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ESCUELA DE SEGURIDAD
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Course on

ILLICIT MARKETS AND ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE AMERICAS



MINISTÉRIO DA
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Eurofront

Class

Arms trafficking in the Americas: actors, routes and modus operandi

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Introduction

Students will learn the general context about the international firearms trafficking crime and more specifically about the latest findings on modus operandi, types of weapons, how this trafficking occurs and, finally, they will also learn about the countries practices and challenges in the fight against international firearms trafficking.



Concepts

International arms trafficking: According to the UN, it is understood by the import, export, acquisition, sale, delivery or transfer of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition from or through the territory of one Member State party to another. *Ant trafficking*: uses one or more people to transport small amounts of weapons and ammunition from one place to another. *Boomerang effect*: The weapon that is produced in one country, is exported legally to other countries, and, when they reach their destination, they are diverted and return to the place of origin illegally. *Frankenstein Weapons*: It is a weapon that is composed of several pieces of different weapons..

Institutions

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL): Intergovernmental organization with 194 member countries. We help police in these countries to work together to make the world a safer place.

Illicit Arms Records And Tracing Management System (iARMS): INTERPOL's Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System (iARMS) facilitates information sharing and cooperation between law enforcement agencies on crime related to firearms.

Tripartite Command: it is an agreement for the integration of the police forces of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina



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Arms trafficking is not an isolated crime. Arms trafficking feeds a series of other crimes in the criminal chain, such as drug trafficking, organized crime in general, etc.

What happens, in general terms, is that these weapons are produced legally, they are sold legally to a first buyer, and from there a deviation route begins, a route that goes from legality to illegality.

Finding the "**deviation point**" is essential and for that we need a deepening of the investigation and tracking capacity of all these weapons found in the hands of criminals.



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The firearms-producing countries most commonly in the hands of criminals in the Americas are the **United States, Turkey, Israel, Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Hungary, and Brazil.**



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As well as firearms, ammunition also ends up being trafficked. The region is an important producer, including Chile, Brazil, Mexico and the United States.

The trafficking of **parts or components** of firearms is also part of this problem, since within the illegal sale of arms there are weapons with unfinished or defective parts, so local gunsmiths assemble these weapons and complement them with the missing parts. With this, what is called “**Frankenstein**” weapons is produced.”.



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The common **routes** in the Southern Cone of Latin America that have been identified depart from the following points :

- Port of Buenos Aires – Argentina
- Border areas between Paraguay and Brazil
- Port of Montevideo – Uruguay
- Port of Iquique – Chile
- Uruguay river that divides Uruguay and Argentina



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“Boomerang effect”: The weapon is produced in one country, legally exported to other countries, and when they reach their destination, they are deviated and returned to the place of origin illegally, fueling crime in general. For example :

- The weapon is produced in Brazil, where there are large manufacturers of firearms, they are exported legally to neighboring countries, such as Paraguay, and, when they arrive in Paraguay, they are deviated and returned to Brazil, fueling crime in general, both common crime and organized crime.
- It also happens in United States, with the arms exported from Brazil to the United States, which return to Brazil illegally.



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Among the **profiles** of the carriers are currently women and young people, families in tourism, driver or passenger of tourist buses.

Among the **modus operandi** we have **ant trafficking**, where one or more people move small amounts of weapons and ammunition from one place to another, and the use of couriers from private transport companies..



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Within Mercosul, there is the **international cooperation mechanism, the Tripartite Command of the Triple Border between Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil**, where the intelligence operations and actions necessary to stop international traffic are generated.

Internal cooperation between **Chile and Argentina** so that Customs, Police, the Public Ministry and Ministries of Foreign Relations exchange information to stop international traffic.

In **Uruguay and Chile** there is cooperation between agencies within the countries themselves, this happens in a very integrated way.

INTERPOL that promotes joint and simultaneous operations in all countries, understanding that this chain of international arms trafficking does not occur only in one country: with the advance of cartels and organized crime, this ends up being essential to stop this cooperation from the world of crime, among criminals from various countries.

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Structural challenges to the policy of combating arms trafficking :

- The investigation of weapons seized in police interventions is not prioritized.
- The difficulty with the records of arms seizures, which are not registered as international arms trafficking.
- Adapt the legislation of some countries to account for framing these crimes as international trafficking.
- Difficulties in coordinating between law enforcement agencies within countries and from one country to another.
- The bureaucracy between countries, which makes it difficult to make investigations more agile, more dynamic and truly capable of combating international trafficking.

Class Summary

- Object of international arms trafficking.
- Frequent routes.
- Modus Operandi.
- Traffickers profile.
- Practices and challenges in the fight against arms and ammunition trafficking.



Reference

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