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General and complete disarmament

Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels

Report of the Secretary-General

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* [A/74/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [73/34](#) on conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, the General Assembly decided to give urgent consideration to the issue and requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the subject and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.
2. Pursuant to that request, on 6 February 2019, a note verbale was sent to Member States seeking their views on the subject. The replies received are set out in section II below. Any views received after 15 May 2019 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs¹ in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

II. Replies received from Member States

Armenia

[Original: English]
[1 April 2019]

An effective and functioning conventional arms control regime is essential for military transparency, predictability and security at the international, regional and subregional levels. A lack of transparency leads to mistrust and miscalculation and increases the risk of tensions. In this regard, full and all-weather implementation of conventional arms control agreements and adherence to the guiding principles of the arms control regime, namely, transparency, sufficiency, verification and limitation, are necessary.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is one of the pillars of security and stability in Europe. Its implementation has promoted an unprecedented and wide-scale disarmament process in Europe and the growth of transparency in the conventional arms control sphere. The Treaty has played a vital role as a stabilizing factor during the transition period in the European security environment.

Armenia is committed to the maintenance of the legally binding conventional arms control regime in Europe and fully complies with its obligations on force limitations, on-site inspections and the exchange of information on its armed forces under the Treaty.

In 2018, Armenia received, in total, 11 inspections and evaluation visits under the Treaty, the Vienna Document and bilateral arrangements, the reports of which have testified to Armenia's compliance with the letter and spirit of the above-mentioned documents. The Armenian side has provided all opportunities for the inspection teams to conduct their activities in an efficient and transparent manner. Armenia has ensured a high level of transparency and openness with regard to military exercises, often going beyond its commitments, and has voluntarily notified exercises below threshold, in line with its commitments under the Vienna Document.

Armenia is actively participating in the Structured Dialogue within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is an informal platform for discussions on the avenues of strengthening and revitalizing the conventional arms control regime in Europe. The principled position of the Armenian side is that any new conventional arms control regime should be based on a legally binding document, which must be of an "all-weather" nature and its implementation not be subject to any condition.

¹ www.un.org/disarmament.

Agreed OSCE confidence- and security-building measures, such as the Vienna Document, the Global Exchange of Military Information, the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, and Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations, are important and mutually reinforcing tools to enhance transparency and confidence, thus contributing to regional security and stability.

Armenia is concerned about systematic violations of the conventional arms control regime by Azerbaijan, which further endanger the volatile security environment of the region.

The massive and destabilizing accumulation of heavy weaponry and unnotified large-scale military exercises by Azerbaijan, in contradiction to its legal obligations and political commitments, raise serious security concerns and pose a direct threat to the whole region.

As at 1 January 2019, according to the official information provided by Azerbaijan, it significantly exceeded its ceilings in four of five categories of major conventional arms established under the Treaty, namely, in battle tanks (525, the permitted ceiling is 220), armoured combat vehicles (427, the permitted ceiling is 220), artillery (969, the permitted ceiling is 285) and attack helicopters (59, the permitted ceiling is 50).

A large portion of the armed forces of Azerbaijan is excluded from any verification activities, in violation of the provisions of the Treaty, which calls into question the credibility of the data provided by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan does not allow inspections of 10 of 28 brigades of its armed forces. Inspections of four other brigades, located in Nakhijevan Autonomous Republic, are allowed under the precondition of notifying 10 days in advance of the intention to inspect, which undermines the efficiency of inspections and turns the territory of Nakhijevan into a grey zone. This provides Azerbaijan with the ability to concentrate a large amount of unverifiable forces and military equipment near the State borders of Armenia and along the line of contact with Nagorno-Karabakh.

The violations of the Treaty and the OSCE confidence- and security-building measures are accompanied by bellicose rhetoric, attempts to advance military positions and the State-led promotion of anti-Armenian hatred by the Government of Azerbaijan. The highest leadership of Azerbaijan openly claims almost the entire territory of Armenia, including its capital. The uncontrolled military build-up by Azerbaijan and the hostile policy towards Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh culminated in the large-scale military offensive unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016. It resulted in grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including atrocities and war crimes targeting the civilian population and military personnel.

Despite the non-compliance of Azerbaijan with its obligations, which has negative security implications for the region and undermines the conventional arms control regime, Armenia will continue to strictly adhere to its international obligations and commitments in the sphere of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[29 April 2019]

The scourges associated with illicit arms trafficking cause great suffering and many social evils. There is thus a growing need for effective arms control. However,

such control should not be limited to conventional weapons but should include weapons of mass destruction, which have a significantly more devastating impact.

