



REPORTING TRANSFERS OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS REGISTER OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS, 2007

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I. Introduction

Information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is not as readily accessible as that on transfers of other conventional weapons. Since 1992 United Nations member states have been requested to annually submit details of international transfers of major conventional weapons to or from their territory to the UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA). However, states were not requested to report on transfers of SALW until 2003. In that year, the UN General Assembly requested that states submit information on some types of light weapon to UNROCA and invited them to submit background information on international transfers of SALW.¹

In July 2008 SIPRI published a report on the submissions of background information on international transfers of SALW to UNROCA for the years 2003–2006.² Thirty-seven UN member states submitted background information on international transfers of SALW to UNROCA for at least one of the years 2003–2006.³ Most notable was the increase in the number of submissions from 5 for the period 2003–2005 to 36 for 2006 following the UN General Assembly's invitation to report using a standardized form.⁴ The earlier SIPRI report suggested that the standardized reporting form in effect created a 'virtual eighth category' for UNROCA and that this was undoubtedly the key factor in the increased reporting of background information on SALW transfers for 2006.⁵

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution 58/54, 8 Dec. 2003.

² Holtom, P., *Transparency in Transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons: Reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, 2003–2006*, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 22 (SIPRI: Stockholm, July 2008).

³ This excludes submissions by Japan on estimated procurement of SALW, Panama's submission on seizures of illicit SALW and Switzerland's *note verbale* on SALW submissions to UNROCA.

⁴ UN General Assembly Resolution 61/77, 6 Dec. 2006. This was a recommendation of the 2006 Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of UNROCA. United Nations, General Assembly, Report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, A/61/261, 15 Aug. 2006, para. 125.

⁵ Transfers are reported to UNROCA under 7 categories, none of which fully covers SALW. The 2006 invitation to submit background information on international transfers of SALW is regarded as effectively creating a new, 'virtual' category because states were invited to use a standardized

SUMMARY

● States have been invited to report on international transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) since 2003. After a slow start, the rate of reporting increased significantly in 2006 and 2007. However, several of the most significant SALW exporters have never reported on international transfers of SALW to UNROCA.

The level of reporting on international transfers of SALW is now high enough that the 2009 UNROCA Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) should reconsider the establishment of a new, eighth UNROCA category on SALW. The creation of a category for SALW could simply involve the formal transformation of the current 'virtual' eighth category into a full category.

For submissions to be of use for monitoring international transfers of SALW, they must include information on units transferred, the importing and exporting states, and the type (subcategory) of SALW. States should also be encouraged to use the 'Comments' column of the standardized reporting form to give information on a specific end-user or -use, and to state if transfers to civilians are included. The German practice of using export licences in lieu of delivery information merits further discussion within the GGE for those states that are currently unable to provide information on actual deliveries.

**Table 1.** Submissions to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, 2003–2007

Figures are numbers of states.

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 ^a
Submissions to UNROCA	115	117	118	113	90
Submissions of background information to UNROCA	34	32	30	53	57
Submissions of background information on SALW to UNROCA	5	4 ^b	5 ^b	36 ^{b,c}	48 ^b

^a Information on submissions for 2007 is based on submissions made publicly available before 31 Dec. 2008.

^b These figures exclude Japan's submission on estimated procurement of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

^c This figure excludes Panama's submission on seizures of illicit small arms and light weapons and Switzerland's *note verbale*.

Source: UNROCA online database, <http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

This paper updates the earlier report with information on and analysis of submissions of background information on international transfers of SALW for 2007.⁶ The intended primary audience is the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the continuing operation and further development of UNROCA, which is to be convened in 2009. Section II of this paper reports on the continuing upward trend in submissions of background information on international transfers of SALW to UNROCA, including details of the states that have submitted information on SALW to UNROCA for the first time and a regional breakdown. Section III analyses the background information on international transfers of SALW for 2007 submitted to UNROCA: it details the volume of SALW transferred, the most significant importers and exporters, and the results of an internal verification of submissions. The paper closes with conclusions in section IV.

