

## 27. Small arms

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled “Small arms” which took the form of a briefing.<sup>749</sup> The last time that the Council had considered the item had been on 18 December 2017.<sup>750</sup> More information on the meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.<sup>751</sup>

At a meeting on 5 February<sup>752</sup> pursuant to the biennial report of the Secretary-General,<sup>753</sup> the Council heard a briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Deputy Director of Operations of Conflict Armament Research.<sup>754</sup> In her briefing, the High Representative addressed “two themes of high relevance to the work of the Security Council”: the role of illicit small arms, light weapons and their ammunition in conflict and pervasive crime; and the deeply crosscutting and wide-ranging impact of illicit small arms and light weapons flows. Those two fundamental themes had been consistently raised in the biennial reports of the Secretary-General, as well as in the context of the two thematic resolutions adopted by the Council on small arms and light weapons, namely, resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015). With an estimated one billion small arms in circulation worldwide, the use of those weapons in lethal violence, whether in conflict or non-conflict settings, was prevalent across regions and subregions from the Americas to Africa to southern Europe, and no State was immune from the challenges posed by illicit arms flows. In addition, the High Representative provided an overview of significant trends and developments over the previous two years and expressed her concerns regarding the continued rise in global military expenditure and the role that small arms and light weapons continued to play in hindering peace, security and sustainable development. She further emphasized that the gender dimension had not been sufficiently integrated into policies regulating small arms and light weapons, while stressing the need to mainstream the consideration of small arms and light weapons across the work of the Council.

The Deputy Director of Operations of Conflict Armament Research recounted that since the early 1990s the international community had sought to control the conventional arms trade so as to minimize weapons diversion and explained that the lack of detailed reporting had consistently hampered those efforts. He highlighted the work of his organization in that regard. He also described the work of his organization in support of United Nations sanctions monitoring groups and panels of experts, as well as in embargo and sanctions enforcement, and expressed the hope that his briefing had demonstrated the importance of an evidence-based approach to tackle the illicit proliferation of weapons.

Following the briefings, Council members welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and its recommendations. However, the representative of the Russian Federation questioned references to the Arms Trade Treaty, citing that the instrument was far from universal and did not fully allow for the implementation of its own provisions. In addition, the representative of the United States raised concerns with regard to civilian ownership of firearms as reflected in the report. The representatives of the Dominican Republic and Estonia called for the promotion of gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in combating the illicit arms trade.

Many Council members emphasized that the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons posed a serious threat to international peace and security. In that regard, they pointed out that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons had contributed to terrorism and transnational organized crime and called for a comprehensive approach in addressing the fight against illicit trafficking. Many speakers drew attention to the implementation of several crucial international mechanisms intended to combat the illicit trade, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and, in 2020, the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the

<sup>749</sup> For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II.

<sup>750</sup> See [S/PV.8140](#). For more information, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2016–2017*, part I, sect. 31.

<sup>751</sup> See also [A/75/2](#), part II, chap. 17.

<sup>752</sup> See [S/PV.8713](#).

<sup>753</sup> [S/2019/1011](#). For more information on the biennial report of the Secretary-General, which was requested by the Council in its presidential statement contained in document [S/PRST/2007/24](#), see *Repertoire, Supplement 2004–2007*, chap. VIII, sect. 40.

<sup>754</sup> See [S/PV.8713](#).

accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

Most Council members commended the efforts of regional organizations, such as the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative, in dealing with the challenges of illicit small arms and light weapons and called for strengthening the partnership between

the United Nations and regional organizations. In that connection, the representative of Indonesia emphasized the important role of other regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the implementation of the programme of action to address arms smuggling and related issues.

### Meeting: small arms

<i>Meeting record 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.8713</a> 5 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons ( <a href="#">S/2019/1011</a> )			High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Deputy Director of Operations, Conflict Armament Research	All Council members, all invitees	

## 28. Women and peace and security

In 2020, the Council held no public meeting in relation to the item entitled “Women and peace and security”. However, Council members held two open videoconferences in connection with the item.<sup>755</sup> More information on the videoconferences is given in table 1 below.

On 17 July, at the initiative of Germany, which held the Presidency for the month,<sup>756</sup> the Council held a high-level open videoconference on the theme “Conflict-related sexual violence: turning commitments into compliance”.<sup>757</sup> At the videoconference,<sup>758</sup> the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Special Envoy of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees, the Founder and Chair of Progressive Voice, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and the Executive President of the Association des femmes juristes de Centrafrique. In her briefing to the Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted that the report of the Secretary-General featured, for the first time, an assessment of compliance gaps, which found prevailing disregard for international norms and obligations by parties to armed conflict as well as a lack of meaningful commitment to curbing violations by the majority of persistent perpetrators. In that connection, she expressed the urgent need for greater coherence between the practice of listing and the practice of imposing targeted and graduated measures to leverage behavioural change. She stated that 2020 had begun with the anticipation of a “jubilee year” for the women and peace and security agenda, but had become a fight to prevent the rollback of women’s rights, which was evident in reprisals against women’s human rights defenders, physical and financial risks to women’s civil society organizations and shrinking civic space. The Special Representative mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic had dramatically affected the work of the United Nations, including her mandate, but that the virus had not changed the needs of survivors or the right to physical integrity and bodily autonomy. In that regard,

<sup>755</sup> For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

<sup>756</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 8 July 2020 ([S/2020/665](#)). See also [S/2020/487](#).

<sup>757</sup> Belgium was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Germany was represented by its Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, South Africa was represented by its Minister for International Relations and Cooperation and the Niger was represented by its Minister for the Advancement of Women and Child Protection.

<sup>758</sup> See [S/2020/727](#).