

Loose guns:

**Israeli controlled
small arms
in the civil sphere**

How many guns and how much control?

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The report in brief

Introduction: The report and the guns

This report is a first-ever account of the proliferation of small arms in the civil sphere within Israel and in the territories it controls. Explaining which institutions and which people own or bear handguns or rifles (which represent just part of what is covered by the official Israeli term: “fighting equipment”), the report outlines who is responsible for controlling these arms and to what extent control is exercised.

The stand taken very openly by the report is also supported by its findings: The widespread proliferation of firearms does not provide security. Focusing on the accumulation of injurious, lethal and threatening effects of guns in the civil sphere, the report traces how these disrupt and even dismantle aspects of the social order. A close look at an array of (mostly) civilian victims demonstrates some of the risks and damages of multiplying small arms and supports a conclusion shared in past by decision makers and top officials, within Israeli security and civilian institutions. That is, that the civil sphere in Israel and in the territories under its control are over-armed. As shown by report findings, this over-armament is accompanied and supported by a severe lack of data and by excessively weak control of the small arms for which the state of Israel is responsible.

Top public security officials agree or agreed in past on the pressing need for selective disarmament designed to reduce the dangerous level of over-armament that they identified. Realizing such a policy depends, however, on the availability of precise, reliable data on the numbers and dispersion of small arms throughout the civil sphere. A responsible stock-taking as a baseline for ongoing monitoring is crucial if a policy of arms reduction is to be implemented. It is equally crucial for carrying out the policy adopted by Israel’s current government: expanding arms proliferation while maintaining a controlled balance.

Translating small arms policy into a practical reality needs a comprehensive data base on the guns carried and stored and moving through those spaces that are populated mostly by civilians. Such a data base must include the small arms of all the armed organizations that share and move through these civil spaces, along with the arms of private citizens.

This attempt to lay foundations for such a stock-taking is carried out from the independent, non-institutional standpoint of activists who firmly believe in democratic civil participation in the operations of authorities, in carefully monitoring their planning and implementation through gender-sensitive and minority-sensitive lenses. The report, written from a clearly acknowledged standpoint, is a necessary tool for understanding the past moves of executive bodies, subject to a declared policy of selective small arms disarmament, and those of the current government claimed to accelerate an ostensibly balanced armament. It stresses the importance of an ongoing public discussion of the scope of small arms proliferation, of limiting the numbers of licenses and guns and of the quality of oversight practices, while proposing foundations for this discussion. As clearly demonstrated by the data collected and presented in the report, civil control of firearms and their uses is an urgent necessity.

Israel's Jewish majority tends to view small arms as enabling a secure, protected space. Discernible in recent years, however, is a degree of change in this perception, both in the public at large and among decision makers. For the first time, for instance, considerable attention was turned by media, the public and the authorities to direct links between the ready availability of firearms and a growing series of killings, murders and suicides performed with the arms of security firms, in the families of private security guards.

This shift in perceptions didn't result from the incidents themselves, which were seen as separate, individual tragedies. Rather, it was the identification and publication of a common enabling factor, by the Gun Free Kitchen Tables (GFKT) initiative, that generated new awareness of the phenomenon. All these

killings were enabled by the available guns of security firms, which were illegally sent into guards' homes. This in turn led to widespread recognition of a correlation between the recurring killings and a long time policy of non-enforcement. GFKT advocacy thus played a key role in exposing an existing, unnoticed phenomenon and in positioning it as an issue demanding policy change.

Concurrently, GFKT galvanized a growing public awareness that small arms in the home and family multiply the risks faced by women and the chances of women's murders, while increasing the risks of murder and suicide overall. The initiative publicized existing, strong evidence for drops in women's murders in families in conditions of increased gun control and tightened small arms legislation and enforcement (both worldwide and in Israel). Public consciousness began to register that reduced firearm availability in homes reduces the risk of homicide, particularly of women. This new knowledge, integrated into the systematic data collection presented by GFKT, succeeded in kick-starting a move that disarmed tens of thousands of homes and alleviated the threat faced by thousands of women and many children and men.

