

Statement by H.E. Mr. Per Thöresson in the Security Council on “The human cost of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons”

Madam President,

Sweden aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to make some additional remarks in a national capacity.

I wish to [THANK](#) the Lithuanian Presidency for taking the initiative to convene this important debate, and the Secretary-General for his excellent [REPORT](#) (S/2015/289). I would also like to acknowledge the important work of UN Member States in implementing and developing the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as that of UNODA, UNICEF, other UN agencies and NGOs in the field. In addition, I would like to recognise the crime prevention efforts of UNODC, which are a critical complement to our work. Finally, I would like to thank today’s briefers for their valuable contributions.

Madam President,

The theme of today’s debate could not be more relevant and timely. As we have heard from other speakers, the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are key drivers of conflict, which [CONTINUE](#) to undermine international peace and security. The human toll is disastrous. The need to mainstream the issue of small arms and light weapons, and their ammunition, into the Council’s agenda could not be more urgent. The same should go for the arms control related findings of the High Level Review of UN Sanctions, of which Sweden is a co-sponsor.

Madam President, I would like to make four points.

Firstly, we want to see a greater focus on ammunition in discussions on small arms issues. Without ammunition, small arms and light weapons are inoperable. While monitoring transfers of ammunition may be difficult, it is essential to prevent the misuse of existing stocks of small arms. Reporting must be encouraged. Mapping should be increased. Tracking and traceability need to be improved. Furthermore, we would like to see ammunition included in the UN Programme of Action on Small

Arms and Light Weapons, and reporting on ammunition should be fully included in the [UNREGISTER](#) on Conventional Arms.

Secondly, efforts against the misuse and illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, including the implementation of the [ArmsTRADE](#) Treaty (ATT), are paramount to rebuilding peaceful societies. We should make efforts to strengthen UN Peace Support Operations and their mandates concerning small arms and stockpile security in conflict and post-conflict areas. Poor stockpile security constitutes a serious threat to peace and security due to the risk of diversion. Tragic accidents involving stockpiles of ammunition, in particular, serve as reminders of the immediate threat to physical security they pose. In this regard, international cooperation and assistance are key. Increased coordination and local ownership are imperative for results. We have seen this in successful projects in, for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Kenya, where Sweden and other donors and partner countries have worked in close collaboration. Sweden will continue to promote the development of agreed standards and best practices. Sweden will also continue to promote the use of technology to improve the management and security of small arms and ammunition, and physical security and stockpile management in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Thirdly, the use of weapons affects women and men, and boys and girls differently. Research shows that easy availability of small arms and light weapons increases the level of armed violence, which in turn increases the level of violence against women. However, the reality is far more complex than the commonly held perception that women are always on the receiving end of violence. Young men are still the most common perpetrators, but they are also more likely to become victims of armed violence. In this regard, it is paramount to address the male social roles that in many cases shape armed violence. This will [CONTINUE](#) to be a Swedish priority.

Without the full participation of women in combating the misuse and illicit transfer of small arms – in line with the women, peace and [SECURITY](#) agenda – effective and lasting results cannot be achieved. Women's participation has proven central to sustainable peace and development. However, reality on the ground gives considerable scope for improvement: out of 585 negotiated peace agreements in the last two decades only 92 contained references to women. During the same period, fewer than 4 per cent of signatories of peace agreements, and less than 10 per cent of negotiators, were women. However, this does not mean that women are not involved. They are. Sweden will [CONTINUE](#) to support women's organisations, with a focus on conflict and post-conflict settings, in cooperation with civil society and through the UN.

Finally, Madam President,

Let me turn to a major positive development. In regulating the international trade in conventional arms and contributing to combat the fight against the illicit trade in small arms, the Arms Trade Treaty is a giant step forward. The success of the ATT is a result of the political will and commitment of the international community. It demonstrates that political support can bridge traditional divides and lead to real progress, and that tangible results can also be achieved when national security interests are involved. Sweden has long been an active participant in the Arms Trade Treaty process, because we believe in it. The ATT remains a political priority, and we will continue to play an active role in supporting the Treaty's effective universalisation and implementation. For Sweden, the ATT is also important as it focuses on the potential humanitarian consequences of arms trade, and thus on human security, which is at the core of Sweden's disarmament and non-proliferation policies. Moreover, for the first time in a binding international instrument, gender-based violence is included as a factor to be considered.

I would like to finish by referring to the words of the Secretary General on weapons and ammunition. They are hardware, and, as such, physical commodities on which we can take measureable action. The concrete character of weapons management should warrant our unrelenting attention. We can take action. We must take action.

[THANK](#)  you.