



# Annual PalAmericas Delegation to the OAS

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# The Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Americas:

Forging Paths, Building Equality

**Hilary Anderson**

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**OAS | CIM**



## Normative framework: Women, peace and security in the Americas

- Security Council Resolution 1325 (year 2000):
  - Resolutions 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) , 2493 (2019), etc.
  - In-depth examination of the issues raised in Resolution 1325:
    - use of sexual violence in conflicts
    - women's participation and leadership in all stages of conflict resolution and peacebuilding
    - role of the justice sector and access to justice, including reparations
    - provision of multisectoral services to women affected by conflict
    - security sector reform, etc...
- Belém do Pará Convention: a Life Free from Violence (Art. 9: Women Affected by Situations of Armed Conflict)
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Chapter E. Women and armed conflict)

CEDAW  
1979



Belém do  
Pará  
1994



Beijing  
1995



IAP  
2000



Res 1325,  
etc.  
2000-2025

## The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS): CIM/OAS' approach

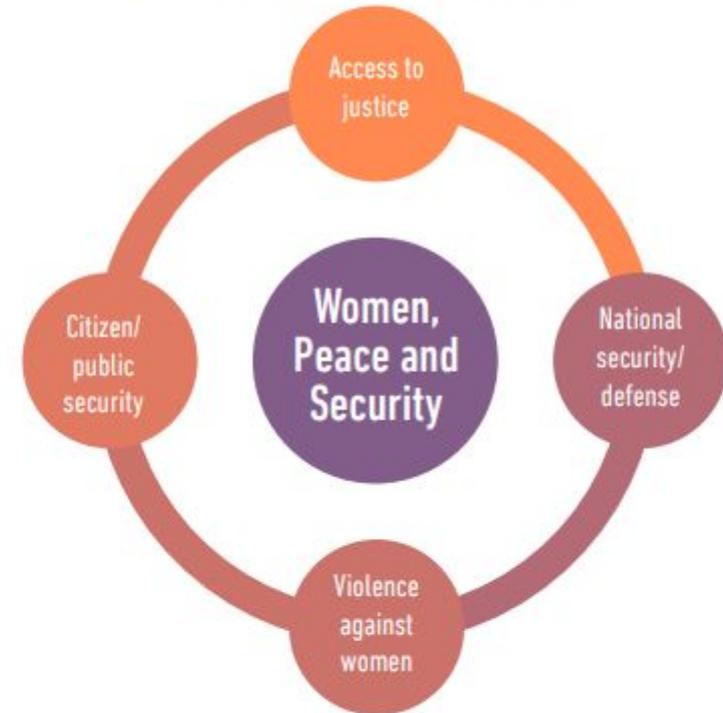
### ■ Current context of the Americas

- How do we understand conflict in a “continent of peace,” facing ever-increasing insecurity?
- How do we understand “peace” in a continent marked by high levels of armed violence and “multidimensional” conflict (including interpersonal conflict/social *conflictivity*)?
- How do we understand “security” through the lens of women’s lived realities—specifically, the home as a site of insecurity?



## The WPS Agenda: CIM/OAS' approach

- **Non-Traditional Approach to Conflicts, Crises, and Security:**
  - Implications for how we understand “conflict prevention and resolution”
  - Implications for all actors involved in crisis and conflict management—including, but not limited to, the armed forces.
- **Citizens' tensions and demands have crystallized in different parts of the hemisphere in recent years:**
  - Political, social, economic, health, and environmental crises, among others
  - Need to identify new entry points for the prevention, management, and resolution of crises and conflicts
  - Need for alternative models of crisis and conflict resolution—and, consequently, of leadership



## The WPS Agenda: CIM/OAS' approach

- Inequality in all its manifestations
- (Transnational) organized crime
- Proliferation of weapons
- Deterioration of democracy and weakening of democratic institutions
- Rising social and political polarization
- Environmental degradation and the fragility of life in the face of climate events/disasters
- Shrinking civic space
- Violence against human rights and environmental defenders
- Displacement and migration related to all these situations
- “New” threats (pandemics such as COVID-19)

