IYC 2026

Group of 20
Study Guide

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Acronyms and Abbreviations Quick Reference

The following table collects, for quick reference during committee, the acronyms and abbreviations used throughout this study guide.

Acronym	Full Term
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty (2013)
UNPoA	UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2001)
ITI	International Tracing Instrument (2005)
EUC	End-User Certificate
FOC	Flag of Convenience
TBML	Trade-Based Money Laundering
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
NSAG	Non-State Armed Group
GGE	Group of Governmental Experts
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
ITAR	International Traffic in Arms Regulations (United States)
EAR	Export Administration Regulations (United States)
CTA	Corporate Transparency Act (United States)
CIFTA	Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms (1997)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
RECSA	Regional Centre on Small Arms (Great Lakes and Horn of Africa)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
iARMS	INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System
WCO	World Customs Organization
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
DISEC	Disarmament and International Security Committee (UN General Assembly First Committee)
QARMA	Question a Resolution Must Address
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Section 1: Letter from the Dais

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Dais, it is our distinct pleasure to welcome you to the Group of 20. As you prepare to enter this committee, we encourage you to recognize that the agenda before you is far more than a discussion of weapons, regulations, or international treaties. At its core, this topic is about responsibility, accountability, and the difficult choices that define global security in the twenty-first century.

The world often imagines threats to peace as dramatic and visible: armies crossing borders, missiles launched across continents, or conflicts dominating international headlines. Yet many of the challenges confronting the international community today are far less visible. They move quietly through shipping routes, financial networks, intermediary companies, and regulatory loopholes. They thrive not because the world is unaware of them, but because addressing them requires sustained cooperation, political will, and a willingness to confront uncomfortable realities.

As delegates, you will be tasked with navigating one of these realities.

The issue before this committee exists in the space between legality and illegality, between national interest and international responsibility, and between the ideals of global governance and the practical limitations of enforcement. It is an issue that demonstrates how interconnected our world has become. Decisions made in one capital can affect communities thousands of miles away. Policies enacted by a single state can influence regional stability, humanitarian conditions, and international security far beyond its borders.

This complexity is precisely what makes G20 one of the most rewarding committees in Model United Nations.

The purpose of this committee is not to identify easy answers. There are none. The purpose is to engage with competing priorities, understand diverse perspectives, and develop solutions that are both ambitious and realistic. Every state represented in this room will approach the agenda with its own interests, concerns, and strategic objectives. Some will prioritize security. Others will emphasize sovereignty. Some will focus on economic considerations, while others may advocate for stronger international oversight. Your challenge is not simply to defend your position, but to understand the positions of others and build consensus despite those differences.

The skills required to succeed in this committee mirror those required of diplomats in the real world. Effective delegates are not necessarily the loudest voices in the room. They are the individuals who listen carefully, think critically, negotiate thoughtfully, and adapt when circumstances change. They understand that meaningful diplomacy is rarely about winning every argument. Rather, it is about finding common ground where none initially appears to exist.

As you conduct your research and prepare your positions, we encourage you to look beyond surface-level analysis. Ask difficult questions. Examine why existing mechanisms succeed in some circumstances and fail in others. Consider the unintended consequences of policy decisions. Reflect on the balance between national sovereignty and international cooperation. Most importantly, approach this topic with curiosity and an open mind.

Throughout committee, there will be moments of disagreement. There will be competing visions, conflicting priorities, and vigorous debate. These moments should not be viewed as obstacles. They are opportunities. Some of the most productive discussions emerge from the clash of perspectives. Every speech, amendment, negotiation, and resolution offers a chance to deepen understanding and strengthen the quality of discourse within the committee.

Remember that Model United Nations is not merely an academic exercise. It is an opportunity to challenge yourself intellectually, develop your confidence as a speaker, refine your ability to negotiate under pressure, and strengthen your capacity to think critically about global affairs. The experiences you gain in committee often extend far beyond the conference itself. The ability to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and solve complex problems are skills that will serve you throughout your academic, professional, and personal lives.

As Dais members, we are not looking for perfection. We are looking for engagement. We are looking for delegates who are willing to take initiative, participate actively, and contribute meaningfully to committee proceedings. Whether you are attending your first conference or your fiftieth, your perspective has value, and your contributions have the potential to shape the direction of debate.

The quality of this committee will ultimately depend on the effort, preparation, and enthusiasm that each delegate brings into the room. Arrive prepared. Defend your country's interests with conviction. Approach negotiations with professionalism. Challenge ideas respectfully. Most importantly, do not be afraid to take risks, propose creative solutions, and push yourself beyond your comfort zone.

The issues discussed in this committee may be complex, but so too is the international community's capacity for innovation, cooperation, and progress. History has repeatedly demonstrated that meaningful change begins with individuals who are willing to engage with difficult problems rather than avoid them. In this committee, you have the opportunity to do exactly that.

We hope that this conference challenges you, inspires you, and encourages you to think more deeply about the responsibilities that accompany leadership and diplomacy. We are excited to witness the discussions you will lead, the solutions you will propose, and the growth you will demonstrate throughout committee.

We wish you the very best in your preparation and look forward to meeting each of you in committee.

Sincerely, The Dais

Group of 20.

Section 2: Committee Overview

2.1 The General Assembly First Committee (G20)

The First Committee is one of six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly, and the principal General Assembly forum for questions of disarmament, arms regulation, and international security. Unlike the Security Council, the First Committee has universal UN membership, operates without a veto, and takes decisions by majority vote (or, where possible, consensus) on non-binding resolutions and recommendations. Its outputs are not legally enforceable in the way a Chapter VII Security Council resolution is, but First Committee resolutions shape the normative architecture of international arms control, set the mandates of expert bodies and review conferences, authorise studies and Groups of Governmental Experts (GGEs), and provide the political momentum behind binding instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA).

For the purposes of this simulation, the committee is convened as a specialised working session of the First Committee focused exclusively on illicit brokering, grey-market transfers, and regulatory gaps in the global arms supply chain. It draws its membership from the states most directly implicated in the legal and illicit arms trade as producers, exporters, importers, transit and trans-shipment states, financial and registry hubs, and conflict-affected destinations, alongside the established leaders of multilateral arms control diplomacy.

2.2 Committee Composition

This simulation seats forty-eight (48) member states, selected to represent every structural role in the global arms supply chain: the major legal exporters whose industries dominate the licit trade; the demand-side importers whose procurement drives it; the transit, trans-shipment, and flag-of-convenience states whose weak oversight enables diversion; the offshore financial and corporate-registry jurisdictions that provide the shell-company infrastructure for illicit brokering; the embargoed and conflict-affected states that are the ultimate destination of diverted weapons; the sanctioned pariah suppliers who operate largely outside the legal system altogether; and the champions of multilateral regulation who have driven the ATT, the UNPoA, and export-control harmonisation. A full country matrix appears in Section 6.

2.3 Mandate and Scope

This committee is not mandated to resolve individual ongoing conflicts, adjudicate specific embargo violations, or impose binding sanctions, those powers rest with the Security Council. Its mandate is to strengthen the international normative and technical architecture governing the international transfer of conventional arms, with specific attention to:

- The role of individual brokers, intermediary networks, and broker-dealers in facilitating unauthorised transfers;
- The use of shell companies, nominee ownership, and offshore financial structures to obscure the true parties to an arms transaction;
- The falsification, forgery, and non-verification of end-user certificates and other transfer documentation;
- Covert re-export and triangulation arrangements that route weapons through permissive transit states;
- Sanctions and embargo evasion mechanisms, including flag-of-convenience shipping and falsified cargo manifests;

- Regulatory and enforcement gaps between national export control regimes, and the uneven implementation of existing multilateral instruments; and
- Mechanisms to improve transparency, traceability, and cross-border enforcement cooperation without unduly constraining legitimate defence trade or infringing on national sovereignty over security decisions.

2.4 Why This Agenda Matters Now

Three converging trends have made brokering and grey-market diversion the most urgent frontier of arms control policy. First, the sheer scale of legal arms transfers has grown sharply amid a global rearmament cycle driven by the war in Ukraine, Middle Eastern conflicts, and Indo-Pacific strategic competition, and a larger legal trade creates a larger pool of transactions within which illicit diversion can be concealed. Second, corporate and financial secrecy tools have become more sophisticated and more accessible, allowing brokers to construct multi-jurisdictional shell company networks in hours rather than months. Third, and most significantly, the primary instrument the international community built to address exactly this problem, the Arms Trade Treaty, has been directly weakened by the withdrawal of a major arms-exporting state, reopening precisely the accountability gap the Treaty was designed to close. Delegates should treat this last development not as background colour but as the committee's central, live procedural fact.

Section 3: Background and Historical Context

3.1 From Black Market to Grey Market: Understanding the Shift

For much of the Cold War, illicit arms trafficking was conceived primarily as a black-market problem: weapons smuggled outright, in defiance of any paperwork, typically by criminal networks or intelligence services operating covertly to arm insurgencies and proxy forces. The collapse of the Soviet Union flooded global markets with poorly secured stockpiles, and the 1990s saw the emergence of the archetypal illicit arms broker, an individual operating a global logistics and financial network capable of moving weapons from surplus stockpiles in Eastern Europe and the former USSR into the civil wars of West Africa, the Balkans, and the Great Lakes region.

Over the past two decades, however, the dominant mode of diversion has shifted. Outright smuggling still occurs, but the far larger and more consequential channel is now the grey market: transactions that begin as licensed, documented, superficially legal exports and are diverted, through fraud, negligence, or the deliberate exploitation of jurisdictional and regulatory gaps, before reaching an unauthorised end user. This shift matters enormously for policy design. A black-market problem is principally one of interdiction and law enforcement. A grey-market problem is principally one of verification, transparency, and corporate and financial accountability, a fundamentally different, and in many ways harder, policy challenge.

3.2 The Anatomy of a Grey-Market Transfer

A typical illicit brokering operation combines several of the following elements, often in combination:

- **Falsified or fraudulently obtained end-user certificates (EUCs):** A document, typically issued by the importing government, certifying that a shipment of arms is intended for a specific, legitimate end user (e.g., a national ministry of defence) and will not be re-exported without authorisation. Brokers routinely forge EUCs, bribe officials to issue certificates for fictitious end users, or obtain genuine certificates from a legitimate government under false pretences before diverting the shipment after it clears customs in the nominal destination country.
- **Shell and front companies:** Corporate entities, frequently registered in secrecy jurisdictions with minimal beneficial-ownership disclosure requirements, used to conceal the true buyer, seller, or financier behind a transaction. A single broker may control a web of shell companies spanning several jurisdictions, each performing a narrow function (contracting, shipping, insurance, payment) so that no single regulator or bank sees the full picture.
- **Covert re-export and triangulation:** Arranging for a shipment to be delivered to an intermediate, low-scrutiny state before being re-exported, often without any new export licence, to the true, embargoed, or unauthorised end user. Neighbouring or transit states with weak customs verification, poor inter-agency coordination, or high levels of corruption are disproportionately used for this purpose.
- **Flag-of-convenience shipping and falsified manifests:** Cargo vessels registered under open or flag-of-convenience registries (which impose minimal beneficial-ownership or inspection requirements) are chartered to carry weapons cargo mislabelled as general machinery, agricultural equipment, or humanitarian goods.
- **Offshore and correspondent banking:** Payment for illicit consignments is frequently routed through offshore accounts, trade-based money laundering (over- or under-invoicing), or informal value-transfer systems, keeping the financial trail as opaque as the corporate and shipping trail.
- **Sanctions-busting through dual-use and component trade:** Rather than trafficking finished weapons systems, brokers increasingly traffic in dual-use components, semiconductors, guidance electronics, drone

parts, machine tools, that fall below the threshold of major conventional-arms controls but that are essential to assembling or maintaining weapons systems domestically, complicating both detection and legal classification.

