

**STRATEGY**  
**ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS CONTROL**  
**IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 2010 – 2015**

## INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Serbia recognizes the need to define the control of small arms and light weapons (SALW), their components and related ammunition at all levels and in all the aspects regarding illegal possession, production, stockpiling and transfers and with the view to preventing the access to weapons by criminal groups and terrorists. Such a decisive attitude has been confirmed by signing the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA)<sup>1</sup>, OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons <sup>2</sup>, OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition <sup>3</sup> and UN Protocol on Firearms. Its position has also been expressed in the Government Conclusion dated 17<sup>th</sup> August 2009.

Small Arms and Light Weapons include any man-portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch projectiles by the action of an explosive, except for old weapons. Small arms are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, pistols, revolvers, rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns. As a rule, light weapons are weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, and include, inter alia, heavy machine guns, hand-held grenade launchers, anti-aircraft missile systems and mortars of a calibre up to 100 millimetres<sup>4</sup>.

Illegal production, possession, transfer and foreign trade of small arms and light weapons and the related phenomena (organized crime, armed violence and terrorism) fuel conflicts and violence and contribute to the citizen feeling of insecurity. The impacts of uncontrolled proliferation and possession of weapons continue to pose a threat to the sustainable economic and social development. Illegal weapon possession leads to continuous misuse of weapons in criminal activities, by illegal use of firearms and for committing homicides.

The mentioned United Nations (UN) Action Programme was considered in the drafting of this Strategy, together with the key findings of a survey conducted in this field in 2004 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

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1 UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, July 2001.

2 OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, November 2000.

3 OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, December 2003.

4 International Tracking Instrument - III, December 2005

The Strategy of Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Republic of Serbia is a document by means of which the Government identifies the situation regarding the control of small arms and light weapons and lays down a framework for drafting an action plan, defines the roles and responsibilities of the national authorities, and identifies the goals and main courses of action.

The Strategy of Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons is a framework for activities by institutions and individuals, both in governmental and in non-governmental sector, in the implementation of measures in preventing and combating the illegal production, possession and trade in small arms and light weapons in all their aspects.

The Strategy covers the period 2010 – 2015.

## **2. SITUATION ANALYSIS**

Following the end of conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia, a number of weapon collection actions have been launched. Still, the proliferation and spread of weapons among the region population is a grave issue, since weapons, ammunition and explosives remain easily available.

As a result of the downsizing of the armed forces, there are large amounts of surplus weapons and ammunition. The Republic of Serbia, as well as other sovereign states, keeps the right to offer a part of the surplus stockpiles for sale, and to use to funds thus obtained for its defense system.

According to the official statistics, in late 2008 there were 1,172,468 weapons in legal civilian possession. From 2005 to 2009 in the Republic of Serbia 6,191 crimes were committed with the use of firearms. In the same period 6,284 firearms in illegal possession were seized from citizens, and 50,541 weapons that used to be under state control were destroyed, 8,018 of which were man portable anti-aircraft systems (MANPADS).

Uncontrolled proliferation and illegal trade of small arms and light weapons may become a serious matter of concern, as a potential cause of insecurity and a factor influencing the security in the Republic of Serbia

Also, an issue of concern is the number of firearms in civilian possession, as a result of post-conflict instability and increased crime rates, coupled with traditional gun culture and high availability of weapons.

In spite of the measures of collection and registration of illegal weapons taken by the competent authorities in 1999, 2003 and 2007, the high number of illegal weapons may still have a considerable impact on development of negative phenomena.

Therefore the Government of the Republic of Serbia is taking further measures at a national level, which in cooperation with international stakeholders and in conformity

with global trends, should contribute to adequate tackling the issues of uncontrolled use of SALW.

### **3. NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK**

In its efforts to combat and eradicate illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, the Republic of Serbia refers to the following international documents on SALW control:

- 1) UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition (June 2001, entered into force in July 2005);
- 2) UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (July 2001);
- 3) International Instrument for the Identification and Tracing of SALW in a timely and reliable manner (December 2005);
- 4) OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (November 2000);
- 5) EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (June 1998)<sup>5</sup>.