II. Participation

Participation in the 'virtual eighth category' continues to increase. Of the 90 UN member states that had reported to UNROCA by 31 December 2008 on international transfers during 2007, more than half—48 states—submitted background information on transfers of SALW (see table 1). Of these 48 states, 19 submitted background information on international transfers for SALW to UNROCA for the first time (see table 2). In total, 56 UN member states—more than a quarter of the UN membership—have submitted background information on international transfers of SALW for at least one of the years 2003–2007.⁷

Participation in the 'virtual eighth category' continues to increase

reporting form to submit the same types of information used when reporting on the original 7 categories. See Holtom (note 2), p.16.

⁶ In Oct. 2008 *Arms Control Today* published a brief overview of submissions of background information on international transfers of SALW to UNROCA for 2007. Since then, 12 more states have submitted background information. Abramson, J., 'UN Register captures expanded small arms trade', *Arms Control Today*, vol. 38, no. 10 (Oct. 2008), <http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_10/smallarms>.

⁷ In addition, Japan has submitted background information on procurement from national production and Panama on seizures of illicit SALW. Of the 37 states that submitted background information on SALW for at least one of the years 2003–2006, 8 had not filed a report for 2007 by the end



The number of states submitting nil reports also increased—nine states submitted ‘nil’ reports for 2007, up from four for 2006 (see table 2).⁸ ‘Nil’ reports can be read as a signal of support from these states for the inclusion of international transfers of SALW in UNROCA.

Of the states that reported for 2007, 31 are in Europe, 7 in the Americas, 4 in Asia, 3 in Africa and 3 in Oceania. Of the states that reported for 2006, 21 are in Europe, 7 in the Americas, 4 in Africa, 3 in Asia and 1 in Oceania. The European Union (EU) has stated that ‘the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in a separate category of the Register remains the European Union’s highest priority’.⁹ To demonstrate their support for this position, 20 EU members submitted background information on international transfers of SALW for 2007 (up from 15 for 2006).

Of the 39 states that reported actual international transfers of SALW (i.e. excluding the 9 ‘nil’ reporting states), 26 states provided a description of at least some of the items in their submissions, although the quality of the descriptions varies. Sixteen states provided comments on some of their entries, such as: (a) whether the items were demilitarized, surplus, or hunting or sporting weapons; (b) the producer companies; (c) the end-users; (d) any intermediary states; or (e) whether the items were donations. For transfers in 2006, only Canada reported in its background information that its submission included transfers of SALW to civilians; however, a questionnaire distributed by SIPRI revealed that eight other states included transfers to civilians in their reports for 2006.¹⁰ For 2007 Canada again stated that transfers to civilians were included in its submission, with Luxembourg, Romania and the United Kingdom identifying transfers of hunting or sporting SALW in their submissions.

For the second year in a row, the Czech Republic gave no information on suppliers or recipients; instead, for each subcategory, it gave only the total number of items imported and exported. Australia classified the number of SALW units imported, Sweden classified the number of recoilless rifles and anti-tank missile launcher units exported, while Canada and Poland reported the number of 84-mm Carl Gustaf recoilless rifles imported from Sweden in their submissions.

The number of units exported and the recipients listed in Ukraine’s submission of background information on international transfers of SALW differ significantly from a report published (in Ukrainian) by the Ukrainian

of 2008: Finland, Haiti, Jamaica, Mali, the Philippines, Saint Lucia, Senegal, and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁸ Moldova, the Philippines, Saint Lucia and Swaziland submitted nil reports for imports and exports for 2006. In addition Mali and Togo submitted nil reports for exports and no report for imports for 2006.

⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, ‘United Nations Register of Conventional Arms’, Report of the Secretary-General, A/63/120, 14 July 2008, p. 138.

¹⁰ In 2007 SIPRI sent a questionnaire to the 36 UN member states that responded to the invitation to submit background information to UNROCA on SALW transfers in 2006. The questionnaire sought information on the data collection methods used for compiling background information submissions. The questionnaire also requested information on the scope and coverage of data collected and how this data compared to information made available to other intergovernmental or public transparency reporting mechanisms. A selection of the returned questionnaires is available at <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=362>.