Armed  
conflict

Conflictivity

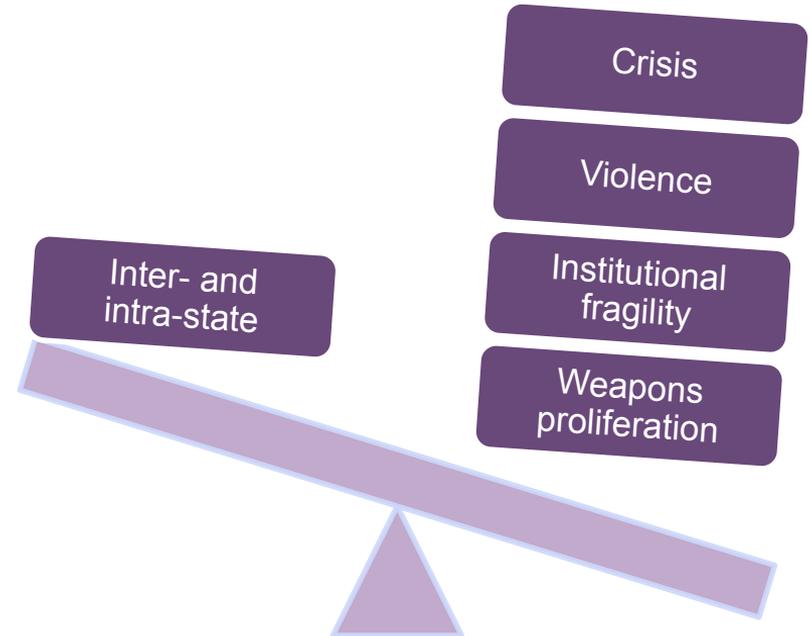
Inter- and  
intra-state

Crisis

Violence

Institutional  
fragility

Weapons  
proliferation



## The WPS Agenda: The approach from the Americas

- The underrepresentation of women's participation and leadership in decision-making positions remains a conspicuous feature of all these crises and complex situations.
- The WPS Agenda in the region is little known, lacks significant political ownership (both national and regional), and the scope of its implementation has been limited:
  - Women in Military Settings (participation in peace operations)
  - Women in Police Settings
  - Foreign Policy / Development Cooperation Policy



### National Action Plans:

- External Perspective
- Women in the Armed Forces
- Foreign Policy

## The WPS Agenda: The approach from the Americas

- Over the last five years, in the face of a multiplicity of crises and widespread conflict across the continent, the situation has changed:
  - The **level of State ownership** of the WPS Agenda
  - The **approach to the WPS Agenda**—a holistic agenda with both internal and external implications, extending beyond armed conflict and women in the armed forces—and using results-based management principles
- In the region, 15 countries now have a National Action Plan (NAP) on MPS (45% of OAS Member States):
  - Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, Uruguay



Regional MAP: WPS Action Plans  
(WPS Focal Points Network)

## The WPS Agenda: The approach from the Americas



Mapa regional: PANs sobre MPS  
(WPS Focal Points Network)

- Argentina: 2015 (I) y 2022 (II)
- Brazil: 2023 (I), expired 2023
- Bolivia: 2026 (I)
- Canada: 2011 (I), 2017 (II), 2023 (III)
- Chile: 2009 (I), 2015 (II), 2025 (III)
- Colombia: 2025 (I)
- Ecuador: 2024 (I)
- El Salvador: 2017 (I), 2022 (II), expired 2024
- Guatemala: 2017 (I)
- Mexico: 2020 (I)
- Peru: 2021 (I)
- Paraguay: 2015 (I), expired 2020
- Trinidad and Tobago: 2025 (I)
- USA: 2011 (I), 2015 (II), 2017 (Acta, III)
- Uruguay: 2021 (I), expired 2024, second plan in development

# The WPS Agenda: The approach from the Americas

## Plans with expired timeframes

- **Brazil:** 2023 (I), expired 2023
- **El Salvador:** 2017 (I), 2022 (II), expired 2024
- **Paraguay:** 2015 (I), expired 2020
- **Uruguay:** 2021 (I), expired 2024, second plan in development

## Plans with an external focus

- **Argentina:** 2015 (I) y 2022 (II)
- **Brazil:** 2023 (I)
- **Mexico:** 2020 (I)
- **Peru:** 2021 (I)
- **Paraguay:** 2015 (I)
- **USA:** 2011 (I), 2015 (II), 2017 (Acta, III)
- **Uruguay:** 2021 (I)

## Plans with a holistic/domestic focus

- **Bolivia:** 2026 (I)
- **Canada:** 2023 (III)
- **Chile:** 2025 (III)
- **Colombia:** 2025 (I)
- **Ecuador:** 2024 (I)
- **El Salvador:** 2022 (II)
- **Guatemala:** 2017 (I)
- **Trinidad and Tobago:** 2025 (I)

## The WPS Agenda: The approach from the Americas

- Over the past five years, the national approach to the WPS Agenda has changed:

- A more holistic / internal agenda



### A more holistic / internal agenda

- Not only participation in peacekeeping missions
- Internal conflicts/*conflictivity*
- Women's security
- "New" threats

- Beyond armed conflict and women in the armed forces



### Beyond armed conflict

- Internal conflictivity/insecurity
- Natural disasters/humanitarian emergencies
- Women in decision-making
- Participation of women's organizations

- Results-based management principles



### Results-based management principles

- Logical Framework: Goals, Objectives, Activities, Timelines, etc.
- Performance Indicators and targets
- Responsibilities, Reporting and Accountability Processes

**Thank you!**

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# Convergence in Transnational Organized Crime

