

2 Country assessments

This report presents progress towards the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) by country. Each country sub-section includes two background sections: 'Small Arms Problem', which details the SALW-related problems in each country, and 'Small Arms Policy and Practice', which gives an overview of current policy and practice on SALW.

These two sections are followed by a third section, 'Small Arms Progress', which gives a detailed assessment of progress made to date. In order to facilitate analysis of the wide-ranging areas in which progress towards the RIP and combating SALW proliferation has been made, a number of sub-sections have been used to categorise and present information for each country (largely based on the functional areas defined by SEESAC). These sub-sections of SALW control activities are:

- Legislative and regulatory issues – this section details countries' current legislative and regulatory control measures and progress made in the context of other agreements on arms control, such as the 2000 OSCE Document on Small Arms, 2001 UN Programme of Action, etc. (For more detail, see Annex H). In order to ensure consistency, all analysis and referencing of legislation in the report is based on English language translations of laws obtained from SEESAC.
- SALW transfers – this section provides an overview of each country's current and recent SALW transfers (exports, imports, transit, transshipment and re-export), focusing on exports, in as far as public information is available, and also details available information on SALW trafficking.
- SALW collection programmes and capacities – this section provides an overview of SALW collection initiatives in each country.
- SALW destruction programmes and capacities – this section provides details of SALW and SALW ammunition destruction projects in each country.
- SALW stockpile management programmes and capacities – this section provides an overview of the stockpile security and management situation in each country.
- SALW awareness activities – this section presents the awareness-raising activities and public information campaigns implemented in each country. (Seminars, conferences and other meetings are not generally included in this section, which concentrates on direct SALW awareness-raising or information campaigns).
- SALW survey activities – this section presents the results of any SALW or related survey conducted in each country. (Research reports, policy reports, needs assessments, small-scale surveys, opinion polls, etc, have not been included in this section as they do not fully correspond with a 'SALW Survey' as defined by SEESAC's regional standards).
- Civil society involvement in SALW interventions – this section provides an overview of civil society and NGO activities on SALW in each country, including a brief note on overall capacity.
- Cross-border SALW control initiatives – this section provides an overview of the situation in terms of border control and cross-border co-operation on SALW trafficking in each country.

- SALW management information and exchange systems and protocols – this section provides an overview of SALW-relevant information systems, both public and confidential; it should be noted that it is not possible to make any assessment of the value and efficacy of confidential information exchange mechanisms.
- Additional SALW-related activities – this section presents any additional activities that may be relevant to a country's efforts to combat SALW, for example, community-based policing initiatives or the development of national SALW action plans.

Moldova



Small Arms problem

Moldova's small arms problems, including illicit production and sale of SALW, large stockpiles of surplus weaponry and the lack of controls over a wide segment of the country's external border, are inextricably linked to the political and security challenges emanating from the 'frozen' conflict in the breakaway region of Transdniestria. This explains why the debate on SALW in Moldova often focuses on Transdniestria and the need to find a political solution to this conflict.

Although small in size and poor in natural resources, Moldova's geographic position gives it some importance as it lies between the former soviet bloc and the new EU. With the EU and NATO enlargements Moldova's burning economic⁷⁵⁴ and political problems have become much more of an issue for Western countries than they used to be. This explains why more recently the international community has shown an increased interest in Moldova's affairs.

The unresolved conflict in the breakaway region of Transdniestria remains a serious threat to the political and economic stability⁷⁵⁵ of the country and the security of the whole region. When Moldova declared its independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991, the Transdniestrian region on the left bank of the Dniester river, which is mainly populated by ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, chose to remain part of Russia. This desire was backed up by Russian troops that were stationed in Transdniestria, allowing the territory to declare its independence from Moldova as the Moldovan Transdniestrian Republic (MTR). The ensuing fighting during 1991 – 1992 caused several hundreds of deaths and displaced 100,000 people. Despite peace agreements, the conflict in Transdniestria remains unresolved, and the Government has in practical terms no control over the territory east of the Dniester River. The Moldovan Government is trying to incorporate Transdniestria as an autonomous region into its territory, whereas the Transdniestrian authorities favour the idea of establishing a union of independent states within a confederation. Transdniestria has established most of the attributes of a state and has its own government, army, police, border guards and border posts.

Russia still has military units posted in Transdniestria - the Operative Group of Russian Forces (OGRF) - as well as a huge arsenal of outdated weapons.⁷⁵⁶ The complete

754 Moldova's economic situation is characterised by extreme poverty, especially in rural areas. In addition to inadequate health and school facilities, roads and transport, a lack of business/work opportunities is one of the main causes for migration from the countryside to the capital and to foreign countries. 'The EU's relations with Moldova - Country Strategy Paper 2002 - 2006', European Commission, 27 December 2001, p 6. http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/moldova/csp/02_06_en.pdf

755 The Transdniestrian dispute heavily affects Moldova's economic development. The country's only big power plant and only modern steel mill are located in Transdniestria. The gas pipelines which supply Moldova cross Transdniestria.