3.3 A Brief History of Multilateral Response

The international community has built a layered, but incomplete, architecture to address these problems over the past three decades:

- **1991, UN Register of Conventional Arms:** Established as a voluntary transparency mechanism inviting states to report annual imports and exports of seven (later eight) categories of major conventional weapons. Reporting has always been voluntary and incomplete, and the Register does not cover small arms and light weapons, brokering, or components.
- **1996, Wassenaar Arrangement:** Established as the successor to the Cold War-era COCOM regime, the Wassenaar Arrangement is a voluntary export-control regime in which 42 participating states exchange information on transfers and denials of conventional arms and dual-use goods and coordinate national control lists. It has no enforcement mechanism, no ability to veto another member's export, and several major arms-exporting and arms-importing states, including China, Israel, and Belarus, are not members.
- **2001, UN Firearms Protocol:** Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Firearms Protocol was the first binding global instrument specifically addressing illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms, obliging states parties to mark and trace weapons, regulate brokers and brokering activities, and criminalise illicit manufacturing and trafficking.
- **2001, UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA):** A politically binding (not treaty-based) framework agreed at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, committing states to strengthen national marking, record-keeping, stockpile security, and international cooperation on SALW. A 2005 International Tracing Instrument (ITI) supplemented it. The UNPoA remains the primary global small-arms framework but is non-binding and has no verification mechanism.
- **2013, Arms Trade Treaty (ATT):** Adopted by the General Assembly on 2 April 2013 by a vote of 154 in favour, 3 against (including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, and Syria), and 23 abstentions, and entering into force on 24 December 2014, the ATT is the first legally binding global instrument regulating the international trade in conventional arms across eight categories, plus their ammunition and parts and components. It obliges states parties to assess export applications against the risk that arms will be used to commit or facilitate genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, or serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, and to take measures to prevent diversion, including through end-use/end-user documentation and post-shipment verification.
- **2024–2026, Erosion and Retrenchment:** On 26 April 2025, the United States announced its withdrawal from the Arms Trade Treaty, framing the Treaty as an infringement on American sovereign arms-export decision-making; the U.S. had signed but never ratified the ATT. As the world's largest single arms exporter, the U.S. withdrawal is widely regarded by arms-control analysts as a serious blow to the Treaty's universality and enforcement credibility, and has reopened debate over whether major exporters can be bound by an instrument they may exit at will. As of 2026, the ATT counts 118 States Parties and 25 additional signatories; several of the world's largest arms producers and exporters, including China, Russia, and (following withdrawal) the United States, remain outside the Treaty's binding obligations.

3.4 Illustrative Case Studies

The Bout Network (1990s–2008)

Viktor Bout, a former Soviet military-intelligence officer, built one of the most extensive illicit arms-brokering networks in modern history, using a global web of shell companies, including twelve incorporated in the U.S. states of Delaware, Florida, and Texas, and a private cargo-aviation fleet to move weapons into conflict zones across Africa, South America, Afghanistan, and the Middle East, frequently in violation of UN arms embargoes. Bout was arrested in a 2008 sting operation in Thailand, extradited to the United States in 2010, convicted in 2011, and released in a prisoner exchange in December 2022. His network remains the paradigmatic case study in the use of corporate opacity, aviation leasing, and jurisdictional arbitrage to sustain a global illicit brokering enterprise over more than a decade, largely because no single national regulator possessed visibility over his entire corporate structure at once.

The North Korea–Iran Shipment (2009)

On 11 December 2009, a cargo aircraft carrying approximately 35 tons of conventional weapons departed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea bound for Iran, in direct violation of a UN Security Council arms embargo on the DPRK. The shipment was intercepted the following day by Thai authorities after a tip-off, but investigators subsequently discovered that the aircraft used to carry the illegal cargo had been leased through a New Zealand-registered shell company, illustrating how a single illicit transfer can implicate the export state, the transit state, the destination state, and an entirely unconnected third jurisdiction whose only role was providing corporate registration services. No individual was ever successfully prosecuted for arranging the transfer.

UK Export-Control Prosecution (2026)

In 2026, a British court convicted two arms brokers of running a clandestine international trafficking operation supplying weapons and controlled equipment toward Sudan, South Sudan, Libya, Iraq, and Iran, all destinations subject to UK arms embargoes. Prosecutors presented email evidence in which the defendants openly discussed forging end-user certificates, falsifying shipping documentation, and routing deliveries through third countries specifically to disguise the ultimate destination of the goods, with one defendant explicitly acknowledging in writing that any transfer without a valid end-user certificate was illegal. The case is instructive because it shows that even a state with a relatively sophisticated export-control enforcement apparatus can take years to detect and prosecute a determined, document-fraud-based brokering operation, and that brokers are frequently well aware of the illegality of their conduct, undermining claims that grey-market activity is merely a product of regulatory ambiguity.

Corruption-Fuelled Diversion (ongoing)

A 2025 review by Transparency International's Defence & Security programme found that private arms brokers, criminals, or smugglers used bribery in dozens of documented arms-diversion cases worldwide, with corruption most prevalent at the weapons storage and active-use stages, followed by disposal and international-transfer stages, confirming that diversion is frequently not a matter of sophisticated criminal tradecraft defeating robust controls, but of ordinary bribery defeating weak or unenforced ones.

Beneficial Ownership Retrenchment (2025)

In 2025, the U.S. Treasury Department significantly narrowed enforcement of the Corporate Transparency Act's beneficial-ownership disclosure requirements, which had been intended to require companies registered in the United States to disclose their true owners to a federal registry, precisely the kind of shell-company opacity historically exploited by arms brokers including the Bout network. Arms-control advocates have warned that the rollback re-opens a major transparency gap in the jurisdiction historically most attractive for shell-company incorporation, illustrating how domestic regulatory and political choices in major economies have direct, cross-border consequences for global arms-trafficking enforcement.

3.5 Structural Drivers Delegates Must Grapple With

- **Dual-use ambiguity:** Many components essential to modern weapons systems, semiconductors, guidance electronics, commercial drones and their components, machine tools, night-vision optics, have legitimate civilian uses, making export control classification and enforcement far harder than for finished weapons systems.
- **Sovereignty and commercial interest:** Arms exports are a central pillar of major-power strategic influence and a significant source of industrial employment and foreign-currency earnings; exporting states have structural incentives to interpret risk-assessment obligations permissively.
- **Uneven capacity:** Many importing and transit states lack the customs infrastructure, inter-agency coordination, or trained personnel to verify end-user documentation or detect falsified manifests, regardless of their legal commitments.
- **Fragmented jurisdiction:** A single illicit transfer typically implicates the export state's licensing authority, the transit state(s)' customs agencies, the flag state of the transport vessel or aircraft, the incorporation jurisdiction of any shell companies involved, and the financial jurisdictions handling payment, with no single body possessing authority, visibility, or investigative jurisdiction over the whole chain.
- **Technological change:** Additive manufacturing (3D-printed firearms and components), commercial drone conversion, and encrypted communications and cryptocurrency payment channels are increasingly used to bypass traditional export-control chokepoints altogether.

3.6 A Timeline of the Modern Illicit Brokering Problem

- **1991:** Collapse of the Soviet Union leaves vast, poorly secured conventional-weapons stockpiles across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, seeding the first generation of post-Cold War illicit brokering networks.
- **1996:** The Wassenaar Arrangement is established as the successor to the Cold War-era COCOM export-control regime.
- **2001:** The UN Firearms Protocol and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons are adopted within months of one another, marking the first coordinated global response to brokering and trafficking specifically.
- **2005:** The International Tracing Instrument supplements the UNPoA with concrete marking and tracing commitments.
- **2008:** Viktor Bout is arrested in a sting operation in Bangkok, drawing unprecedented public attention to the shell-company and aviation-leasing infrastructure underpinning large-scale illicit brokering.
- **2011:** The collapse of the Gaddafi government in Libya releases one of the largest uncontrolled conventional-weapons stockpiles in modern history into regional circulation, seeding the Sahel corridor described in Section 4.
- **2013:** The Arms Trade Treaty is adopted by the UN General Assembly, entering into force in December 2014 as the first binding global instrument covering the conventional arms trade as a whole.
- **2018 to 2022:** A succession of UN Panel of Experts reports on Libya, Yemen, and the DPRK document sophisticated, ongoing sanctions-evasion networks combining falsified documentation, flag-of-convenience shipping, and shell-company financing.
- **2022:** Belarus is added to major Western sanctions regimes following its role in facilitating the invasion of Ukraine, adding a new significant transit and re-export concern to European arms-control monitoring.
- **2025:** The United States formally withdraws from the Arms Trade Treaty; the U.S. Treasury simultaneously narrows enforcement of domestic beneficial-ownership disclosure rules, compounding concerns over a widening transparency gap in the world's largest arms-exporting and corporate-registration jurisdiction.

- **2026:** A UK prosecution secures convictions against brokers who supplied embargoed destinations across multiple continents using forged documentation, underscoring that even well-resourced national enforcement systems require years to detect and prosecute a determined brokering operation.

3.7 The Economics of Illicit Brokering

Delegates should understand why illicit brokering persists despite decades of normative condemnation: it is, quite simply, extraordinarily profitable relative to its risk. A broker who successfully diverts a single mid-sized shipment of small arms and ammunition to a conflict-zone buyer can realise a markup of several multiples over the legitimate market price, reflecting both the buyer's desperation and the absence of competitive, legal alternatives in an embargoed or conflict-affected market. Prosecution rates remain extremely low relative to the estimated scale of the trade, in part because, as the case studies above demonstrate, successful prosecutions typically require years of cross-jurisdictional investigation, and in part because many transactions never generate the kind of documentary trail that securing a conviction requires. This risk-adjusted profitability calculus is the single most important fact for delegates to internalise: normative condemnation alone does not change the underlying economics. Effective policy must raise the practical cost, or lower the practical profitability, of brokering illicit transfers, whether through registration and licensing requirements that increase the broker's operating costs, through beneficial-ownership disclosure that increases detection risk, or through post-shipment verification that increases the probability a diverted shipment is eventually traced back to its broker.

Section 4: Regional Trafficking Corridors and Illustrative Networks

Illicit brokering does not occur in the abstract. It follows specific, well-documented geographic corridors shaped by conflict demand, weak governance, porous borders, and historical stockpile surpluses. Understanding these corridors is essential to drafting resolutions that target real chokepoints rather than generic principles. This section surveys the corridors most frequently cited in UN Panel of Experts reporting, Small Arms Survey research, and national law-enforcement disclosures.

