



Addressing Arms Trafficking in the Americas: A Critical Priority

The Americas face a severe violence epidemic, with the highest rate of homicides in the world. Firearms are involved in nearly 70% of the homicides. As a major destination for illicit arms trafficking, the region prioritizes combating the proliferation of illegal firearms and ammunition. In 1997, 31 of 34 OAS Member States ratified the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Firearms Trafficking (CIFTA), the first legally binding agreement of its kind. Despite this commitment, full implementation remains a challenge. To address this gap, the OAS, through its Department of Public Security of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, implements the Program of Assistance on Control of Arms and Munition (PACAM), an operational tool to bolster Member States' capacity to prevent and reduce illicit small arms, light weapons, and ammunition trafficking.

In the Americas, 7 out of 10 homicides involve firearms, compared to 4 out of 10 globally



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1 Enhancing Regional Understanding of Firearms Trafficking

The Americas face challenges in comprehending firearms trafficking due to insufficient data and research. This hinders evidence-based policymaking. To address this, the OAS is spearheading two key initiatives: the Hemispheric Study on Illicit Firearms and Ammunition Trafficking with Mexico support, and the Hemispheric Firearms Knowledge Platform.

OUR MISSION

Analyze regional firearms and ammunition trafficking dynamics, assess state responses and impacts, and formulate targeted recommendations to enhance prevention, control, and prosecution efforts.

OUR SOLUTIONS

- Data dashboards on illicit firearms trafficking.
- Digital library of relevant studies and documents.
- Searchable database of CIFTA and related materials.
- Online CIFTA Questionnaire submission.
- User communication forum.
- Directory of national contact points and authorities.

WHAT IS PACAM?

PACAM, an OAS Department of Public Security initiative, supports Member States in reducing armed violence by strengthening state control over arms and ammunition and addressing risk factors in high-impact communities. Since 2019, PACAM has assisted 28 Latin American and Caribbean countries, with EU funding continuing through 2025.

2 Bolstering Firearms and Ammunition Regulatory Frameworks

The OAS, through PACAM, strengthens state capacities to prevent unauthorized access to arms and ammunition, in line with CIFTA obligations, and of other international instruments. Our expert team provides targeted legislative assistance for countries to improve their regulation and oversight of firearms and ammunition.

OUR MISSION

Reinforce National Firearms Regulatory Frameworks using international standards and best practices.

WHAT WE OFFER

- Development of Inter-American standards and operating procedures.
- Provide legislative assistance to harmonize and strengthen national legislation.

3 Strengthening Regional Coordination for a Safer Hemisphere

Preventing and reducing illicit proliferation and trafficking of small arms, light weapons (SALW), and ammunition demands a coordinated approach. The OAS, through PACAM, facilitates cooperation to achieve a safer hemisphere.

OUR MISSION

Enhance regional coordination mechanisms to foster cooperation, providing countries with practical, evidence-based management tools.

WHAT WE OFFER

- Development of the Central American Roadmap to Prevent Illicit Firearms and Ammunition Trafficking.
- Support the implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap.
- Development of technology systems to improve coordination and oversight of international arms and ammunition transfers.

4 Enhancing Weapons and Ammunition Management in the Americas

The majority of trafficked firearms and ammunition are legally manufactured, and then diverted to the illicit market. To address this, the OAS supports countries in improving their capacities to oversee the lifecycle of firearms and ammunition.

OUR MISSION

Strengthen member states' ammunition management capabilities to reduce violence and illicit trafficking while implementing CIFTA.

WHAT WE OFFER

- Training in EOD, physical security, and stockpile management, marking of firearms, destruction of firearms and ammunition, and voluntary weapons collection campaign.
- Security assessments and suggestions for improving arms and ammunition depots.
- Inventory control software for institutional stockpiles.
- Donations of marking machines.
- Assistance and certification for destruction processes of seized, obsolete, or in-excess firearms and ammunition.

5 Gun Violence Prevention for Safer Communities

The crisis of armed violence disproportionately affects vulnerable populations and carries significant economic, social, and human costs. Addressing it requires comprehensive policies combining repressive and preventive strategies.

OUR MISSION

To reduce gun violence through prevention protocols, intervention strategies, and education on violence prevention and victim assistance.

WHAT WE OFFER

- Train officials, NGOs, families, and community leaders on prevention of armed violence.
- Strengthen the resilience of at-risk youth.
- Address armed violence in school settings.
- Reduce gender-based gun violence through the development of regional guidelines and regional training.
- Reduce illicit firearm circulation through awareness campaigns and voluntary collection programs.

WHAT IS CIFTA?

CIFTA: Americas' Cornerstone Against Illicit Arms

The Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Related Materials (CIFTA) is the Americas' key instrument to combat arms trafficking. Adopted in 1997, this binding agreement has been ratified by 31 countries.

CIFTA's core provisions include:

- Criminalizing illicit arms manufacturing and trafficking.
- Managing firearms lifecycle to prevent illegal diversion.
- Regulating international arms trade.
- Fostering regional cooperation.



OUR IMPACT

+ 86,000 weapons destroyed in 7 countries.

219 tons of ammunition destroyed in 7 countries.

16 firearm marking machines donated to 15 countries.

7 countries assisted in strengthening firearms regulatory framework.

+ 5,000 officials from 30 countries trained to improve arms and ammunition control.

PARTNERS



Funded by the European Union

COUNTRIES WHERE WE HAVE WORKED

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Antigua and Barbuda | Dominican Rep. | Panama |
| Argentina | Ecuador | Paraguay |
| The Bahamas | El Salvador | Peru |
| Barbados | Grenada | Saint Kitts and Nevis |
| Belize | Guatemala | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| Bolivia | Guyana | Saint Lucia |
| Brazil | Haiti | Suriname |
| Chile | Honduras | Trinidad and Tobago |
| Costa Rica | Jamaica | Uruguay |
| Dominica | Mexico | |



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