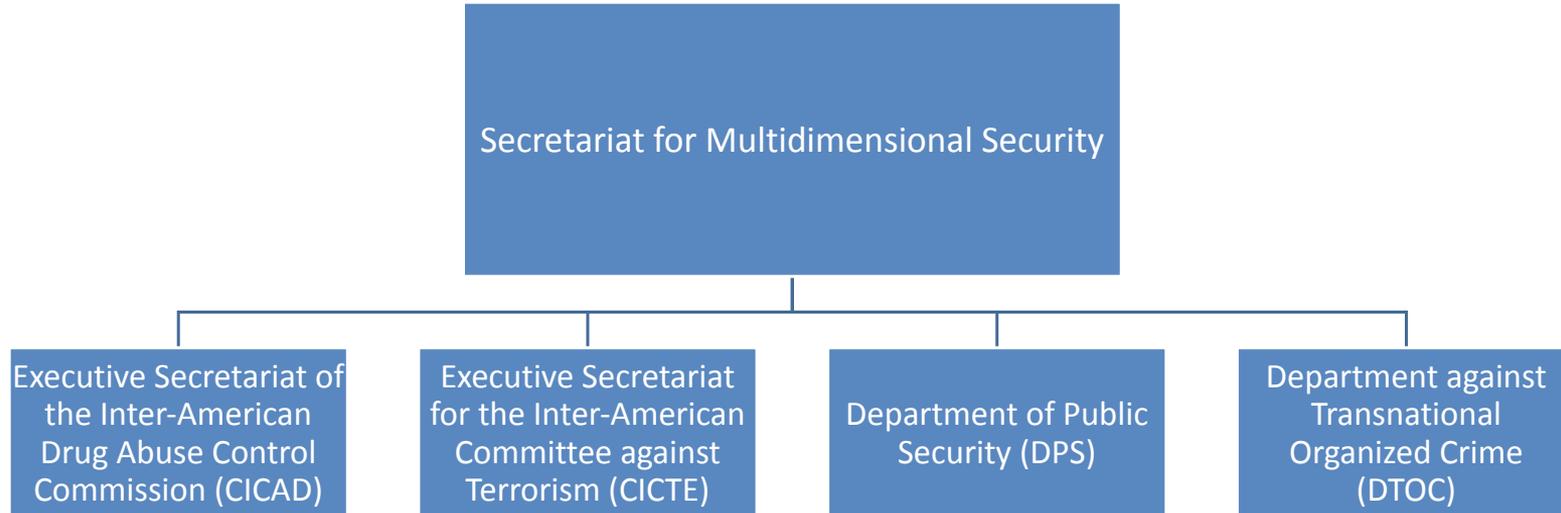
**Facing this Evolving Challenge**



**OAS**

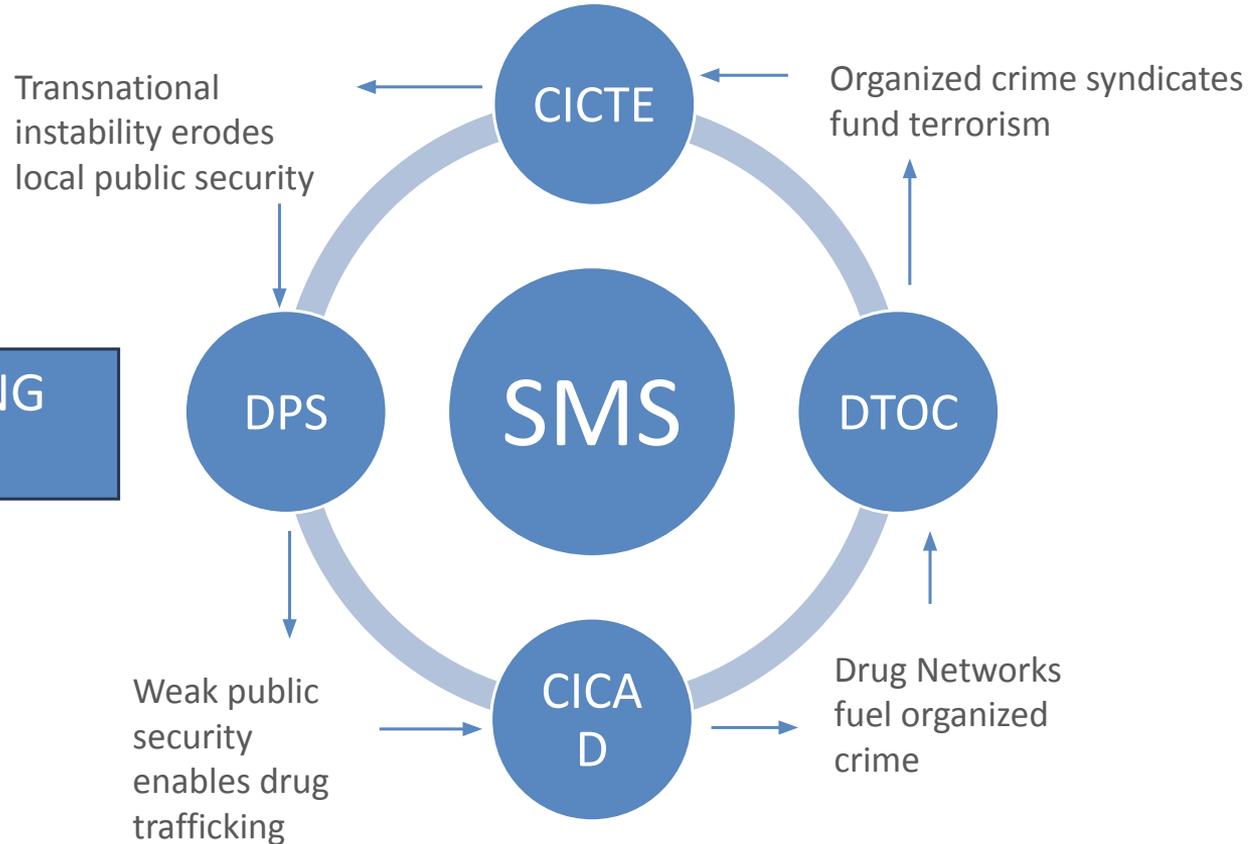


# ORGANOGRAM





## CONVERGING THREATS





## The Paradigm Shift: Defining Criminal Convergence

**Fragmented Sights:  
Autonomous Markets**

**The Convergent Ecosystem:  
Interdependent Mechanisms**