4.1 The Balkans-to-Middle East Pipeline

The Western Balkans, particularly Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Croatia, retain enormous legacy stockpiles of Warsaw Pact-pattern small arms, light weapons, and ammunition dating to the Yugoslav wars and earlier Cold War-era production. These states have, since the mid-2010s, become significant licensed arms exporters, particularly of ammunition compatible with weapons systems used across the Middle East and North Africa. Investigative reporting by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project has repeatedly documented cases in which end-user certificates naming Gulf state militaries were used to secure export licences for cargo that was subsequently re-routed, without a new licence, toward armed groups in Syria and Yemen. Because several of these end-user states are themselves close security partners of the exporting states, and because the transactions are nominally state-to-state government sales, they attract far less international scrutiny than smaller-scale black-market smuggling would.

4.2 The Sahel Corridor

Weapons looted from Libyan government stockpiles following the collapse of the Gaddafi government in 2011 flooded across the porous, thinly policed borders of Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso, arming both Tuareg separatist movements and jihadist affiliates of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State operating across the region. This corridor has since become partially self-sustaining: weapons captured from national armed forces in successive coups and insurgent victories are recirculated across borders faster than any regional tracing mechanism can follow them. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials (2006) was designed to address exactly this corridor, but its implementation has been severely weakened by the political instability, and in several cases outright withdrawal from ECOWAS, of the very states most affected.

4.3 The Horn of Africa and Red Sea Corridor

Weapons flow into Somalia in violation of a long-standing UN arms embargo, arming both federal government-aligned forces (under progressively eased embargo exceptions) and the Al-Shabaab insurgency, which has developed sophisticated means of capturing, purchasing, and manufacturing (including improvised explosive devices) its own materiel. Separately, the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb Strait have become a documented smuggling route for Iranian-origin weapons and components destined for Houthi forces in Yemen, typically transported via small dhows that are far harder to interdict than large container vessels, notwithstanding a sustained multinational naval interdiction presence in the area.

4.4 The Central American and Caribbean Corridor

Unlike the conflict-zone corridors above, the trafficking pattern connecting the United States to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean is driven primarily by organised-crime demand rather than armed conflict. Firearms purchased legally at retail in U.S. states with permissive purchase laws are trafficked south, often through repeated small-volume "straw purchases" rather than large brokered shipments, to arm cartel and gang violence; a 2021 Mexican government lawsuit against several major U.S. firearms manufacturers, and subsequent related litigation, has kept this specific south-bound corridor at the centre of bilateral U.S.-Mexico diplomatic friction. This corridor is instructive for delegates because it demonstrates that "illicit brokering" is not always a matter of sophisticated international shell-company networks; it can equally be a matter of high-volume, low-sophistication domestic retail diversion that, in aggregate, rivals any single brokered conflict-zone shipment in scale.

4.5 The Golden Triangle and Southeast Asian Corridor

Myanmar's protracted civil conflict has produced a significant domestic illicit-manufacturing sector, particularly in Shan State and along the Thai border, supplying both ethnic armed organisations and criminal networks with locally produced small arms and ammunition, supplemented by trafficked components sourced from China and Thailand. The corridor is notable for its reliance on artisanal and small-workshop manufacturing rather than diverted industrial-scale production, illustrating a distinct enforcement challenge: interdicting raw-material and machine-tool flows into an internal manufacturing base, rather than interdicting finished-weapon shipments crossing a border.

4.6 The Post-Soviet and Black Sea Corridor

Moldova's breakaway Transnistria region, alongside broader Black Sea shipping routes, has long been flagged by regional security analysts as a potential transit node for both legacy Soviet-era stockpiles and, more recently, materiel connected to the war in Ukraine. While documented large-scale diversion from Western military assistance to Ukraine remains limited according to most independent audits to date, the sheer volume of matériel flowing into an active conflict zone, combined with historically weak customs infrastructure in the wider region, has made this corridor a priority concern for the European Union's post-conflict arms-control planning.

4.7 Why Corridors Matter for Drafting

Delegates should resist treating illicit brokering as a single undifferentiated global phenomenon. A resolution clause addressing flag-of-convenience shipping standards speaks directly to the Red Sea and Balkans corridors, but does little for the Central American corridor, which depends far more on domestic retail-sale regulation and cross-border tracing cooperation than on maritime shipping oversight. Similarly, a clause on beneficial-ownership disclosure targets shell-company-dependent brokering networks but has limited relevance to the artisanal manufacturing base driving the Golden Triangle corridor. The strongest resolutions will pair universal, cross-cutting mechanisms (beneficial ownership, brokering registration, Panel of Experts resourcing) with targeted, corridor-specific language addressing the mechanism of diversion actually documented in each region.

Section 5: Key Terminology and Definitions

- **Arms Broker / Brokering:** An individual or entity that arranges, facilitates, or negotiates an arms transaction between a supplier and a buyer, typically for commission or profit, without necessarily ever taking physical or legal title to the goods. Brokering activity, as opposed to manufacturing or direct export, is regulated unevenly and, in many jurisdictions, not regulated at all.
- **End-User Certificate (EUC):** A document issued by (or on behalf of) the government of the importing state, certifying the identity of the final recipient of an arms shipment and providing assurances against unauthorised re-export. The single most commonly forged, falsified, or fraudulently obtained document in illicit arms transfers.
- **End-Use Monitoring / Post-Shipment Verification:** Mechanisms, physical inspection, documentary audit, or on-site verification visits, used by an exporting state to confirm, after delivery, that arms remain with the certified end user. Rarely mandatory and inconsistently applied even among ATT states parties.
- **Grey Market:** Arms transfers that begin as documented, licensed, superficially legal transactions but are diverted, through fraud, negligence, or exploitation of regulatory gaps, to an unauthorised end user before or after delivery, as distinct from the black market, where the transaction is illicit from inception.
- **Diversion:** The redirection of arms and ammunition from their intended, authorised recipient to an unauthorised end user, whether through theft, corruption, battlefield capture, illicit resale, or brokered re-export.
- **Triangulation / Covert Re-Export:** The routing of a shipment through one or more intermediary ('transit' or 'trans-shipment') states to disguise its true origin or ultimate destination, often without a new or valid export licence covering the onward transfer.
- **Flag of Convenience (FOC):** The registration of a merchant vessel in a state other than that of its owners, typically to benefit from lower registration costs, lighter regulation, and reduced beneficial-ownership disclosure, a practice heavily exploited in maritime arms smuggling.
- **Shell Company / Front Company:** A corporate entity with no substantive business operations, used to hold assets, conduct transactions, or receive payments while concealing the identity of its true ("beneficial") owner.
- **Beneficial Ownership:** The identity of the natural person(s) who ultimately own, control, or benefit from a legal entity or arrangement, as distinct from its nominal or registered owner. The disclosure (or non-disclosure) of beneficial ownership is the single most important variable determining a jurisdiction's attractiveness for illicit arms-brokering finance.
- **Dual-Use Goods:** Items, technologies, or components with both legitimate civilian and potential military applications (e.g., certain electronics, machine tools, chemicals, drone components), subject to a separate and often less stringent export-control regime than finished weapons systems.
- **End-Use Diversion Risk Assessment:** The obligation, under Article 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty, for an exporting state to assess the risk that a proposed arms export could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law, or be diverted to unauthorised end use, prior to authorising the export.
- **Arms Embargo:** A prohibition, imposed by the UN Security Council, a regional organisation, or a national government, on the transfer of arms to a specified state, region, or non-state actor. UN Panels of Experts are frequently mandated to monitor and report on embargo violations, but have no enforcement power of their own.

- **Trade-Based Money Laundering (TBML):** The use of trade transactions, commonly over- or under-invoicing, multiple invoicing, or misrepresentation of goods, to move value across borders and disguise the proceeds of illicit activity, frequently used to settle payment for illicit arms shipments.
- **Marking and Tracing:** The practice of applying unique, permanent markings to firearms and ammunition at the point of manufacture and import, enabling weapons recovered in conflict zones or crime scenes to be traced back to their point of diversion, mandated in principle by the UN Firearms Protocol and the International Tracing Instrument, but unevenly implemented.
- **Non-State Armed Group (NSAG):** An organised armed actor that is not part of, or acting on behalf of, a state's formal military or security forces, including insurgent groups, militias, and terrorist organisations, and that is, under most national and international frameworks, an unauthorised recipient of arms transfers by default.
- **Illicit Trade vs. Grey-Market Trade vs. Diversion:** Illicit trade refers broadly to any arms transfer conducted in violation of national or international law; grey-market trade specifically denotes illicit transfers that exploit or masquerade within the legal trade; diversion specifically denotes the redirection of arms from an authorised to an unauthorised recipient at any point in the supply chain, whether the original transfer was itself legal.
- **Straw Purchase:** The purchase of a firearm by an eligible buyer on behalf of, and for subsequent transfer to, an ineligible or undisclosed third party, typically used to describe high-volume, low-sophistication domestic retail diversion, as distinct from internationally brokered shipments.
- **Re-Export:** The transfer of previously imported arms from the importing state to a third state, generally requiring a fresh export authorisation from either the original exporting state (under re-export consent clauses) or the current possessor state; a frequent point of documentary evasion.
- **Open General Licence:** A standing, pre-authorised licence permitting the export of specified categories of goods to specified destinations without the need for a case-by-case individual licence application, streamlining legitimate trade but reducing per-shipment scrutiny.
- **Catch-All Control:** A regulatory mechanism empowering national authorities to require an export licence for an otherwise uncontrolled item where there is a known or suspected risk that the item will be used for a prohibited military, proliferation, or human-rights-violating end use, used to address gaps in fixed control lists.
- **Registered Agent / Nominee Director:** A person or firm, typically located in a secrecy jurisdiction, who is listed as a company's formal representative or director of record while exercising no actual control, used to obscure the identity of a shell company's true beneficial owner.
- **Group of Governmental Experts (GGE):** A body of technical and policy experts nominated by member states and convened under a General Assembly or First Committee mandate to study a specific arms-control issue and report recommendations, frequently used as a precursor step toward a binding instrument.
- **Universalisation:** In ATT and disarmament diplomacy, the diplomatic effort to expand the number of states that have signed, ratified, or acceded to a treaty, particularly targeting major producer and consumer states that remain outside its obligations.
- **Diversion Red Flags:** Indicators used by licensing authorities to identify higher-risk transactions warranting additional scrutiny, such as circuitous shipping routes, buyers unfamiliar with the technical specifications of the goods purchased, payment structured to avoid reporting thresholds, or newly incorporated purchasing entities with no trading history.
- **Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW):** As defined by the UN Panel of Governmental Experts (1997) and subsequent instruments, weapons designed for personal use (small arms, e.g., revolvers, rifles, sub-machine guns) or for use by several persons serving as a crew (light weapons, e.g., heavy machine guns, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft systems, mortars under 100mm calibre).

