



## Statement of Canada's National Firearms Association to UN First Committee October 2017

The NFA is Canada's largest advocacy organization representing the rights of Canadian firearms owners. Our members are concerned that UN attempts to regulate small arms and light weapons are misdirected and will have an unjustifiably harmful effect upon the ability of free people to have access to firearms and ammunition for perfectly legitimate purposes. The NFA rejects as false that civilian access to small arms is the problem.

A critical problem with United Nations' effort related to the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons is that there seems to be little desire for the UN to acknowledge that civilian ownership and use of firearms has legitimate purposes and is important not only for target sports, hunting and so on, but also for defence. It is apparent from our interactions with the UN that many of the advocates of UN firearms position are basically opposed to civilian ownership of firearms – they, and much of the UN ODA staff are in effect anti-gun. Thus, there is an inherent bias at the UN against civilian firearms ownership and use, as well as significant opposition to the information presented by users, and the expertise provided by manufacturers of firearms and ammunition.

This inherent bias does not lend itself to addressing the real problems of international mass violence. It has instead forced user groups and manufacturers into an oppositional role. The NFA wishes to make it clear that we have frequently offered our expertise along with our friends in WFSA with the proviso that the United Nations must be clear that in acknowledging and respecting civilian ownership and use of firearms and ammunition as a completely legitimate activity.

To address recent events, the NFA wishes to make it clear that gun control laws do not prevent bad behaviour, nor have they ever stopped a determined person from carrying out evil deeds. Furthermore, if the purpose of law is to change behaviour, it cannot succeed if said behaviour is aberrant and fears no sanction.

Canada's National Firearms Association (NFA) continues to recommend that controls on small arms and light weapons be limited solely to major crew-served weapon systems possessed or sold by nation states - not individually operated firearms owned or desired to be owned by civilians. The rights and property of Canadians, and our firearms businesses engaged in the lawful trade in firearms and ammunition, including surplus firearms and ammunition are matters of national sovereignty, civil freedoms, property rights, and are related to national culture. Also, uniquely marking ammunition beyond calibre, date, and manufacturer is unreasonable, unnecessary, and fiscally impossible.

Small arms in civilian hands allow people to defend themselves from aggression. Self-defense is a natural right of all individuals. This is especially important in the event of unrest and disorder, or in case of state-mandated crimes against humanity. Civilian ownership of arms is an important factor in preventing and limiting the effect of genocide. While governments need to act against terrorism, disarming civilians violates fundamental democratic principles. Unrest by addressing the economic situations, and other reasons that contribute to people agitating for change rather than engaging in one size fits all solutions affecting the rights of free people to own and use firearms. Thank you for your consideration.

Sheldon Clare, President, Canada's National Firearms Association