Table 2. Export, import and nil reports on international transfers of small arms and light weapons submitted as background information to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, 2007

State	Exports			Imports			First year of reporting
	Yes	Nil	No	Yes	Nil	No	
Albania	x					x	
Antigua and Barbuda		x			x		
Argentina ^a		x			x		x
Armenia			x	x			x
Australia	x			x			x
Bangladesh			x	x			
Bosnia and Herzegovina	x			x			
Brunei Darussalam			x	x			x
Canada	x			x			
Chile			x	x			x
Colombia	x			x			x
Croatia	x			x			x
Cyprus	x			x			
Czech Republic	x			x			
Denmark	x			x			
El Salvador		x			x		x
Fiji		x			x		x
France	x			x			
Georgia			x	x			
Germany	x			x			
Ghana		x			x		x
Greece	x			x			
Hungary	x			x			
Indonesia			x	x			x
Italy	x			x			x
South Korea	x			x			
Latvia			x	x			
Liechtenstein			x	x			
Lithuania			x	x			
Luxembourg			x	x			x
Malta		x			x		x
Mexico			x	x			
Moldova ^b		x			x		
Montenegro	x					x	x
Netherlands	x			x			
New Zealand	x			x			
Norway	x			x			x
Poland	x			x			
Portugal	x			x			
Romania	x			x			x
Slovakia	x			x			
Slovenia			x	x			x
Swaziland		x			x		
Sweden	x					x	
Togo		x			x		
Turkey ^c	x			x			
United Kingdom ^d	x					x	
Ukraine	x			x			x
Total	27	9	12	35	9	4	19



Notes: Japan reportedly submitted information on small arms and light weapons (SALW) procurement through national production for 2007, but this information was not made publicly available. Equivalent information for 2004–2006 has previously been made publicly available in the Report of the UN Secretary-General on the UN Register of Conventional Arms and the online database. For a full list of participating states for 2003–2006, see Holtom, P., *Transparency in Transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons: Reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, 2003–2006*, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 22 (SIPRI: Stockholm, July 2008), table 4.4.

^a Argentina provided information on holdings of SALW, using the subcategories of the standardized reporting form.

^b Moldova provided information on SALW identified as surplus and/or seized and destroyed by the Moldovan Army.

^c Turkey provided information on SALW identified as surplus and destroyed.

^d The UK provided information on SALW destroyed by the British Ministry of Defence.

Source: UNROCA online database, <http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

State Export Control Service in late August 2008.¹¹ In its submission to UNROCA, Ukraine reported the export of 105 996 SALW items to 8 states, all of which were participants in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The Ukrainian State Export Control Service report documented the export of 211 352 SALW to 19 states, not all of them OSCE participants.¹² It thus seems that the Ukrainian submission to UNROCA is a copy of its submission to the OSCE exchange of information on SALW transfers and not a complete report on Ukraine's international transfers of SALW. This type of practice would be avoided if the 'virtual eighth category' were to become a full category within UNROCA, as Ukraine would not have been *invited* to submit background information based on its reports to other transparency mechanisms—instead, it would have been *requested* to submit information on all SALW exports and recipients.¹³ Of course, Ukraine could still update its UNROCA submission with the data collected and published by the Ukrainian State Export Control Service.

III. An analysis of reporting for 2007

In analysing the background information on transfers of small arms and light weapons submitted to UNROCA for 2007, this section addresses the same questions as those posed in the earlier report on the years 2003–2006:

1. How many transfers and units were reported to UNROCA for 2007?
2. Who were the most significant suppliers and recipients according to submissions to UNROCA for 2007?
3. How many of the transfers can be verified by cross-checking with submissions by other reporting states to UNROCA?¹⁴

¹¹ Ukrainian State Export Control Service, [Information on the amount of transfers of certain categories of weapons made by Ukraine in 2007], n.d., <http://www.dsecu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=41896&cat_id=41879> (in Ukrainian).