Section 6: Applicable Legal and Regulatory Framework

6.1 The Arms Trade Treaty (2013)

The ATT is the cornerstone binding instrument on this agenda. Its key provisions include:

- **Article 6 (Prohibitions):** States parties shall not authorise a transfer of conventional arms if it would violate their obligations under UN Security Council measures (including arms embargoes), other relevant international agreements, or if they have knowledge at the time of authorisation that the arms would be used to commit genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, attacks on civilian objects or protected persons, or other war crimes.
- **Article 7 (Export and Export Assessment):** Requires exporting states to assess the potential that arms could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law, undermine peace and security, or be used in acts of terrorism or transnational organised crime, and to assess the risk of diversion, before authorising an export.
- **Article 8 (Import):** Requires importing states to provide, upon request, appropriate and relevant information to assist the exporting state's risk assessment, including end-use or end-user documentation.
- **Article 9 (Transit and Trans-shipment):** Requires states through whose territory arms transit or are trans-shipped to regulate such movements in accordance with applicable international law, a provision widely regarded as among the weakest in the Treaty, given its lack of specific verification obligations.
- **Article 10 (Brokering):** Requires states parties to take measures to regulate brokering activity taking place under their jurisdiction, which may include requiring brokers to register or obtain written authorisation before engaging in brokering. This is the Treaty's principal, and, delegates should note, comparatively thin, provision directly addressing the agenda's central concern.
- **Article 11 (Diversion):** Requires states parties to take measures to prevent diversion, which may include examining the parties involved, requiring additional documentation, certificates, or assurances, and cooperating with other states to mitigate diversion risk. Encourages, but does not mandate, post-shipment verification.
- **Article 12 (Record Keeping) and Article 13 (Reporting):** Require states parties to maintain national records of authorised exports and to submit reports on authorised or actual exports and imports, though reporting is frequently incomplete, delayed, or omitted in practice, and the Treaty has no independent verification body.

Structural limitations: The ATT has no standing enforcement or verification body; it relies on self-reporting by states parties; it does not cover ammunition production equipment, many categories of dual-use components, or (explicitly) the full range of small arms accessories; its brokering and transit provisions use permissive ("may") rather than mandatory ("shall") language for key enforcement tools; and, most consequentially for this committee, three of the world's five largest arms exporters by SIPRI's 2021–2025 rankings, the United States (following its 2025 withdrawal), Russia, and China, are not bound by its obligations.

6.2 The UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA)

Agreed in 2001 and reviewed periodically at Biennial Meetings of States and Review Conferences, the UNPoA is a politically, not legally, binding framework committing states to: establish or strengthen national legislation regulating SALW manufacture, possession, and transfer; regulate arms brokers and brokering activity; improve stockpile management and security; mark weapons at manufacture and import for tracing purposes; strengthen international cooperation and information exchange; and support post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The 2005 International Tracing Instrument (ITI) supplements the UNPoA with more specific marking, record-keeping, and tracing-cooperation commitments. As a politically binding framework, the UNPoA has near-universal support but no compliance mechanism and no means of sanctioning non-implementation.

6.3 The UN Firearms Protocol (2001)

Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the "Palermo Convention"), the Firearms Protocol is legally binding on its states parties and requires the criminalisation of illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms, their parts, components, and ammunition; the marking of firearms at manufacture and import; the establishment of licensing or authorisation systems for import, export, and transit; and the regulation of brokers and brokering activities. Because it is a criminal-law instrument tied to organised-crime cooperation, the Protocol offers stronger law-enforcement and mutual-legal-assistance tools than the ATT, but has a narrower substantive scope (firearms only, not major conventional weapons systems).

6.4 The Wassenaar Arrangement (1996)

A voluntary, consensus-based export-control regime of 42 participating states (as of the 2025 Plenary) that maintains agreed control lists for conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, and requires participants to exchange information on transfers and licence denials involving states of concern. Wassenaar has no enforcement mechanism, no ability to compel or veto a member's export decision, and notably excludes China, Israel, and Belarus, three states central to this agenda, from membership, while including Russia, whose continued participation despite its own trafficking and embargo-evasion record has long been controversial within the regime.

6.5 The UN Register of Conventional Arms (1991)

A voluntary transparency mechanism under which states report annual imports and exports across eight categories of major conventional weapons (battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-calibre artillery, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles and missile launchers, and, since 2003, on an optional basis, small arms and light weapons). Reporting compliance has historically hovered at well under half of UN member states in any given year, and the Register captures neither brokering activity nor dual-use components.

6.6 UN Security Council Arms Embargoes and Panels of Experts

The Security Council maintains mandatory arms embargoes on a number of states and non-state armed groups (as of 2026, including embargoes related to Libya, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Yemen (Houthi-linked), and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, among others). Most sanctions regimes are supported by an independent Panel or Group of Experts mandated to investigate and report on violations, including diversion and brokering networks, but Panels have no enforcement or arrest powers, and their findings depend entirely on the Council's willingness to act on them, which is itself frequently constrained by P5 politics.

6.7 National Export Control Regimes

National systems vary enormously in stringency and enforcement capacity. The United States operates one of the most extensive dual regimes, the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), administered by the State Department for defence articles, and the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), administered by the Commerce Department for dual-use items, alongside extraterritorial enforcement tools such as the Arms Export Control Act. The European Union coordinates member-state export licensing through the EU Common Position on arms exports and the EU Dual-Use Regulation, most recently updated in 2025 to reflect Wassenaar, Missile Technology Control Regime, Australia Group, and Nuclear Suppliers Group list changes covering emerging technologies including quantum-computing components and additive-manufacturing (3D-printing) equipment. Many mid-sized and developing exporting and transit states, however, lack dedicated export-control legislation altogether, rely on customs officials with minimal specialised training, or maintain licensing systems that are formally robust but practically under-resourced.

6.8 Financial and Corporate Transparency Instruments

Because illicit brokering depends on corporate and financial opacity, several non-arms-specific instruments are directly relevant: the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) sets global standards on beneficial-ownership transparency and anti-money-laundering controls and grey-lists non-compliant jurisdictions; national beneficial-ownership registries (such as the U.S. Corporate Transparency Act, whose enforcement was substantially narrowed in 2025) determine how easily a broker can hide behind a shell company; and INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization provide operational platforms for cross-border law-enforcement and customs cooperation, including the INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System (iARMS) database for weapons tracing.

6.9 Regional Instruments

- **ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2006):** Binding on its West African member states, this Convention was the first regional instrument to establish a presumptive prohibition on SALW transfers, subject to narrow exemptions, and a regional exemption-request mechanism intended to make illicit diversion within the Sahel corridor easier to detect. Implementation has been severely weakened by political instability and several member states' withdrawal from ECOWAS since 2023.
- **EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP:** Establishes eight common criteria EU member states must apply when assessing arms export licence applications, including respect for human rights in the recipient country and the risk of diversion; enforcement remains a national competence, producing significant variation in practice among member states despite the common legal text.
- **Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms (CIFTA, 1997):** The Organization of American States' binding instrument on firearms trafficking, predating and structurally similar to the UN Firearms Protocol, but notably not ratified by the United States, a significant gap given the scale of the U.S.-to-Latin-America trafficking corridor described in Section 4.
- **Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (2000):** A politically binding African Union framework that has informed subsequent binding sub-regional instruments, including the ECOWAS Convention and the SADC Firearms Protocol covering Southern Africa.
- **Nairobi Protocol (2004):** Binding on Great Lakes and Horn of Africa states, requiring harmonised national legislation, marking, and stockpile-management standards, administered through the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA).

6.10 Adjacent Non-Proliferation Regimes

Delegates should be aware of, though this committee's mandate does not extend to, the adjacent regimes governing more specialised or strategic technology transfers: the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR, 1987) restricts the transfer of missile and unmanned delivery-system technology; the Australia Group coordinates export controls on chemical and biological weapons precursors; and the Nuclear Suppliers Group governs nuclear and nuclear-related dual-use exports. These regimes share the Wassenaar Arrangement's fundamental structural weakness, voluntary participation, consensus-based decision-making, and no binding enforcement mechanism, but are frequently cited by delegates as precedents (for better or worse) when debating whether a similarly structured regime could be extended or strengthened for conventional-arms brokering specifically.

6.11 The ATT Diversion Working Group

Recognising the comparative weakness of Articles 10 and 11, ATT States Parties have, through successive Conferences of States Parties, maintained a standing Working Group on Diversion within the Treaty's institutional architecture, tasked with developing voluntary guidance on risk indicators, reporting templates, and information-sharing practices. The Working Group's output remains non-binding and has faced persistent criticism from civil-society observers for its slow pace relative to the scale of documented diversion; it nonetheless represents the most active existing forum specifically focused on this committee's core agenda item, and delegates proposing new mechanisms should consider whether strengthening or formalising this existing body is more achievable than creating an entirely new one.

Section 7: Stakeholder Analysis

7.1 Major Legal Exporters

The United States, France, Russia, China, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Israel, Spain, and South Korea together account for roughly nine-tenths of the global arms trade by value. Their interests, while individually distinct, converge on resisting measures that would meaningfully constrain executive discretion over export licensing decisions, treat brokering regulation as a matter of national rather than international jurisdiction, and avoid the creation of any independent verification or investigative body with authority over national licensing decisions. The withdrawal of the United States from the ATT in April 2025 has emboldened this bloc's more sceptical members and given non-ATT exporters (China, Russia) additional room to argue that binding multilateral obligations are neither universal nor durable enough to justify further concessions of sovereignty.

7.2 Import-Dependent and Conflict-Affected States

States such as those in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and parts of the Middle East and Southeast Asia that are net recipients of both licit imports and illicit diversion have the strongest substantive interest in stronger end-use verification, mandatory post-shipment monitoring, and diversion-tracing cooperation, but frequently lack the technical and financial capacity to implement even existing commitments, and are wary of measures that could be used to justify supplier states unilaterally restricting their legitimate defence procurement on security-of-supply or human-rights grounds.

7.3 Transit, Trans-shipment, and Registry States

States offering flag-of-convenience shipping registries, permissive corporate incorporation regimes, or geographically convenient trans-shipment infrastructure face a structural tension between the revenue and economic activity these services generate and the reputational and diplomatic cost of being identified as an enabler of illicit brokering. Many resist being singled out in resolution language, preferring generic commitments to "international cooperation" over specific due-diligence or disclosure obligations targeted at their sectors.

7.4 Sanctioned and Pariah Suppliers

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, and (since 2022) Belarus operate substantially outside the legal international arms trade, relying on sanctions-evasion networks, barter arrangements, and non-recognition of embargoes to sustain both their own procurement and, in the case of the DPRK and Iran, arms exports to allied states and non-state proxies. These states have every incentive to resist any strengthening of enforcement architecture and will frame such proposals as politically motivated instruments of the states that sanction them.

7.5 Multilateral Regulation Champions

A cross-regional group of small and medium powers, including several Nordic and Western European states, Canada, Switzerland, several Latin American and African states, and civil-society-aligned diplomatic actors, has historically driven the ATT, UNPoA, and Firearms Protocol negotiations and continues to push for stronger verification, transparency, and victim-assistance provisions, often in coalition with UN agencies, the Small Arms Survey, and NGOs such as Control Arms and Amnesty International.

7.6 Individual State Spotlights

The bloc-level summaries above capture broad tendencies, but delegates representing the states below should note that each carries a distinct, specific negotiating posture shaped by its own recent history with this agenda.

