

Translated from Spanish

Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations

No. 243

The Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat, Department for Disarmament Affairs, and has the honour to refer to document DDA/1-2004/TSA, concerning General Assembly resolution 58/241 entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”.

In that regard, the Government of Honduras transmits herewith its national report on measures to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and on other security measures.

The Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations takes this opportunity to convey to the Secretariat of the United Nations, Department for Disarmament Affairs, the renewed assurances of its highest consideration

New York, 28 April 2004

United Nations Secretariat
Department for Disarmament Affairs
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National report of the Government of Honduras on measures to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and other security measures

The Government of the Republic of Honduras, pursuant to the resolutions cited below and in accordance with the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America as well as the security strategies provided for in the current government plan, has decided on preventive measures and operational and legislative initiatives to comply with the commitments made to the Secretary - General of the United Nations. To that end the following actions have been taken:

I. General Assembly resolution 58/241 entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, adopted on 23 December 2003

A. Information relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action

1. Measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects:

(a) At the national level

•Paragraph II.2 of the Programme of Action:

In 2000 Honduras adopted the Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Related Materials, which introduces legislative measures to criminalize the illegal manufacture, possession and stockpiling of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

•Paragraph II.3 of the Programme of Action:

The Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Related Materials and the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Honduras criminalize illegal manufacture, possession and stockpiling of and trade in small arms and light weapons.

•Paragraph II.4 of the Programme of Action:

The national coordination bodies responsible for policy guidance and for research to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, are the Ministry of Security, supported by the Ministry of Defence, which apply domestic legislation setting the legal framework for their actions in that regard.

Recently, a national multidisciplinary commission for the control of the trade in small arms and light weapons was established, which is responsible for national and regional coordination in launching operational initiatives aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all aspects.

•Paragraph II.5 of the Programme of Action:

The national point of contact is the National Preventive Police, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence.

•Paragraph II.6 of the Programme of Action:

In Honduras the Criminal Investigation Police are responsible for maintaining records on cases involving individuals arrested for selling, stockpiling or trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

•Paragraph II.7 of the Programme of Action:

Honduras is not an arms manufacturer; therefore this paragraph does not apply.

•Paragraph II.8 of the Programme of Action:

In Honduras operations are regularly conducted to seize illegal arms, with priority given to cases involving arms that are not marked or whose markings have been altered, which are seized pending further investigation. Honduras has no arms manufacturing facilities.

•Paragraph II.9 of the Programme of Action:

In April 2002 the National Arms Register was created under the Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. It is the responsibility of the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ministry of Security to manage the Register, through which the possession and transfer of small arms and light weapons is controlled at the national level.

In September 2002, a register was created of weapons not in legal use that are turned in by private firms to the Preventive Police Department of the Ministry of Security.

On 19 March 2003 the Unit for Supervision and Control of Private Security Firms was established by order of the Ministry of Security.

In September 2003, the Ministry of Security drew up a procedural plan for the registration of weapons that sets forth the administrative procedures governing the record-keeping process.

•Paragraph II.10 of the Programme of Action:

The Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Defence exercise control and keep special registers of all weapons assigned by the State of Honduras to its agents. They establish the appropriate procedures for storage, physical security, control of access to stockpiles and other measures relevant to control and security of weapons, ammunition, explosives and other related materials, as provided for in the Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other

Related Materials and the domestic regulations issued in that regard.

•Paragraph II.11 of the Programme of Action:

The Organizational Act of the Honduran Armed Forces and the Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials empower the Secretary of State in the Office of National Defence to authorize, regulate and control the manufacture, import, export, storage, loan, transport, purchase and sale of weapons, ammunition, explosives and other similar devices in accordance with the Constitution. The Ministry of Security is responsible for putting into effect the procedures provided for by law.

•Paragraph II.12 of the Programme of Action:

The Honduran Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials sets forth adequate administrative procedures to ensure effective control over the import and transit of small arms and light weapons and other enforcement measures regarding the handling of arms, ammunition and explosives.

•Paragraph II.13 of the Programme of Action:

In Honduras there is currently no re-export of small arms and light weapons; however, if the situation should arise, the Ministry of Defence would be the authority responsible for regulating the activity, and there is a law in effect that empowers it to deal with such a situation.

•Paragraph II.14 of the Programme of Action:

The Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials sets out procedures regulating the activities of those who engage in small arms and light weapons brokering.

The Ministry of Security has issued regulations governing the bearing of arms under license or as authorized by law.

The above-mentioned Act defines appropriate offences and penalties for all illicit arms brokering activities.

