

Disarmament:

Mathilde: Preventing Black Market trade of weapons regarding ISIL

I: Introduction

A growing threat in the world today, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (otherwise known as ISIL, Daesh, or the IS) has control over vast territories and resources both in Iraq and Syria, as well as small territories in Afghanistan, Nigeria, Libya and other countries. It is held responsible for war crimes and human rights abuse by the United Nations, and considered a terrorist organization. Since 2014, ISIL has claimed statehood and tried to gain political and religious control over Muslims around the world as well as declaring war on all non-Muslim people (which they call *Jihad*). The terrorist group uses a wide array of weapons, most of them stolen from Syria, Iraq, both countries affected by civil war, or purchased from illicit arms dealers. Among these are hundreds of armored vehicles from the United States, as well as weapons from Russia, China, and European countries. In general, weapons could be classified as a) conventional weapons, such as guns, missiles, and body armour, as well as b) unconventional ones, including improvised weapons and weapons of mass destruction (chemical weapons, nuclear materials, and mustard gas). Such weapons allow for the group to expand and capture more territories, resources (such as oil fields) and even more weapons. ISIL leaders claim to have around 40,000 fighters, while they are reported to have 31,000 by the CIA, a large portion foreign members.

II: Definition of Key Terms

Arms trafficking, also known as black market weapons trade, is mainly described as the international illicit smuggling of weapons, explosives and ammunition. Although there are many examples of this, all around the world, it mostly occurs in areas afflicted by violence, war and crime, and is a primary way for terrorist organizations to stockpile arms. The difference between illegal and legal weapons trade may vary in different countries, each of which have specific legislations on the subject. Black Market trade violates such legislations, and occurs without permission from the government.

A huge number of terrorist attacks are carried out using Small arms and Light weapons (SA/LW), the main weapons illegally bought from the black market. Easier to acquire, conceal, maintain and use, SA/LW are hard to track and can be trafficked in large numbers. According to the UN, they are responsible for around 90% of the deaths in conflict zones and tens of thousands outside conflict zones.

SA/LW:

Small arms mostly consist of portable weapons, assault rifles, pistols and certain types of light machine guns. They can be carried by one or two people, making transportation and usage easier.

Light weapons are larger weapons, usually carried by a crew of people. Many types of machine guns, grenades, portable launchers, mortars and anti-aircraft missile systems can all be defined as light weapons.

The total value of the global arms market is estimated at an astounding \$60 billion, about 10 or 20% of which is illicit.

III: History and Timeline

1998: The United Nations created UNODA (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs) in the goal of avoiding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) as well as small arms and other conventional weapons.

1999: ISIL started out as a group affiliated with Al-Qaeda, the terrorist group responsible for the 9/11 attacks. (They separated in February 2014)

2001: United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held in New York in July, and a Programme of Action was defined. After multiple conferences, they decided to focus on three main topics: International cooperation, arm stock management and illicit smuggling of small arms and light weapons.

2003: ISIL participated in the Iraqi civil war, following the invasion of Iraq by Western forces.

2010: The former leader of ISIL was killed and replaced by current leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

2011: With the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, the terrorist organization managed to gain more territory and influence, especially in the region.

2013: ISIL organizes a massive break-out of 500 of its members from a prison in Iraq, involving several suicide bombers, car bombs, mortar and rocket fire.

2014: ISIL proclaimed themselves to be a worldwide caliphate, in this case an extremist Islamic State. They gained more influence than ever, and were able to attract foreign recruits. In September, a coalition including the United States, France and several Arab Nations launched airstrikes against ISIL.

2015: The attacks of November 13 in Paris, France are orchestrated by ISIL, killed 130 and injured between 352 and 368, as well as 7 of the 9 perpetrators. Suicide belts are one of the main weapons used, as well as AKM assault rifles and hand grenades.

IV: Key issues

-The black market makes weapons such as M16 and AK-47 rifles more accessible and cheaper for ISIL to use. They are able to capture them in large numbers and use them easily, with only one or two people. Transfers of small arms and light weapons are harder to track down by governments, which is why they are used by terrorist organizations and

other illegal groups. Such weapons are responsible for a huge number of casualties in the world, which makes them extremely dangerous in the hands of terrorists.

-There is very limited information on how many firearms actually exist in the world, since a lot of them are not legally registered. This makes it very hard to track down any parties buying them, or selling them.