756 'The EU's relations with Moldova - Country Strategy Paper 2002 - 2006', p 3.

withdrawal of Russian arms and troops provided for in the commitments given to the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999 and confirmed at the 10th OSCE Ministerial Council in Porto in 2002 has not been completed.⁷⁵⁷ To date, Russia has removed from Transdniestria nearly 20,000 tonnes of ammunition out of the 42,000 tonnes of matériel which was kept in military depots at the beginning of 2003.⁷⁵⁸ Some 2,000 Russian troops are still deployed in Transdniestria. Russia has repeatedly argued that its troops are necessary in Transdniestria in order to guard its huge arsenals, which could otherwise end up in unsafe hands. However, the OSCE and other international organisations have requested that Russia withdraw its troops and weapons to help stabilise the region. With around 4,500 regular army troops,⁷⁵⁹ the military strength of the separatist forces in Transdniestria is smaller than that of the Moldovan army that numbers some 6,800 personnel.⁷⁶⁰ However, the military potential of any combined Transdniestrian and OGRF forces would be considered to be higher than that of Moldova.⁷⁶¹

Transdniestria has been described as a haven for organised crime⁷⁶² and a virtual 'arms dump' containing within its boundaries large quantities of mines, as well as ammunition and small arms.⁷⁶³ There have been reports that 50,000 tonnes of aging artillery shells, mines and rockets are stored in fortified bunkers.⁷⁶⁴ Allegedly, the separatist regime in Tiraspol has the capability to manufacture and export different models of SALW, including assault rifles, machine guns and Grad multiple-rocket launchers.⁷⁶⁵

The dispute with the MTR complicates Moldova's border and customs controls, facilitating smuggling, arms transfers and other illegal activities.⁷⁶⁶ The Transdniestrian Government is not internationally recognised and therefore it is not party to or obligated by any customs and border agreements.⁷⁶⁷ Four hundred and seventy kilometres of the state border with Ukraine on the Transdniestrian region, which is very likely to be used for weapons trafficking, is unprotected and represents a significant threat to regional stability and arms control. The internal Moldovan border with the Transdniestrian region is also poorly controlled.⁷⁶⁸ It has been reported that hundreds of westbound trucks and cars cross unchecked into Moldova each day along the main Tiraspol-Chisinau highway.⁷⁶⁹ It is clear that this is another area where no significant progress can be achieved, unless the Transdniestrian problem is solved.⁷⁷⁰

757 The withdrawal was due to have been completed by the end of 2002 but the Transdniestrian leadership blocked it, demanding that the Russian troops should leave their weapons and military equipment behind.

758 All the armaments and equipment limited by the CFE Treaty have also been removed or destroyed.

759 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation', a questionnaire compiled by Col (Ret) Oleg Graur, IPP, Chisinau, Moldova, February 2004.

760 Ibid.

761 'National Security and Defense of the Republic of Moldova, Institute of Public Policy, 2002, p 140.

762 'Moldova: No Quick Fix', International Crisis Group, ICG Europe Report No 147, 12 August 2003, p 1.

763 'Security Threats Facing an Enlarged EU', a presentation by Christopher Langton, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, at the seminar on 'EU-Belarus co-operation to increase security in a wider EU', held in Warsaw, Poland, 24 - 25 November 2003.

764 'Dirty Bomb Warheads Disappear - Stocks of Soviet-Era Arms for Sale on Black Market', Joby Warrick, The Washington Post, 07 December 2003.

765 Ibid. Cf also: op cit, 'Moldova: No Quick Fix', p 6.

766 The World Factbook, CIA, <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/md.html>

767 Short Mission Report - SEESAC Consultation in Moldova, 17 - 19 July 2002, <http://www.seesac.org/about/moldova.htm>

768 Op cit, 'Dirty Bomb Warheads Disappear - Stocks of Soviet-Era Arms for Sale on Black Market'

769 Ibid

770 As highlighted in a recent NGO report, it is very difficult to develop effective collaborative actions to improve legislation, law enforcement training and awareness-raising campaigns related to trafficking issues when a country is 'not recognised internationally and is resistant to international pressure or intervention.' Op cit, 'Moldova: No Quick Fix', p 6.

Moldova has no gun culture, and has in place reasonably efficient control mechanisms regulating the possession of SALW. According to official data from the Ministry of the Interior, 46,747 firearms are legally possessed by civilians. 4,200 small arms were purchased in 2000 and 1,900 in 2003. The Ministry of Interior keeps records of the quantity, quality and types of SALW that are in legal possession.⁷⁷¹ In the Transdnestrian region the local authorities operate controls on domestic possession which are similar to those in force in Moldova. Therefore, if one excepts the problems posed by military stockpiles in Transdnestria, the overall circulation of weapons in Moldovan society does not appear to present a particular challenge.⁷⁷² However, attempts to smuggle important quantities of SALW in and out of Moldova have been recorded and are a cause for concern. Between November 2002 and May 2003, in the course of 'Operation Ploughshares', the SECI Center's initiative to tackle illicit firearms trafficking in South Eastern Europe, Moldovan law enforcement authorities seized the following weapons: 2 carbines, 2 automatic assault rifles, 60 hunting guns, 1 heavy machine gun, 53 grenade launchers and 41 anti-tank mines.⁷⁷³