**Criminal Convergence** is the functional, economic, logistical, and political-institutional interconnection of different illegal activities and non-state actors.

**Structure:**  
Compartmentalized networks

**Logic:**  
Opportunistic crimes

**Infrastructure:**  
Parallel operations

**Structure:**  
Diversified risk portfolios

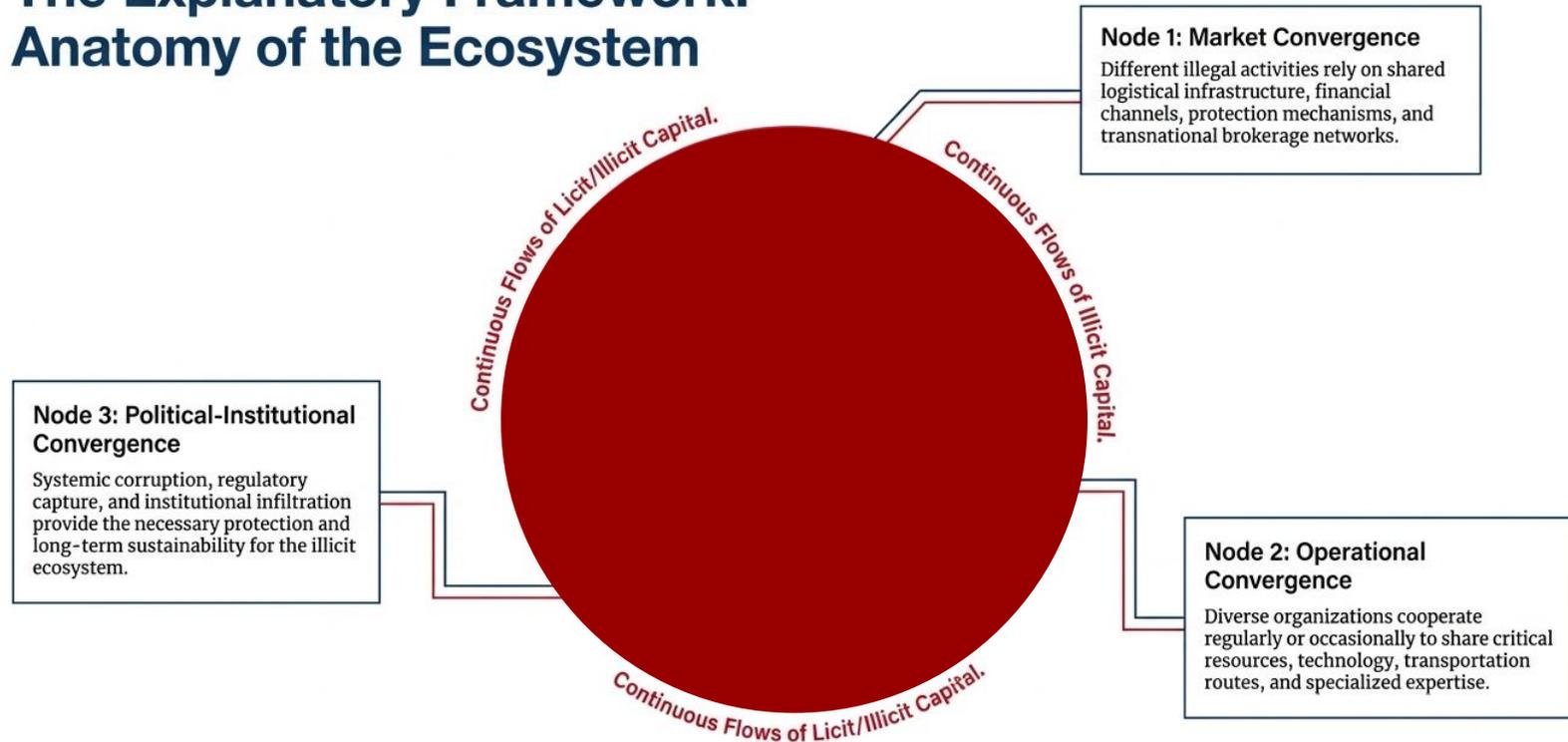
**Logic:**  
Rational business synergies