Whether at the regional, subregional or international level, conventional arms control should be governed by the norms and principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and good faith compliance with the obligations assumed under international norms.

In the principles to be formulated by the Conference on Disarmament and in discussions on conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, the following factors should be taken into account:

(a) Conventional arms control should be based on respect for and recognition of national control measures. States should be primarily responsible for implementing their arms control measures;

(b) Because each country and region is different, control measures should be adapted to the interests, needs and characteristics of each country and region;

(c) It is for the States to decide whether they need assistance in establishing and implementing their arms control measures;

(d) Cooperation and assistance initiatives must continue to be strengthened not only at the regional and subregional levels but also at the international level. They should take into account the specificities and needs of the recipient State and should promote both technology transfer and national capacity-building.

In accordance with the international treaties and United Nations resolutions aimed at more effective control over firearms, the Cuban State has incorporated into its legal framework a series of relevant legal norms.

The conventional arms that exist in Cuba are defensive in nature and intended to maintain national security and defence. They are properly controlled by the appropriate State bodies. In Cuba, the vast majority of conventional arms are the property of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior, which both have the internal rules and mechanisms necessary for the rigorous and periodic control of stocks of such weapons and follow strict procedures to ensure the security of their arsenals. In addition, in Cuba, no arms of any kind may be sold to natural persons.

The multiple control mechanisms used by the Cuban authorities to ensure the security of their weapons have been described in the national reports on compliance with Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons which the Cuban State submits annually, as well as in discussions on stockpile management in the context of that Convention. The prevention and control mechanisms described in these reports could be considered good practices that could contribute to the work on formulating principles requested of the Conference on Disarmament.

Czechia

[Original: English]
[18 April 2019]

In 2018, the Czech Republic implemented all its commitments stemming from international agreements on arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures.

The Czech Republic, in accordance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe:

- Organized and conducted one multinational inspection abroad with the participation of five inspectors from five countries
- Organized one multinational training inspection with the participation of 11 foreign inspectors from nine countries
- Received one training inspection
- Conducted two training inspections abroad
- Participated in the training of specialists in the verification area
- Took part in three allied inspection teams abroad

The Czech Republic, in accordance with the Vienna Document:

- Organized and conducted three inspections of a specified area and one evaluation visit with the participation of seven inspectors from seven countries
- Took part in one visit to an air base
- Took part in two visits to other military facilities
- Took part in three demonstrations of new types of weapons
- Took part in three observations of certain military activities
- Took part in three inspections of a specified area and one evaluation visit as part of a foreign team
- Received two inspections of a specified area and one evaluation visit
- Conducted one training evaluation visit
- Received one training evaluation visit

The Czech Republic, in accordance with the Dayton peace agreement (annex 1B, art. IV), participated as a guest Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observer in two inspections.

The Czech Republic, in accordance with the Treaty on Open Skies:

- Received one training observation flight
- Took part in one pre-certification event and one certification event of an observation aircraft
- Took part in four training observation flights as part of a foreign team

El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2019]

El Salvador attaches priority to strengthening national, regional and international security, with special emphasis on respecting and ensuring human rights. For our country, a fundamental aspect of this effort is combating and eradicating the manufacture, trafficking and illicit use of conventional weapons, in order to increase the level of security and confront the different criminal operations in which the use of such weapons (primarily firearms) is implicated, including organized crime, narcotrafficking, the activities of youth gangs or *maras* and armed violence.

Through the Central American Integration System, El Salvador has worked with the other the countries of Central America to ensure security in El Salvador and the Central American region and strengthen arms controls, confronting illicit trafficking in firearms forcefully and comprehensively through mutual assistance in criminal

investigations; registration and control of firearms; coordination among customs authorities; sharing of information on arms sales monitoring; implementation of international, regional and national instruments on firearms, and capacity-building for the officials responsible for security in our countries.

El Salvador also participates in various initiatives led by the Organization of American States and its Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, in order to work jointly with the countries of the hemisphere to strengthen regional security and, in particular, implement the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

In addition, through the Safe El Salvador plan, our country is working to implement multiple short-, medium- and long-term priority actions for confronting armed violence and crime and ensuring victim access to justice, care and protection, with a special focus on prevention and full respect for the human rights of the affected population. El Salvador attaches critical importance to continued participation in all regional and multilateral discussions, forums or negotiations on promoting arms control initiatives and actions.

