



## **Junior Committee: Economic and Social Council**

### **Topic: The Issue of the Regulation of Access to Weapons Without Laboral Purposes**

## **Background Information**

Non-laboral weapons are weapons that do not incorporate a part of one's profession, meaning that the issue at hand does not touch upon professional activities of hunting, of security-work, police-work, etc. This deals with weapons whose owners chose to buy and carry these weapons under or not a legal permit for their personal safety, or for any other reason.

Historically, weapons have been used for several activities throughout the globe. From hunting, to criminal activity and self-defence, but also to the peaceful act of cutting a steak, weapons have been a resource that humans have used to counteract their physical inabilities regarding strength and velocity, for example.

Contrary to the general trend in the media, the issue of weapons should not be limited to the USA. All around the world, numerous nations battle violence epidemics, being it with fire arms, or white weapons. **Delegates should keep in mind the extensive variety of weapons that exists as the issue is not focused on guns, but on the regulations that give citizens access to any type of weapons.**

Additionally, this issue isn't and shouldn't be dealt with through the lens of war. Although wars are the main symptom of the world's violence, the issue at hand does not intend to englobe war weapons in the debate. However, **delegates should take into account the consequences of legalizing or regulating non-professional weapons in the eventuality that a civil war arises or that a national conflict develops.**

As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup> states, in its Article 3, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person". This could or not include, at the discretion of each

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. (2022). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

delegation, the right to protect themselves with a weapon, but also the right to not feel threatened by other's possession of one.

Being in an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), **delegates should acknowledge and discuss the consequences of nations' policies on the issue, taking into account its impacts on global and national economies, as well as on the state of society.**

## **Current Situation**

Around the world, only three nations give their citizens constitutional permission to bear guns with them. These are Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States.<sup>2</sup> However, many more countries are affected by the dangers of weapons. It is undisputable that legalizing weapons freely can pose a danger to citizens, however should that be allowed under the discretion of one's consciousness? What limitations should be imposed on these weapons? Should all gun owners have a license with them at all times?

In 2022, Amnesty International claimed that 12 billion bullets are produced per year.<sup>3</sup> This amount of bullets would be enough to kill everyone in the world and still miss more than 30% of the shots. This is, obviously, a threat to the safety of populations all around the world. However, should this weigh more against one's right to ensure one's personal safety? **Delegates should keep in mind this issue clearly touches upon the issue of freedom, and personal rights, and not only whether weapons are a threat or not.**

Moreover, the issue with gun violence is of great concern at the moment. Amnesty International estimates that 500 people die everyday as a result of gun related violence.<sup>4</sup> This doesn't necessarily mean weapons should be completely forbidden but that delegates should take as their duty to reach a long-lasting consensus on a way to prevent these deaths from happening

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<sup>2</sup> Weiss, B., Pasley, J. and Haroun, A. (2022). *Only 3 countries protect the right to bear arms in their constitutions.* [online] Business Insider. Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/2nd-amendment-countries-constitutional-right-bear-arms-2017-10> [Accessed 12 Jan. 2023].

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International. (2022). *Arms Control.* [online] Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/arms-control/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International. (2022). *Gun Violence.* [online] Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/arms-control/gun-violence/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

while preserving what some believe to be the last stronghold of freedom. This should be extrapolated to the issues with other weapons like the knife violence epidemic in the United Kingdom, for example, amongst many others.

## **Bloc Positions**

States that statistically have a number of firearms per capita higher than 1, meaning that the average citizen has more than one weapon under its name. As well as States who it is known to be battling both epidemics of violence based on specific non-professional weapons and states that continuously enforce the legalization or illegalization of possessing such weapons, in various cases.

## **United States of America**

According to the American Constitution, specifically to its Second Amendment<sup>5</sup>, all citizens “being necessary to the security of a free State” should make sure that the “right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed”. This gives constitutional right to all American citizens to own, possess, and carry a weapon, taking into account that the limitations in regard to licensing, and limitations upon situations of carriage vary from state to state. For example, out of 50 states, only 3 require permits to purchase rifles and shotguns, while only a dozen require permits to purchase handguns. Additionally, the background checks conducted in the USA, when done, can be performed over the phone. These should be passed in order to be allowed the firearm. This background check can involve criminal record, history of illness, both physically and mentally, experience with weapons, amongst others, however it can be conducted over the phone and for 10 minutes. The validity of such background checks has been recently questioned by the ones desiring to increase the limitations put upon gun owners.