**Infrastructure:**  
Shared transport, logistics, and finance

Insight: Crimes are no longer isolated sectors; they are interdependent parts of a single systemic mechanism.

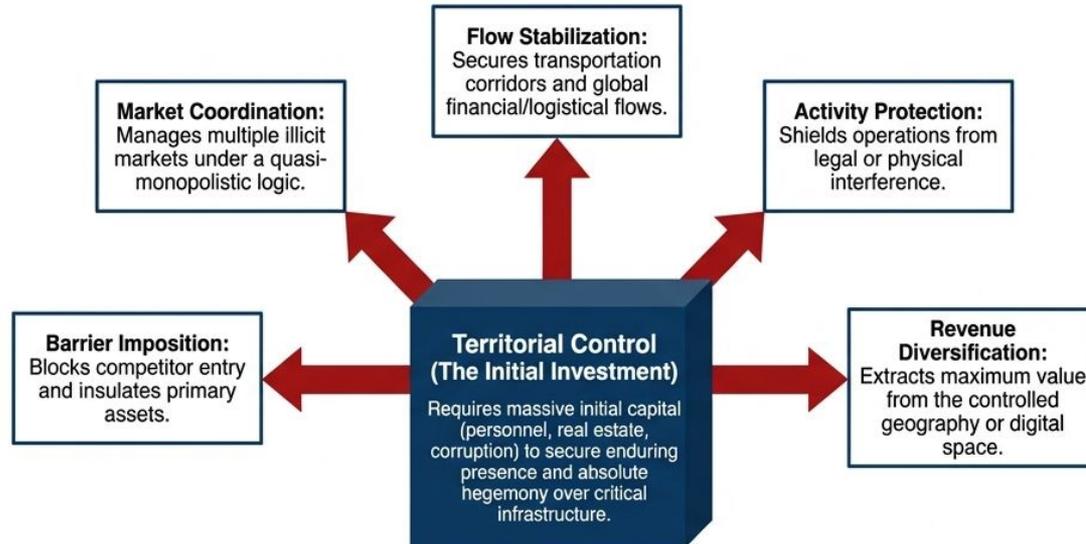


## The Explanatory Framework: Anatomy of the Ecosystem





## The Anchor Point: Territorial Control



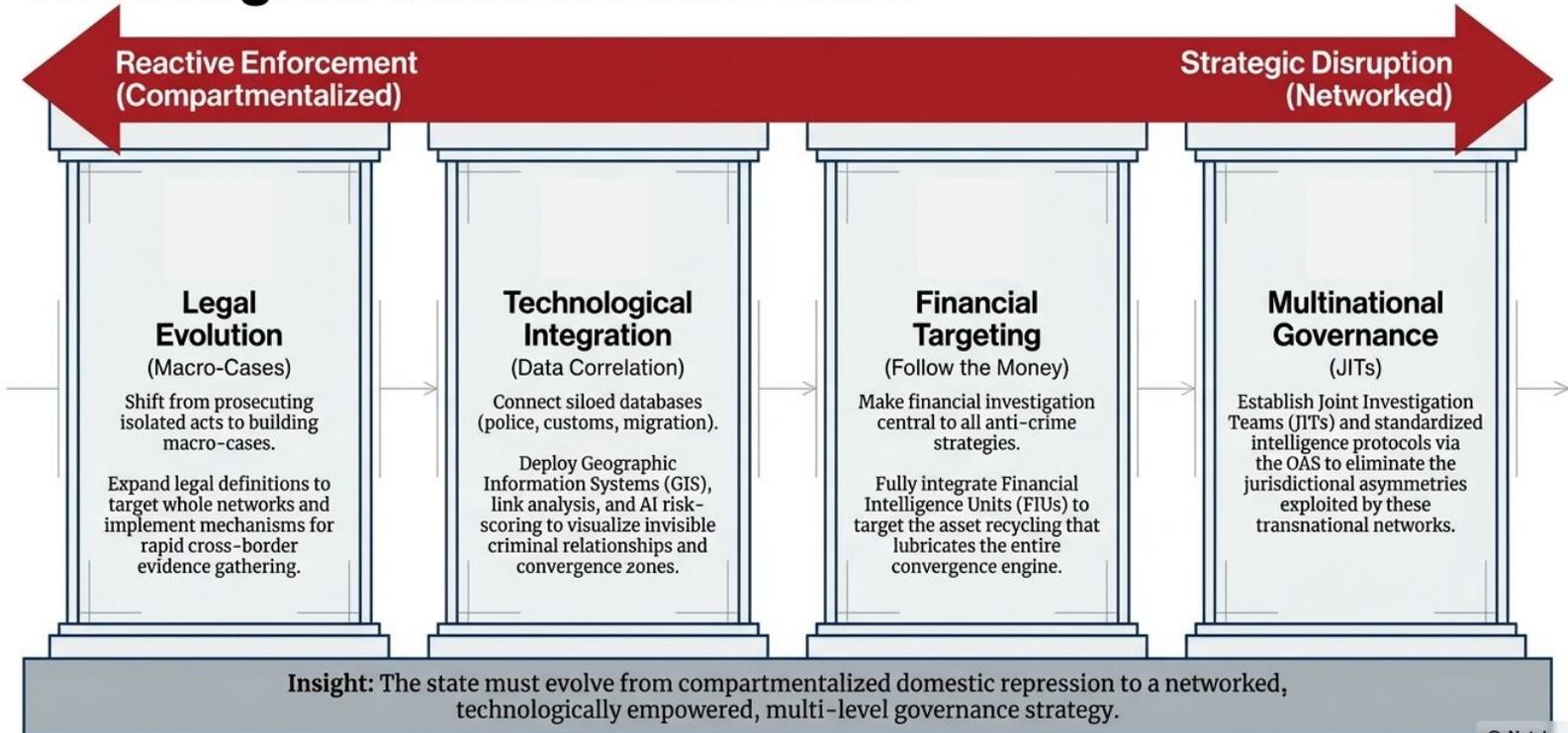
### Micro-Case Study

**Field Evidence:** Organizations like Tren de Aragua and PCC utilize prison systems and marginalized urban neighborhoods as centralized operational hubs. From these secured nodes, they dictate cross-border integration, coordinate weapons/drug/human trafficking, and regulate illicit economies across multiple jurisdictions.

Insight: Without territorial control—whether a physical border crossing, a prison, or a digital port—the convergent ecosystem collapses.



## Strategic Disruption: The Integrated State Architecture



Thank you



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# Strengthening Responses to Illicit Arms Flows in the Americas

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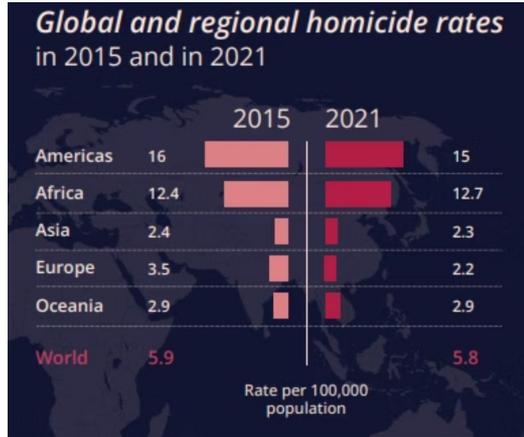
Legislative and Operational Priorities



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# Armed Violence in the Americas

The Americas hold the **world's highest homicide rate** — **15 per 100,000 inhabitants** — with firearms involved in 67% of killings. Far above the global average, this crisis is driven by illicit arms flows, inequality, and fragile institutions.



Source: UNODC, 2023



Source: UNODC, 2023

## Scale

67% of homicides involve firearms — nearly double the global average of ~40%

## Key Drivers

Illicit arms flow (diversion and trafficking);  
Inequality and social exclusion

## Broader Impact

Fuels organized crime, extortion, GBV, deters investment, and undermines democratic governance

# Gaps in Addressing Illicit Firearms Flows

## Through-life management of firearms and ammunition

- Outdated laws fail to regulate all stages of firearms and ammunition lifecycle
- Limited personnel and equipment to ensure security conditions of storage, handling, and disposal
- Paper-based systems and atomized databases

## Border control

- Porous borders
- Lack of equipment to screen cargo and containers
- Insufficient personnel and training
- Weak communication tools between national authorities and other counterparts

## Criminal Justice System

- Absence of protocols for systematic tracing and investigation of recovered firearms and ammunition
- Limited use of police intelligence to counter diversion points
- Absence of effective systems to share data with other police forces
- Delays to destroy or repurpose seized firearms

## Prevention of Armed Violence and Promotion of Culture of Peace

- Absence of policies to promote social inclusion and equality
- Limited resources and capacity to solve conflicts
- High levels of violence and insecurity at community level