¹² On Ukrainian SALW exports see Holtom, P., 'Ukrainian exports of small arms and light weapons, 2004–2007', SIPRI Background Paper, Oct. 2008, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=369>.

¹³ Although reporting to UNROCA is voluntary, a 'request' for information is considered to be more politically binding on UN member states than an 'invitation' to submit information. Wagenmakers, H., 'The UN Register of Conventional Arms: the debate on the future issues', *Arms Control Today*, Oct. 1994, pp. 11–12.

¹⁴ Holtom (note 2), p. 27.

Table 3. States named as importers and exporters in submissions of background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, 2003–2007

Figures are numbers of states.

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Exporting states reported	10	12	14	38	52
Importing states reported	67	78	93	105	135

Note: Information on submissions for 2007 is based on submissions made publicly available by 31 Dec. 2008. The figures for 2006 and 2007 exclude submissions by the Czech Republic (which only gave aggregated exports for small arms and light weapons (SALW) and reported no importers or exporters), Japan and Panama. The table also excludes entries filed by the UK on SALW transfers to Alderney, Aruba, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, the Channel Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey, St Helena and Sark, and by Germany on SALW transfers to Aruba. These transfers have been excluded from the study because the recipients are not UN member states.

Source: UNROCA online database, <http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

SALW transfers reported to UNROCA represent only a fraction of international transfers

It is necessary to stress that the data presented below on SALW transfers reported to UNROCA represent only a fraction of international transfers of SALW because many major importing and exporting states (e.g. China, Russia and the USA) have not reported their international transfers of SALW. In particular, the tables presenting the biggest exporters and importers of SALW based on submissions to UNROCA (tables 5 and 6 below) are skewed by an over-representation of submissions by European states. In addition, the figures reported here may undercount the actual number of SALW units transferred. This is because when an importing and exporting state have submitted reports on a transfer of items for the same subcategory of SALW that differ in the number of units transferred, the importer’s reported number of units delivered is used. This choice was taken to limit the possibility of double counting.¹⁵

The 39 states that reported international transfers of SALW for 2007 named 52 UN member states as exporters of SALW and 135 as importers. This was an increase in comparison with previous years (see table 3).

There was also a significant jump in the number of units reported as transferred in 2007 in comparison with 2006 (see table 4). Submissions to UNROCA for 2007 contained more than double the number of SALW units reported for the entire period 2003–2006. Not only was this due to an increase in the number of states submitting information, it was also due to the fact that significant SALW exporting states reported on international transfers of SALW for the first time. For example, the two biggest exporters for 2007 according to UNROCA submissions—Croatia and Italy—submitted background information on international transfers of SALW for the first time. Together, these two states accounted for almost half of the SALW transfers reported to UNROCA for 2007 (see table 5).

The five exporters presented in table 5 account for 72 per cent of SALW exports reported in background information submissions to UNROCA for 2007. However, many major SALW producers and exporters, including Austria, Belgium, China, Israel, Russia and the USA, have never submitted background information on international transfers of SALW. As long as such

¹⁵ For an explanation of the rationale for this choice see Holtom (note 2), p. 29.



Table 4. Small arms and light weapons reported in submissions of background information on international transfers to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, 2003–2007

Figures are numbers of units. Figures do not include double counting of units.

Type of weapon	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total	54 322	93 063	167 246	619 767	2 292 219
Small arms	53 749	92 117	161 065	598 268	2 279 153
Revolvers and self-loading pistols	18 644	47 040	31 725	245 020	924 690
Rifles and carbines	3 838	11 275	5 134	247 740	1 021 650
Sub-machine guns	8 254	1 776	19 230	36 830	86 614
Assault rifles	21 137	2 101	4 684	48 063	224 479
Light machine guns	1 158	724	5 039	3 858	21 162
Other	718	29 201	41 069	1 770	558
Various small arms ^a	0	0	54 184	14 987	0
Light weapons	573	946	6 181	21 499	13 066
Heavy machine gun	119	378	206	2992	2 930
Hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers	334	247	3 007	11 960	5 674
Portable anti-tank guns	0	0	0	222	2
Recoilless rifles ^a	70	0	1 597	2 340	2 479
Portable anti-tank launchers	12	304	1 086	3 840	1 431
Mortars of calibre less than 100 mm	36	17	250	50	61
Others	2	0	35	95	489