•Paragraph II.15 of the Programme of Action:

Since Honduras is not an arms producer, it has never had occasion to apply an arms embargo against a third country; however, if such a situation should arise, it would be handled through the relevant national agencies.

•Paragraph II.16 of the Programme of Action:

In implementation of the Decree on the destruction and/or deactivation of AK-47 rifles and Makarov pistols, based on the Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, large numbers of expropriated, confiscated or voluntarily surrendered weapons were destroyed.

Weapons destruction campaigns were carried out in 2003 and 2004 in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme and the Ministry of Security.

•Paragraph II.17 of the Programme of Action:

The Ministry of Defence sets security standards and procedures for the management of all weapons assigned to the Honduran Armed Forces and takes the appropriate measures, such as providing for storage warehouses equipped with physical and operational security, security systems for controlling access to stockpiles, general and specific inventories recorded electronically using security codes, and other measures necessary for the control of small arms and light weapons in all operational units of the armed forces.

In the case of the National Preventive Police under the Ministry of Security, a general register is maintained of all weapons at their disposal, for which security standards and procedures are defined in accordance with the Act on the Control of Firearms and internal procedures of the Ministry of Security.

•Paragraph II.18 of the Programme of Action:

The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Security determine the legal and security procedures for the control of weapons assigned to operational personnel, while establishing effective controls over unassigned weapons.

With reference to the implementation of programmes for dealing with surpluses of weapons not in use, in a recent executive decree the Government ordered the destruction and/or deactivation of AK-47 rifles and Makarov pistols that had been seized or voluntarily turned in by civilians. This plan will continue to be applied as long as necessary.

•Paragraph II.19 of the Programme of Action:

In that connection, the Ministry of Security in September 2003 drew up a procedural plan for the registration of weapons. Honduras also has a programme for the destruction of weapons that are out of service, using methods such as melting them down or cutting them with an acetylene torch to render them unusable.

•Paragraph II.20 of the Programme of Action:

The following awareness-raising and confidence-building programmes were undertaken:

An awareness-raising campaign with the slogan of "Halt the violence!" was carried out by the Xibalba organization in August 2002 and 2003 with the aim of promoting awareness and building confidence concerning the problems and consequences of illicit use of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

A training programme on doing away with war toys and video games was given at educational centres by staff of the Preventive Police Department, the Police Education Department and the non-governmental organization, Cultura de Vida, in 2002 and 2003.

A workshop entitled "The Honduran Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials: effectiveness, challenges and opportunities" was held in Tegucigalpa, organized by the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress and given by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Reference Group on Small Arms on 21 November 2002.

- Paragraph II.21 of the Programme of Action:

A programme was carried out under a legislative decree whereby military and hand-crafted weapons were handed over with compensation to the individuals who surrendered them.

- Paragraph II.22 of the Programme of Action:

Honduras has not suffered from armed conflict. However, campaigns have been conducted to promote non-violence and the proper handling of small arms and light weapons by persons carrying them legally.

- Paragraph II.23 of the Programme of Action:

The Ministry of Security, through the Preventive Police Department, conducts orientation programmes in education centres on the application of the Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

(b) At the regional level

- Paragraph II.24 of the Programme of Action:

The Central American national security commissions have agreed that national police forces, or their equivalents shall act as points of contact for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the exchange of information.

- Paragraph II.25 of the Programme of Action:

Measures and actions have been implemented at the regional level in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, article 30 of which requires the parties (States) to combat unlawful trafficking in military weapons, material and equipment as well as small arms for personal protection. Therefore, in accordance with regional agreements, Honduras takes this legal instrument as the basis for the implementation of the Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

In the Antigua Declaration adopted at the First Central American Forum on the Proliferation of Light Weapons, held in June 2002, in Antigua, Guatemala, measures intended to stop the proliferation of light weapons were agreed upon.

In the area of demining, military engineers and other experts from Honduras are taking part in the Assistance Programme for Demining in Central America (PADCA).

At the regional level, Honduras is taking part in the regional plan to eradicate trafficking in and possession of small arms and light weapons in all Central American countries.

Within the framework of Central American integration and pursuant to the legal instruments created for consolidating its aims, such as the Tegucigalpa Protocol, the Charter of the Organization of Central American States and the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, measures to reduce threats to regional security are being developed. In this area, policies, strategies and action plans have been elaborated to support efforts to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The following comprehensive regional plans have been adopted:

- Regional plan against organized crime
- Central American Plan for Comprehensive Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Terrorism and Related Activities
- Central American system of police statistics on criminal activities in the region
- Regional plan to combat drug trafficking
- Regional plan to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons
- Paragraph II.26 of the Programme of Action:

Honduras is supporting and participating in the proposed Central American project to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in implementation of the mandates arising from the meetings of the Central American Security Commission, endorsed by the General

Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SG-SICA), a project involving Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The project will be implemented over a five-year period at a cost of US\$ 5,206,897.50 and will comprise regional initiatives in keeping with the programme of action of the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations.

