

EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium

Promoting the European network of independent non-proliferation and disarmament think tanks

E-newsletter of the European Network of Independent Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Think Tanks

COUNTERING ILLICIT TRADE IN SALW: THE WAY AHEAD - AN INTERVIEW WITH NILS DUQUET



Nils Duquet is director of the Flemish Peace Institute. He started working at the Flemish Peace Institute as a researcher in 2006 and has authored more than 70 policy-oriented and academic publications on illicit firearms trafficking and gun violence in Europe, domestic gun policies and European arms export controls. He has coordinated several large-scale European research projects on gun violence and arms trafficking in Europe.

What is your overall assessment of the outcome of the 4th Review Conference (RevCon4) of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons?

Small arms and light weapons (SALW), such as firearms, are the most used weapons causing violent deaths globally, both in conflict and non-conflict settings. Preventing and combating the illicit trade in these very lethal weapons is therefore a crucial endeavour. For more than two decades now, the UN PoA has played an important role in the development of adequate international cooperation, national regulatory frameworks and policy measures. The UN PoA is not legally binding, which is actually one of its strengths as it allows for a more dynamic process. Review Conferences are crucial to this process. Every six years, they offer opportunities to enhance the effective implementation of PoA measures and address new methods of trafficking SALW and the rapid development of technologies like 3D printing. In an increasingly divided political world, it is a significant achievement that RevCon4 reaffirmed the global commitment to fully and effectively implement all provisions of the PoA. In addition, the outcome document includes various measures to develop national action plans, strengthen regional and international cooperation, improve information-sharing and dialogue, and so on. These are all important steps forward.

What will be the next steps in the implementation of the PoA?

Within the PoA process, Biennial Meetings of States on SALW will be organised in 2026 and 2028 to prepare the 5th Review Conference. In the meantime, it is up to the states to further implement the measures that were agreed upon during RevCon4. National implementation is often challenging because international political commitments must compete for resources with other national priorities. To combat the illegal trade in SALW a continued proactive and comprehensive policy effort is needed. Unfortunately, this is not self-evident in many countries.

What critical issues should the international community focus on in order to achieve a sustained decline in firearm-related deaths?

It is important to underline that firearm-related violence has a strong detrimental impact on society. To achieve a sustained decline in firearm-related violence many different types of measures in various policy domains are needed. The PoA focuses strongly on limiting the illicit availability of SALW. This is a very important aspect in any attempt to prevent firearm-related violence. International cooperation is key here, since criminals and other violent actors across the globe exploit legal loopholes and weaknesses in the control system, such as inadequate stockpile management, to acquire SALW. An often overlooked but very important aspect in this regard is strengthening transfer controls of the countries exporting these SALW and limiting the possibilities for diversion from legal possession into the illegal market. Also the specific availability of ammunition, which is not part of the PoA, deserves more international policy attention. Finally, I would like to mention that the international community should not only focus on limiting the availability of SALW, but also focus on the demand for these weapons. Demand for SALW is the driving force for the illegal trade in these weapons, which in turn increases availability and demand. It is very important to break this vicious circle.

UNSC Resolution 1540 Twenty Years On

April 2024 marked the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540, a crucial global instrument in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery by non-state actors. The 1540 Committee, that was established to support and oversee the national implementation of UNSCR 1540, has pursued its mission by cooperating intensively with international, regional and sub-regional organizations. The 1540 Committee's mandate was extended for another ten years through UNSCR 2663 unanimously approved by the UN Security Council in November 2022.

In the last twenty years this global endeavour has been quite successful especially thanks to bilateral and multilateral cooperation as shown by the increased number of initial reports submitted by nations on their implementation efforts. In addition, the UNSCR 1540's provisions and the requirements spelled out in its more operative paragraphs have proved flexible enough to adapt to the ever-changing spectrum of biological, nuclear, chemical risks and threats, and to the dangers associated with new technologies like artificial intelligence and with covid-19. Indeed, the Resolution constitutes one of the most powerful legal instruments that focus on the prevention of the proliferation of WMDs and their delivery systems.

Nevertheless, since the Resolution's adoption several challenges have emerged. One is the lack of enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance. More importantly, the full implementation of the Resolution has been hampered by inadequate financial resources, technical expertise, and legal frameworks. Many member states, especially developing countries, have also failed to invest enough resources due to economic and financial constraints. Furthermore, some institutional problems, notably the lack of comprehensive guidelines and a conceptual framework regarding counter proliferation financing and sanctions obligations, have become increasingly evident.

