

The illicit arms trade, particularly on the Dark Web, has emerged as a pressing issue that demands our immediate attention. The Dark Web, an obscure corner of the internet notorious for criminal activities, has become a hub for the sale of illegal weapons. This underground market offers an alarming level of anonymity for transactions, making it increasingly challenging for law enforcement agencies to track and intercept shipments of small arms and light weapons. The ease with which these arms can be accessed and purchased poses a significant threat to international security.

The rise of the global arms trade can be attributed to factors such as the Cold War and regional conflicts, leading to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Dark Web has further facilitated the sale of these illicit weapons, which are often trafficked across borders. Although law enforcement efforts have resulted in the takedown of some Dark Web marketplaces, new ones continue to emerge, allowing the problem to persist.

In 2014, Europol estimated that there were approximately half a million lost or stolen firearms in the EU.¹ Illegal weapons account for over 60% of homicides in Latin America. “In 2018, it was estimated that over 60 million firearms were in hands of civilians in the region, both legally and illegally owned. In Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico, there are more unregistered weapons than registered ones.”² This year, in Syria, it was monitored that there were dozens of Facebook groups with markets to purchase a whole host of products.³ Clearly, this issue is rampant among the international community and needs better solutions to prevent attacks in the future.

Within the realm of the illicit small arms trade, DISEC can explore several key facets that should guide your research:

- What shortcomings exist in the current international agreements aimed at limiting the proliferation and utilization of small arms and light weapons (SALW), and how can these deficiencies be rectified?
- In what ways can we provide incentives to encourage national governments to strengthen their import and export controls, and possibly reduce their overall arms imports?

¹ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/illicit-firearms-trafficking>

² <https://americasquarterly.org/article/behind-a-rise-in-latin-americas-violent-crime-a-deadly-flow-of-illegal-guns/>

³ <https://www.newarab.com/features/illegal-firearms-trade-booms-northwest-syria>

- How can we navigate the delicate balance between user privacy and international security, address concerns related to Dark Web regulation, cryptocurrencies, and emerging technologies, while also considering each country's unique experiences in these discussions?
- What other underlying socio-economic factors should be taken into account if we aim to enhance the current situation concerning SALW?
- How can contemporary technology be harnessed to assist international regulatory bodies in more efficiently tracking the proliferation of SALW?

I look forward to discussing this pressing issue and having productive dialogue surrounding the illicit small arms trade. Please reach out with questions or comments to hradinsk@mail.yu.edu. As a reminder, your goal as a delegate is to represent the views of your country rather than your own. Additionally, please remember that all writing must be original and that papers will be submitted to Turnitin to detect plagiarism.

Sincerely,
Harry Radinsky
Chair, DISEC