Small Arms policy and practice

Although Moldova's chances for prompt membership of NATO are remote, dialogue and co-operation have taken place within the framework of NATO enlargement and have addressed issues related to international security and non-proliferation, both bilaterally, through the development of a co-operative security relationship with the US and multi-laterally through such avenues as NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the Partnership for Peace.⁷⁷⁴

Moldova is a signatory of the OSCE Document on SALW and the UN Program of Action and has actively participated in numerous international initiatives on SALW. In Moldova's statement at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in July 2001, its representative emphasised Moldova's concerns about the proliferation of SALW and the threat that such weapons pose to peace, security and sustainable development. He also highlighted the need for 'concrete measures that need to be taken at the national, regional and global level to prevent uncontrolled flow of small arms'.⁷⁷⁵ In particular, Moldova emphasised its support for measures 'to increase transparency in arms transfers; ensure an appropriate and reliable marking of SALW; promote brokering regulations; increase effectiveness of arms embargoes; guarantee security of arms stocks and reduce arms in 'hot spots' by collecting and destroying them, as well as disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating former combatants'.⁷⁷⁶ While making a commitment to strengthen national controls through export control, border and customs mechanisms and enhanced information exchange, the Moldovan representative also emphasised the challenges which face Moldova in the separatist region of Transdnestria, which is outside the control of the Moldovan Government.

771 Op cit, 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'.

772 Ibid

773 Data provided by the SECI Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime, June 2003.

774 Despite being short on resources, Moldova has been active in PFP activities. Moldova joined NATO's PFP on 16 March 1994.

775 Statement by Mr Victor Moraru, Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Moldova at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 12 July 2001.

776 Ibid

Moldova has its own project for restructuring border controls, which is due to be completed by 2005. Since the disbanding of the Moldovan Border Police in 2000, the investigation and prosecution of border-related crimes in the territory controlled by the Moldovan Government is the responsibility of local police forces. Physical border control is carried out by the Moldovan Border Guard Service, 'an autonomous military-style unit, which has no police authority and cannot conduct criminal investigations'.⁷⁷⁷ There has been criticism of this new system of border control and some officials have called for the re-instatement of the Border Police to achieve more effective border control over the areas accessible to Moldovan law enforcement.⁷⁷⁸

The lack of controls over the Transnistrian region and its borders strongly limits the Moldovan Government's implementation and enforcement of its commitments to curb SALW proliferation across the whole territory of Moldova. The parallel institutions operating in the MTR seem to have made no efforts to develop a responsible SALW policy, or regulate production and transfer of arms in their region.⁷⁷⁹ Moreover, SALW trafficked from Transnistria are said to lack serial numbers, which makes them ideal for organised criminal networks.⁷⁸⁰

Table 30 – Moldova's commitments to arms or SALW control agreements

ARMS OR SALW CONTROL AGREEMENT	MOLDOVA'S COMMITMENTS
Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan	November 2001
UN Programme of Action	July 2001 Letter Report in 2003
UN Firearms Protocol	-
OSCE Criteria on Conventional Arms Transfers	1993
OSCE Document on Small Arms	November 2000
OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition	December 2003
EU Code of Conduct	-
EU Joint Action on SALW	-
Wassenaar Arrangement	-

⁷⁷⁷ Op cit, Short Mission Report - SEESAC Consultation in Moldova, 17 - 19 July 2002.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid

⁷⁸⁰ Op cit, 'Moldova: No Quick Fix', p 6.

Small Arms progress

Legislative and regulatory issues

The import and export of military equipment, armaments and other military-technical equipment is regulated by the Law on the Control of Export, Re-export, Import and Transit of Strategic goods No 1163-XIV of 26 July 2000,⁷⁸¹ which was developed by the Moldovan Ministry of Economy with the Assistance of the US Department of Commerce⁷⁸² and Decision No 606 'About the National System of Export, Re-export, Import and Transit Control of Strategic Goods in the Republic of Moldova' of 15 May 2002,⁷⁸³ which includes the Control List of strategic goods. The Law defines the principles and procedures for controlling the export, re-export and import of strategic goods, the competence of the Parliament and the Government in the field of export controls. It also identifies the Interdepartmental Commission for Control of the Export, Re-export, Import and Transit of Strategic Goods as the permanent government body responsible for co-ordinating the national system of export controls.⁷⁸⁴ National controls must conform to the following principles:

- Compliance with the basic guidelines of the foreign policy of Moldova;
- Protection of national security interests;
- Fulfilment of international commitments with regard to the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other strategic goods used for military purposes;
- Fulfilment of international agreements to which the Republic of Moldova is a party;
- Verification of end-use of strategic goods that are subject to control within the framework of the nonproliferation regime;
- Free access to regulatory acts governing control of the export, re-export, import and transit of strategic goods;
- Participation in international efforts to control the export of strategic goods;
- Maintenance of the confidentiality of classified information.⁷⁸⁵

Three types of licences are set out in the export and import control regime:⁷⁸⁶

781 <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldovalaw.htm>

782 'Moldova: Export Control System', Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, <http://www.nti.org/db/nisprofs/moldova/excon.htm>.