Years of non-enforcement of the law requiring security firms to store guards' guns at their places of employment merely formed part of a much broader trend. The report discusses a comprehensive policy of selective non-enforcement of gun laws directly affecting and damaging a variety of communities. This systemic practice is motivated, the authors claim, by political and economic interests, and first and foremost by a bid to maximize the control exercised by the institutions of the ruling Jewish majority. Non-enforcement is applied in different ways within the boundaries of the "green line" (internationally recognized as Israel's borders) and beyond them, in Jewish and Palestinian communities. It effectively denies protective civilian measures to the members of a range of different groups. A distinctly gendered aspect is built-in to this policy, as it serves to oppress and exploit disadvantaged populations and directly injures women in general and women from excluded groups in particular.

Alongside systematic and selective non-enforcement of gun laws, this policy further comprises a refusal to provide existing data and an avoidance of methodical data collection on small arms proliferation, gun crime and damages incurred by firearms. These are, as noted, vital to conducting a responsible, transparent and democratic implementation of small arms policy. The present report lays the groundwork for further research, data collection and new action on the part of civil society, expanding the initial discussion of security firms' arms to all arms present in the civil sphere and to over-armament as a preventable phenomenon demanding practical steps.

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Chapter 1: Mapping small arms in the civil sphere – classifications and responsible parties

All of the bodies responsible for the arms caches present in civilian space throughout Israel and the territories it controls are subject to the Firearms Act (1949), the central law regulating small arms. The Firearms Licensing Department of the Ministry of Public Security is the key party responsible for executing the state's small arms policy in keeping with this law. The administrative classification of the small arms for which the state bears responsibility varies according to the gun owners and the official roles of their bearers. The authorities distinguish between "civilian arms" and arms issued to security forces, although the classification "civilian" is sometimes used in contradictory ways. The Firearms Licensing Department is responsible for issuing licenses to bear "civilian" arms, including those classified by the law and by the ministry as "private" and those classified as "organizational" arms. It is also responsible for oversight of civilian license holders and gun bearers.

In addition, the Firearms Act defines armed organizations that share responsibility for managing the overall store of small arms. The list of responsible bodies includes:

- The Ministry of Public Security and in particular the Firearms Licensing Department;
- “Independent Licensing Bodies” including:
 - a) The Israel Police, an armed organization that manages the cache of arms issued to its employees, including the arms of the Border Police;
 - b) The Israel Defense Force, an armed organization that manages the cache of arms classified as “military,” including the arms issued to conscripted soldiers during active service, the arms entrusted to some of the professional army, the arms issued to reserve soldiers during terms of duty and the arms issued to the organizations known as “readiness squads” in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and in communities classified as “worthy” (that is, worthy of armament) inside and along the Green Line;
 - c) The Prison Service, an armed organization that manages the cache of arms issued to its employees;
 - d) The Knesset (parliamentary) Guard, an armed organization that manages the cache of arms issued to its employees.

The Firearms Licensing Department reviews and grants requests for three main types of licenses for bearing small arms:

- A “private license” – issued to a private individual in order to purchase and keep a firearm at home;
- A “special license” – issued to someone who is responsible for additional arms bearers and their arms, for instance, as a senior employee of a private security firm;
- A limited license to bear arms on duty, issued to a person who answers to a “special license” bearer, for bearing arms in the course of his work or in keeping with his domicile.

Like the licenses, the firearms for which the Department is responsible are classified as:

- Private arms
- Organizational arms – a term used by the Department to denote both the arms of private security firms and the arms of many other organizations.