The experience of these two decades of implementation of Resolution 1540 has revealed several issues that should be addressed. To begin with, there is the need for greater access to reliable information and best practices, and for more effective guidance and tools to improve biological, chemical, and nuclear security. New initiatives should be undertaken to help countries develop tailored approaches to fight against WMD proliferation. This includes the establishment of legal and regulatory infrastructures, and technical expertise. It is worth noting that the structured framework of the EU enables several EU member states and institutions to provide assistance to third states, based on their requests, through thematic capacity building workshops, coordination mechanisms linking experts and international organisations as well as technical training at the regional level. Furthermore, these assistance and cooperation efforts aimed at reinforcing institutional capacity must take into account domestic priorities of individual countries. Outreach efforts must also be intensified through broader involvement of stakeholders, particularly industry players, to raise the awareness of international obligations and of the changes in domestic legal frameworks needed to ensure compliance.

Implementation of Resolution 1540 should be regarded as a key component of the non-proliferation regime. The uncertainty surrounding the state of the global political environment makes this global cooperative effort to prevent and counter the proliferation of WMDs and their delivery systems even more urgent.

Chandana Seshadri, Research Analyst at the Centre for Finance and Security. The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

Latest Publications

Minilateralism and effective multilateralism in the global nuclear order. Megan Dee. Contemporary Security Policy. July 2024

Forging a New Frontier: Strengthening the Humanitarian Impacts Agenda for Inclusive and Effective Non-Proliferation under the NPT. Ali Alkis, Hree Putri Samudra, Elisa Shafiqah Shahrilinzam, Yerdaut Rakhmatulla, Christelle Barakat, Mahlet Sebsibe Haile. The British American Security Information Council (BASIS). May 2024

The challenge of Russian dual-capable missiles. Simon Lunn and Nicholas Williams. European Leadership Network (ELN). July 2024

Network Calls

The Alva Myrdal Centre for Nuclear Disarmament is recruiting a Senior lecturer in Peace and Conflict research, specialising in Nuclear Disarmament. The senior lecturer will play a key role in the AMC team, with an ambition to allocate at least half of the working time to research at the centre. Interacting with the surrounding society will also be a vital part of the role, to ensure that the knowledge and expertise at the centre benefit society.

More info: [Here](#)

The German Institute for International and Security Affairs is looking for a researcher to start on 1 October 2024 - subject to the approval of the project sponsor - for the BMVg-funded project "Deutschlands Sicherheit nach der Zeitenwende: Military force, nuclear rivalries and Europe's new security order as challenges for German defence policy" funded by the BMVg.

The position is to be filled for a limited period until 31 December 2025. Part-time employment is possible.

More info: [Here](#)

EU NEWS

EU STATEMENT ON THE ACCESSION OF TUVALU AND MICRONESIA TO THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

TUVALU AND THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA DEPOSITED THEIR INSTRUMENTS OF ACCESSION TO THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION (BTWC) ON 25 JUNE AND 12 JULY, RESPECTIVELY, BECOMING THE 186TH AND 187TH STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION.

THE ACCESSION OF TUVALU AND MICRONESIA TO THE BTWC IS FOR THE EU AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS THE UNIVERSALISATION OF THE CONVENTION.

THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS SUPPORTED THE PROCESS OF UNIVERSALISATION OF THE CONVENTION, INCLUDING THE ACCESSION OF TUVALU AND THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA THROUGH AN EU-FUNDED PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS.

THE EUROPEAN UNION IS A STRONG AND CONSISTENT SUPPORTER OF THE STRENGTHENING OF THE BTWC. ALL 27 EU MEMBER STATES ARE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION, WHICH IS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT FRAMEWORK AND A CRUCIAL TOOL TO PREVENT BIOLOGICAL AGENTS AND TOXINS FROM EVER BEING DEVELOPED AND USED AS WEAPONS.

THE EUROPEAN UNION CALLS ON ALL STATES NOT YET PARTY TO ACCEDE TO THE BTWC WITHOUT DELAY.