783 Through this Decision, the Government approved: the Statutes of the Interdepartmental Commission for Control of the Export, Re-export, Import and Transit of Strategic Goods (Annex 1); the Regulation about the control regime of export, re-export, import and transit of strategic goods (Annex 2); the Control List of strategic goods (Annex 3), which is based on the EU list of dual-use items and the military list developed by the EU for the application of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldovapol.htm>.

784 The Interdepartmental Commission is headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also the Minister of Economy. Its functions include: reviewing proposals with regard to signing or adhering to bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements on non-proliferation of WMD and other strategic goods; implementing controls on the obligations pursuant to international and intergovernmental agreements on non-proliferation and the control of movements of WMD and other strategic goods; making decisions with regard to issuing export, re-export or import and transit authorisations of strategic goods through the territory of the Republic of Moldova; suspending the authorisations of export, re-export, import and transit of strategic goods in those cases where the authorisation holders violate the existing legal provisions in a specific area or infringe upon provisions, which derive from international agreements and from the national policy with regard to the control of movements of strategic goods. <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldovapol.htm>.

785 Ibid

786 <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldovapol.htm>

Export licence – Authorisation for single shipments of strategic goods from the customs authority of Moldova with an intent to locate them permanently on another country's territory.

Re-export licence – Authorisation to transfer strategic goods whose origin is other than the Republic of Moldova from its customs territory or to export from the territory of another country strategic goods whose country of origin is the Republic of Moldova.

Transit licence – Authorisation to convey strategic goods through the customs territory of the Republic of Moldova.

The arms export control system involves a two-tier licensing process whereby an arms exporter must first apply for a licence to trade and then for authorisation to export a specific consignment.⁷⁸⁷ The Division on Dual-Use Goods Trade Control at the Ministry of Economy is the licensing authority. The Division has the following functions:⁷⁸⁸ authorisation,⁷⁸⁹ regulation,⁷⁹⁰ control,⁷⁹¹ representation,⁷⁹² and information and consultation.⁷⁹³

The possession of firearms and ammunition is regulated in Moldova by Law 110-XIII of 18 May 1994, Government Decision of 18 January 1995 on its implementation,⁷⁹⁴ and Government Order No 126/2000 on 'The list of weapons and ammunition that can be sold to physical and legal persons'.⁷⁹⁵ Only Moldovan citizens over the age of 18 who have received an authorisation issued by official police bodies can possess firearms. Licence applications are assessed against strict criteria: applicants must not have committed any 'grave crimes', they must be of good mental health and must not have a history of domestic abuse. Moreover, they are required to provide a credible reason for their wish to own a firearm, as well as provide information regarding the storage of the firearm.⁷⁹⁶ Illegal manufacture, possession, trade and stockpile of arms and

787 'Moldova: Description of national control system', SIPRI, <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldovapol.htm>. In order to obtain an export, re-export, import or transport authorisation, applicants are requested to provide the following documents:

- a) a copy of the document that certifies the registration of the applicant as an economic agent;
- b) a copy of the licence to trade in arms;
- c) documents that certify the origin of items;
- d) documents regarding qualitative and technical characteristics of items, and if possible, the code of respective items in accordance with the Control List;
- e) the relevant contract and its copy signed with the foreign company importing or exporting the strategic goods;
- f) a copy of the licence that certifies the permission for the foreign company to carry out operations of export-import with strategic goods, released by the authorised body of the country where the company is registered;
- g) an End-User Certificate (at the demand of Division);
- h) an International Import Certificate (at the demand of Division).

788 <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldovapol.htm>

789 It examines and issues licences for export, re-export or import of strategic goods and monitors export/import transactions. (This includes examining international certificates of import and end-user certificates released by competent authorities from the importer country; releases international certificate of import, certificate of the end-user or equivalent document, as well as certificate of verification the deliver of imported strategic good)

790 It initiates normative acts, regulations, instructions and procedures on arms export controls and updates National Control Lists in accordance with Moldova's international arrangements.

791 It verifies conformity and exactness of declarations of the persons who carry out transactions with strategic goods; it can stop or interdict operations of export, re-export, import, transit, reloading or other strategic goods transfer, as well as penalising persons guilty of violating the export control system.

792 It represents the Republic of Moldova at international forums and international organisations in the field of control the export controls.

793 It organises programmes to inform economic agents of the principles, objectives, norms and procedures regarding the national system for export, re-export and transit control. <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldova.htm>

794 Report of the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects, (hereafter 'Moldova UN PoA report 2003'), <http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/docs/nationalreports/2002/moldova.pdf>.