It is not infrequent to find clashing and inconsistent uses of labels and classifications pertaining to firearms. Classifications of arms and their bearers can change from department to department or from one document to the next. As a result, overall, official data provided by the authorities is inconsistent and confusing. Officials from the institutions responsible for firearms in Israel are aware of this problem and recognize that it impairs coordination between and within authorities and their operations. Unclear terminology, vague institutional accountability, uncertain status of armed organizations and licenses all seriously hinder the implementation of an effective small arms policy. Conclusive comparisons between the number of license holders and the number of firearms over time become unfeasible, for instance, though these are vital for reality checks and well-informed decision-making. Concurrently, confusing terminology severely impairs efficient oversight of firearms and their bearers.

Prevalent public indifference to small arms proliferation in Israel is rooted, at least partly, in the normalized and naturalized omnipresence of military guns among the Jewish majority. An open, focused discussion of the damages incurred by extensively present military firearms in the civil sphere could galvanize criticism and weaken entrenched perceptions of small arms as friendly, protective tools. Army authorities, however, exploit the prevalent culture of security secrecy to impede public debate on the excessive proliferation of military arms in the civil sphere. Thus, for instance, data demonstrating that readily available firearms act as “suicide accelerators” among soldiers was hidden for a long time after it was collected and interpreted by the military and even after it had led to changes in regulations. The data was concealed even though its disclosure posed no security threat.

An organization entrusted with the security of the state and its citizens is duty-bound to establish and uphold regulations for providing information on the arms that it scatters throughout the living spaces of these citizens. This organization bears responsibility for supplying focused relevant details on the lethal small arms populating the streets, communities and homes of civilians. The same holds for the Israel Police, an organization directly responsible for security in the civil sphere. And yet, it seems that only a strong civil society demand for such data can lead to its collection and provision by these bodies.

Accordingly, the authors of the present report submitted requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act to four executive bodies: the Israel Police, the Israel Defense Force, the Defense Ministry and the Ministry of Public Security. The latter made a considerable effort to provide the requested data. Nevertheless, about a third (32%) of the questions were rejected, most of them (22%) on supposed security grounds and the remainder because, as the ministry claimed, they did not conform to the legal definition of information under the Act. Additional questions remained unanswered due to lack of resources, clearly indicating a consistent failure to collect highly relevant data which accordingly did not exist in the ministry. The answers of the other three bodies queried fell far short even of this modest level. The process as a whole clarified that, by and large, the executive bodies in charge of small arms do not consider it their duty to provide comprehensive information to civil society groups. Contradicting the principle of freedom of information, this moreover prevents democratic, fact-based monitoring of small arms proliferation and its implications.

Given the constraints of non-existent or inaccessible information, the current report attempts a first, rough estimate of the present incidence of small arms throughout civil society while documenting a gap between policy decisions to reduce over-armament, taken in the recent past, and the practical implementation of these.

Chapter 2: An attempted stock-taking after all or: How many guns are scattered around us?

Civilian firearms:

The vital need for reliable data on firearms in general and on organizational firearms in particular is clearly demonstrated by the fact that it was data collected by the Gun Free Kitchen Tables initiative that galvanized a policy change disarming thousands of homes. It was data that evidenced the phenomenon of killings with the guns of private security firms in the family sphere.

In 2013, the then Minister of Public Security claimed to be implementing “an important reform, reducing small arms proliferation ... we are lowering the number of those licensed to bear arms. Since March 2011, we’ve cancelled 10,000 licenses. Since 2005 – close to 100 thousand.” Concurrently, the Firearms Licensing Department reported 133,187 “organizationally licensed” firearms and less than a year later it placed “the number of firearms held by worthy operations” at 125,000. A swift drop of over 8,000 “organizational firearms” raises distinct doubts, partly, because it is unclear whether the number reported in 2014 denotes all “organizational arms” or only some of them.

Civil society is not privy to the definitions awarding a variety of bodies the title “worthy operation” (or organization), licensing it to maintain a store of “organizational arms.” The public receives no details on the identity of the worthy operations (which, for instance, include the local manufacturer of Coca-Cola) or of the scope of their respective armament. It receives no account of the numbers of small arms at the disposal of these fully civilian organizations or of the degree to which they meet the regulations applying to their arms caches. According to the Firearms Licensing Department, in February 2013 private security companies were in possession of less than 30% of all “organizational arms,” which they claimed numbered 93,000 at the time. The remainder of this store then, over 60,000 guns, was dispersed in unknown quantities throughout Israel and the West Bank in industrial plants, commercial organizations, municipalities and unknown bodies, in conditions of almost zero transparency.