Georgia

[Original: English]
[15 May 2019]

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is the key mechanism in providing military balance and security in Europe by means of the limitation of conventional arms and verification tools.

As a member of the Joint Consultative Group dealing with questions related to compliance with the provisions of the Treaty, Georgia takes legal responsibility for fulfilling the obligations defined in the Treaty.

In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, Georgia, as a State party, implements the following commitments:

1. In accordance with the Protocol on Inspection to the Treaty, Georgia receives or conducts the following activities:
 - (a) Declared site inspection;
 - (b) Challenge inspection within specified areas;
 - (c) Inspection of the process of destroying military equipment that is written off and outdated.
2. In accordance with bilateral agreements, Georgia receives or conducts additional declared site inspections.
3. In accordance with the Protocol on Notification and Exchange of Information to the Treaty, Georgia prepares and circulates notification formats for the States parties by means of an integrated notification application system and an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe network.
4. In accordance with sections I to V of the Protocol on Notification and Exchange of Information, Georgia annually prepares and circulates, through diplomatic channels, military information regarding its armed forces in a special automated data systems programme on 15 December, which is valid as from 1 January of the following year.
5. In accordance with the Protocol on Procedures Governing the Reduction of Conventional Armaments and Equipment Limited by the Treaty on

Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, Georgia conducts the reduction of the decommissioned treaty-limited equipment by means of their destruction.

Since January 2018, Georgia has participated in the following events, pursuant to the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe:

1. Georgia participated in an annual workshop on VERITY, a database of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; the event was arranged by the Organization in January 2018. The aim of the workshop was to gather information from all States parties regarding their military forces, as required under the provisions of the Treaty.
2. Ukraine conducted a declared site inspection in Georgia in June 2019 (passive quota). The aim of the inspection was to verify the information exchanged on the military unit to be inspected (number and types of conventional armaments and equipment).
3. Georgia conducted two declared site inspections in France in June 2018 (active quota and bilateral agreement). The aim of the inspections was to verify the information exchanged on the military unit to be inspected (number and types of conventional armaments and equipment).
4. Georgia conducted a declared site inspection in Germany in August 2018 (active quota). The aim of the inspection was to verify the information exchanged on the military unit to be inspected (number and types of conventional armaments and equipment).
5. Germany conducted a declared site inspection in Georgia in August 2018 (bilateral agreement). The aim of the inspection was to verify the information exchanged on the military unit to be inspected (number and types of conventional armaments and equipment).
6. France conducted a declared site inspection in Georgia in October 2018 (bilateral agreement). The aim of the inspection was to verify the information exchanged on the military unit to be inspected (number and types of conventional armaments and equipment).

Kyrgyzstan

[Original: English]
[15 April 2019]

The Kyrgyz Republic conducts its activities in the field of conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels in accordance with its commitments under the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Joint Control Group under the agreements between the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the People's Republic of China on confidence-building in the military field in the border area, signed on 26 April 1996, and on the mutual reduction of armed forces in the border area, signed on 24 April 1997.

Pakistan

[Original: English]
[18 March 2019]

Resolution 48/75 J was first introduced by Pakistan in 1993 in an effort to draw lessons from the success of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and apply them in the South Asian context.

In the resolution, the General Assembly recognizes the crucial role of conventional arms control in promoting regional and international peace and security; is aware that the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments would contribute to peace and stability and should be a prime objective of conventional arms control; and notes with particular interest the initiatives taken in this regard in different regions of the world, in particular the Treaty in Europe, which is a cornerstone of European security.

In the resolution, the Conference on Disarmament is requested to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control.

The elaboration of these principles should include:

- Guidelines on arms transfer, with particular reference to strategic stability
- Identification of destabilizing weapon systems and emerging technologies
- Guidance on confidence-building measures on force postures, the avoidance of an arms race and optimal force ratios at a minimum level of armaments
- Guidelines on the use of parallel processes for dispute resolution to strengthen the arms control objectives
- Facilitation of understanding between regional players on practical elements for possible regional arms control arrangements

Pakistan believes that the destabilizing effects of conventional weapons on security and stability at the regional and subregional levels, as well as their catastrophic humanitarian toll, underscore the need for continued action aimed at controlling these weapons. There is a need for a comprehensive and equitable approach that takes into account the priorities and security interests of all States and to not give way to a destabilizing conventional imbalance. Disarmament measures should be based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all States to protect their security.