795 Monitorul Oficial al R Moldova No 19-20/208 of 24.02.2000, <http://www.seesac.org/laws/lmold.htm>

796 Moldova UN PoA report 2003; Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada http://www.research.ryerson.ca/SAFER-Net/regions/Europe/Mol_Y04.html

ammunition carries with it a prison term of up to ten years.⁷⁹⁷ Penalties for violating the law are to be increased with the introduction of a new Penal Code.

Moldova is currently in the process of reviewing its firearms legislation. The Ministry of the Interior has drafted a new law to bring the current legislation into line with international standards.⁷⁹⁸ Currently, there are only four state owned companies (Cartus, Pulbere, Dinamo-MA, and Nalifax-com) that are authorised by the Ministry of the Interior to import weapons for civilian use. The majority of imports are of pistols and sporting guns.⁷⁹⁹ In order to ensure comprehensive and accurate records of arms transactions, these arms dealers are required to report to the Department of Public Order on a monthly basis about their business transactions. The information provided includes: the quantity of arms sold, their serial numbers, as well as relevant data on the buyers. Every three months the Ministry of the Interior undertakes verification of the existed record-keeping system.⁸⁰⁰

Table 31 – Features of Moldova's legislative and regulatory framework

FEATURES OF LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	MOLDOVA
National	
National co-ordinating agency on SALW	No
National point of contact on SALW	Yes
Laws & Procedures on Production, Export, Import and Transit	
Legislation	Yes
Production	Yes
Export	Yes
Import	Yes
Transit	Yes
National System of Export & Import Licensing or Authorisation	
System	Yes
Diversion risk	Yes
End-user certificate	Yes, but only at the demand of the national licensing agency. ⁸⁰¹
Retransfers	No
Verification (pre/post)	No
Brokering controls	Yes ⁸⁰²
Domestic Possession, Trade and Stockpiling	
Legislation	Yes
Manufacture	NA
Marking and tracing	NA
Possession	Yes
Stockpiling	Yes
Trade	Yes

797 Article 290 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova provides for a 2-5 year prison term for illegal possession, bearing, manufacturing, storage, repairing and trade in arms and ammunition. If the crime is repeated, there is a mandatory prison term of 5-10 years.

798 Moldova UN PoA report 2003.

799 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'.

800 Ibid

SALW transfers

According to Jane's Infantry Weapons, Moldova does not produce SALW.⁸⁰³ Such a view is shared by Moldovan defence experts who maintain that the only source for Moldovan small arms exports is the weapons which have been made redundant to the requirements of armed and security forces.⁸⁰⁴

Moldovan efforts to tighten up arms controls and procedures culminated in December 2001 in a decision by the Moldovan Security Council to 'halt the trading of unusable weapons and hardware of the national army'.⁸⁰⁵ Such efforts prompted US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher to express appreciation in 2002 for the efforts that Moldova had made in non-proliferation.⁸⁰⁶ However, suspicion re-emerged about Moldova's tendency to overlook questionable arms transfers when in May 2002 the US Government sanctioned two Moldovan companies for selling small arms and other military equipment to Iran. This case triggered a parliamentary inquiry and in July 2002 a parliamentary report was quoted as admitting that: 'since Moldova became independent in August 1991, it has sold significant amounts of Kalashnikov rifles and ammunition. Legislation has been violated in all these deals.'⁸⁰⁷

A further case came to light in March 2001, which indicated that a Moldovan air company, Renan Airways, had been supplying weapons for several years to conflict zones across Africa and the Middle East. The firm also allegedly used a disreputable African company owned by Victor Bout to deliver weapons by proxy. A further feature of the case was that payment for the illicit transfers was made to a company registered in Ireland.⁸⁰⁸ Given the circuitous methods used to launder the proceeds, and the degree to which responsibility for them was thereby displaced, the case highlights the difficulties faced by Moldovan authorities in asserting control over such transfers. It also highlights, given the motives that prompted the disclosure of the scandal,⁸⁰⁹ the danger that cases similar in nature may be continuing undetected. This concern is substantiated by recent reports that an aircraft owned by Renan Airways made three flights to supply weapons and ammunition to rebel forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo in June 2003.⁸¹⁰

There is strong suspicion that unregulated manufacture and trade in SALW continues in the separatist region of Transdniestria. According to Moldovan analysts, since 1993–1994, the production of armaments has become 'the most important factor in the economic and military policy of the Tiraspol administration.'⁸¹¹ The Bendery

801 <http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Moldova/moldovapol.htm>

802 Although there is no explicit definition of brokering in Moldovan legislation, the export control Law is applicable to persons conducting exports of strategic goods through operations which do not entail physical contact with the territory of Moldova. 'SEESAC Export Control Analysis - Moldova', 26 November 2002.