Notes: The figures do not include small arms and light weapons (SALW) procured by the Japanese Government, 2004–2007. The figures do not include the submission by Panama for 2006. The figures also exclude SALW reported by the UK as transferred to Alderney, Aruba, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, the Channel Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey, St Helena and Sark, and by Germany as transferred to Aruba. These transfers have been excluded from the study because the recipients are not UN member states. The figures also exclude SALW included in the Indonesian submission on transfers of SALW that were produced in Indonesia and are therefore not international transfers.

^a These figures cover various (unclassified) small arms exported to Iraq (in 2005) and the USA (in 2005 and 2006) from Poland, and to Algeria, Norway, Switzerland and the USA from France (in 2005).

Source: UNROCA online database, <http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

states do not participate in this important transparency mechanism, the utility of UNROCA for monitoring international transfers and potentially destabilizing accumulations of SALW will continue to be limited.

The five importers presented in table 6 account for 79 per cent of SALW imports reported in background information submissions to UNROCA for 2007. Most significant is the fact that the USA accounted for 68 per cent of all international SALW transfers reported to UNROCA, based solely on submissions by exporters.

While the UNROCA submissions seem to show that the USA is a significant importer of SALW, it is unclear whether the USA is the final destination of some of the transfers reported to UNROCA. For example, Croatia reported the export of 528 766 revolvers and self-loading pistols, 120 300 rifles and carbines and 100 heavy machine guns to the USA in 2007—these figures alone account for Croatia's ranking as the biggest exporter in table 5 and made a significant contribution to the USA's ranking as the biggest importer in table 6. However, it is not known if the SALW were for civilian end-users in the USA or were re-exported by US-based brokers.

Table 5. Significant exporters of small arms and light weapons based on UNROCA submissions, 2007

State	Croatia	Italy	UK	Ukraine	Romania
SALW units exported	653 378	462 497	255 812	167 151	118 241
Share of all units transferred (%)	29	20	11	7	5

Source: UNROCA online database, <http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

Table 6. Significant importers of small arms and light weapons based on UNROCA submissions, 2007

State	USA	Iraq	Mexico	UK	France
SALW units imported	1 548 253	98 877	72 664	60 557	44 134
Share of all units transferred (%)	68	4	3	3	2

Source: UNROCA online database, <http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

Submissions to UNROCA continued to document significant transfers of SALW to Iraq—the second biggest importer in 2007 and for the period 2003–2006.¹⁶ However, since neither Iraq nor the USA reported to UNROCA on SALW transfers in 2007, the figures in table 6 do not include the estimated 7000 M16 rifles delivered to Iraq by the USA in 2007.¹⁷ The Iraqi Government has requested a total of 342 079 M16 and M4 rifles and carbines from the USA to replace Kalashnikov rifles supplied from the surplus of former Warsaw Pact states.¹⁸

Afghanistan and Georgia, with imports of 33 862 and 32 973 SALW units, respectively, were the sixth and seventh biggest importers in 2007 according to UNROCA, having been the third and fourth biggest importers for 2003–2006.¹⁹ The USA began to supply M16 rifles to these states in 2007–2008, also with the aim of replacing Kalashnikov rifles.²⁰ While Georgia reported on SALW imports in 2007, Afghanistan has never reported on SALW transfers to UNROCA.

The main exporters of major conventional weapons, such as the USA and Russia, already report to UNROCA. These reports reveal information on transfers to importing states that do not report to UNROCA. If the most significant exporters of SALW were also to report to UNROCA on SALW transfers, this would make a significant contribution to monitoring the volume

¹⁶ Holtom (note 2), table 5.8.