Even more problematic, perhaps, the Israel Police refrains from collecting and providing clear, disaggregated data on the relative significance of guns in crime (whether licensed or illegal), in murders and killings in general and in the murders of intimates – predominantly women – in particular, in assault related injuries, in robberies, in suicides and so forth. Neither does it amass and provide details on the ownership of firearms used in crimes. This is in stark contradiction to many countries in which such data is collected and placed at the disposal of researchers and the public.

Based on the data that the Firearms Licensing Department does nevertheless collect and publish, in 2013 the number of civilian arms was 293,000 (including private and organizational arms). Whether or not this represents an “important reform reducing small arms proliferation,” as claimed by the minister, rests on the question: Reducing relative to what? Twenty years earlier, in 1993, a ministerial committee reported the existence of 309,000 registered, civilian firearms (including private and organizational arms). Accordingly, the store of guns that the state of Israel licensed to its citizens decreased by only 5.1% over twenty years, or by about 16,000 firearms.

The data reported by the minister focused exclusively on private guns but obfuscated a dramatic rise in organizational arms. In 1993, the number of organizational guns was apparently about 65,100; in 2013 organizational guns had more than doubled and reportedly amounted about 133,200. The overall reduction of arms proliferation was much smaller, then, than the cancellation of 100,000 licenses.

Military firearms:

Since the foundation of the state of Israel, data on military-related subjects, including military small arms, are largely kept under the sweeping wrap of “potential damage to state security.” The majority of Israel’s civil society including most journalists and researchers tend to self-censor critical questions on what are loosely perceived as “national security” issues. And yet, how and in what sense is state security jeopardized by informing citizens of the estimated quantity of military guns outside of military bases, a store that permeates civilian space on a daily basis? What precisely will such an estimate reveal? Research for this report included a query to the military spokesperson requesting the estimated amount of military arms regularly present in the civil sphere. The response was: “Reaching such an estimate is difficult as oversight is carried out the level of units and commands.” The IDF has made a policy decision, which it has even publicized, to reduce the number of small arms leaving military bases. And yet, it fails to conduct an overall, fact-based monitoring process to verify implementation of this policy.

The authors of this report have conjectured that the number of military arms regularly circulating throughout civil spaces controlled by Israel (borne by soldiers on furlough, on their way to and from medical treatments or on their way from one military site to another) is somewhere between one-quarter and one half of the number of combat soldiers (who are not the only soldiers issued arms). Drawing on figures publicized by both Israeli military and foreign sources, the number of these arms can accordingly be placed between 6,700 and 20,000. Vague as it may be, an estimate of 6,700 to 20,000 military guns in the civil sphere at any given time is a cautious one founded on publicly available figures. In addition, some 4,000 to 5,200 military arms at least are given to civilian members of the Jewish settlements beyond and along the Green Line. This arms cache too is distributed throughout civil space. Consequently, in total, an estimable number of between 11,000 to 25,000 military arms, and perhaps many more, are regularly present in the civil spaces in, and controlled by, Israel.

The firearms of “independent licensing bodies”:

The numbers of arms held and deployed by thoroughly civilian organizations such as the Israel Police and the Prison Services were not provided to the authors of the present report. Neither was detailed information given on the regulations stipulating which roles and employees are to bear arms in the course of duty or on the overall percentage of armed vs. unarmed positions in the organization. In the absence of such statistics, our conservative conjecture places arms in the hand of at least one-third (26,300) of the overall workforce of these organizations (comprising both employees and active volunteers). That is, one-third of 25,000 police employees, 35,000 police volunteers, 10,000 Border Police, 8,800 employees of the Prison Service, totaling 78,800, are presumably armed. As all of the 200 strong Knesset Guard can be assumed to be armed, independent licensing bodies add some 26,500 firearms at least to the civil sphere.

