



**Disarmament and International  
Security Committee  
Illicit Arms Trade**

# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Director’s Letter .....                        | 3  |
| Introduction to MUN .....                      | 4  |
| What is Model UN? .....                        | 4  |
| Recommendations for Choosing a Country .....   | 4  |
| Research Tips .....                            | 4  |
| The United Nations .....                       | 5  |
| Committee Overview .....                       | 5  |
| Topic Overview .....                           | 5  |
| Historical Analysis .....                      | 6  |
| Diagram 1 .....                                | 7  |
| Timeline .....                                 | 8  |
| Current Situation .....                        | 8  |
| Possible Solutions .....                       | 9  |
| Regulatory Framework For Illicit Weapons ..... | 9  |
| Government Transparency .....                  | 10 |
| Reducing the Demand for Weapons .....          | 10 |
| Bloc Positions .....                           | 11 |
| No Gun-Control Bloc .....                      | 11 |
| Gun-Controlled Bloc .....                      | 11 |
| Guiding Questions .....                        | 11 |
| Further Research .....                         | 12 |
| Bibliography .....                             | 12 |

# Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Annalise Politis and I am delighted to be serving as the director of the Disarmament and International Security Committee during the first iteration of AbbyMUN 2021. Along with my Chair Harry Zhu, we are anticipating thrilling debate, collaborative responses, and of course to make long lasting memories.

Since my first conference in 2019, I fell in love with Model United Nations and spent countless hours honing my debating and public speaking skills. Additionally, Model UN has provided me with friendships that will last a lifetime. From the anxiety of finishing a position paper late at night to passing a resolution paper, MUN never ceases to amaze me. Continuously I have felt a burning passion towards MUN and I am captivated to share my ambitions with you all. Whether this is your first conference or last, I encourage all of you to step outside of your comfort zone.

The topic chosen this year is the illicit arms trade. Ever since the beginning of the 16th century, mankind has strived to conquer each other. Thus, due to the greed formed for weapons, war and conflict, approximately 1.4 million people have died due to the trafficking of illicit arms. This number is likely to increase as crime spirals out of control. The task of the delegates is to tackle this issue with precision, logic, and passion. The trafficking of illicit arms is a multilayered process making it difficult to trace perpetrators. Policy reforms, increased surveillance, and restrictions are possible ways to combat illicit trafficking. However this ideology differs from country to country. We recommend that you research your gun policies and the solutions your nation has used to prevent arms trafficking as it could prove useful during debate.

As your director and on behalf of the dais team, we wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you at AbbyMUN 2021! If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us at [disec@abbymun.com](mailto:disec@abbymun.com).

Sincerely,

Annalise Politis  
Director of DISEC  
AbbyMUN 2021

# Introduction to MUN

## What is Model UN?

Model United Nations, also known as Model UN or MUN, is a political simulation where students role play as delegates to simulate the United Nations<sup>1</sup>. This is an extracurricular activity and generally done through MUN conferences which are organized by high schools across Canada. During conferences you are eligible for awards which include best position paper, best new delegate, honourable mention, outstanding delegate and lastly, best delegate, for which you receive a gavel. Through MUN you gain the skills of research, public speaking, debating, collaborating, and writing expertises. Students are to give detailed speeches on their nation's position and offer possible solutions. Additionally, students are recommended to write a position paper on your given topic describing its history, solutions, etc. Position papers are mandatory to be considered for an award.

## Recommendations for Choosing a Country

When picking a country it is crucial to find one that is the most suitable for you. Consider the following:

- Does my country have the same political views as me?
- Is my country challenging and can I step outside my comfort zone?
- Is my country involved in the topic at hand or would I be rather less involved?
- Is there substantial information about the country's history and actions on the topic at hand?
- Can I feel comfortable to come up with viable solutions and provide overall quality to the debate with this country?
- Can I provide statistics and reliable information to my fellow delegates?

## Research Tips

Research is one of the reasons why some people are reluctant to join MUN. From the lack of available information or the sophisticated use of language, research can prove quite arduous for many beginner delegates. Nevertheless, the more research you do, the more confident and knowledgeable you will feel about the topic and the country you are representing. For many, Iikipedia is seen as an unreliable source. It is a great starting point but it should not be your only

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://bestdelegate.com/what-is-model-united-nations/>

source of information. A great way to obtain more information is through the ‘further reading’ section of the backgrounder. Additionally, you should research in areas like culture, economics, politics, history and governmental organizations relating to the topic.