•Paragraph II.27 of the Programme of Action:

Regional cooperation programmes among cross-border customs systems and networks for information-sharing among immigration systems and the customs police have been set up.

•Paragraph II.28 of the Programme of Action:

The chiefs of the police of Central America and the Caribbean are implementing a specific plan to combat illicit traffic in firearms, ammunition and explosives. In addition, ministries of security and defence or their equivalents in Central America are also implementing a plan to counter terrorism, organized crime and related activities, which includes measures to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In the military arena, the Conference of Central American Armed Forces is discussing and providing guidance on relevant measures to complement the aforementioned plan.

•Paragraph II.29 of the Programme of Action:

The Ministry of Defence keeps a full and accurate record of all weapons held by the Honduran Armed Forces and has also taken appropriate measures for their storage, physical security and for the control of access to stockpiles and other measures necessary for the control of small arms and light weapons in all operational units of the armed forces. In addition, security standards are applied by other Honduran government institutions that possess weapons, such as the Ministry of Security.

•Paragraph II.30 of the Programme of Action:

An executive decree on the destruction and/or deactivation of AK-47 rifles and Makarov pistols has been complied with, resulting in the destruction of thousands of weapons voluntarily handed over by the public or decommissioned.

•Paragraph II.31 of the Programme of Action:

Under the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, the Central American Security Commission has developed strategies and projects in the areas of security, defence and legislation with a view to contributing to regional

efforts to introduce measures of transparency to combat illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

(c) At the global level

•Paragraph II.32 of the Programme of Action:

Honduras does not produce or export weapons; therefore it has not implemented an embargo on exports at the regional or international level.

•Paragraph II.33 of the Programme of Action:

Not applicable to Honduras.

•Paragraph II.34 of the Programme of Action:

Not applicable to Honduras.

•Paragraph II.35 of the Programme of Action:

Not applicable to Honduras.

•Paragraph II.36 of the Programme of Action:

The ability to identify and trace small arms and light weapons is currently being strengthened through comprehensive programmes at the national and regional levels that include preventive and operational measures to combat the spread of illicit weapons in Central America.

•Paragraph II.37 of the Programme of Action:

In Central America, there is cooperation between the customs services and national police forces to counteract illicit trade in weapons.

•Paragraph II.38 of the Programme of Action:

Honduras has signed many international agreements and treaties to combat terrorism and organized crime. The National Congress of Honduras recently ratified these agreements and treaties.

•Paragraph II.39 of the Programme of Action:

At the national level, in its government plan for 2002-2006 the Government of Honduras has developed strategies, arrived at by consensus, to combat the illicit arms trade. These form part of its overall public security strategy to combat and eliminate common and organized crime. This strategy includes measures relating to the activities of those engaged in illicit arms brokering.

•Paragraph II.40 of the Programme of Action:

A cooperation agreement, focusing on criminal investigation, security and the control of private security services, was concluded between the Ministry of Security and the United Nations Development Programme in October 2003.

Representatives of government institutions and non-governmental and civil society organizations of Honduras also took part in the “Regional Workshop on Impact Training” in San José, Costa Rica from 12 to 14 March 2002, which received financing and technical support from the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress.

•Paragraph II.41 of the Programme of Action:

The Xibalba organization conducted “Halt the violence!” awareness-raising campaigns in August of 2002 and 2003 with the aim of promoting awareness and building confidence in relation to the problems and consequences arising from illicit use of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

- B. Views on the further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.
- The steps to enhance cooperation are efficacious, although poor countries such as Honduras need funding to meet the requirements in full.
 - In Honduras, there are agencies responsible for operations to eradicate illicit arms brokering but international training is needed to make actions to combat this scourge more effective.
 - Technical equipment is needed to trace and intercept illicit arms traffic.
 - Information networks need to be set up at national and regional levels to cope with the threat.
 - More staff are needed in both the operational and administrative areas.
 - The responsibility for counteracting the illicit arms trade lies not only with the countries that have the problem but also with the developed countries or major powers that have adopted policies allowing for uncontrolled arms proliferation.
- C. Up-to-date information regarding the name, telephone number, facsimile number and mailing address of the Government’s national point of contact relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

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