-Black Market Trade leads to Human Rights Abuse and human suffering. The security of countries is threatened by illicit arms trafficking, as well as war. When one party (such as ISIL in the civil war) has access to illegal weapons, the circumstances turn in their favor, and the battlefield becomes much more violent, unfair and bloody.

-About 50% of terrorist attacks take place using SA/LWs, and they are not only carried out by ISIL. Al-Qaeda and other terrorist parties are able to access SA/LWs on the Black Market. Controlling the Black Market would be a way to stop a great number of attacks all over the world.

V: Major parties involved

Weapons' Countries of Origin (The Big Five):

Most of the weapons possessed by ISIL are imported from United States, China, Russia, The United Kingdom or France. the by Iraq, and are then taken by the terrorist group. Weapons from these countries include Ak-47 assault rifles from Russia and M16 assault rifles from the United States, two of the most known weapons to be used.

United States: High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (Humvees), are type of armored military truck primarily used in the United States military are also very useful to ISIL. During the Iraq War, 10,000 Humvees were stockpiled in Iraq and used by coalition forces. However, in 2014, around 2,300 of them were captured by the ISIL, when the city of Mosul was overrun by their forces. During the attack, they also captured a multitude of other weapons, abandoned by Iraqi divisions, who fled. Humvees are also sometimes used as IEDs and rigged with explosives.

Russia: The AK-47 assault rifles (Also known as Kalashnikov rifles) are the weapons of choice for ISIL. Adopted in 1948 by the Soviet Army, they still remain the most used assault rifles in the world. Cheap and fairly easy to manufacture, about 100 million of the estimated 500 million firearms in the world are some variant of the Kalashnikov. Around the 1980s, the USSR was the main arms dealer to middle-eastern countries such as Iran and Syria. After the collapse of the USSR, they were sold more and more on the Black Market to any party in need of them, such as terrorist groups, drug cartels and states.

Arms Receivers(Iraq, Syria and other Middle-East Countries):

ISIL purchases and steals weapons from Iraq and Syria, as well as neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iran, Lebanon and Jordan, and other Middle-East countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar and the UAE.

Iraq and Syria: Due to civil war, both of these countries have enormous stockpiles of weapons, and are divided into the government, rebels and other parties, as well as terrorist organizations. Weapons from NATO or the United States are often found in Iraqi military bases in large quantities. After the capture of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, many of these weapons fell into the hands of ISIL. These weapons originally sent for different reasons, have fallen into the wrong hands, greatly fuelling the terrorist group.

Neighboring Countries and other Middle-East countries: Iraq and Syria's have many neighboring countries and controlling all of the borders proves to be very difficult. The neighboring countries are very fearful of destabilization related to the influx of Syrian and Iraqi refugees, threat of terrorism and the influence of ISIL on their internal affairs. Other Middle-East powers also have an influence, either from their government or from internal parties who support different factions in the civil war. Because of this, the environment is thrown into chaos, and complex to maneuver, and requires diplomatic efforts. This makes it easier to ISIL to prospere.

VI: Possible Solutions

The main solution for Arms trafficking is to make international laws regarding the subject, to stop the stockpiling and selling of weapons on the Black Market.

-Since December 24th, 2014, the United Nations has started to prepare for the Arms Trade Treaty, a movement meant to focus more on conventional weapons, rather than WMDs, which were their main focus in the past. Its purpose is reducing human suffering, reaching peace, and promoting international cooperation. It has been signed by 130 states, but has been ratified by only 80. 23 countries have abstained, including Russia and China, and the United States has signed, but not ratified. North Korea, Iran and Syria were the only countries to vote against.

However, it was a general concern that the constitutional rights from several countries(including the United States) and Individual Rights to Defense would be undermined by such treaty.

-International cooperation is definitely one of the key solutions to ending arms trafficking conflict all over the world. If the major powers responsible for the exporting of weapons

come together and try to find a solution, the problem will be more easily solved, then if each country does something individually.

-Securing the borders between arms-trafficking countries in the middle-East would also be a solution. Loose borders are a primary cause for illicit arms trafficking. ISIL is able to capture certain cities and take both weapons and vehicles, as can be seen by the invasion of Mosul(2014).

-Aiding Iraq and Syria to make reformations to their countries: Most of arms trafficking regarding ISIL takes place due to the weakened states of Iraq and Syria, which are thrown into chaos by the civil war. By helping other parties and the general country to grow stronger, ISIL territory and weapons can be recaptured, and the terrorist group will have more trouble capturing cities, such as Mosul in either of these countries.

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