All in all, GFKT estimates place the number of small arms permeating the civil sphere controlled by the state of Israel between 311,000 and 326,000 at least and possibly many more, alongside an unknown number (possibly hundreds of thousands) of illegal arms.

Illegal small arms:

The authors were not provided with an estimate of the number of illegal arms that play a key role in the overall cache of small arms scattered throughout local civilian spaces. Is it conceivable that the Israel Police and the Ministry of Public Security form and implement policies without estimates of the dimensions of the illegal arms cache, even if these are tentative and cautious? Or is it, rather, the case that Israel's authorities prefer to conceal such estimates? An internal Ministry of Interior report placed the number of civilian arms stolen or lost since the nineteen-seventies at 23,000. With regard to military arms, the Minister of Public Security recently stated that: “In the north of the country, 90% of illegal arms come from the army.” Unverified reports claimed that police assessed the number of illegal arms in 2013 at 400,000.

The sources of illegal arms emerge clearly from an array of official documents, demonstrating clearly that the majority of illegal arms were formerly licensed and legal. The store of legal arms is decidedly the predominant source of illegal arms in Israel.

The sources of illegal arms comprise:

- Military arms stores
- Soldiers in transit or on leave outside of military bases
- Arms stores in “worthy” communities and Jewish settlements in the West Bank
- Private security firms’ arms stores
- Police and Border Police arms stores
- Worthy operations
- Firearms manufacturing plants
- Illegal firearms manufacturers

The extensive proliferation of illegal firearms documented in Palestinian communities in Israel is closely linked to the state’s abstinence from orderly and egalitarian law enforcement in the lives and communities of Israel’s Palestinian citizens. Recurring claims that police refrain from intervention and fail to collect and reduce this store of arms reflect a reality of “negligent law,” leading to lethal results both in and beyond Palestinian communities.

The chapter concludes with evidence of the daily and routine abuse of small arms in the public sphere: An overview of police statistics on offenses involving “fighting equipment” and independent GFKT data collected from reports on shooting incidents. As the casualty lists in the report demonstrate, many of those killed and injured in the course of this routine reality were innocent and unsuspecting. In addition, a comparison of shooting data from the last quarter of 2015 with that of the last quarter of 2013 reveals a severe shift for the worse in gun use practices.

Chapter 3: To what extent are firearms subject to government oversight?

Oversight of civilian firearms, private and organizational:

The Firearms Licensing Department of the Ministry of Public Security bears overall responsibility for oversight of civilian firearms and civilian arms bearers. In 2014 the number of ministry officials in charge of overseeing the entire cache of 274,000 civilian arms and arms bearers, based on data provided by the department, was only six, or in other words, one official per about 48,000 guns and licenses. Senior ministry officials admitted that this was insufficient and claimed that the department in fact applies oversight prior to licensing and gun purchase, while ongoing oversight (as reported by the State Comptroller) amounts to automatic license renewal. The oversight of civilian firearms was exhaustively examined by two State Comptroller's reports, about 15 years apart. Both reported a reality of seriously failed oversight.

Over the recent decade, the Firearms Licensing Department implemented a policy prioritizing organizational arms over private arms, while claiming that the former were subject to two levels of oversight – both by the department and by the “special license” holder employed by the organization. The veracity of this claim was closely examined in the requests for information submitted by Gun Free Kitchen Tables to the Israel Police and the Ministry of Public Security. We asked for data on the frequency of monitoring visits at the armed organizations, on the numbers of deviations discovered over recent years and on the resulting sanctions imposed.

