

Case study

Kazakhstan: Export legislation and submission of national report

The process of implementing the [UN Programme of Action] PoA in Kazakhstan has been positive, with the Republic submitting its first national report this year. Kazakhstan is the only SALW producer in Central Asia and also has significant arms stockpiles inherited from the old Soviet Army. Therefore, as it does not have a major domestic gun violence problem, export legislation and criteria are the key concerns. SALW production has been consolidated into one company, Kazakhstan Industries, which remains state owned.

International concern and pressure has tended to concentrate on WMD held in the country and, as such, small arms have tended to take a lesser priority in the country and the sub-region as a whole. However, there have been a number of indications that the government is beginning to address PoA commitments and OSCE reporting requirements.

In terms of implementing the PoA Kazakhstan has a designated national point of contact – the Ministry of Defence – and for the first time in 2005 produced a national report for the UN DDA. This is, in part, reflected an increase in international attention to security in the sub-region and also Kazakhstan's desire to have a close relationship with both Russia and the West. Kazakhstan is keen to be seen to be exemplary in its adherence to international agreements. Kazakhstan's pivotal role in the global war against terrorism and in the campaign against illegal narcotics has also led to increased concerns with regards to the proliferation of SALW. As mentioned in the sub-regional overview, above, the OSCE hosted a conference on SALW in 2002 and the UN organised a conference promoting the PoA in 2004.

Both conferences were held in Almaty, the commercial capital, demonstrating the importance of Kazakhstan in leading sub-regional implementation of regional and international SALW commitments. Kazakhstan has a fairly well developed export licensing system organised through the Ministry of Trade and Industry which involves consultations with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

However, issues remain relating to a potential conflict of interest between the exports of a state owned industry and the state regulatory framework. While Kazakhstan does have a system of marking weapons manufactured in the country, the marking does not include information on the country of manufacture and only states the name of the manufacturer with an initial (eg Metalist has the letter M) followed by a three digit serial number. The issue of stockpile management continues to be a serious concern both in terms of safety and in terms of the risk of illegal diversion. While there have been no recent reports of diversion from these stockpiles and the last explosion at a stockpile was in August 2001 the scale, security and safety of Kazakhstan's SALW and ammunition stockpiles remain an issue of concern.

Civil society involvement in SALW control is minimal, which reflects the rather limited development of civil society organisations across the sub-region. However, there are a number of IANSA members in the country and in early 2004 a number of civil society organisations in the sub-region including Kazakh members formed a sub-regional group. However this has not been active since its formation.

Source: *Examining the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action, IANSA / Biting the Bullet, 2005.*