United States

As the world's largest single arms exporter by a wide margin, and as the state whose April 2025 withdrawal from the ATT reopened the accountability gap at the centre of this committee's mandate, the U.S. delegation occupies the single most consequential seat in the room. Expect the U.S. to defend its withdrawal as a matter of restoring sovereign control over export decisions rather than as an abandonment of diversion-prevention principles, to point to its extensive domestic ITAR and EAR enforcement architecture as evidence that binding treaty membership is not a precondition for responsible export practice, and to resist any resolution language that could be read as implicitly criticising the withdrawal. At the same time, the 2025 narrowing of Corporate Transparency Act enforcement is a genuine point of vulnerability the U.S. delegation should expect to be pressed on repeatedly, particularly by Global South delegations citing the historical role of U.S.-registered shell companies in cases such as the Bout network.

Russian Federation

Russia's own extensive history of embargo evasion, most visibly through private military contractor networks operating across Africa, gives it little credible standing to lead on enforcement measures, and the delegation should expect this to be raised directly and often. Russia's most productive path is likely to be positioning itself as a defender of sovereign discretion over arms-export decisions generally, aligning procedurally with the United States and China against binding verification mechanisms while avoiding substantive engagement with specific diversion allegations.

People's Republic of China

China's rapid expansion as a small arms and drone exporter, particularly across Africa and South and Southeast Asia, has occurred almost entirely outside the Wassenaar Arrangement and the ATT, giving China both a genuine outsider's critique of Western-designed control regimes as unrepresentative, and a corresponding vulnerability, given China's own absence from the very transparency mechanisms it might otherwise be expected to champion. Delegates representing China should focus on capacity-building and non-binding cooperation framings that do not require formal accession to instruments China has consistently declined to join.

United Kingdom

The UK's 2026 domestic brokering prosecution gives its delegation an unusually strong, evidence-based platform to argue for binding brokering-registration requirements grounded in specific, prosecutable conduct rather than abstract principle. Expect the UK to lead technical drafting on Article 10 strengthening and to be a natural coalition partner for the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland.

France and Germany

Both maintain sophisticated, ATT-compliant export-licensing systems on paper, while facing sustained domestic civil-society criticism over specific exports to Gulf and Middle Eastern destinations later implicated in regional conflicts. Expect both delegations to support incremental ATT-strengthening language while resisting any mechanism that would subject their own past licensing decisions to independent international review.

United Arab Emirates

Named repeatedly in UN Panel of Experts reporting as a re-export and transit node for materiel reaching Libya and Sudan despite denials, the UAE delegation faces the delicate task of defending its role as a legitimate regional logistics hub while deflecting specific diversion allegations. Expect the UAE to favour capacity-building and technical-assistance framings over binding transit-verification obligations, and to resist any resolution clause naming specific transit jurisdictions.

Serbia

As one of the fastest-growing ammunition and small-arms exporters in Europe, with well-documented cases of onward diversion to Middle Eastern conflict zones via third-country triangulation, Serbia's delegation is likely to insist that its exports are fully licensed and legal at the point of departure, placing responsibility for onward diversion on the buyers and intermediary states rather than on Serbian licensing practice itself, a legally defensible but diplomatically contested position that will draw sustained challenge from Global South delegations.

Panama and the Marshall Islands

As the two largest open ship registries in the world, both delegations face pressure over the historical use of flag-of-convenience vessels in maritime arms-smuggling interdictions. Expect both to defend registry openness as a legitimate, sovereign revenue-generating model, to resist mandatory beneficial-ownership verification as commercially damaging and likely to simply redirect registrants toward less-cooperative alternative registries, and to seek technical-assistance and phased-implementation language rather than immediate binding obligations.

Nigeria, Mexico, and Colombia

These three states anchor the Global South accountability push from three different corridors, West African Sahel-adjacent trafficking, the U.S.-Mexico south-bound firearms corridor, and Latin American organised-crime trafficking respectively, and are likely to find substantial common ground in demanding supplier-side accountability, marking and tracing capacity funding, and stronger cross-border tracing cooperation, even though the specific trafficking patterns each faces are structurally distinct.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran

Both delegations should be expected to reject the legitimacy of the sanctions regimes constraining them, to frame their own arms transfers, including the DPRK's documented transfers to Russia, as legitimate sovereign bilateral cooperation outside UN Charter Chapter VII jurisdiction where no binding embargo applies to the specific transaction, and to resist any strengthening of Panel of Experts resourcing or mandate.

Section 8: Country Matrix

The following matrix summarises the structural role, primary interests, position, and likely coalition partners for all 48 participating states in this committee. Delegates should treat "position" as a starting point for research, not a substitute for it, real state positions on brokering-specific measures are frequently more granular, and more negotiable, than a state's headline posture on arms control generally.

Country	Bloc / Structural Role	Primary Role / Interest	Position	Likely Partners
United States	Major Exporter (Non-ATT)	World's largest arms exporter (42% of global exports, 2021-25); withdrew from ATT April 2025	Defends sovereign licensing discretion; favours bilateral end-use monitoring over multilateral verification; wary of any body reviewing US export decisions	UK, Israel, South Korea, Gulf states
Russian Federation	Major Exporter (Non-ATT)	Major legacy exporter; extensive history of embargo evasion and proxy brokering (Wagner/Africa Corps networks)	Rejects Western-led transparency initiatives as politicised; defends arms exports to Global South partners as sovereign right; opposes new binding verification bodies	China, Belarus, Iran, North Korea
China	Major Exporter (Non-ATT, Non-Wassenaar)	Rapidly growing exporter, especially drones and light weapons to Africa/Asia; not party to ATT or Wassenaar	Frames Western export-control regimes as protectionist; supports UNPoA-style non-binding cooperation; resists beneficial-ownership disclosure mandates	Russia, Pakistan, Global South importers
France	Major Exporter (ATT)	World's 2nd-largest exporter; ATT depositary-region leader	Supports ATT universalisation and brokering regulation; defends strategic export relationships (India, Egypt, Gulf); resists independent verification of licensing decisions	Germany, UK, EU states
United Kingdom	Major Exporter (ATT); 2026 broker-prosecution precedent	Major exporter with a recent high-profile domestic brokering prosecution	Advocates strengthened brokering-registration requirements based on its own enforcement experience; promotes 5-year ATT revitalisation strategy	France, EU states, Canada
Germany	Major Exporter (ATT)	World's 4th-largest exporter; historically strict (if inconsistently applied) end-use rules	Strong rhetorical support for tighter EU-wide dual-use and brokering controls; domestic political pressure over exports to conflict zones	France, Netherlands, Nordic states
Italy	Major Exporter (ATT)	6th-largest global exporter; rapidly rising export share	Balances defence-industrial growth with ATT compliance rhetoric; historic scrutiny over exports transiting to embargoed destinations	Spain, France
Spain	Major Exporter (ATT)	Rising mid-tier exporter (+29% export growth)	Supports EU-coordinated export control harmonisation; sensitive to human-rights conditionality debates	Italy, Germany
Israel	Major Exporter (Non-Wassenaar, ATT non-signatory)	Top-10 exporter, especially drones, precision-guided munitions, cyber/surveillance tech	Resists external oversight of security-related exports; defends bilateral end-user vetting as sufficient; opposes broad dual-use definitions capturing its tech sector	United States, India, select Gulf/Abraham Accords states
Republic of Korea	Major Exporter (ATT, Wassenaar)	Fast-growing top-10 exporter (Europe rearmament driven)	Supports rules-based export order; seeks to protect newly won market share from over-regulation	United States, Poland, EU states
Ukraine	Major Importer / Wartime Grey-Zone Risk	World's largest single arms importer 2021-25; wartime influx raises major diversion-risk concerns	Seeks continued Western supply while defending its own end-use controls against diversion allegations; supports post-war weapons accountability mechanisms	United States, Poland, EU/NATO states
Turkey	Exporter, Transit State, Wassenaar member	Significant mid-tier arms and drone exporter; historically used as a transit route into Syria/Libya theatres	Balances NATO-aligned export posture with independent regional arms-transfer relationships; resists intrusive transit-verification obligations	Azerbaijan, Gulf states, Pakistan

Country	Bloc / Structural Role	Primary Role / Interest	Position	Likely Partners
Netherlands	Regulation-Forward Exporter (ATT, Wassenaar)	Mid-tier exporter; strong domestic dual-use enforcement culture	Champions binding brokering registration and beneficial-ownership transparency; active in EU dual-use list updates	Germany, Nordic states, Switzerland
Sweden	Regulation-Forward Exporter (ATT, Wassenaar)	Mid-tier exporter with historically strict human-rights export criteria	Advocates strong Article 7 risk-assessment standards and civil-society consultation in licensing	Netherlands, Norway, Finland
Czech Republic	Mid-Tier Exporter / Former Transit Hotspot (ATT)	Historic post-Soviet surplus stockpile exporter; past diversion controversies	Supports EU harmonisation while defending its defence-export sector's competitiveness	Slovakia, Bulgaria, Serbia
Bulgaria	Mid-Tier Exporter / Legacy Diversion Concern (ATT)	Major exporter of Soviet-legacy-pattern ammunition and small arms, some diverted into Middle Eastern conflict zones	Defends legality of its licensed exports; supports (cautiously) enhanced end-use monitoring to rebut diversion allegations	Serbia, Czech Republic, Romania
Serbia	Mid-Tier Exporter / Balkans Diversion Corridor (Non-ATT)	Rapidly growing arms exporter; repeatedly implicated in onward diversion to Middle Eastern conflicts via third-country triangulation	Resists binding EU-style controls as sovereignty infringement; frames itself as a legal exporter not responsible for buyers' onward re-export	Russia, Gulf intermediary states
Brazil	Regional Exporter / Importer (ATT)	Latin America's leading arms producer; also a major destination for illicitly diverted small arms (cartel/criminal markets)	Advocates stronger controls on illicit trafficking into criminal markets; supports UNPoA and Firearms Protocol implementation funding	Colombia, Mexico, regional Latin American states
Saudi Arabia	Major Importer (ATT signatory, not ratified)	World's largest single arms importer (9%+ of global imports)	Defends unrestricted procurement as a sovereign security necessity amid regional threats; resists human-rights-based export conditionality	UAE, Qatar, United States
United Arab Emirates	Major Importer / Re-Export & Transit Concern (ATT)	Top-10 importer; repeatedly named in UN Panel of Experts reports as a transit/re-export node for diverted weapons into Libya, Sudan, and other embargoed destinations	Denies facilitating onward diversion; frames itself as a legitimate regional logistics and re-export hub requiring capacity support rather than sanction	Saudi Arabia, United States, France
Qatar	Major Importer (ATT)	Significant importer; regional mediator role	Supports dialogue-based approaches; sensitive to being associated with regional proxy-arming allegations	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey
Egypt	Major Importer / Historic Diversion Destination (ATT)	Top-10 importer; historically named in Sudan and Libya-related arms-flow reporting	Defends sovereign procurement rights; supports regional (African Union / Arab League) rather than externally imposed monitoring mechanisms	Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Gulf states
Pakistan	Major Importer / Regional Exporter (ATT non-signatory)	Significant importer and small-arms producer with informal cross-border trafficking concerns (Afghanistan border region)	Frames illicit trafficking as primarily a regional/Afghan-border enforcement issue; wary of India-aligned initiatives	China, Turkey
India	Major Importer / Rising Exporter (ATT non-signatory)	World's 2nd-largest importer; growing indigenous defence-export ambitions; Wassenaar chair (2023)	Supports transparency initiatives in principle; defends its own non-ATT status as consistent with sovereign strategic autonomy; wary of measures that could constrain its expanding export ambitions	France, Russia, United States (diversified supply)
Poland	Major Importer (ATT)	One of Europe's three largest importers amid rearmament	Strongly supports tightened Belarus/Russia-adjacent transit and diversion controls; advocates robust Eastern-flank end-use verification	Ukraine, Baltic states, United States
Japan	Major Importer / Cautious Exporter (ATT, Wassenaar)	Significant importer; recently eased self-imposed export restrictions	Champions strict ATT implementation and Indo-Pacific transparency; supports capacity-building for Southeast Asian partners	United States, Australia, South Korea
Australia	Importer / Regional Capacity-Builder (ATT, Wassenaar)	Advocates Indo-Pacific regional arms-control capacity building and Pacific Islands brokering-loophole closure	Strong ATT and UNPoA supporter; funds regional customs and marking/tracing capacity programmes	Japan, New Zealand, Pacific Island states

