

U.S. ACTIONS TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN ARMS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE



“We’re partnering to address the concerns that people across the Americas say they worry about the most – and that’s the security of their families and communities... We’re also doing more to stem the southbound flow of guns into the region.”

*– President Barack Obama
March 21, 2011*

PRESIDENT OBAMA AND SECRETARY OF STATE CLINTON have voiced their commitment to combating threats to citizens’ security in the Americas. With rising levels of crime and violence in many areas of Latin America and the Caribbean, insecurity has become the top concern of citizens. To address these concerns, the United States has implemented programs to strengthen partnerships with the nations of the Western Hemisphere to combat trafficking in arms. Some of the programs include:

- The United States provided the Organization of American States (OAS) a \$1 million grant to provide marking equipment and related training to 26 countries in the hemisphere. The machines will mark tens of thousands of firearms with unique identifying information, making it possible to trace firearms and identify illicit trafficking routes and suppliers.
- The United States signed eTrace agreements with the Central American and Caribbean states and Mexico, offered the program to the South American states, and launched a Spanish language version of the software. eTrace is a web-based firearm trace request submission system that provides for the electronic exchange of crime gun data in a secure environment.
- The United States has posted a Regional Firearms Advisor (RFA) from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives in Central America to assist law enforcement officials in firearms-related investigations and in combating firearms trafficking. The RFA conducted assessments of each country’s capacity to combat firearms trafficking and provided hands-on training in firearms identification and firearms tracing.
- The United States has assessed and offered stockpile management and destruction assistance to a number of states in the hemisphere. Through the destruction of excess, confiscated, and/or aging and unsafe stockpiles, states are avoiding the potential disaster of an explosion and keeping weapons in the stockpile from returning to circulation. Examples include:
 - Through bilateral efforts and nearly \$2 million in grants to the Organization of American States, the United States provided stockpile destruction assistance in Central America and the Caribbean, ridding the region of aging, dangerous, and excess arms and ammunition.
 - With U.S. funding, the United Nations Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean helped build the capacity of several Caribbean states in firearms stockpile management and destruction.
 - The Defense Threat Reduction Agency conducted Physical Security and Stockpile Management Assessments and Seminars in six countries.
- In 2010, the United States hosted a workshop for South American countries on combating arms trafficking, with the goal of increasing states’ capacity to effectively address the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms.
- The United States has offered technical assistance to every country in the hemisphere to confront firearms trafficking.