapon tracing.

Tracing illicit weapons helps to: **1)** identify their provenance; **2)** uncover the mechanisms and patterns of diversion; and **3)** counter risks of diversion. Tracing shines new light on weaknesses in supply chains, and provides urgent red flags for arms transfer risk assessments. It also is a key support for law enforcement and intelligence efforts to counter illicit arms trafficking.

Sixteen years of the ITI have seen notable progress in its implementation, but also several persistent challenges that have impeded its full operationalisation. Challenges in identification, marking, record-keeping, and information sharing have been observed across various contexts and issues, including:

- → Limited technical and operational capacity to conduct weapon tracing and investigations, including gaps in the development and implementation of national procedures for arms recovery, tracing, and analysis;
- → Conflict-affected settings, where there may be lack of systematic measures, dedicated capacity, and sufficient technical resources for effective weapon tracing;
- → Marking obliteration, where illicit actors have erased unique identifiers of weapons;
- → Developments in weapon manufacturing, technology and design, where increased use of polymer, 3D-printing, and weapon modularity have presented both challenges and opportunities for traceability; and
- → Lack of sufficient knowledge and use of international policing capabilities and other international tracing mechanisms assisting SALW monitoring, investigation and analysis.

EVENT DETAILS

On the occasion of the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8), **Conflict Armament Research** (CAR), in cooperation with the **European Union**, **INTERPOL** and the **Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations**, is convening a panel dialogue to share insights on recent developments and experiences in weapon tracing with a view to identifying opportunities for further strengthening ITI implementation. Concretely, it seeks to promote knowledge and generate ideas on:

- → Conflict tracing, including recent CAR investigative findings and how tracing has supported the development of preventive measures against diversion, as well as supported monitoring and enforcement of UN and EU arms embargoes;
- → Weapon marking obliteration, including trends and patterns of obliteration observed in the field, and potential technological solutions to recover erased markings;
- → Challenges and opportunities to enhance international police cooperation on weapon tracing, including detection and investigation capabilities, data collection and analysis of illicit firearm flows, information sharing on marking practices and firearms recovery methods, as well as use of relevant INTERPOL tools such as the Firearms Reference Table, the Firearms Recovery Protocol, and the Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System; and
- → Recent developments in weapon manufacturing, technology and design, including innovative investigative techniques, such as forensic and technological applications, to address evolving weapon traceability challenges relating to polymer, 3D-printing and modularity.

The side-event is open to BMS8 participants, and will be held in English.

Ahead of BMS8, CAR has produced a series of new investigative reports on illicit weapons globally, from Afghanistan, Niger and Ukraine. Since its inception in 2011, CAR has documented more than half a million diverted items and traced thousands of unique supply chains.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

EVENT MODERATOR
Himayu Shiotani
Head of International Policy – Conflict Armament Research

WELCOME REMARKS: ITI AND THE WAY FORWARD
H.E. Ambassador Enrique A. Manalo
Permanent Representative and the President-designate of the BMS8 – Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations

OPENING REMARKS
Stefan Tressing
Acting EU Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament

INSIGHT FROM CONFLICT TRACING: NEW CAR INVESTIGATION ON WEAPON SUPPLIES FUELLING TERRORISM IN LAKE CHAD REGION
Ashley Hamer
Field Investigator – Conflict Armament Research

LESSONS FROM INTERNATIONAL POLICE COOPERATION TO ENHANCE WEAPON TRACING
Line Haidar
Firearms Specialist – INTERPOL

ENHANCING TRACEABILITY: FORENSIC INVESTIGATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS TO TRACE THE UNTRACEABLE
Bailey Henwood
Forensic Scientist – Conflict Armament Research

For any questions, please contact: admin@conflictarm.com.

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