



The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the
United Nations, New York
Security Council - 2021-2022

SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON
"THE IMPACT OF DIVERSION AND TRAFFICKING OF ARMS FOR PEACE
AND SECURITY"

22 NOVEMBER 2021 (10:00 A.M)

STATEMENT BY AMB. MARTIN KIMANI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

1. Thank you Mr. President and welcome to new York.
2. I commend your Presidency for convening this open debate on curbing the diversion of and illicit trafficking in arms – a challenge that Kenya considers as requiring enhanced action by the Security Council.
3. I thank Mr. Robin Geiss, of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and Ms. María Pía Devoto for their briefings.
4. During our Presidency in October, the Security Council had the opportunity to deliberate on ways of addressing the threat posed by illicit flows of small arms and light weapons especially in the context of peace operations. There was wide support by members for a

continuation of this deliberation; we therefore hope that today's pertinent debate continues to benefit the Council's actions in this important arena.

5. The continued proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is key to generating and worsening the conflicts that the Security Council is responding to. It offers non-state actors with militant political and ideological aims the means to turn their opposition into criminal violence against the state and civilians. It frustrates conflict resolution efforts by enabling the protraction of war, humanitarian crises are worsened and their period extended. It leads to growing attacks on peacekeeping forces dispatched under the Security Council's mandate.
6. The fuelling role of illicit arms in almost all conflict situations before the Council is undeniable as has been mentioned by several delegations. The latest biennial report by the Secretary General on small arms and light weapons touches on several of these files.
7. Given the importance of illicit small arms and light weapons in escalating and prolonging destructive conflicts, it continues to be puzzling to us why there is continued reluctance in this Council to undertake every effort to address this problem. We welcome fresh efforts to do the utmost, recognising and responding to the relevant perspectives of members who have historically sought that the subject be approached with caution.

8. We agree that caution is important and we look forward to finding those common points that can be reached so that we can have further action. After having chaired the BMS7 process in the General Assembly, we are profoundly aware of the need to not mirror or undermine the mandate of BMS7 but we believe that there is more that the Security Council can do beyond that mandate within its own specific area of work.
9. While we may not be able to immediately address every aspect of the challenge, we believe that there are actions that are ready to be undertaken now.
10. Allow me to highlight four recommendations for your consideration:
 - a. **First**, there is need for stronger collaboration and coordination among the relevant UN organs and agencies, and regional and sub-regional organisations. This was underscored during the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States that Kenya was privileged to chair.
 - b. **Second**: regional and sub-regional organisations should be enabled financially and technologically to advance information sharing, sensitisation and inter-agency coordination to tackle the diversion and trafficking of arms. Since so much of the Council's efforts focus on African files, mechanisms such as the Regional Centre for Small Arms in our region should be strengthened and their capabilities extended to their counterparts around the continent.

- c. **Third**, and most critically, we need to see this challenge as part of an ecosystem of threats that interact to destructive effect. Much more needs to be done to attack the criminal networks and ecosystems that are fuelling conflicts particularly in profiting from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, criminal economies are worsening and prolonging the impact of insurgents and terrorist groups. If these criminal economies are not tackled with every tool available in the Council's arsenal, multiple state failure may be the result. We call on a more aggressive use of the sanctions regimes to lower the perverse incentives of war and terrorist economies.
- d. When Kenya has pushed for the listing of terrorist groups under the appropriate sanctions regimes, the negative response by some members has pointed to the threat of such action on humanitarian work.
- e. What is not considered with sufficient gravity is the escalation of the humanitarian need due to the increasingly protracted nature of terrorist and insurgent group operations.
- f. There is profit to be made in terrorism and insurgency, and there will be no end to war and waves of suffering if the Security Council does not escalate its action against the criminal economies that continue to advance profit motive as is

reflected in criminal economies, not least in regard to the diversion and trade in illicit small arms and light weapons.

- g. **Fourth:** there is need for this Council, in Mission mandates, to include responding to the needs of host countries through technical support in security sector reforms, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes and monitoring capabilities. Activities under such support can be reflected in the relevant Secretary General's reports to monitor progress and address any challenges as a preventive measure.
11. Mr. president, I reaffirm Kenya's commitment to all efforts to comprehensively address this challenge of diversion and trafficking in arms and further more welcome Mexico's efforts to seek and pass a resolution in this regard.
12. **Thank you for your kind attention.**