Besides by international documents, the status of small arms and light weapons in the Republic of Serbia is also regulated by the following legislation:

- 1) Law on Weapons and Ammunition (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia” no. 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/03, 85/05 and 101/05);
- 2) Law on Production and Transfers of Weapons and Military Equipment (“Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Serbia” no. 41/96, “Official Journal of SCG 7/2005, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia” 85/2005);
- 3) Law on Testing of Hand-held Firearms, Devices and Ammunition (“Official Journal” of SCG 31/04) and
- 4) Law on Foreign Trade in Weapons, Military Equipment and Dual-use Goods (“Official Journal“ of SCG 7/05 and 8/05).

### **4. MAIN GOALS**

The main tasks of the SALW Control Strategy of the Republic of Serbia include:

- 1) Constant national control of activities related to production, possession, carrying, local and foreign trade (including brokering) of small arms and light weapons;
- 2) Reporting to the UN Action Programme on SALW, OSCE Document on SALW, UN Protocol on Firearms and other international treaties and conventions;
- 3) Control of activities related to management of SALW stockpiles under state control and disposal of surplus stockpiles.

The overall goal of the SALW Control Strategy is to establish a unique national system of effective control of small arms and light weapons in the Republic of Serbia ensuring

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<sup>5</sup> Conclusion of the Government of R. Serbia made on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008 on accepting the principles of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

the reduction of weapons in illegal possession and number of abuses of legal weapons and increase of general security of citizens and the society as a whole.

## **5. OBJECTIVES**

The SALW Control Strategy of the Republic of Serbia has the following objectives:

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	
<b>Objective 1</b>	Create the conditions for an effective application of the national legislation related to the production, transfer, marking and stamping, export and import controls, fulfillment of requirements for weapons' possession and weapons registration procedures.
<b>Objective 2</b>	Inform the public on the negative impacts of weapons' abuse and raise awareness in individuals and legal entities on the risks caused by weapons and on legal regulations related to weapons possession and internal and international transfers of weapons.
<b>Objective 3</b>	Create the conditions for safe storage of small arms and light weapons.
<b>Objective 4</b>	Plan and conduct long-term and regular activities of SALW controls with the aim of weapons collection (amnesty) or their seizure and destruction.
<b>Objective 5</b>	Identify surplus stockpiles of small arms and light weapons under state control and create material and financial conditions for their safe disposal.
<b>Objective 6</b>	Strengthen cooperation at national and international level, in accordance with the existing international documents.
<b>Objective 7</b>	Seek civil society support to the SALW Control Strategy.
<b>Objective 8</b>	Ensure observance and implementation of the existing international agreements (documents, conventions) related to small arms and light weapons, acceded by the Republic of Serbia and compliance of local legislation with the international documents and regulations of the UN, OSCE and EU.

## **6. EXPECTED OUTCOME**

The effective implementation of the SALW Control Strategy of the Republic of Serbia will create a favorable environment for faster development and will demonstrate a consistent position of the Republic of Serbia as regards combating all the forms of crime and terrorism.

## **7. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY**

### **7.1. Authorities responsible for Strategy implementation**

The Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Strategy (hereinafter referred to as: the Strategy) is implemented by the relevant ministries and other authorities, within their respective field of responsibility. Some activities are the responsibility of only one ministry, while others require the cooperation of several national authorities. In such cases the competent ministries take over the lead, and thus, cooperation and coordination with other ministries are ensured at the level of SALW Council.

Control of small arms and light weapons is conducted by:

- 1) Effective application of national legislation related to production, transfer, marking and stamping, export and import controls, fulfillment of requirements for weapons' possession and weapons registration procedures with the view to reduction of crime rates (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health);
- 2) Public information on negative impacts of weapons' abuse and raising awareness in individuals and legal entities on the risks caused by weapons and on legal regulations related to weapons possession and internal and international transfers of weapons; (Ministry of Young People and Sport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development);
- 3) Creating the conditions for safe storage of small arms and light weapons (Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior);
- 4) Planning and conducting long-term and regular activities of SALW controls with the aim of weapons collection (amnesty) or seizure and destruction of weapons (Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Finance - Customs Authority and BIA)
- 5) Identification of surplus stockpiles of small arms and light weapons under state control and setting up material and financial conditions for their safe disposal (Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior).
- 6) Strengthening cooperation at national and international level, in accordance with the existing international documents (Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development).
- 7) Seeking civil society support to the SALW Control Strategy (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Young People and Sport, Ministry of Health).
- 8) Implementation of the international agreements and documents related to small arms and light weapons, signed by the Republic of Serbia and harmonization of local legislation with them in the fields of Strategy implementation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Justice).