¹⁷ Stockman, F., 'Iraq says US behind in arms deliveries', *Boston Globe*, 3 Nov. 2007.

¹⁸ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 'Iraq—helicopters, vehicles, weapons and support', News Release Transmittal no. 06-69, Washington, DC, 19 Sep. 2006; Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 'Iraq—various vehicles, small arms ammunition, explosives, and communications equipment', News Release Transmittal no. 07-64, Washington, DC, 25 Sep. 2007; Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 'Iraq—M16A4 rifles, M4 carbines and M203 grenade launchers', News Release Transmittal no. 09-10, Washington, DC, 10 Dec. 2008—all available from <http://www.dsca.mil/PressReleases/36-b/36b_index.htm>. By Sep. 2008, the Iraqi police and armed forces had reportedly taken delivery of 50 000 M16 rifles. American Forces Press Service, 'Iraqi Defense Ministry bids Petraeus farewell', US Department of Defense, 15 Sep. 2008, <<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=51176>>.

¹⁹ Holtom (note 2), table 5.8.

²⁰ Georgia reported the delivery of 4000 M4A3 assault rifles and 20 M82A rifles in its UNROCA submission for 2007. By Oct. 2008 the Afghan security forces had reportedly received 6000 M16 rifles. Graham, S., American Forces Press Service, 'Afghan forces receive NATO weapons', US Department of Defense, 9 Oct. 2008, <<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=51452>>.



Table 7. Internal verification of background information on transfers of small arms and light weapons reported to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, 2007

	No. of entries	No. of pairs	Share (%)
Exact match	27	13	2
Partial match (no units)	4	2	–
Partial match (difference in units)	119	43	9
No match	484	..	35
Match not possible	748	..	54
Total	1 382	58	100

Source: UNROCA online database, <http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

and trends in international SALW transfer and allow potentially destabilizing accumulations to be identified.

Internal verification

As with the earlier report for 2003–2006, an attempt has been made to verify each entry in a state's reporting form. The verification in this paper is internal only: importer and exporter submissions to UNROCA are cross-checked for matches on type of weapon, description of items and number of units.

The following terms are used to distinguish the different results arising from the internal verification exercise.

1. *Exact match*: the exporting and importing states both file entries that identify the transfer of the same number of units for the same subcategory of SALW.

2. *Partial match* (no units reported): the exporting and importing states both file entries that identify the transfer of the same subcategory of SALW, but neither party reports on the number of units transferred.

3. *Partial match* (difference in units reported): the exporting and importing states both file entries that identify the transfer of the same subcategory of SALW, but each party reports a different number of units transferred or one of the parties does not report the number of units exported or imported.

4. *No match*: the exporting and importing states both report to UNROCA for the same year, but only one of the parties files an entry for a particular subcategory of SALW.

5. *Match not possible*: only one of the parties to a transfer reports to UNROCA.

For 2007, UN member states filed 1382 entries on SALW transfers as background information to UNROCA.²¹ Table 7 gives the results of the internal verification of these submissions. Of the 1382 entries, no match was possible for 748 (54 per cent) because only one of the parties to the transaction submitted background information on SALW transfers to UNROCA for 2007. This is a substantially lower proportion than for the years 2003–2006 and

²¹ An 'entry' is defined here to mean each provision by a reporting state of information for a particular SALW subcategory and a particular importing or exporting state. In several cases, there is more than 1 entry for a single exporting or importing state within a particular SALW subcategory. See e.g. Holtom (note 2), figure 5.1.



perhaps helps to explain why a higher percentage of entries resulted in exact or partial matches in comparison with the results for previous years.²²

In 9 of the 13 exact matches found for 2007, Germany was the exporting state. However, instead of reporting the number of SALW actually exported, Germany reports figures based on export licences issued. While the figures for licences issued are not always accurate (since, e.g., the number of items exported may be less than the number permitted by the licence), the internal verification shows that, in the case of Germany, data derived from licences issued can be a fairly reliable source of information.²³ States should thus consider supplying export licence data for their submissions on international transfers of SALW if figures for actual deliveries are not available. When they do so, they should follow the German example of explicitly stating that the submission has relied on such a data source.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

The case for including an eighth category in UNROCA has been strengthened

The case for including an eighth category in UNROCA for international transfers of small arms and light weapons has been further strengthened by the increase in the number of states that have demonstrated their willingness and ability to submit background information on international transfers of SALW to UNROCA for 2007. Overall, 56 UN member states have submitted such background information to UNROCA for at least one of the years 2003–2006, with 31 states submitting information more than once in this period.

