



## *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*

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Department of Political Affairs - Security Council Affairs Division  
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### **30. Small Arms**

#### **Overview**

On 26 September 2013, the Security Council held a high-level meeting and adopted its first resolution in connection with small arms. The resolution was adopted by 14 votes in favour and 1 abstention (Russian Federation). The table at the end of this section provides more information on the meeting at which this item was considered as well as on invitees, speakers and the decision adopted.

#### **Resolution on small arms**

During the meeting, the Secretary-General introduced his biennial report on small arms,<sup>1</sup> underscoring how the absence of regulation, the ease of access to arms and the great profitability of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons fuelled insecurity and conflict, leading to a vast range of human rights violations.<sup>2</sup> The Council also heard a briefing by the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, who added that the ICRC was a first-hand witness of the devastating costs to civilians of the easy access to, and misuse of, small arms and light weapons.<sup>3</sup>

Speaking prior to the voting, the representative of the Russian Federation maintained that the draft resolution lacked a provision on the supply of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. He affirmed that the root of the problem of small arms and light weapons

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<sup>1</sup> [S/2013/503](#). In [S/PRST/2007/24](#), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on small arms to the Council biennially beginning in 2008.

<sup>2</sup> [S/PV.7036](#), pp. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

was illicit trafficking and stated that imposing universal prohibitions on the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors and unauthorised State recipients and users was of particular importance. The recent events in Mali were, in his view, a salient example where weapons that had initially been transferred to Libyan groups for humanitarian reasons were used as instruments for the violation of fundamental human rights and the source of suffering for the civilian population.<sup>4</sup>

In the resolution, the Council encouraged the establishment or strengthening, where appropriate, of subregional and regional cooperation, coordination and information sharing mechanisms with a view to preventing, combating, and eradicating illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.<sup>5</sup> The Council also encouraged information-sharing between groups of experts, peacekeeping missions within their mandates and other relevant United Nations entities on possible arms embargo violations. Lastly, the Council urged States to consider signing and ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible, encouraging States, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations that were in a position to do so to render assistance in capacity-building to enable States Parties to fulfil and implement the Treaty's obligations.<sup>6</sup>

During the debate that followed the adoption of resolution [2117 \(2013\)](#), speakers welcomed the resolution as well as the recommendations proposed by the Secretary-General in his report, concurring on how international cooperation could be strengthened to better tackle the issue through the existing mechanisms. Several delegations also expressed their support for the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty as a milestone, which for the first time regulated international trade in conventional weapons, and vowed to work towards its rapid entry into force and implementation.

A number of speakers emphasized the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons on international peace and security, exacerbating conflict and posing a threat to civilians, especially women and children, deliberately targeted.<sup>7</sup> In that regard, several speakers stressed the importance of the role of the Council on the issue of illicit small arms and light

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution [2117 \(2013\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [A/RES/67/234 B](#). The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted by the General Assembly on 2 April 2013.

<sup>7</sup> [S/PV.7036](#), p. 6 (Australia); p. 7 (Guatemala); p. 8 (Luxembourg); pp. 11-12 (Morocco); p. 13 (Rwanda); pp. 18-19 (Togo); p. 19 (Argentina).

weapons in conflict and post-conflict situations.<sup>8</sup> The representative of the Republic of Korea highlighted that an enhanced role of the Council could be achieved by assisting and supporting Member States in implementing arms embargoes, giving effective mandates and sufficient resources to peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions as well as special political missions, and enhancing coordination and information sharing across the United Nations system. In addition, he suggested that the Security Council should establish a follow-up mechanism to the biennial reports of the Secretary-General in order to maintain momentum and move forward through a continuous assessment of the process.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 6 (Australia); p. 7 (Guatemala); p. 8 (Luxembourg); p. 9 (United Kingdom); p. 10 (Republic of Korea); p. 15 (Azerbaijan); p. 16 (United States); pp. 18-19 (Togo); p. 19 (Argentina).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

## Meetings: small arms

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
<a href="#">S/PV.7036</a> 26 September 2013	The impact of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on international peace and security	Draft resolution submitted by 26 Member States <sup>a</sup> <a href="#">(S/2013/570)</a>	15 Member States <sup>b</sup>	Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross	Secretary-General, all Council members <sup>c</sup> and invitee under rule 39	Resolution <a href="#">2117 (2013)</a> 14-0-1 <sup>d</sup>
	Report of the Secretary-General on Small arms <a href="#">(S/2013/503)</a>					
	Letter dated 6 September 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General <a href="#">(S/2013/536)</a>					

<sup>a</sup> Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>b</sup> Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, Japan, Liberia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>c</sup> Guatemala was represented by its President and the United Kingdom and Luxembourg by their Deputy Prime Ministers. A number of countries were represented at the ministerial level: Australia (Foreign Minister and President of the Security Council), Azerbaijan (Minister for Foreign Affairs), France (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Morocco (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation), Republic of Korea (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Rwanda (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation), Pakistan (Adviser on National Security and Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister), and the United States was represented by its Permanent Representative and a member of the President's Cabinet.

<sup>d</sup> For: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Australia, China, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Morocco, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom, United States; abstaining: Russian Federation.