## **The United Nations**

The United Nations (UN) is an international body established on October 24, 1945 after World War II. The UN was the second attempt to create an international organization after the failure of the League of Nations, which was created in 1919. The UN’s office is currently located in New York City with additional headquarters in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The officials include Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The objective of the UN is to maintain peace and security, developing friendly relations, and solving global implications with respect to the basics of human rights. In addition, the United Nations is split into 6 sections. The Security Council, General Assembly (includes DISEC), Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice, Secretariat and Trusteeship Council.<sup>2</sup>

## **Committee Overview**

The first ever committee in the United Nations was the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC). DISEC is commonly referred to as the original committee which was formed in response to the need for an international platform to mainly discuss issues of peace and security amongst the members based on the UN Charter. The Charter states the DISEC is to establish “General principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and regulation of armaments.” Furthermore, DISEC should give “recommendations with regard to such principles to the members or to the Security Council.” Keep in mind that DISEC cannot directly advise the decisions of the Security Council, but can provide solutions based on the UN Charter.<sup>3</sup>

## **Topic Overview**

The illicit arms trade can be defined as the illegal transfer and dealership of nuclear arms and weaponry. The whole system of trade violates existing national and international regulations, involving unauthorized manufacturing and circulation of arms and weapons within borders. The network of these vile weapon traders is not only wide and extensive, but profitable. Estimations on the quantity of trafficking are extremely difficult to make due to lack of detection and

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

surveillance. These illicit arms can be used under different circumstances including crime, armed conflict and “self defence.” For crime, perpetrators use these weapons to commit crimes with their advantage being that these weapons cannot be traced back. Moreover, there is a lack of restrictions on the illegal market in terms of the types of gun laws.

Consequently, these weapons are used in armed conflicts with international laws in control of regulating the trade of arms in conflicted regions. This offers the opposition party an opportunity to supply their arsenal with weapons and ammunition by paying large amounts of money or by the exchange of natural resources. “Self-defence” is a term mainly seen in constitutional states to sugar coat the term illicit weapons. For instance, Germany is a monopoly of violence, threatening to use physical violence in the framework to govern the law. Its intended purpose is to prevent people from taking the law into their hands for revenge. The argument of self defence differs from nation to nation. The United States of America, for example, uses weapons to grant greater “freedoms” while Commonwealth countries such as Canada have strict gun regulations. The culprits who indulge in the illicit arms trade are commonly involved in the legal trading of weapons, this include producers, traders, government officials, and civilians. The convicted establish secretive networks with the producers and arms brokers hauling and selling the weapons to the buyer.

## Historical Analysis

European traders established a foundation of trading arms in the 16th and 17th centuries when they started shipping arms to African, American, and Asian markets. The trade created what is now known as the “triangular trade”. In response, Africa traded slaves and other goods to the Americas. The diagram on the next page provides a clear visual of the triangle trade.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://origins.osu.edu/article/merchants-death-international-traffic-arms>