Country	Bloc / Structural Role	Primary Role / Interest	Position	Likely Partners
Panama	Flag-of-Convenience / Offshore Registry Hub	One of the world's largest ship-registry states; historically linked to flagged vessels used in arms-smuggling interdictions	Defends registry revenue and sovereign right to regulate its own shipping registry; resists mandatory beneficial-ownership disclosure for registered vessels	Marshall Islands, Liberia (observer interests), Panama Canal stakeholders
Cyprus	Offshore Financial/Corporate Hub, EU Member (ATT)	EU member with historic scrutiny over shell-company and offshore-finance use in sanctions-evasion cases	Balances EU-level transparency obligations against domestic offshore-services sector interests; supports FATF-aligned reform rhetorically	EU states, Malta
Malta	Offshore Corporate/Flag Registry Hub, EU Member (ATT)	EU flag registry with beneficial-ownership transparency concerns raised by FATF and EU partners	Publicly supports EU dual-use and beneficial-ownership frameworks while defending its registry's competitiveness	Cyprus, other EU registry states
Marshall Islands	Flag-of-Convenience Registry Hub	One of the largest open ship registries globally; minimal beneficial-ownership verification	Frames registry openness as a legitimate sovereign revenue model; resists new mandatory vetting requirements as commercially damaging	Panama, Liberia (observer interests)
Republic of Moldova	Transit / Border-Vulnerability State (ATT)	Small state bordering conflict-affected Transnistria; historic concern as a Balkans/Black Sea trafficking transit route	Strongly supports EU-backed border and customs capacity-building; advocates enhanced regional information-sharing	Ukraine, Romania, EU states
Libya	Fragmented State / UN-Embargoed Destination	Subject to a UN Security Council arms embargo since 2011; a primary global destination and onward-trafficking hub for diverted weapons since the 2011 conflict	Government of National Unity delegation calls for embargo enforcement against rival factions while defending its own procurement needs; deep contestation over legitimate representation	Egypt, Turkey (rival factional patrons), UN Support Mission in Libya
Sudan	Conflict State / UN-Embargoed Region (Darfur)	Ongoing civil war since 2023; subject to a partial (Darfur-region) UN arms embargo; major documented diversion destination	Contested representation amid civil war; competing factions blame external states (including neighbours and Gulf actors) for embargo violations	Egypt, African Union
Yemen	Conflict State / UN-Embargoed (Houthi-linked)	Subject to a UN Security Council embargo on Houthi forces; documented Iranian arms-smuggling routes via small-boat trafficking	Internationally recognised government delegation calls for stronger maritime interdiction; disputes over legitimate representation given ongoing civil conflict	Saudi Arabia, UAE
Syria	Post-Conflict Transitional State	Post-2024 transitional context; historically both a recipient of illicit external arms flows and a major source of black-market weapons circulating regionally	Transitional government seeks international support for stockpile security and demobilisation; wary of measures that could be read as continued isolation	Turkey, Gulf states, UN agencies
Somalia	Conflict State / Partial UN Embargo	Longstanding partial arms embargo (progressively eased for government forces); weapons diversion to Al-Shabaab a persistent concern	Government delegation supports continued embargo easing paired with stronger federal stockpile-management capacity support	African Union, Kenya, Ethiopia
Mali	Conflict State / Sahel Diversion Corridor	Central node in Sahel weapons-trafficking routes linked to jihadist and separatist armed groups	Emphasises Sahel-wide regional cooperation and criticises perceived great-power indifference to trafficking fuelling regional instability	Niger, Burkina Faso, African Union
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Conflict State / UN Group of Experts Focus	Long-running UN Group of Experts reporting on regional arms flows to non-state armed groups in the eastern DRC	Calls for stronger regional (Great Lakes) end-use verification and sanctions enforcement against named diversion networks	African Union, Southern African Development Community states
Myanmar	Conflict State / UN Embargo Recommendation (Non-Wassenaar)	Subject to General Assembly calls for an arms embargo amid ongoing civil conflict; documented illicit small-arms manufacturing and cross-border trafficking	Military authorities reject international oversight as interference in internal affairs; opposition/ethnic-resistance delegations (where recognised) call for embargo enforcement	China, Russia (defends against embargo calls)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Sanctioned Pariah Supplier (ATT: voted against)	Subject to comprehensive UN Security Council sanctions including an arms embargo; documented arms exports to Russia and historically to Iran/Syria via illicit networks	Rejects Council sanctions regime as illegitimate; frames its own arms transfers as sovereign bilateral cooperation outside UN jurisdiction	Russia (arms-for-technology arrangements)

Country	Bloc / Structural Role	Primary Role / Interest	Position	Likely Partners
Iran	Sanctioned Pariah Supplier (ATT: voted against)	Subject to targeted arms-related sanctions; documented supplier of drones and light weapons to regional proxies and (reportedly) Russia	Rejects sanctions regime as unilateral coercion; defends transfers to allied states/groups as legitimate sovereign cooperation	Russia, Syria (historic), regional proxy networks
Belarus	Sanctioned Supplier / Transit State	Subject to EU/US sanctions since 2022; alleged transit and re-export role for Russia-bound and Russia-origin materiel; not a Wassenaar member	Rejects Western sanctions as politically motivated; aligns closely with Russian positions on all agenda items	Russia
Switzerland	Regulation Champion / Neutral Diplomatic Hub (ATT, Wassenaar)	Host state for major disarmament diplomacy (Geneva); mid-tier exporter with strict domestic war-material export law	Advocates strengthened ATT universalisation, hosts Small Arms Survey; balances neutrality with support for binding verification tools	Nordic states, Netherlands, Austria
South Africa	Regulation Champion / Regional Exporter (ATT)	Continental leader in small-arms-control diplomacy; mid-tier regional exporter	Strong advocate for African Union-coordinated small-arms control, UNPoA implementation funding, and Global South-led (not externally imposed) verification frameworks	Nigeria, Kenya, African Union bloc
Nigeria	Importer / Regional Diversion Destination (ATT)	West Africa's largest state; major destination for trafficked small arms fuelling internal insurgencies (Boko Haram, banditry)	Leading advocate for ECOWAS-aligned regional trafficking controls and stronger marking/tracing cooperation with supplier states	South Africa, ECOWAS member states
Mexico	Importer / Illicit Trafficking Destination (ATT)	Major destination for illicitly trafficked firearms from the United States fuelling cartel violence, a signature south-bound trafficking corridor distinct from the conflict-zone pattern elsewhere on the agenda	Strong advocate for binding U.S. dealer- and gun-show-level export accountability and cross-border tracing cooperation; has pursued litigation against U.S. manufacturers	Colombia, Latin American bloc, Caribbean states
Colombia	Importer / Regional Trafficking Concern (ATT)	Historic destination for trafficked weapons linked to non-state armed groups and organised crime	Supports UNPoA and Firearms Protocol implementation funding; favours regional Latin American tracing cooperation frameworks	Mexico, Brazil, regional bloc

Section 9: Bloc Analysis

9.1 The Major Exporter Bloc

United States, Russia, China, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain, Israel, Republic of Korea.

This bloc collectively accounts for the overwhelming majority of the global licit arms trade and holds the greatest capacity, and the greatest reluctance, to accept binding brokering, verification, or transit obligations. It is internally divided between ATT states parties who favour incremental strengthening of the existing Treaty framework (France, UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, South Korea) and non-parties who prefer voluntary, non-binding cooperation (United States, Russia, China, Israel). The bloc's common ground lies in resisting any independent international verification body with authority to review individual national licensing decisions, and in favouring capacity-building and information-sharing language over binding disclosure mandates.

- **Likely working paper priorities:** Voluntary information-sharing on licence denials; expanded technical assistance funding for lower-capacity states (a low-cost concession that shifts attention away from exporter obligations); reaffirmation of sovereign licensing discretion.
- **Internal fault lines:** ATT parties within the bloc face pressure from civil society and Global South delegations to distance themselves from non-party exporters, creating an opening for delegates to peel off individual states, particularly the UK, Germany, and South Korea, on specific brokering-registration language even where the bloc resists collectively.
- **Red lines:** No independent international body with authority to review or veto a national export licensing decision; no mandatory, non-consensual on-site end-use verification.

9.2 The Demand-Side Importer Bloc

Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Poland, Japan, Australia, Ukraine.

A large and heterogeneous bloc united mainly by dependence on secure, unimpeded access to imports. Gulf importers strongly resist human-rights-based export conditionality; European frontline importers (Poland, Ukraine) push hard for tightened transit and diversion controls on their eastern flank; Indo-Pacific importers (Japan, Australia, India) balance importer interests against India's and (increasingly) Japan's own rising export ambitions. This bloc is unlikely to act as a unified negotiating coalition and is best understood as several overlapping sub-regional interest groups.

- **Likely working paper priorities:** Protection of legitimate defence procurement from being caught in broader trafficking-prevention measures; regional capacity-building funding; in the case of Poland and Ukraine, specific Eastern European transit and diversion-monitoring language.
- **Internal fault lines:** Gulf states' resistance to human-rights conditionality sits uneasily with India's and Japan's public support for ATT-aligned risk assessment, limiting the bloc's ability to negotiate as a single voting bloc on contested clauses.

9.3 The Grey-Zone Enabler Bloc

Panama, Cyprus, Malta, Marshall Islands, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, UAE, Moldova.

States whose registries, corporate-incorporation regimes, or geographic position have made them recurrent (if often unwilling or contested) nodes in documented diversion and triangulation cases. This bloc is the most defensive in committee, typically resisting language that names specific jurisdictions or sectors, and preferring generic capacity-building commitments over binding due-diligence, beneficial-ownership, or vessel-registry reform obligations. It is also, not coincidentally, the bloc whose cooperation is most necessary for any resolution to have practical effect.