READ THE FULL STATEMENT: [HERE](#)

NETWORK NEWS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS - NUCLEAR STRATEGY NETWORK - NEW GENERATION

THE RÉSEAU NUCLÉAIRE ET STRATÉGIE - NOUVELLE GÉNÉRATION (RNS-NG) WAS CREATED IN SEPTEMBER 2015. THIS NETWORK IS AIMED AT STUDENTS (MASTER 2 LEVEL, PHD STUDENTS, PHDS) AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS (DIPLOMATS, ENGINEERS, JOURNALISTS...) INTERESTED IN MILITARY NUCLEAR ISSUES, IN PARTICULAR DETERRENCE AND NON-PROLIFERATION, IN ORDER TO DEEPEN THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND PROVIDE FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

THE NETWORK IS ADMINISTERED BY THE FONDATION POUR LA RECHERCHE STRATÉGIQUE (FRS) AND THE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES (IFRI), WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLYING TO THE NETWORK ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- THE NETWORK AIMS TO BUILD THE NEXT GENERATION OF STRATEGIC THINKERS: IT IS THEREFORE AIMED EXCLUSIVELY AT CANDIDATES AGED UNDER 40 ON 1 OCTOBER 2024.
- THE NETWORK IS PRIMARILY AIMED AT NATIONALS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OR MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO).
- AS THE NETWORK'S ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE IN FRENCH, A GOOD COMMAND OF THE LANGUAGE IS A DETERMINING FACTOR.
- FOR LOGISTICAL REASONS, PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO APPLICANTS LIVING IN MAINLAND FRANCE: HOWEVER, PEOPLE LIVING ABROAD MAY ALSO APPLY.
- INVOLVEMENT IN THE NETWORK (PARTICIPATION IN VISITS, CONFERENCES AND ANY GROUP WORK, INTERACTION WITH OTHER MEMBERS) IS EXPECTED ON PAIN OF EXCLUSION.

MORE INFO: [HERE](#)

CALL FOR APPLICATION FOR XIV ODCNP INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL "MOVING TO THE THRESHOLD: GLOBAL NUCLEAR TRENDS"

THE ODESA CENTER FOR NONPROLIFERATION WITH THE SUPPORT OF SWEDISH RADIATION SAFETY AUTHORITY IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE XIV ODCNP INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL "MOVING TO THE THRESHOLD: GLOBAL NUCLEAR TRENDS", WHICH IS HELD IN MALTA ON OCTOBER 21-25, 2024.

THE SUMMER SCHOOL AIMS TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY UP-TO-DATE TRAINING IN A WIDE RANGE OF SPECIALLY SELECTED METHODS IN THE FIELD.

THE MAIN AIM OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL IS TO PREPARE THE YOUNG GENERATION OF NONPROLIFERATION AND ARMS CONTROL EXPERTS ACROSS EUROPE AND THE BLACK SEA REGION. THE FOCUS WILL BE ON THE CURRENT TRENDS IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY, ARMS CONTROL, DETERRENCE, DISARMAMENT, AND NONPROLIFERATION. THE PROGRAM ALSO AIMS TO FOSTER ANALYTICAL AND INDEPENDENT THINKING, FACILITATE THE EXCHANGE VIEWS AND PROMOTE LASTING CONTACTS WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS. ADDITIONALLY, PARTICIPANTS WILL ENHANCE THEIR PRESENTATION AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS THROUGH TABLETOP EXERCISES.

MORE INFO: [HERE](#)

A GAMBLE OF OUR OWN CHOOSING: FORECASTING NUCLEAR RISKS

OPEN NUCLEAR NETWORK (ONN) AND FORECASTING RESEARCH INSTITUTE (FRI) ARE PLEASED TO INVITE YOU TO AN UPCOMING SIDE EVENT "A GAMBLE OF OUR OWN CHOOSING: FORECASTING NUCLEAR RISKS" AT THE 2024 NPT PREPCOM IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

THIS SIDE EVENT WILL SHOWCASE OUR INTERIM FINDINGS AND EXPLORE THE FORECASTING METHODOLOGIES WE EMPLOYED. WE WILL DISCUSS HOW THESE FORECASTING METHODS CAN SERVE AS CRUCIAL TOOLS IN UNDERSTANDING AND POTENTIALLY MITIGATING THE RISKS OF A NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE. THE SESSION WILL AIM TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THEORETICAL FORECASTS AND PRACTICAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS, ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS IN DISCUSSIONS ON INCORPORATING THESE INSIGHTS INTO GLOBAL NUCLEAR STRATEGIES EFFECTIVELY.

MORE INFO: [HERE](#)



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