# Legislative Gaps

1

## Outdated National Laws

Decades-old statutes fail to regulate the lifecycle of firearms, ammunition, and explosives: export/import controls, marking, stockpile management, and disposal procedures

2

## Weak Legal Market Oversight

Brokers, dealers, and commercial exports are insufficiently regulated — making legal channels a key source of diversion to illicit markets

3

## Emerging Technology Blind Spots

3D-printed weapons, ghost guns, and online marketplaces remain largely uncovered — traffickers exploit these gaps to move untraceable arms

4

## Inconsistent Regional Standards

The absence of harmonized regulations allows traffickers to exploit jurisdictional differences across the Americas

# The Missing Piece: Ammunition and Explosives

**Ammunition and explosives are increasingly weaponized by organized crime — yet they remain the region's most under-regulated threat vectors.**

## Ammunition: The Silent Enabler

- Smuggling increasingly more profitable than firearms trafficking in some sub-regions
- Few countries require marking, record-keeping, or tracing of ammunition
- Military, police, and private stockpiles lack modern inventory controls
- No regional data exchange on ammunition seizures or trafficking routes

## Explosives: Expanding Criminal Use

- Increasingly used for territorial control, intimidation, and attacks on infrastructure
- Regulatory gaps in precursors, storage, and transport remain widespread
- Online procurement of components bypasses traditional controls
- Cross-border sharing on explosive thefts is virtually nonexistent

# Criminal Convergence

## Links to Organized Crime

The relationship between illicit flows of firearms, ammunition, explosives, and organized crime is **multidimensional and mutually reinforcing**. Arms fuel crime networks; crime networks demand more arms — creating a self-sustaining cycle of violence.

## Common Enablers

- Weak border control and surveillance
- Corruption at key transit and enforcement points
- Gaps in intelligence, data, and information exchange
- Inadequate or under-resourced justice institutions
- Limited victim identification and referral mechanisms

## Operational Interdependence

- Shared smuggling routes (land, sea, air)
- Overlapping logistics and transport networks
- Weapons used to protect drug shipments or extortion markets

## Financial Convergence

- Firearms profits fund other illicit markets
- Money laundering through shared facilitators
- Weapons as currency or barter in criminal transactions

□ Tackling these linkages requires **coordinated, integrated responses** — combining data collection, cross-border cooperation, and targeted intelligence sharing across agencies and borders.

# Available Resources – Inter-American System



## CIFTA

Legally binding agreement to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of SALW, ammunition, and explosives  
Ratified by 31 countries in the Americas



## Practical tools to promote CIFTA:

- Model legislation and guidelines;
- Hemispheric Study on Arms Trafficking;
  - PACAM
- Regional cooperation mechanisms



## Mechanisms to expand inter-institutional cooperation

Regional Communication Mechanism on Licit Transfers (MCTA) □ Strengthening controls on international transfers (ATT and CIFTA)  
Sub-Regional Roadmaps



# CIFTA

## Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture of, and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials

### Legally Binding Treaty

Signed in 1997 — the first regional treaty to address firearms trafficking in the Americas.

### Comprehensive scope

Unique treaty that provisions for firearms, ammunition, and explosives

### 31 State Parties

Ratified by 31 countries of the Americas.

The USA, Canada, and Jamaica have signed but not yet ratified.

One of the conventions with the highest number of State Parties in the Inter-American System — the **main framework** to address illicit firearms in the Americas.

# CIFTA – Main Obligations

## **Criminalization**

Establish criminal offenses for illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms and ammunition.

## **Lifecycle Management**

Mandatory marking (serial numbers), recordkeeping, physical security and stockpile management, and licensing systems for international transfers.

## **Border Control**

Strengthen controls at export and import points to prevent diversion and illicit flows.

## **Cooperation & Information Exchange**

States commit to sharing information, expertise, and best practices to combat trafficking regionally.

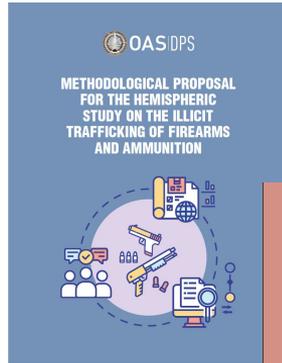
## **Biennial Reporting**

Every two years, member states submit a standardized questionnaire on CIFTA implementation progress.

# Hemispheric Study on Illicit Firearms Trafficking

Ongoing effort to generate comprehensive knowledge about **illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking** in the Americas

**Modular methodology** (funded by Mexico and approved by VI Conference of State Parties to CIFTA) to understand **how to effectively prevent the illicit trade of firearms, their components, and ammunition** — and to generate **actionable recommendations**.



## CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE

**Development of new CIFTA questionnaire**   
**self assessment tool to measure state capacities**

### Module 3 – Impacts of Arms Trafficking

Module 3 aims to understand the impact of arms and ammunition trafficking and illicit trade, with a gender perspective. Implemented in partnership with civil society (case studies for Brazil and Mexico)



#### Public Health

Health system burden, mortality, and injuries from illicit firearms.



#### Governance

Erosion of state authority and rule of law in affected areas.



#### Illicit Economies

How arms trafficking fuels other criminal activities.



#### Economy

Costs to institutions, businesses, and households from arms-related violence.



#### Quality of Life

Displacement, fear, and restricted civic participation.



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# PACAM

## Program of Assistance on Control of Arms and Munitions

OAS capacity-building program supporting Member States to address illicit flows of firearms and ammunition and to implement CIFTA obligations

- Legislative Assistance
- Through-life management of firearms and ammunition
- Tracing and police investigation
- Development of IT tools for information-sharing and regional coordination
- Export control
- Prevention of armed violence

**5,500** people assisted and impacted through actions to prevent armed violence

**21** marking machines donated

**+95,000** arms and **+230** tons of ammunition destroyed

**6,000** officials trained to improve oversight of firearms,

**11** countries supported in PSSM with equipment and arsenal upgrades

**Funded by:** European Union and Italy



# Subregional Roadmaps

**Dynamic and participatory government strategy** that guides coordinated actions among all key stakeholders — government agencies, international and regional organizations, the donor community, and civil society.



## Concrete Objectives

Priorities are defined by participating countries and translated into measurable targets through National Action Plans (NAPs).



## Institutional Renewal

Effective inter-agency coordination guided by roadmap goals, and metrics.



## Compliance

Co-custodians ensure accountability on Roadmap and NAP progress through a robust M&E framework.



## International Cooperation

Structured collaboration with donor and partner organizations.

## Caribbean Roadmap

**OAS, as an implementing partner,** participates in quarterly coordination meetings, supporting priority actions through PACAM activities.

## Central America & DR Roadmap

Mandated by the OAS General Assembly. **OAS, as co-custodian,** leads the follow-up and monitoring mechanism, coordinating with UNLIREC and SG/SICA.

## Andean Roadmap

Mandated by the OAS Permanent Council. OAS, as co-custodian, leads the development, in cooperation with UNLIREC and SG/LaCAN



# Central America & DR Roadmap

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2025

2025–2035



## 1 Regulatory Strengthening and Interinstitutional Coordination.

- Update national regulatory frameworks.
- Strengthen inter-institutional coordination at the national and subregional levels.
- Generate updated information and data on firearms, ammunition, and explosives.



## 2 Prevention of violence with firearms and firearms misuse

- Implement comprehensive national and local strategies to prevent and reduce violence involving firearms.
- Establish guidelines and protocols to restrict firearm use in public spaces.
- Strengthen links between arms control and development policies.



## 3 Lifecycle Management of Firearms, Ammunition, and explosives.

- Strengthen measures and processes for registering, supervising, and controlling the lifecycle of firearms, including civilian firearms and ammunition.
- Prevent the diversion of firearms, ammunition, and explosives.
- Enhance the control of international transfers of firearms, ammunition, and explosives.



## 4 Investigation and Criminal Prosecution of Illicit Trafficking, Manufacture, Possession, and Use of Firearms, Ammunition, and Explosives.

- Strengthen the capacities of security forces and the justice system.
- Promote subregional and international cooperation.
- Enhance the capacities and infrastructure of customs, border control, and postal services.

## Context & Mandate

- Mandated by the OAS General Assembly
- Built on proven models from the Western Balkans and Caribbean
- OAS and UNLIREC as co-custodians; SICA as major implementing partner
- EU as main donor for the development phase

## Key Characteristics

- **7 signatory states** committed to a 10-year framework
- Mid-term review planned for 2030
- Comprehensive approach: prevention through criminal prosecution, covering the full lifecycle of firearms, ammunition, and explosives
- **19 KPIs** under development to track progress

# Conclusions

## Priority Areas (legislators)

01

### Modernize Legislation

Update firearms, ammunition, and explosives laws; close gaps in marking, tracing, stockpile management, and broker oversight

03

### Strengthen State Capacities

Invest in digital tracing systems, electronic records, and border surveillance infrastructure

05

### Use Evidence to Guide Policy

Leverage the Hemispheric Study and regional Knowledge Platform for data-driven decision-making

02

### Regulate Emerging Threats

Address ghost guns, 3D-printed weapons, online sales, and explosive precursors before traffickers further entrench these channels

04

### Promote Regional Cooperation

Support CIFTA mechanisms, Subregional Roadmaps, and cross-border information-sharing platforms

The Inter-American system provides political and operational tools to help States strengthen their capacity to prevent and combat illicit arms flows.

Support is tailored to national needs and can be requested through the Department of Public Security. Sustainable progress depends on anchoring interventions within the region's political architecture, particularly the CIFTA framework.

# Thank You!

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