- **Likely working paper priorities:** Phased, technically assisted implementation timelines for any new disclosure obligations; language emphasising registry sovereignty and commercial competitiveness; avoidance of jurisdiction-specific naming.
- **Compromise space:** This bloc is the most likely to accept binding obligations if paired with real technical and financial assistance for implementation, and if any new standards are set at the level of an existing technical body (the IMO, FATF) rather than through a bespoke new enforcement mechanism perceived as politically targeted.

9.4 The Conflict-Affected and Embargoed Destination Bloc

Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar.

States and contested governments that are the ultimate destination of large volumes of diverted and illicitly brokered weapons, several under active or recommended UN arms embargoes. This bloc has the strongest moral claim to speak on the agenda's human cost but the weakest formal leverage, is frequently divided over questions of legitimate representation, and depends heavily on how larger blocs and the Security Council choose to act on Panel of Experts findings.

- **Likely working paper priorities:** Stronger, better-resourced Panel of Experts mandates; direct linkage between diversion findings and supplier-state accountability; stockpile-security and demobilisation funding.
- **Internal fault lines:** Contested representation (particularly for Libya, Syria, and Myanmar) may complicate this bloc's ability to speak with a single voice, and delegates should research carefully which government or faction their assigned state's delegation is understood to represent in this simulation.

9.5 The Sanctioned Pariah Supplier Bloc

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Belarus.

A small, tightly aligned bloc that operates substantially outside the legal international arms-control architecture and has the strongest incentive of any bloc to see this committee fail to produce meaningful new enforcement tools. Likely to act as spoilers, procedurally and substantively, and to align rhetorically (though not always substantively) with Russia and China on sovereignty-based objections to new binding mechanisms.

- **Likely tactics:** Procedural delay; amendments designed to dilute operative language; rhetorical emphasis on the selective and politicised character of existing sanctions regimes.

9.6 The Multilateral Regulation Champions Bloc

Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, Nigeria, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Canada-aligned Pacific partners (Japan, Australia).

The bloc most likely to author ambitious working papers, push for binding brokering-registration and beneficial-ownership disclosure language, and seek Global-South-led (rather than externally imposed) verification and capacity-building architecture. Internally divided between European regulation champions focused on tightening the ATT/EU framework and Global South champions focused on trafficking-destination concerns (Nigeria, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, South Africa) who prioritise supplier-side accountability and marking and tracing capacity funding over further obligations on importing states.

- **Likely working paper priorities:** Binding brokering registration; mandatory beneficial-ownership disclosure tied to FATF standards; strengthened, better-resourced Panel of Experts mandates; dedicated technical-assistance funding mechanisms.
- **Strategic value:** This bloc is the most natural author of the committee's most ambitious working paper, but will need votes from at least part of the Demand-Side Importer Bloc and, ideally, individual defectors from the Major Exporter Bloc (see the UK spotlight in Section 7.6) to have any realistic path to adoption.

Section 10: Areas of Debate and Possible Solutions

9.1 Should Arms Brokers Be Subject to Mandatory International Registration?

In favour: Article 10 of the ATT already permits, but does not require, national brokering-registration regimes; only a binding, harmonised, mutually-recognised registration and licensing requirement, closing the gap under which a broker denied a licence in one jurisdiction can simply relocate to another, would meaningfully raise the cost of brokering illicit deals.

Against: Major exporters argue that brokering regulation is inherently a matter of domestic commercial and criminal law; a harmonised international registry raises sovereignty concerns, would be difficult to enforce against brokers operating from non-cooperative jurisdictions, and risks capturing legitimate defence-industry intermediaries in an overly broad net.

9.2 Should Beneficial-Ownership Disclosure Be Mandatory for Any Company Involved in an Arms Transaction?

In favour: Nearly every major illicit brokering case examined in Section 3, the Bout network, the 2009 North Korea-Iran shipment, ongoing corruption-fuelled diversion, depended on corporate anonymity. Mandatory, verifiable beneficial-ownership disclosure, tied to arms-export and brokering licensing, would close the single most exploited structural gap in the current system.

Against: Offshore financial and registry states argue that beneficial-ownership mandates threaten legitimate commercial confidentiality and competitiveness, and that verification would be effectively unenforceable without matching commitments from major economies, a pointed reference to the 2025 rollback of U.S. Corporate Transparency Act enforcement.

9.3 Should the Arms Trade Treaty Be Strengthened, or Should Efforts Focus on the UNPoA and Firearms Protocol Instead?

In favour of strengthening the ATT: The ATT is the only binding, comprehensive instrument covering major conventional arms; abandoning it in favour of politically-binding frameworks would formalise the erosion accelerated by the 2025 U.S. withdrawal and reward non-participation.

In favour of prioritising the UNPoA/Firearms Protocol track: These instruments already enjoy near-universal or wide binding participation (including many non-ATT states); focusing political capital on strengthening implementation and funding of existing near-universal frameworks may achieve more real-world diversion prevention than pursuing further ATT ratification from states that have already declined to join or have withdrawn.

9.4 Should Post-Shipment End-Use Verification Be Made Mandatory?

In favour: Voluntary end-use monitoring has repeatedly failed to detect diversion until weapons surface in a conflict zone or crime scene years later; mandatory, risk-based, periodic verification (potentially resourced through international technical assistance for lower-capacity importing states) would create a meaningful deterrent and early-warning function.

Against: Importing states, including major, legitimate defence purchasers such as Gulf states and India, regard mandatory foreign verification visits to their own territory and military facilities as an infringement on sovereignty and operational security, and fear such mechanisms could be selectively applied for geopolitical leverage.

9.5 How Should the Committee Treat Dual-Use Components and Emerging Technologies?

In favour of expanded coverage: Modern conflicts increasingly depend on commercially-sourced drone components, semiconductors, and additive-manufacturing equipment that fall outside traditional "finished weapon" control categories; failing to address this gap will make any brokering agreement obsolete within years.

Against expanded coverage: Overly broad dual-use definitions risk capturing enormous volumes of legitimate civilian and commercial trade, imposing compliance burdens disproportionate to the actual diversion risk, and disadvantaging the substantial civilian technology sectors of major economies.

9.6 What Role Should Flag Registries and Shipping States Play?

In favour of reform: Flag-of-convenience registries have repeatedly been implicated in maritime arms-smuggling interdictions; requiring minimum beneficial-ownership verification and cargo-manifest audit standards as a condition of registry recognition (potentially through the International Maritime Organization) would close a major enforcement gap.

Against: Registry states depend heavily on registration revenue and warn that unilaterally imposed verification standards, without corresponding support for the administrative capacity to implement them, would simply push registrants toward even less-regulated alternative registries rather than solve the underlying problem.

9.7 Can the Security Council's Embargo and Panel-of-Experts System Be Made More Effective Without Council Reform?

In favour: Even without Council reform, strengthening the mandate, resourcing, and inter-agency data access of existing Panels of Experts, and creating a standing (rather than case-by-case) capacity for cross-referencing brokering, shipping, and financial data across sanctions regimes, could substantially improve detection without requiring new binding authority.

Against: Panel findings currently depend entirely on P5 willingness to renew mandates and act on recommendations; without addressing that underlying political constraint, technical strengthening of the Panels may improve information without improving outcomes.

9.8 Should Regional Organisations or Universal UN Mechanisms Take the Lead on Corridor-Specific Enforcement?

In favour of regional leadership: Regional bodies such as ECOWAS, the African Union, and the Organization of American States have closer operational knowledge of specific trafficking corridors, faster decision-making cycles than the UN system, and, in several cases, existing binding instruments (the ECOWAS Convention, CIFTA) that a universal mechanism would simply duplicate.

In favour of universal leadership: Regional instruments have historically suffered from weak implementation, precisely because they lack the political weight and funding access of universal UN mechanisms; a universal framework can also address corridors, such as the Balkans-to-Middle East pipeline, that cross multiple regional organisations' jurisdiction.

9.9 How Should the Committee Address Domestic Retail-Level Diversion Alongside International Brokering?

In favour of a unified framework: Both the Central American straw-purchase corridor and internationally brokered conflict-zone shipments are, at bottom, instances of arms reaching unauthorised end users through exploitation of documentation and verification gaps; a single resolution addressing "diversion" broadly can capture both.

In favour of separate treatment: The policy tools that address high-volume, low-sophistication domestic retail diversion (point-of-sale record-keeping, straw-purchase criminalisation, cross-border tracing cooperation) are substantially different from those addressing internationally brokered shipments (beneficial ownership, flag registries, end-user certification), and conflating the two risks producing a resolution that is too diffuse to be operationally useful for either problem.

9.10 What Weight Should Be Given to Industry Self-Regulation and Corporate Due Diligence?

In favour: Major defence manufacturers and freight and logistics firms possess supply-chain visibility that governments often lack; voluntary or incentivised corporate due-diligence standards, modelled on conflict-minerals supply-chain frameworks in other sectors, could complement state-level controls at comparatively low cost.

Against: Defence-industry self-regulation has a poor track record of independent verification in other sectors, and critics argue that without binding, externally audited standards, corporate due-diligence commitments function primarily as reputational cover rather than substantive diversion prevention.

Section 11: Questions a Resolution Must Address (QARMAs)

The following questions should guide delegates in the drafting of working papers and resolutions. Each identifies a substantive issue the committee must confront.

1. Should arms brokers be subject to a binding, internationally harmonised registration and licensing requirement, and if so, which body should maintain and cross-check such a registry?

2. Should beneficial-ownership disclosure be made a mandatory precondition for any entity participating in an international arms transaction, and how should such disclosure be verified across jurisdictions with differing corporate transparency laws?

3. Should the Arms Trade Treaty's Article 10 (Brokering) and Article 11 (Diversion) provisions be strengthened from permissive ("may") to mandatory ("shall") language, and what would be required to bring major non-parties into a strengthened framework rather than driving further withdrawals?

4. What obligations, if any, should be placed on flag-of-convenience shipping registries and their international recognition (including through the International Maritime Organization) to prevent their use in maritime arms smuggling?

5. Should post-shipment end-use verification be made mandatory for higher-risk transfers, and how can such verification be designed to respect legitimate sovereignty and operational-security concerns of importing states?

6. How should the international community regulate the export and re-export of dual-use components, including drone parts, semiconductors, and additive-manufacturing equipment, that fall outside traditional major-conventional-arms control categories?

7. What mechanisms can be established to improve information-sharing and joint investigation capacity among exporting-state licensing authorities, transit-state customs agencies, flag-state registries, and financial intelligence units, given that no single body currently has visibility across an entire illicit transaction?

8. How should the international community respond to the withdrawal of a major arms exporter from the Arms Trade Treaty, both in terms of preserving the Treaty's remaining normative force and in terms of closing the specific accountability gap the withdrawal reopens?

9. What capacity-building and technical-assistance mechanisms are needed to bring lower-capacity importing, transit, and registry states into compliance with existing marking, tracing, and end-use verification commitments, and how should such assistance be funded?

10. Should the mandate, resourcing, and data-sharing authority of UN Security Council Panels of Experts on arms-embargo violations be strengthened, and if so, how, given that their ultimate effectiveness still depends on Council willingness to act on their findings?

11. What role should regional organisations (the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, the Organization of American States, ASEAN) play relative to universal UN mechanisms in addressing region-specific trafficking corridors?

