Mr. President, I am Sheldon Clare, President of Canada’s National Firearms Association. The NFA is by far the largest advocacy organization representing the rights of firearms owners and users in Canada. Because UN attempts to regulate small arms and light weapons are misdirected, Canadians are concerned that the UN and CASA’s ISACS will have an unjustifiably harmful effect upon the ability of free people to have access to firearms and ammunition for perfectly legitimate purposes, including self-defence. The NFA rejects as false that civilian access to small arms is the problem. It is not civilian access to small arms that is to blame for most deaths; instead it is the use of and trade in weapons by governments in state-terrorism operations against their own people. This is a situation which has been repeated many times in history and continues unabated to this day in many parts of the world.

Canada’s National Firearms Association (NFA) recommends that controls on small arms and light weapons be limited solely to major crew-served weapon systems possessed or sold by nation states - not individually operated firearms owned or desired to be owned by civilians. The sovereign rights and property of Canadians, and of our firearms businesses engaged in the lawful trade in firearms and ammunition, including surplus firearms and ammunition, must not be subject to UN edict or control. Quite simply, firearms ownership and use, like other civil freedoms (eg. property rights), are matters of our national sovereignty and are related to national culture. We also reject UN efforts about ammunition - including marking beyond caliber, date, and manufacturer would be excessive; it is unreasonable, unnecessary, and fiscally irresponsible for the UN to meddle with ammunition.

Canada’s NFA is categorically opposed to efforts to register possession of arms by civilians as in our view this is all too often a precursor to confiscation of civilian arms. History shows that civilians need them for defensive purposes. The NFA also supports the sale of surplus military ammunition and small arms to civilians as the continuation of a harmless practice that goes back to the end of the First World War, if not before.

Small arms in civilian hands allow people to defend themselves from aggression. Self-defense is a natural right of all individuals. This is especially important in the event of unrest and disorder, or in cases of state-mandated crimes against humanity. Civilian ownership of arms is an important factor in preventing and limiting the effect of government-encouraged murders such as what occurred in Somalia, Srebrenica and Rwanda. Let us not forget Cambodia, the Ukraine, China, and the many other examples that have occurred. People disarmed either by the UN or their own governments were helpless in the face of organized aggression, especially when the UN was powerless to provide protection. While governments need to act against terrorism, disarming civilians violates fundamental democratic principles. Perhaps governments should deal with unrest by addressing the economic situations, political differences, and human rights issues that contribute to people agitating for change rather than engaging in one size fits all solutions affecting the rights of free people to own and use firearms.

For these reasons, the NFA strongly recommends that Canada should withdraw from the PoA on SALW process and explicitly state that ISACS is of no legal standing. The UN should consider employing significant sanctions against those countries which murder and otherwise oppress their own citizens and even consider expelling them from this august body. Thank you for your consideration Mr. President.

In defence of freedom
By Sheldon Clare, Oral Presentation Version

June 19th, 2014 United Nations

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Canada’s National Firearms Association (NFA) recommends that controls on small arms and light weapons be limited solely to major crew-served weapon systems possessed or sold by nation states - not individually operated firearms owned by civilians. The sovereign rights and property of Canadians, and of our firearms businesses engaged in the lawful trade in firearms and ammunition, including surplus firearms and ammunition, must not be subject to UN edict or control. We also reject UN efforts on ammunition - including marking beyond caliber, date, and manufacturer would be excessive; it is unreasonable, unnecessary, and fiscally irresponsible for the UN to meddle with ammunition.

Small arms in civilian hands allow people to defend themselves from aggression. This natural right to self defence is especially important in the event of unrest, or in cases of state-mandated crimes against humanity, such as what occurred in Somalia, Srebrenica and Rwanda. Perhaps governments should deal with unrest by addressing the economic situations, political differences, and human rights issues that contribute to people agitating for change rather than engaging in one size fits all solutions affecting the rights of free people to own and use firearms.

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