



Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4896th meeting of the Security Council, held on 19 January 2004, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Small arms", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of his recommendations to the Council entitled Small Arms (S/2003/1217) of 31 December 2003, and reaffirms the Statements of its President of 31 October 2002 (S/PRST/2002/30), of 24 September 1999 (S/PRST/1999/28), and of 31 August 2001 (S/PRST/2001/21).

"The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, in view of which its attention is drawn inevitably to the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, as such weapons are the most frequently used in armed conflicts. The Council reaffirms the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and, subject to the Charter, the right of each State to import, produce and retain small arms and light weapons for its self-defence and security needs.

"The Council welcomes all efforts already undertaken by Member States and calls upon them to fully implement at the national, regional and international levels the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action adopted by the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its aspects.

"The Council welcomes the resolution 58/241 of 23 December 2003 of the General Assembly by which, among other things, it decided to establish an open-ended working group to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons and calls upon all Member States to support all efforts aimed at this purpose.

"The Council encourages the arms-exporting countries to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in small arms and light weapons transactions. It also encourages international and regional cooperation in the consideration of the origin and transfers of small arms and light weapons in order to prevent their diversion to terrorist groups, in particular, Al Qaida. The Council

welcomes the significant steps that have been taken by Member States in this regard. The obligation of Member States to enforce the arms embargo should be coupled with enhanced international and regional cooperation concerning arms exports.

“The Security Council reiterates its call on all Member States to effectively implement arms embargoes and other sanction measures imposed by the Council in its relevant resolutions, and urges Member States in a position to do so to provide assistance to interested States in strengthening their capacity to fulfil their obligations in this regard. The Council encourages Members to undertake vigorous actions aimed at restricting the supply of small arms, light weapons and ammunitions to areas of instability. The Council further encourages Member States to provide the Sanctions Committees with available information on alleged violations of arms embargoes and also calls on Member States to give due consideration to the recommendations of the related reports.

“The Council continues to recognize the need to engage the relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations, business and financial institutions and other actors at the international, regional and local levels to contribute to the implementation of arms embargoes.

“The Security Council reiterates the importance of carrying out Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes, an increasingly essential component of peacekeeping mandates, as comprehensively and effectively as possible in post-conflict situations under its consideration.

“The Security Council takes note of the inclusion of Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS) on an exceptional basis in the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms.

“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to update the Council for its next meeting on the subject on the further implementation of the recommendations contained in his report entitled ‘Small arms’ of 20 September 2002 (S/2002/1053).”