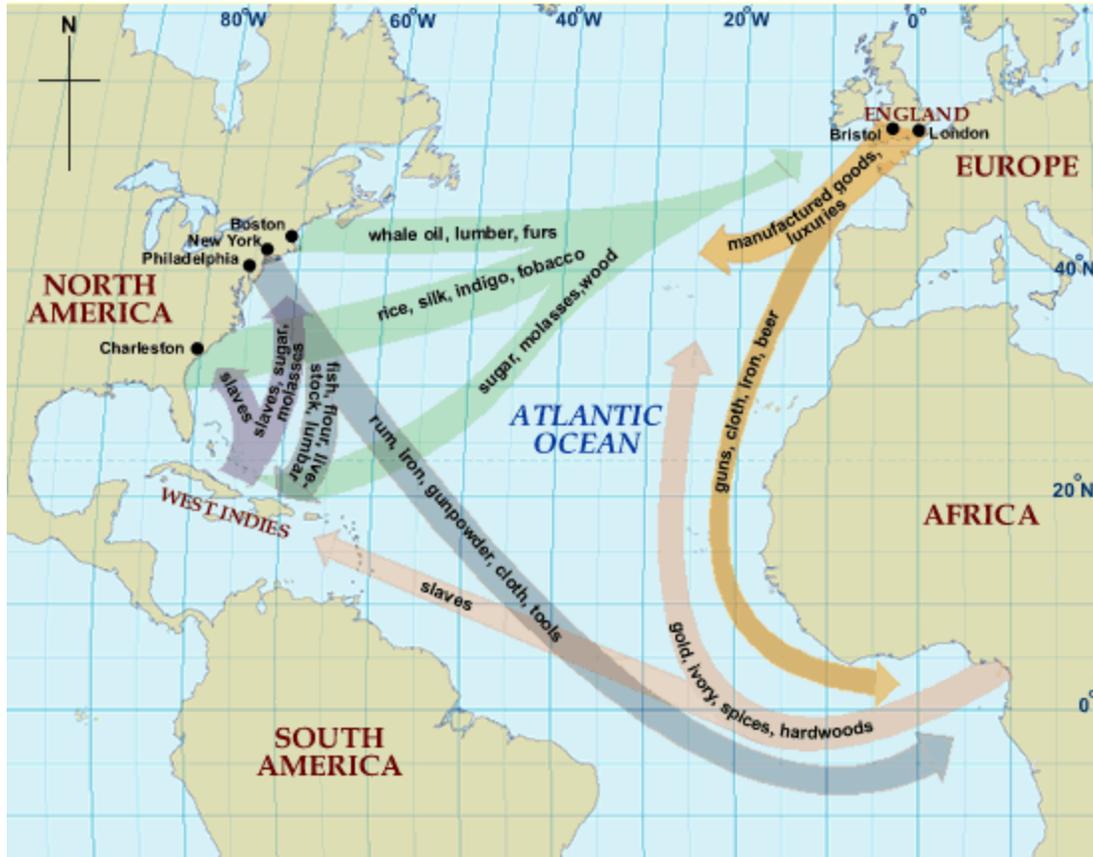


Diagram 1<sup>5</sup>

Consequently the first and second world wars provided more demand for the illicit arms and trade became divided based on allies, with the USA exporting an approximately 2.3 billion dollars to Allied Powers.<sup>6</sup> This later followed into the Cold-War where the United States of America and the Soviet Union became the main exporters of weapons. They exported to their respectful allies and involved their weapons in areas of conflict, specifically Vietnam and Afghanistan. Since there were so little restrictions on the creation of arms this paved the way for illegal trafficking. The current use of firearms by criminals poses a threat to the safety of citizens worldwide. It is not unusual for criminals to use these weapons for robberies and murder. In addition, these weapons often stem into corruption, environmental crime, human trafficking, maritime piracy, organized crime and terrorist activities.

<sup>5</sup> “A World of Weapons: Historians Shape Scholarship on Arms Trading: Perspectives on History: AHA.” *A World of Weapons: Historians Shape Scholarship on Arms Trading | Perspectives on History | AHA*, [www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2017/a-world-of-weapons-historians-shape-scholarship-on-arms-trading](http://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2017/a-world-of-weapons-historians-shape-scholarship-on-arms-trading).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Firearms-trafficking>

## Timeline

1600 - European traders established trade routes for weapons.

1650 - Established the triangular trade.

1700 - Manufactured the trade of slaves, resources and weapons.

1860 - There was a profound expansion in arms trading.

1950 - Nuclear arms trafficking rose in popularity due to the Cold War and the conclusion of WWII.

1980 - United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) was established.

1999 - Small Arms Survey was established. Acted as a guide to implement mechanisms to combat the illicit flow of weapons.

July 11, 2001- Firearms protocols were signed. The treaty prevents the trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

December 24, 2014 - Arms Trade Treaty was established, ATT regulates the international trade in conventional arms.