Significant regional differences in participation remain, with OSCE states accounting for over half of all submitting states. However, several of the OSCE's most significant SALW exporters (in particular, Austria, Belgium, Russia and the USA) have yet to submit background information on international transfers of SALW to UNROCA. These states and other major SALW exporters should follow the good example set by France, Germany, Italy, the UK and others. Beyond the OSCE, submissions from the Americas and Oceania have been encouraging while Africa, Asia and the Middle East continue to be poorly represented. Asian states such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and South Korea and African states such as Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Swaziland and Togo are leading the way in supporting the case for an eighth UNROCA category.

In practical terms, the creation of an eighth category in UNROCA for SALW could simply involve the transformation of the 'virtual eighth category' into a full category. For submissions to be of use for monitoring international transfers of SALW and identifying potentially destabilizing accumulations, they must at the very least include information on units transferred and the importing and exporting states and they should continue to use subcategories for reporting on SALW. An argument could be made for the rationalization of some of the subcategories—for example, having one category for rifles, carbines and assault rifles rather than two—to alleviate

²² For 2003–2006 entries, no match was possible for 90% of the entries; 7% gave no match; 2% had partial matches; and less than 1% produced exact matches. Holtom (note 2), pp. 34–38.

²³ The share of German export entries that resulted in an exact or partial match is higher than the average for 2007: 10% resulted in an exact match, 16% resulted in a partial match, 45% gave no match and it was not possible to match 29%.



the problems caused by the different classifications used by reporting states. However, regardless of the categorization, if more states were simply to provide a description (i.e. the model) of the items being transferred, this would enable cross-checking as long as the importing and exporting states and number of items transferred were reported.

States should also be encouraged to use the ‘Comments on the transfer’ column of the standardized reporting form to give information on a specific end-user or -use. More states should openly state if transfers to civilians are included in their submission. Transfers of demilitarized major conventional weapons to museums and private collectors are already identified in reports to UNROCA and this practice can be easily extended to SALW. It is encouraging that several states have already provided ‘Comments on transfer’ that reveal whether transfers were re-exports or temporary exports and the nature of the transfers (e.g. state-to-state, return to manufacturer). The German practice of using export licences in lieu of delivery information is an option that merits further discussion within the GGE for those states that are currently unable to provide information on actual deliveries.

The earlier report on the years 2003–2006 concluded by noting that the invitation to submit background information on SALW transfers (the ‘virtual eighth category’) could become a substitute for an eighth category in UNROCA.²⁴ While it can also be argued that it does not really matter how the information is classified, as long as it is submitted, it seems that the grounds for opposing the introduction of an eighth UNROCA category are being overcome in principle and in practice. In addition, the inclusion of SALW in UNROCA would increase UNROCA’s relevance for other UN conventional arms control processes, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and ongoing discussions related to the creation of an international arms trade treaty.

Since the decision in 2006 to invite states to submit background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons to UNROCA using a standard form, the response from states has been clear and positive. The level of the response means that the GGE should reconsider the case for *requesting* (rather than *inviting*) states to submit such information to a new, eighth UNROCA category for SALW.

The GGE should reconsider the case for requesting (rather than inviting) states to submit information to a new, eighth UNROCA category for SALW

Abbreviations

EU	European Union
GGE	Group of Governmental Experts
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
UN	United Nations
UNROCA	United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

²⁴ Holtom (note 2), p. 49.

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SIPRI BACKGROUND PAPER

REPORTING TRANSFERS OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS REGISTER OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS, 2007

PAUL HOLTOM

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