We learned that, “There are unannounced monitoring visits but no in-depth monitoring visits ... [and that] there's no record of how many hearings we hold.” No details were provided on the frequency of imposing the main sanction, that is, the cancellation of a “special license.” As this sanction affects a single employee, rather than the entire organization, department officials also claimed a lack of sufficient authority for efficient enforcement: “The authority that shuts down security guard firms is the Ministry of Justice.” However, a 2005 report cited the department as the authority that revoked the license of “Katzrin Shooting

Range.” Furthermore, reports on this incident distinctly contradict the department claim to doubly tight oversight on shooting ranges. The details of another shooting range closure in 2010 raised further doubts regarding oversight quality. In addition, available data seems to indicate that oversight led to revoking of only a fraction, less than 1 percent, of the 130,000 licenses for organizational arms in 2009.

The response received to GFKT’s request for detailed data on revoked licenses of persons living in “worthy” municipalities and communities was: “There is no precise number. In principle, hundreds of firearms a year are collected.” This answer reveals that systematic records of this process are not being kept. The State Comptroller cautioned in 2014 of critical lacks in data collection. Serious questions ensue: If the data doesn’t exist, how is orderly, planned oversight possible? What is resource and staff allocation based on? If the data does exist, why is it concealed? Is this an abuse of the prevalent culture of confidentiality meant to block criticism of the state and its performance? Apparently, the police and the Ministry of Public Security do not conduct structured monitoring of oversight activities and fail to collect data which is vital for identifying trends, for reviewing policy and for planning budgets. Pervasive privatization in the field of policing and an ongoing handover of responsibility to private “sub-contractors” is accompanied, it would seem, by state authorities’ evasion of accountability.

The use and storage of private firearms aren’t subject to ongoing monitoring in Israel. The state hasn’t devised means for regularly verifying the emotional-physical state of private license holders or of their patterns of gun storage and gun usage. A 2015 decision by the Israel Police to prohibit “Civil Guard” volunteers from reporting to duty with their private arms amounts to a de facto admission to these problematic lacks. In 2009, for instance, just one-half percent of private license holders – 918 out of 181,050 – were summoned to active reviews conducted by the supervisors of the Firearms Licensing Department. Concurrently, over an unspecified period (based on incomplete data quoted in a Knesset Research and Information report), the department directly monitored another

10,000 private license holders of specific types of arms, “possessing a military rifle, a hunting rifle or a small scale rifle.” Presumably, the remaining 170,000 private license holders were continuously granted automatic license renewals every three years based on a practice session at a shooting range.

A potential monitoring channel which could prove significant in preventing firearm abuse are the welfare authorities specializing in domestic violence prevention. Recognizing the increased risk posed by the presence of a firearm in a family living with violence, the intake questionnaires of welfare workers ask whether there is a gun in the home. This source would be far more reliable than the context-less psychological “risk evaluation” introduced into the licensing process in 2014. However, while the Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence Prevention recommended in 2015 that reporting channels be established, the Ministry of Welfare objected. The military too abstains from informing civilian licensing authorities of developments relevant to firearms ownership. For instance, it does not, as a rule, report decisions to dismiss reserve officers on grounds of conduct, despite known incidents in which such information might have prevented severe gun violence and saved lives.

Even when monitoring is efficient, the authorities appear overly lenient on gun licensing, as indicated by the evidence collected for two civil suits filed by “Gun Free Kitchen Tables.” Leniency in licensing intensified further in 2015, following the ministerial decision to expand the pool of people entitled to gun licenses.

Oversight of military firearms in the civil sphere:

The State Comptroller identified a rise of 4% in the annual loss of firearms by the military, some years ago, while the army reported a drop of about 12% in gun losses. This discrepancy casts serious doubts on claims by the Investigative Military Police to a 42% drop in the rate of gun thefts in the Israel Defense Force in 2011. The military oversight of firearms, according to the State Comptroller, exhibits: “recurring failures ... ‘fundamental ... in counting,’ ... in mishandling gun loss reports which misapply regulations; failures in the management of weapons stores, and circumventing regulations in stock taking ... and ‘officers insufficiently engaged

in controlling stocks.” Overall, these amounted to: “failures affecting the way stocks are managed ... at the level of units.” However, in a letter to the authors of the present report, the Military Spokesperson explained that, “Oversight [of small arms] is carried out at the unit level and at the level of command.” The State Comptroller’s list of failures, at the level of the separate units, is therefore particularly pertinent, bearing directly upon the quality of oversight of military small arms.