Encouraged by the SALW Council, other state authorities, international organizations and NGO may take part in these activities.

The SALW Council may propose to set up expert teams for specific activities.

The specific activities to be carried out by these ministries will be identified in the Action Plan.

## **7.2. SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

The Small Arms and Light Weapons Council is a working group set up by the Government; it consists of representatives of the national authorities with expertise in the relevant fields required for the implementation of the Strategy. It is responsible for proposing measures for the implementation and coordination of the Strategy and Action Plan of the control of small arms and light weapons. The SALW Council is also authorized to put forward proposals for amending the Strategy and Action Plan. The Council is the vehicle for communication and cooperation of the national authorities in the fulfilment of the common objectives.

The composition of the SALW Council:

- 1) Chair (SALW National Coordinator);
- 2) Representative of the Ministry of Defense;
- 3) Representative of the Ministry of Interior;
- 4) Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- 5) Representative of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development;
- 6) Representative of the Ministry of Justice;
- 7) Representative of the Ministry of Finances;
- 8) Representative of the Ministry of Education;
- 9) Representative of the Ministry of Young People and Sport;
- 10) Representative of the Ministry of Health;
- 11) Representative of the Security and Intelligence Agency (BIA).

Upon an invitation of the Council, the following representatives, in the capacity of observers, may provide technical advice and assistance:

- Representatives of the Technical Testing Centre;
- Representatives of the Institute for Testing and Stamping;
- UNDP representatives;
- Associations dealing with SALW issues.

The SALW Council has the following responsibilities:

- 1) To develop and submit the Action Plan of SALW Control for the Republic of Serbia within six months from the day of its establishment;
- 2) To follow and assess the influence of SALW issues on public security;
- 3) To arrange for the allocation of the necessary resources for efficient implementation of the Action Plan related to small arms and light weapons from the republic budget and, when appropriate, to request additional funding from the international community;

- 4) To disseminate information related to the implementation of the Action Plan in a timely manner;
- 5) To evaluate specific interventions or programmes conducted as a form of support to the Action Plan.
- 6) To coordinate the work of the competent ministries in producing information and reports in accordance with the international commitments of the Republic of Serbia;
- 7) To submit periodical reports to the Serbian Government on the progress made in the fulfillment of the objectives of the Strategy and Action Plan.
- 8) To provide for harmonization of legislation and regulatory issues with the international regulations and standards of relevance for the Republic of Serbia;
- 9) To contact technical organizations with the view to a more effective implementation of the Strategy;
- 10) To coordinate activities of all stakeholders in the Strategy implementation;
- 11) To initiate and contribute to the establishment of a unique national SALW tracing database.

### **7.3. SALW NATIONAL COORDINATOR**

The SALW National Coordinator is appointed by the Serbian Government. The SALW National Coordinator has the following responsibilities:

- 1) To make initial contacts for all SALW-related issues in the Republic of Serbia;
- 2) To inform all the relevant stakeholders as regards the issues of small arms and light weapons and the progress made in the Strategy and Action Plan implementation;
- 3) To chair the work of the SALW Council;
- 4) To establish contacts with the international organizations and civil society organizations supporting the Strategy implementation and SALW Council.
- 5) To draft and harmonize various components of the report for the SALW Council.

### **8. FUND RAISING**

Funds required for the pursuit of the activities to be implemented as planned by this Strategy will be covered by the financial plans of the leading stakeholders and will be appropriated in the budget of the Republic of Serbia in accordance with available resources, with the possibility to provide additional funds, if necessary, from the international community, which is in line with the UN Programme of Action for SALW.

## **9. FINAL PROVISION**

The Strategy is to be published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia".

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Prime Minister  
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