803 <http://www.nisat.org/>

804 Op cit, 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'.

805 Ibid

806 Ibid

807 Small Arms Survey 2003, A Project of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, p109.

808 The Irish company, Balcombe Investments, was formed by a Maltese company, of which the secretaries, directors and shareholders were registered as yet other companies or individuals based in the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey. Balcombe Investments was registered as the owner of a plane operated by Renan Airways which featured in several UN Sanctions Committee Reports. 'War, Terrorism and Money Laundering', Brian Johnson Thomas, IANSA Newsletter, February 2002.

809 It was suspected when the story was initially reported that this information was made available by the Moldovan intelligence agency (Serviciului Informatii si Securitate) only because it served to discredit a political opponent.

810 'Current situation: Exploitation, arms flows and trends', <http://www.congoned.dds.nl/geheim.html>

811 'The Military Aspect of the Conflict Settlement in the Eastern Zone of the Republic of Moldova', Iurie Pinteau, IPP, 2001, p 9.

Mechanical Factory, which has the capacity to produce a wide range of SALW,⁸¹² has allegedly exported in the past mobile rocket launcher systems to Abkhazia.⁸¹³ The Ribnitsa Metallurgy Factory⁸¹⁴ and its branch Elektromash⁸¹⁵ are also said to be involved in production and export of illicit SALW.⁸¹⁶

Western officials, as well as law-enforcement and weapons experts, have raised concerns that there is an eastern flow of arms from Transdniestria to the Ukrainian port of Odessa on the Black Sea. The Transdniestr–Ukraine border is not subject to border or arms control agreements, and illicit trade in arms is a major source of revenue for the regime, with weapons smuggled to a number of unsafe destinations.⁸¹⁷

SALW collection programmes and capacities

In 2003, law enforcement agencies confiscated 294 SALW. Moldovan regulations provide that all confiscated arms be destroyed by melting at the Tracom plant in Chisinau. But due to financial difficulties, the Ministry of the Interior has been unable to provide funding for the destruction process and therefore the arms are kept in Mol depots.⁸¹⁸ In 2002, a general firearms amnesty resulted in the registration of 4,100 weapons with the Ministry of the Interior and the destruction of 900 illicit weapons.⁸¹⁹

SALW destruction programmes and capacities

The OSCE Mission to Moldova co-ordinates a major programme aimed at facilitating the withdrawal of arms, ammunition, military equipment, and OGRF troops from Transdniestria. The Mission manages a Voluntary Fund of over 15 million, to verify, amongst other things, the withdrawal or destruction of Russian arms, ammunition, and equipment from Moldovan territory. Part of the Mission's work in this area has involved monitoring the removal or elimination of surplus SALW stored at the OGRF base in Tiraspol.⁸²⁰ Although the Russian Government is thought to have armed the Transdniestrian separatist forces in the past, it intended to destroy 40,000 SALW by the end of 2003. However, this plan has been stalled by the Transdniestrian Government, which demands compensation from Russia for removing assets, 'which they deem

812 Mobile Rocket Launcher System BM-21 'Grad' with 20 disposable rocket tubes (mounted on the chassis of the automobile ZIL-131); 82 mm and 120 mm Mortars; Antitank grenade launcher with gun-carriage SPG - 9; Portable antitank grenade launcher RPG - 7; and 5.45mm pistol PSM (2,000 units were produced between 1995-1999). 'The Military Aspect of the Conflict Settlement in the Eastern Zone of the Republic of Moldova', p 35.

813 Ibid

814 'In the spring of 1997, the factory launched the production of 82mm mortars. The equipment for mortar manufacturing was purchased in 1995 in the Russian Federation and allowed to produce not only 82mm mortar but also 120mm mortar. The first testing and control shooting were carried out on 17 May 1997 in the presence of Russian representatives. The manufacturing capabilities are 5 - 6 units per week. The majority of mortars were delivered to Transdniestrian armed forces. Also, in the spring of 1997, the factory produced 100 units of PMD-type antipersonnel mines. The factory also produces antipersonnel grenade launchers (with under barrel fixing) GP-25, caliber 40mm. Accessories for these launchers are made at the factory 'Selhoztehnika' in t. Kammenka. The export of various types of armaments, both from the arsenal of the OGRF (Since 1996, the factory has begun to regularly receive trucks-loads of mortar bombs and howitzers from the Kolbasna military depot, officially for the destruction of munitions that could not be transported to Russia) and from the factory is carried out under cover of exports of 'metal goods'. Op cit, 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'; also: 'The Military Aspect of the Conflict Settlement in the Eastern Zone of the Republic of Moldova', pp35-36.

815 'The factory makes: 9mm sub-machine guns; 9mm PM pistols; 5.45mm PSM pistols; and hunting arms. The accessories, including silencers, are delivered from the Russian Federation. At the same time, 'Elektromash' and 'Electroagregat' produce accessories and parts for various armament systems which are assembled in the Russian Federation'. Op cit, 'The Military Aspect of the Conflict Settlement in the Eastern Zone of the Republic of Moldova', p 36.

816 Op cit, Short Mission Report - SEESAC Consultation in Moldova, 17 - 19 July 2002.

817 'Dirty Bomb Warheads Disappear - Stocks of Soviet-Era Arms for Sale on Black Market'.