## Current Situation

Trade in weapons has been one of the most profitable businesses in the world. Having weapons and ammunition readily available leads to human suffering, political repression, and crime and terror within populations. A lack of control over arms trade can destabilize an entire region, violate arms embargoes, and contribute to human right abuses. In addition, the conflict and high levels of violence discourage investment and disrupt development in countries, especially in those who could benefit from these things the most. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was signed in April 2013 by the General Assembly of the UN, and sets specific international standards to help guide governments in the arms trade. The ATT marked the international community's efforts to ultimately promote peace and security by regulating the global trade in conventional arms. The Arms Trade Treaty holds many powerful promises such as reducing armed conflict and violence,

helping create a more favourable environment for the UN to carry out its goals on post-conflict rebuilding, as well as making a safer environment for UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>7</sup>

The black market on small arms trafficking alone accounts for a \$1 billion-a-year international business.<sup>8</sup> However, this financial profit to few people comes at a tremendous cost to global and regional security. An estimated 500,000 people are killed each year by the 639 small arms in circulation, and in some conflicts, up to 80% of casualties are caused by these weapons.<sup>9</sup> It is problematic that these weapons are often left behind at the end of conflicts, thus leaving resources for disputes to reignite or spread to neighbouring countries.<sup>10</sup> It is conditions like these that enable terrorist organizations to emerge and thrive. Illicit arms proliferation often takes place via complex global networks such as legitimate channels, systems, and other infrastructure where these networks exist. They are equally as quick to create new routes, which is why we must start thinking of ways to prevent future expansion of illicit arms trafficking routes and close down existing ones.

## Possible Solutions

### Regulatory Framework For Illicit Weapons

The main issue of trafficking arms is that they are trafficked both legally and illegally, making identification and trafficking very arduous. Additionally, most arms are produced legally and then maneuvered into the black market, presenting itself through violent crimes and the increase of power in criminal groups. Therefore, there must be amendments and enforcement to current protocols such as the Firearms Protocol. The protocol aims to “promote, facilitate and strengthen cooperation among State parties, to prevent combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of firearms, both their parts, components and ammunition.” Located below is the current framework provided by the Firearms protocol:

- Criminalization of manufacturing. Trafficked weapons: This includes restrictions on their parts, components and communication. Also including penalties for obliterating and altering the marking on fire arms.
- Keep Consistent documentation: This includes implementing licensing of all international transactions and brokers and keeping track of imported and exported arms for government use.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/att/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/kf/TerrorinShadows-Stohl.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

- Establishing a marking system for the purpose of effective tracing and identification.

## **Government Transparency**

It is a good tactic for citizens to be educated on the dangers of illicit weapons and give them tools on how to handle these weapons safely. Education programs, stricter jail sentencing and transparency are all viable solutions to combat arms trafficking. With government accountability, civilians have access to policies placed by governing bodies and see the benefits and services they pertain to. This improves communication and the citizen's abilities to hold its government accountable through elections or through protest. Without accountability there is a sense of disempowerment, misinformation and lack of trust. This is why it is vital for creating up-to-date frameworks. Other benefits of transparency include:

- Increased efficiency and effectiveness: decisions are open to public scrutiny, making government bodies work better and be more disciplined.
- Government Effectives Improves: Creates for honest decision making and clarity on how arms policies are made.
- Enables citizens, the media and law enforcement to use official records to uncover cases of arms trafficking.
- Increasing transparency will make nations less likely to practice corruption methods.

## **Reducing the Demand for Weapons**

It is estimated that civilians hold four-fifths of the world's firearms , which are mainly used for leisure, gangs, and protection. State level demands for weapons are primarily influenced by a range of internal and external security, social and economic predicaments. Solutions to reduce the demand for weapons goes as listed; gun safety, preventing contributors to gun violence, and prevention of infrastructure. Furthermore, more people are prone to buy weapons for protection and for fear of encountering gang violence, which increases the demand. To decrease the demand for weapons delegates must consider:

Gun Safety:

- 1) Creation of sensible gun laws that prevent easy access to harmful weaponry
- 2) Reduce arms accessibility to youth
- 3) Create oversight over marketing and sale of guns and ammunition
- 4) Implemented mandatory training and licensing for owners

Other methods include:

- 1) Stabilizing the economy; asking for foreign aid is a viable solution
- 2) Suppressing Crime: harsher penalties for offenders could lead to reduced crime rate, which could lower demand.

- 3) Enforce background checks for one's purchase and manufacturing of weapons. This includes everyone, including people who have signs for any mental disorders.