It's estimated that per day 110 Americans die from a gunshot, either through homicide or suicide<sup>6</sup>, putting the USA in a position of danger regarding the population's access to weapons.

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<sup>5</sup> National Constitution Center (2023). *The 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution*. [online] Available at: <https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/amendments/amendment-ii> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>6</sup> Narea, N., Zhou, L. and Millhiser, I. (2022). *Mass shootings and America's unique gun violence problem*. [online] Available at: <https://www.vox.com/23142734/america-mass-shooting-gun-violence-control> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

In a study published by the World Population Review, the USA is said to have 120.5 weapons per 100 civilians, 1.21 per capita<sup>7</sup>, the highest number throughout the world.

## **United Kingdom**

In a similar study to the World Population Review's, published by Gun Control Network, it is claimed that the UK has 3.3 firearms per 100 civilians<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, handguns are completely forbidden – a consequence of the Dunblane school shooting. Other weapons are subject to appropriate licensing, however they are commonly used for sporting or hunting.

On another hand, last year the UK registered 45,000 knife incidents<sup>9</sup>, an increase of 3,000 incidents from the previous year. The issue has began to raise deep concerns throughout the country. Until this moment, the penalties for illegal carriage of a knife are a maximum of 4 years in prison, as well as a fine that isn't limited by law. These two conditions can be conjugated, as well. Additionally, carriage of these weapons in educational premisses has become completely forbidden as well.

## **Somalia**

Somalia's issue with weapons is deep. It is until today one of the African nations with the highest amount of guns per 100 citizens, 12.4.<sup>10</sup> Somalia is also a centre for gun trafficking in Africa. Additionally, Somalia has issues surrounding the weapons, deriving from political instability and unsafety. The country, as of 2014, didn't have a stable and official army.<sup>11</sup> For

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<sup>7</sup> World Population Review. (2023). *Gun Ownership by Country 2023*. [online] Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-ownership-by-country> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>8</sup> Gun Control Network. (2016). *Gun Control Network*. [online] Available at: <https://gun-control-network.org/press/us-uk-comparative-data/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>9</sup> Allen, G. and Burton, M. (2023). *Knife crime statistics*. [online] House of Commons Library. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04304/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>10</sup> World Population Review. (2023). *Gun Ownership by Country 2023*. [online] Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-ownership-by-country> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>11</sup> African Arguments (2014). *Somali military has more problems than lack of guns*. [online] Available at: <https://africanarguments.org/2014/02/somali-military-has-more-problems-than-lack-of-guns-by-mohamed-mubarak/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

the past few decades, Somalia has transitioned several times between different governments, passing through years of civil war and instability. Violence has been normalized in the Somali society which leads to the often misuse of weapons, especially firearms. Although to officially purchase a weapon the customer is required to have an appropriate license, Somalia is still deeply affected by a vast black market that almost dodges the whole system of legal purchases.<sup>12</sup>

## **Thailand**

In the previously mentioned study by World Population Review, Thailand appears with 15.1 guns per 100 citizens.<sup>13</sup> However, Thailand's problem with weapons is far more systemic and deeper than this. According to the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)<sup>14</sup>, it is fairly easy to apply for and receive a license to purchase guns in Thailand, no more than 7 months and 5 Baht (0.14 Euro) per gun. The fees of importing a weapon are moderately high, however these only apply to legally registered and purchased weapons, which only around 60% are.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> African Arguments (2014). *Somali military has more problems than lack of guns*. [online] Available at: <https://africanarguments.org/2014/02/somali-military-has-more-problems-than-lack-of-guns-by-mohamed-mubarak/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>13</sup> World Population Review. (2023). *Gun Ownership by Country 2023*. [online] Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-ownership-by-country> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>14</sup> TDRI (2022). *Let's talk about gun control in Thailand* [online] Available at: <https://tdri.or.th/en/2022/10/lets-talk-about-gun-control-in-thailand/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].

<sup>15</sup> Serhan, Y. (2022). *Guns Are Everywhere in Thailand. Could the Country's Deadliest Mass Shooting Change That?* [online] Available at: <https://time.com/6220339/thailand-gun-control-mass-shooting/> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2023].