818 Op cit, 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'.

819 'Short Mission Report - SEESAC Consultation in Moldova, 17 - 19 July 2002.'

820 'Summary of Regional SALW Projects - Moldova', SEESAC, <http://www.undp.org.yu/salw/repview.aspx>.

the property of the Transdnestrian people'.⁸²¹ A political solution to the problems between Transdnestria and Moldova seems to be a pre-condition for any major SALW destruction project.

In June 2001, representatives of the OSCE Mission, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation and the Transdnestrian industrial complex established a working group to investigate the possibility of industrial reprocessing and disposal of ammunition held at the Russian depot of Colbasna.⁸²² The tripartite working group identified over 26,000 tons of ammunition suitable for reprocessing and disposal (out of over 40,000 tonnes). In September 2001, the working group made recommendations to the states participating in the OSCE Voluntary Fund on further steps to dispose of the ammunition in Colbasna.⁸²³

NATO has also been involved in the destruction of Moldova's surplus weaponry. In June 2001, Moldova and NATO signed an agreement concerning the safe destruction of Melanj rocket fuel oxidizer, anti-personnel land mines (APMs) and surplus munitions.⁸²⁴ This allowed NATO's executing agency NAMSA to provide material assistance and training to ensure the implementation of the project, which has already resulted in the destruction of nearly 12,000 APMs, 300 tonnes of munitions and over 300 tonnes of rocket fuel.⁸²⁵ Thousands of tonnes of SALW surplus ammunition will be destroyed in a separate NATO-funded project.⁸²⁶

SALW stockpile management programmes and capacities

With the exception of the territory under the control of the MTR, Moldova does not have any significant stockpiles of SALW.⁸²⁷ The Ministry of Defence is responsible for securing all stockpiles of surplus official weaponry, while Russian and Transdnestrian authorities are in charge of protecting stockpiles in Transdnestria. Details of Moldova's stockpile management programmes and capacities could not be retrieved from available sources.

SALW awareness activities

There have been no SALW awareness activities. According to Moldovan analysts, if one excepts organised crime, civilian possession of illicit firearms is not a burning issue for Moldova.⁸²⁸

821 'Transdnestria: Separatists Obstruct Russian Arms Destruction', by Eugen Tomiuc, RFE/RL, 12 April 2002.

822 'Annual Report 2001 on OSCE Activities', 26 November 2001, http://www.osce.org/docs/english/misc/anrep01e_activ.htm.

823 Ibid

824 NATO Update, week of 25 June-01 July 2001, <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2001/0625/e0628a.htm>.

825 'Small Arms in the Black Sea Region', The Small Arms Survey, Background note presented at the conference 'Countering SALW Trafficking in the Black Sea Region: Improving Regional Standards', 04 - 05 March 2004, Chisinau, Moldova

826 Ibid

827 Op cit, 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'.

828 Ibid

SALW survey activities

No survey on SALW has been conducted in Moldova. Therefore the full extent of problems related to SALW is not known.

Civil Society involvement in SALW interventions

There has been very limited involvement by NGOs in SALW activities in Moldova. Most of the interest in this field has concentrated on the SALW problem in Transdnistria and the withdrawal of the Russian Operative Group Troops.⁸²⁹ However, the Institute for Public Policy (IPP), a think tank working on security issues, has expressed an interest in becoming more involved in SALW awareness-raising and research projects and in February 2004 IPP compiled a SALW questionnaire commissioned by Saferworld.

Cross-border SALW control initiatives

Moldova participates in various regional initiatives dealing with issues of cross-border illicit trafficking and organised crime, including Interpol, the SECI Regional Center for Combating Trans-Border Crime,⁸³⁰ the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, BSECO, and the CEI. In particular, Moldova has adopted a number of norms and mechanisms to ensure the development of collaborative actions to tackle cross-border crime in South Eastern Europe, in co-operation with the SECI Regional Center.⁸³¹ These include:

- Nomination of specialists and experts in charge of negotiating agreements for the prevention and combat of cross-border criminality;
- Adoption by the Government of Decision no. 815/ 2001 'regarding the creation of the Regional Information Link Office, designed to maintain permanent operational contacts with the SECI Center;
- The detachment by the Customs Department of a liaison officer to the SECI Regional Center in Bucharest.

The Treaty between the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine on Cooperation for Combating Crime signed in Kiev on 6 July 1999 provides the legal framework for sub-regional cross-border co-operation. The Agreement states that the three countries will collaborate on the prevention and fight against cross-border criminal activities, including the illegal trafficking of weapons and dual-use materials.⁸³² In a positive development, in 2001 the Moldovan Government tried to establish joint Border Check Points on Ukrainian territory to halt illegal trafficking activities. However, after a few days, the Ukrainian authorities stopped the programme.