Pakistan has remained concerned about the growing transfers of conventional armaments, especially in volatile regions, that are inconsistent with the imperative of maintaining peace, security and stability. This has the potential to fuel instability and jeopardize the delicate regional balance. The situation is rendered more complex by the presence of long-standing disputes and stalled political dialogue, which hinder the realization of the goal of durable peace in our region. Pakistan, for its part, is committed to the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, which includes an element of conventional force balance.

The United Nations should make use of its available mechanisms, i.e. its good offices and its mediation, facilitation and dialogue processes, to play an active role in resolving regional and subregional conflicts that actually fuel the arms race between countries. The effective parallel use of conflict resolution mechanisms would give an important boost to fulfilling the objectives of this resolution.

Poland

[Original: English]
[14 May 2019]

Poland is convinced that conventional arms control, including the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, forms the foundation of security in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe area. The Treaty provided the basis for partial conventional disarmament on the continent. It also proved that cooperation in the field of arms control can be beneficial to all parties involved; this cooperative element is vital as the Treaty is not only about “limits” but, to a greater degree, verification, information exchange and joint assessment. Poland has always been among the countries that are most interested in pursuing and developing such cooperation. We regret that Russia is not implementing the Treaty and, in 2015, decided to withdraw from the Joint Consultative Group. Poland is going to continue to work, step by step, on the practical implementation of the Treaty.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[15 May 2019]

Portugal, in compliance with the new directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of firearms, Directive (EU) 2017/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017, has initiated a project to incorporate into national law the new European rules, new rules for firearms collectors and the issue of intermediaries. As the new directive presupposes tighter rules for museums with firearms and for sports shooting, two legislative proposals for the regulation of collecting and sports shooting have been sent to the parliament.

With regard to European regulations, Portugal is actively involved with different working groups with a view to creating a set of rules at the European Union level regarding the acquisition or transfer of firearms in a particular country, as well as the transfer of firearms from one European Union country to another.

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/337 of 5 March 2018 amending Regulation (EU) 2015/2403 laying down common guidelines on decommissioning standards and techniques for the irreversible destruction of decommissioned firearms has been in application since 28 June 2018.

A working group is examining the exchange and sharing of information on transfers of firearms and refusals to grant arms licences in order to achieve a better understanding of European Union countries’ practices with regard to refusals. In this respect, Portugal will bring into force, by 17 January 2020 at the latest, Commission Implementing Directive (EU) 2019/69 of 16 January 2019.

Other working groups at the European Union level are currently discussing the implementation of new rules for the marking of firearms in order to improve control of these weapons. Portugal will bring into force, by 17 January 2020 at the latest, Commission Implementing Directive (EU) 2019/68 of 16 January 2019.

Another working group is laying down technical specifications for alarm and signal weapons. Portugal will bring into force, by 3 September 2019 at the latest, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/686 of 16 January 2019.

The aim of all the previously mentioned working groups is to achieve a very significant improvement in the control of arms and ammunition in the national territory, in accordance with best practices at the European Union level.

The project on the implementation of a weapons and ammunition test bank is continuing to develop and will be ready by 2020. It will increase the quality and control of weapons introduced in Portugal; we recommend this test bench in terms of getting certification under the Permanent International Commission for the Proof of Small Arms.

Arms control efforts have been one of the cornerstones of the international security environment. Portugal shares the international community's concerns about the growing tendencies regarding the dissemination of conventional arms. Bearing in mind historical evidence on this subject, Portugal considers that non-proliferation and disarmament are matters of grave importance in the promotion of peace and security in a global context and, specifically, in regional and subregional contexts. Portugal supports the implementation of various confidence- and security-building measures, which include the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the humanitarian demining goals of the Ottawa Convention.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[15 May 2019]

Qatar encourages and views with great interest measures for conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. Such measures should help to maintain a balance in defensive capabilities with the minimum level of armament and armed forces.

Qatar also notes with interest the initiatives and proposals that have been adopted in various regions, such as Latin America and South Asia, in addition to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is intended to promote peace and security at the regional and European levels.

Qatar believes that the Conference on Disarmament should consider drafting principles that could constitute a framework for the conclusion of conventional arms control treaties aimed at achieving regional and international security.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2019]

The ultimate goal of any system of arms control or confidence- and security-building measures should be to prevent conflicts by reducing the dangers of misunderstanding or miscalculation of the military activities of other countries; taking steps to impede covert military preparations; reducing the risk of surprise attacks; and reducing the risk of the outbreak of war by accident.