Thefts and illegal sales of military arms are sometimes conducted over extended periods and involve large quantities of arms. In 2016 a professional non-commissioned officer was sentenced to 15 years in prison for stealing and selling large amounts of army weapons over an extended period. A faulty regulation allows the military to entrust army guns to civilians in Jewish settlements in the West Bank who have criminal records. Civilians to whom the military delegates responsibility for the security of their settlements in the West Bank (“Civilian Security Coordinators”) were authorized to keep their military arms after being convicted of criminal offenses. This is one of many aspects of the selective and discriminatory non-enforcement of laws in these regions. Poor oversight of the large cache of military arms present in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and in communities along the Green Line allows and indeed encourages abuses of these arms directed, first and foremost, against Palestinians.

Oversight of police arms:

In 2011, the Israel Police examined the correction of severe oversight failures identified following a theft of police arms, and revealed numerous, persisting failures. Publication of the report was prohibited. Dozens of similar internal reports exposing failures in police operation were gagged. This sweeping practice, and the findings of these reports, including failures in securing arms caches, testify to an entrenched culture of faulty oversight. Oversight regarding police firearms, their usage and abuses of the power that they grant their bearers, seems excessively loose, to say the least. In 2014, another internal review found breaches of law by armed municipal policing units that handled criminal offenses falling beyond their authority and intervened in arrests, against regulations. Strong evidence of the lack of oversight

exercised in cases of police who apply excessive violence against Palestinian citizens of Israel is the number of these citizens killed by police between 2000 and 2015. This number was 17 times higher than the number of Jewish citizens killed over the same period.

Illegal arms:

Prolonged acts of theft and arms sales from sensitive sites that are presumably subject to extra-tight oversight are evidence of weak oversight practices. Examples of such cases are numerous and include, among others, the arms store of the “readiness squad” of the Shavei Shomron settlement in the West Bank as well as arms stores at various military bases. Large loopholes in the oversight systems of armed organizations enable a steady flow of firearms from legal to illegal arms caches. Extensive proliferation of legal arms leads to the growing proliferation of illegal arms. Significantly reducing the store of illegally owned guns requires a large reduction of the store of legal ones and much tightened oversight. Such measures must apply to the arms stores of the IDF, the Israel Police, the Prison Services and to “worthy” settlements and communities on both sides of the Green Line. Common claims to the security of arming growing numbers of competent, qualified people don’t stand the reality test of faulty oversight and of the constant flow of legal arms into the illegal cache.

Chapter 4: A Call for Vital Measures:

This final, succinct chapter presents a series of practical measures viewed by the authors as vital to formulating and implementing a responsible small arms policy:

- 1) Building an infrastructure of clear, accessible, transparent data.
- 2) Accelerating and completing the ongoing process of centralizing responsibility and authority for firearms licensing and oversight.
- 3) Enacting a new clear, understandable and consistent Small Arms Act designed to protect the human security and personal security of women and men from diverse groups, minorities and communities.
- 4) Consistently adhering to and implementing a policy of rolling back small arms proliferation in the civil sphere.

- 5) Significantly reducing the proliferation of illegal arms through significant reduction of their sources in the cache of legal arms.
- 6) Seriously tightening oversight of all small arms.

Among the detailed measures the chapter urges, it calls for enactment of mandatory third-party insurance for every firearm, analogous to the mandatory third-party insurance required in Israel for every motor vehicle. The protective measures for damages, injuries and deaths incurred by firearms under Israel's law are currently far weaker than those provided for damages, injuries and deaths incurred by motor vehicles. The law cannot offer weaker protection from a machine expressly designed to kill than it does from a machine designed for transport.

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