The Moldovan authorities have advocated international and regional co-operation to strengthen border controls, calling for measures such as the placement of international monitors along the borders, which they feel would contribute to the fight against SALW

⁸²⁹ In 2001, the IPP published a detailed analysis of the military aspects of the unresolved conflict in Transdnistria, which includes an overview of the SALW situation in the breakaway region. 'The Military Aspect of the Conflict Settlement in the Eastern Zone of the Republic of Moldova'.

⁸³⁰ Moldova has sent law enforcement liaison officers to the SECI Regional Center to co-ordinate and exchange information with their counterparts in South Eastern Europe.

⁸³¹ 'Collaboration between the Republic of Moldova and the countries of Southeastern Europe in combating cross-border criminality', D Purice, Liaison Officer of the Republic of Moldova to the SECI Regional Center.

⁸³² Op cit, 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'.

trafficking.⁸³³ Some assistance, including capacity-building and equipment provision support, has been provided through multi-lateral and bi-lateral channels. The Customs and Border Guard Troops (BGT) officers have been trained in the framework of the TACIS Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) programme. Since 1997, the European Commission has provided funding for several projects aimed at modernising some of the border crossing checkpoints. Amongst other measures, those projects included training on search for hidden goods, including weapons and ammunition. Another international programme, TACIS Transport Corridor Europe–Caucasus–Asia (TRACECA), provides BGT personnel with training on modern technology for processing documentation at the state border, identification of false documents, and the search for hidden goods and arms. In 2003, the US Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) programme assisted Moldovan customs with border control projects and collaborated with the Moldovan Department of Civil Defence on a project to create a ‘first response unit’ for weapons of mass destruction.⁸³⁴

To date, however, the Ministry of the Interior, BGT and Customs (the main state authorities responsible for combating arms trafficking) do not have any joint training programmes either at the national or regional level aimed specifically at combating arms trafficking.⁸³⁵ Most of the relevant institutions lack sufficient capacity,⁸³⁶ especially in terms of technical and financial resources and qualified individuals. Where there is capacity, the implementation of the highest standards is hampered by high levels of corruption.

On 04 – 05 March 2004, Moldova in co-operation with the governments of Switzerland and the Netherlands, and SEESAC, hosted an international conference in Chisinau on ‘Countering SALW Trafficking in the Black Sea Region – Improving Regional Standards’. The meeting brought together the countries of the Black Sea Region to discuss a set of central issues, including border security and border management, with a view to contributing to the enhancement of regional standards in the SALW field. It focussed on the need for enhanced border management and information exchange, as well as co-operation between law enforcement bodies, both nationally and regionally.



Participants at the March 2004 border control conference ‘Countering SALW Trafficking in the Black Sea Region - Improving Regional Standards’.

SALW management information and exchange systems and protocols

Moldova is active in the international and regional information exchange systems to which it has made commitments, including UN, OSCE and Interpol mechanisms. Moldova has provided information on imports and exports of arms to the UN Register of Conventional Arms since 1994. As a member of the OSCE, Moldova is committed to implementing the OSCE Document on SALW and participates in the information exchange on SALW amongst member states. Within the framework of ‘Operation

833 Op cit, Short Mission Report - SEESAC Consultation in Moldova.

834 ‘Background Note: Moldova’, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, US Department of State, February 2004.

835 Op cit, ‘Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation’.

836 Ibid

Ploughshares', the first co-ordinated information exchange on seizures of illicit SALW in South Eastern Europe co-ordinated by the SECI Regional Center, Moldova was an active participant in data collection and intelligence sharing with other SEE countries.

Moldovan laws, regulations and procedures related to arms production and trade are published in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova.⁸³⁷ Information concerning weapons collection, destruction, the illegal trade, possession and manufacturing of firearms is not accessible by private citizens. Nor are there functioning mechanisms for parliamentary or public oversight of SALW imports and public input into decision-making on issues in this area. An annual report on all exports, imports and transits of arms and dual-use goods is made available only to specific government departments and the Security and Intelligence Service.⁸³⁸ As to Transdnistria, commercial trade information is shrouded in secrecy and the local authorities have consistently denied any arms transfers from the region.

Table 32 – Information and exchange progress

INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE SYSTEMS AND PROTOCOLS	MOLDOVA
International	
Reporting to the UN DDA on the Programme of Action	Yes
Reporting to the UN Register of Conventional Arms	Yes
Reporting to other international regimes, if appropriate (eg Wassenaar Arrangement)	-
Interpol	Yes ⁸³⁹
Regional	
Information exchange with OSCE	Yes
Annual reporting to EU (if relevant)	-
SECI Regional Center intelligence exchange	Yes
National	
Transparency – on SALW imports, exports and decision-making	No
Publication of national reports on arms/SALW transfers	No
Publication of SALW national strategy	No

⁸³⁷ Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova.

⁸³⁸ Op cit, 'Moldovan Arms Export Controls and Measures to Combat Small Arms Proliferation'.

⁸³⁹ Government Decision No 294 of 10 May 1995 established the Interpol's National Central Bureau, which works as part of the Ministry of the Interior. One of the Bureau's key tasks is tackling illicit arms trafficking.