12. How should the committee balance the legitimate commercial and strategic interests of major arms-exporting states against the need for meaningful transparency and accountability mechanisms that those same states have historically resisted?

13. What accountability or remedial mechanisms, if any, should exist for states, companies, or individual brokers found to have facilitated diversion to embargoed destinations or non-state armed groups, and which body should have jurisdiction to pursue them?

14. How should the resolution address the distinction between conflict-zone diversion (arming non-state armed groups and embargoed states) and criminal-market trafficking (arming cartels and organised crime), which involve overlapping but distinct supply chains, actors, and policy tools?

15. What role, if any, should defence-industry and freight-and-logistics-sector due diligence and self-regulation play alongside state-level controls, and how could such commitments be made verifiable rather than purely reputational?

16. How should existing regional instruments (the ECOWAS Convention, CIFTA, the Nairobi Protocol, the EU Common Position) be reconciled with, or incorporated into, any new universal framework, to avoid duplication while preserving their comparative operational advantages?

17. Should a resolution distinguish explicitly between corridor-specific mechanisms (addressing, for example, maritime flag-registry standards relevant to the Red Sea and Balkans corridors) and universal cross-cutting mechanisms (beneficial ownership, brokering registration), and if so, how should corridor-specific language be selected and justified?

18. What financial or technical incentives could be offered to grey-zone enabler states (flag registries, offshore corporate hubs) to secure their cooperation with new transparency obligations, given that punitive or naming-and-shaming approaches have had limited success to date?

Section 12: Committee Mechanics and Research Guidance

11.1 Procedure

This committee follows standard General Assembly First Committee procedure: formal debate with a speakers' list, moderated and unmoderated caucuses, and the drafting of working papers that may be developed into draft resolutions requiring the requisite signatory and voting thresholds set by the Dais at the start of committee. As a First Committee simulation, there is no veto; substantive resolutions pass by simple or two-thirds majority as specified in the rules of procedure distributed separately. Delegates should nonetheless research their state's real voting record on relevant instruments (the 2013 ATT adoption vote, UNPoA Review Conference outcomes, and relevant Firearms Protocol ratification status) as a starting point for their expected position.

11.2 Working Paper and Resolution Expectations

Given the technical density of this agenda, delegates are expected to engage with specific mechanisms, registration thresholds, verification triggers, reporting timelines, capacity-building funding sources, rather than restating general condemnations of illicit arms trafficking. Blocs are strongly encouraged to specify: which existing instrument(s) a proposal builds on or amends; which body would be responsible for implementation, monitoring, or enforcement; how compliance would be verified; and how lower-capacity states would be supported in meeting any new obligations.

11.3 Dais Updates

Given the non-crisis, policy-drafting character of this committee, delegates should expect the bulk of committee time to be spent in caucus and resolution drafting rather than crisis-style directives. The Dais may, at its discretion, introduce press releases or brief updates (for example, a newly reported diversion case, a new national ratification, or a relevant Security Council development) to sharpen debate; these should be treated as prompts for sharper drafting, not as invitations to depart from realistic policy tools.

11.4 Research Priorities

- Your state's ATT, UNPoA, Firearms Protocol, and Wassenaar Arrangement membership status and its stated reasons for that status.
- Your state's role in the global arms trade as reported by SIPRI (exporter/importer ranking and volume) and by UN Panels of Experts (if named in any embargo-violation or diversion reporting).
- Any documented brokering, diversion, or export-control enforcement cases involving your state's nationals, companies, registries, or territory.
- Your state's domestic export-control, brokering-registration, and beneficial-ownership disclosure legislation, if any.
- Your state's position, and voting record where available, in the most recent ATT Conference of States Parties, UNPoA Biennial Meeting/Review Conference, or relevant Security Council sanctions committee.
- Any regional instrument (ECOWAS Convention, CIFTA, Nairobi Protocol, EU Common Position, SADC Firearms Protocol) binding on your state, and how it interacts with the universal instruments discussed in Section 6.

11.5 Position Papers

Delegates are expected to submit a position paper of approximately two pages addressing: their state's national interest and historical role (as exporter, importer, transit state, registry jurisdiction, or destination) in the global arms trade; their state's position on the core QARMAs identified in Section 10; and at least two specific, concrete policy mechanisms their delegation intends to propose or support. Position papers that restate the agenda description without engaging the state-specific research priorities above will not adequately prepare delegates for substantive caucusing.

11.6 Suggested Bloc-Formation Timeline

- Opening speeches and general statements of position (Session 1).
- Moderated caucuses on discrete QARMA clusters, brokering regulation, beneficial ownership, transit and flag registries, verification mechanisms (Session 1 to 2).
- Bloc formation and unmoderated caucusing toward working papers (Session 2).
- Working paper introduction and cross-bloc negotiation, including amendment sponsorship (Session 2 to 3).
- Draft resolution introduction, clause-by-clause debate, and voting (Session 3).

Section 13: Sample Resolution Framework

The following partial draft illustrates appropriate structure and the range of issues a comprehensive resolution on this agenda should address. It is a starting point for delegates' own drafting, not a template to be adopted wholesale.

DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/[SESSION]/L.[XX]

General Assembly First Committee, Disarmament and International Security

The General Assembly,

Preambulatory Clauses

- Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the shared responsibility of all States to prevent the illicit trade, diversion, and brokering of conventional arms,
- Recalling the Arms Trade Treaty (2013), the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2001), the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms (2001), and the International Tracing Instrument (2005),
- Noting with concern the withdrawal of a major arms-exporting State from the Arms Trade Treaty in April 2025, and the resulting gap in binding, universal risk-assessment and diversion-prevention obligations among the world's largest arms suppliers,
- Deeply concerned by documented cases in which arms brokers have exploited shell companies, falsified end-user certificates, flag-of-convenience shipping registries, and covert re-export arrangements to divert legally authorised transfers to embargoed destinations, conflict zones, and non-state armed groups,
- Recognising that the regulation of brokering, corporate beneficial ownership, and maritime registries falls at the intersection of arms control, financial regulation, and maritime law, requiring coordinated action across multiple international frameworks,
- Acknowledging the disparate technical and financial capacity of Member States to implement existing marking, tracing, licensing, and end-use verification commitments,

Operative Clauses

- 1. Calls upon all Member States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, and calls upon States Parties that have withdrawn to reconsider that decision in light of the Treaty's role in preventing diversion;
- 2. Recommends the establishment, under the auspices of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, of a voluntary international arms broker registration and cross-notification mechanism, through which States commit to sharing information on licensed, denied, and revoked brokering authorisations;
- 3. Urges Member States to require verified beneficial-ownership disclosure as a precondition for any entity's participation in a licensed arms export, import, or brokering transaction, and to align such requirements with Financial Action Task Force standards;
- 4. Calls upon the International Maritime Organization, in cooperation with flag registry States, to develop minimum beneficial-ownership verification and cargo-manifest audit standards as a condition of good-standing registry recognition;
- 5. Encourages Member States to strengthen post-shipment end-use verification for higher-risk transfers, including through risk-based, mutually-agreed inspection or documentary-audit mechanisms that respect the legitimate sovereignty and security concerns of importing States;

- 6. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Wassenaar Arrangement, the World Customs Organization, and relevant regional organisations, to prepare a technical study on the regulation of dual-use components and emerging technologies relevant to conventional arms diversion, including drone components and additive-manufacturing equipment, for submission to the following session;
- 7. Calls for enhanced resourcing, data-sharing authority, and inter-Panel coordination among United Nations Security Council Panels and Groups of Experts monitoring arms-embargo violations;
- 8. Requests the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to establish a dedicated technical-assistance facility to support lower-capacity Member States in implementing marking, tracing, licensing, and beneficial-ownership verification commitments, funded through voluntary contributions;
- 9. Encourages regional organisations, including the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of American States, and ASEAN, to develop or strengthen region-specific frameworks addressing documented local trafficking corridors;
- 10. Decides to remain seized of the matter and requests a follow-up report on implementation within eighteen months.

Section 14: Recommended Research and Further Reading

- **Arms Trade Treaty (2013), full text and treaty-status database** : thearmstradetreaty.org. The foundational binding instrument for this agenda; delegates should read Articles 6-13 closely.
- **UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2001) and International Tracing Instrument (2005)** : the near-universal, politically binding small-arms framework.
- **Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms (2001)** : supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- **SIPRI, "Trends in International Arms Transfers" (annual fact sheets, 2024 and 2025 editions)** : the essential open-source dataset on global exporter/importer rankings and trends.
- **Small Arms Survey, ATT Hub and annual publications** : smallarmssurvey.org.
- **Wassenaar Arrangement, Control Lists and annual Plenary statements** : wassenaar.org.
- **UN Register of Conventional Arms** : the voluntary transparency mechanism dataset (UNODA).
- **Transparency International Defence & Security, "Under the Radar: Corruption's Role in Fueling Arms Diversion" (2025)** : a detailed empirical review of corruption-enabled diversion cases.
- **Oxfam, "Brokers Without Borders" (case study of the 2009 North Korea-Iran shipment)** : a granular case study of shell-company and flag-registry exploitation.
- **U.S. Government Accountability Office, reporting on shell companies and Defense Department contracting fraud** : illustrative of beneficial-ownership enforcement gaps in a major economy.
- **FATF (Financial Action Task Force), standards on beneficial ownership and trade-based money laundering** : fatf-gafi.org.
- **UN Security Council Panel/Group of Experts reports (Libya, DRC, Somalia, Yemen, DPRK sanctions committees)** : primary-source reporting on documented diversion and embargo-violation networks, available via the UN Security Council subsidiary organs website.
- **INTERPOL, Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System (iARMS)** : operational weapons-tracing platform overview.
- **Control Arms Coalition and Amnesty International, ATT monitoring and advocacy publications** : civil-society perspectives on implementation gaps.

Appendix: Sample Position Paper Outline

Delegates unfamiliar with position-paper conventions may find the following outline useful as a starting structure. It is illustrative only; delegations should adapt it to their assigned state's actual circumstances rather than treating it as a fixed template.

I. National Overview and Historical Role in the Arms Trade

- A brief statement of your state's role as exporter, importer, transit state, registry jurisdiction, financial hub, or conflict-affected destination, supported by SIPRI or equivalent sourcing.
- Any documented brokering, diversion, or embargo-violation cases involving your state, cited accurately and without exaggeration or minimisation.

II. Treaty and Instrument Status

- Your state's membership status in the ATT, UNPoA, Firearms Protocol, Wassenaar Arrangement, and any relevant regional instrument.
- A brief, honest explanation of your state's stated rationale for its membership status, whether that rationale is one your delegation will defend or one it is instructed to work around.

III. Position on Core QARMAs

- A clear statement of your state's position on brokering registration, beneficial-ownership disclosure, flag-registry standards, and post-shipment verification, the four mechanisms most likely to anchor substantive negotiation.

IV. Proposed Mechanisms

- At least two specific, concrete policy proposals your delegation intends to introduce or support, each stated with enough operational detail (who implements it, who funds it, how compliance is verified) to be workable as draft resolution language.

V. Coalition Strategy

- An honest assessment of which blocs and individual states your delegation expects to align with, and on which specific clauses that alignment is likely to break down.