The legally or politically binding measures should meet a series of requirements that can be summed up in the following principles:

- (a) Specificity. Measures should be specifically negotiated for each case and each geographical area.;
- (b) Transparency. This should be based on exchanges of information and the establishment of regular contacts and free-flowing communication;
- (c) Verifiability. The measures adopted should include a system for verifying their implementation. This is the only way to maintain confidence in cases of suspected non-compliance;

(d) Reciprocity. Each party's gains in terms of a higher level of confidence in the other parties should be matched by similar gains in the other parties' levels of confidence. Otherwise, measures of this type will be much harder to negotiate;

(e) Voluntary nature of negotiations and mandatory nature of compliance. The parties should feel comfortable with the measures agreed at each stage of the process. In addition, the political will required for the negotiation of measures of this type should be commensurate with the mandatory nature of compliance with these measures;

(f) Progressivity. The measures should be seen as a process in which new and more effective measures are progressively developed as confidence between the parties improves.;

(g) Complementarity. Care should be taken at all times to ensure complementarity between the measures adopted at the global (United Nations), regional, subregional and bilateral levels and to avoid the duplication of measures.

Moreover, an arms control regime, in order to be effective, requires:

(a) A consultative body to monitor the measures' implementation. All the parties should be represented in such a body, which should provide for the reporting of any problems encountered in the practical application of the measures, as well as for the negotiation of new measures or the modification of existing ones. This body should be able to exert enough political pressure to convince the parties of the need for full compliance with the commitments undertaken (the involvement of the most powerful countries in each region is therefore extremely important);

(b) A suitable system of communications that enables the parties to meet the response deadlines laid down in the various measures and that is flexible enough to ensure the flow of information needed to restore confidence in the event of any disturbances;

(c) The establishment of confidence-building measures, especially among affected neighbouring States, the strengthening of border controls and the training of specialized staff, among other arrangements, could create a propitious environment for the elaboration of supranational (including subregional and regional) arms control agreements.

In addition, regional and subregional conventional arms control agreements should take into account the importance of:

(a) Establishing new confidence-building measures among neighbouring countries and strengthening those currently in place;

(b) Increasing transparency measures within the regional and subregional forums themselves;

(c) Disseminating the objectives of such forums to countries in the area that have not yet endorsed them;

(d) Compiling an arms inventory in the countries where such inventories do not yet exist;

(e) Strengthening measures to promote universal adherence to the various international instruments;

(f) Enforcing strict requirements for export and import permits;

(g) Strengthening mechanisms for monitoring weapons manufacturers and, in cases where the weapons purchased are not end products, suppliers and component assemblers.

Moreover, within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Spain is engaging in the structured dialogue on current and future challenges and risks as a first step in the strategy for relaunching arms control and confidence- and security-building measures in Europe.

Ukraine

[Original: English]

[15 May 2019]

Ukraine recognizes the importance of conventional arms control, including at the regional and subregional levels, and, accordingly, welcomes all relevant measures in this field.

This commitment has been reinforced by Russia's deliberately bringing conventional arms control in Europe into a state of impasse, thus causing the erosion of trust and confidence in the military field and challenging the very essence of the architecture of contemporary European security, as well as verifiable confidence- and security-building measures.

One of our claims to the Russian Federation is that the temporary occupation of the State of Ukraine's Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as the military intervention in the Donbas region, prevents Ukraine from fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Furthermore, these internationally wrongful acts by Russia have turned the above-mentioned territories into grey zones that are inaccessible for verification and are intensively militarized.

Ukraine is a long-term responsible participant in pan-European and complementary bilateral conventional arms control and related confidence-building instruments, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe; the Treaty on Open Skies; the Vienna Document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and bilateral agreements on confidence- and security-building measures with neighbouring Hungary, the Republic of Poland, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Belarus and Romania. Notwithstanding the increased burden on Ukraine's Armed Forces caused by the Russian aggression, Ukraine continues to comply with its obligations under the above-mentioned international instruments.

The case of Ukraine as a victim of the Russian aggression is a reminder of the urgent need to revitalize and improve conventional arms control in order to strengthen its efficiency, through tightening intrusiveness, to better address existing security challenges in the areas of application.

Ukraine considers that conventional arms control should have as many participants as possible and cover as large an area as possible; be made transparent to the maximum extent possible through information exchange and verification intrusiveness; preferably be legally binding; be free of ambiguity of interpretation; and be evaluated periodically by parties for viability, effectiveness and the possibility of further enhancement and modernization.

Ukraine supports efforts to solve outstanding issues pertaining to the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Document, which are essential for enhancing military transparency, predictability and political stability in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe area.