## **Bloc Positions**

### **No Gun-Control Bloc**

Though it is unclear which nations are responsible for trafficking illicit arms, it is clear that they do support the Arms Trade Treaty. These countries have the highest rates of trafficking, yet they want little gun control. Countries such as the United States of America, Russia and China are the world's major military powers. While they differ in views, the United States of America has abided by the treaty but prefers no gun control. Consequently, Russia and China are at a disadvantage, though being a part of the treaty helps to maintain their reputation. They request lesser restrictions to maintain weapon import and exports, furthermore leaning to the side of continued trafficking. This can be seen as catastrophic especially in progressing states such as Yemen.

### **Gun-Controlled Bloc**

As the name entails, this bloc is in favour of gun control and strives for the total eradication of weapon trafficking. These nations took strategic and successful methods from heavy restrictions of gun use to heavy jurisdictions to those who offend. They tackle illicit weapons with an iron fist and abide by the Arms Trade Treaty at all cost. Canada is a prime example of these gun control restrictions. Ever since the 2020 Nova Scotia attacks which killed 13 people, it left a stain on Canada's sovereignty. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated "These guns have no place in our communities and have no place anywhere in Canada." Other nations include Greece, Indonesia, India, Hungary and other countries who support gun control.

## **Guiding Questions**

- 1) How has your country dealt with the illicit arms trade in the past? What policies did they implement to combat it?
- 2) Why has there been such a high demand for these weapons?
- 3) Has your country dealt with gun and gang violence in the past? If so, how have they dealt with it?

- 4) What type of weapons are normally trafficked through your country?
- 5) What is your country's belief on the illicit arms trade? Should there be lesser restrictions or more criminalization?

## Further Research

- 1) <https://www.pgaction.org/ips/illicit-salw/>
- 2) <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Firearms-trafficking>
- 3) <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13126.doc.htm>
- 4) <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/index.html>

## Bibliography

“Arms Trade Treaty – Unoda.” *United Nations*, United Nations,  
[www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/arms-trade-treaty-2/](http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/arms-trade-treaty-2/)

Fromiti. “Organized Crime Module 3 Key Issues: Firearms Trafficking.” *Organized Crime Module 3 Key Issues: Firearms Trafficking*,  
[www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-3/key-issues/firearms-trafficking.html](http://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-3/key-issues/firearms-trafficking.html)

“Gun Ownership.” *Gun Ownership by Country 2021*,  
[worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-ownership-by-country](http://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-ownership-by-country)

“Gun Violence Must Stop. Here's What We Can Do to Prevent More Deaths.” *Prevention Institute*,  
[www.preventioninstitute.org/focus-areas/preventing-violence-and-reducing-injury/preventing-violence-advocacy](http://www.preventioninstitute.org/focus-areas/preventing-violence-and-reducing-injury/preventing-violence-advocacy)

“Illegal Arms Trade: War and Peace.” *Illegal Arms Trade | War and Peace*,  
[www.warpp.info/en/m5/articles/illegal-arms-trade](http://www.warpp.info/en/m5/articles/illegal-arms-trade)

“The International Criminal Police Organization.” *INTERPOL*, [www.interpol.int/](http://www.interpol.int/)

McKenzie-Sutter, Holly. "Trudeau Doubles down on Gun Laws, Pledges Tougher Firearm Control - National." *Global News*, Global News, 5 Sept. 2021, [globalnews.ca/news/8168823/trudeau-tougher-gun-control-laws-canada-election/](https://globalnews.ca/news/8168823/trudeau-tougher-gun-control-laws-canada-election/)

Ryan. "What Is Model United Nations?" *Best Delegate Model United Nations*, 9 May 2019, [bestdelegate.com/what-is-model-united-nations/](https://bestdelegate.com/what-is-model-united-nations/).

*The Tangled Web of Illicit Arms Trafficking.*

[www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/kf/TerrorinShadows-Stohl.pdf](https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/kf/TerrorinShadows-Stohl.pdf)

"United Nations." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., [www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations](https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations)

"Vision and Mission." *Small Arms Survey*,

[www.smallarmssurvey.org/who\\_we\\_are/vision\\_mission](https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/who_we_are/vision_mission)

"A World of Weapons: Historians Shape Scholarship on Arms Trading: Perspectives on History: AHA." *A World of Weapons: Historians Shape Scholarship on Arms Trading | Perspectives on History | AHA*,

[www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2017/a-world-of-weapons-historians-shape-scholarship-on-arms-trading](https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2017/a-world-of-weapons-historians-shape-scholarship-on-arms-trading)