

The Americas Regional Monitoring of Arms Sales Act (ARMAS Act)

The Americas Regional Monitoring of Arms Sales (ARMAS) Act seeks to disrupt firearm trafficking from the United States to Latin American and the Caribbean by implementing stronger transparency, accountability, and oversight mechanisms for U.S. arms exports.

As the region grapples with rising violence and insecurity exacerbated by the increasing presence and aggression of transnational organizations, notably fentanyl cartels, we cannot ignore the role U.S.-sourced weapons has played in furthering these crises. Insufficient oversight and accountability mechanisms for arms sales have allowed an increasing number of U.S. weapons to end up in the hands of illicit actors in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to data from the Government Accountability Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, U.S.-sourced firearms accounted for [75 percent](#) of firearms recovered from the Dominican Republic and [70 percent](#) from Mexico. Most recently, U.S. guns were [connected to](#) the murder and kidnapping of four American citizens in the Texas border town of Matamoros, Mexico.

Under the Trump administration, small arms authority was transferred from the State Department to the Commerce Department, providing a giveaway to gun lobbyists by creating fewer registration requirements, less oversight, and more exemptions. This decision was celebrated by the National Rifle Association (NRA) as allowing “America’s exporting manufacturers are free to run more competitively among the global markets.” The transfer has led to skyrocketing arms sales both globally, with a 30 percent annual increase. In Latin America and the Caribbean, [public reporting](#) has found that firearms from the United States significantly contribute to political suppression, gang violence, and human rights violations. As the United States seeks to address the root causes of migration and promote regional stability, curbing arms trafficking from the United States must be a top priority.

The ARMAS Act will address these challenges by:

- Transferring small arms authority from the Department of Commerce and back to the Department of State to ensure greater accountability and transparency
- Requiring the development of a comprehensive interagency strategy and program, led by the State Department, to disrupt arms trafficking and diversion of exported firearms and create a certification requirement for arm sales end-users
- Providing for congressional notification, review, and oversight of certain small arms exports regulated by the Department of State
- Requiring the submission of an annual report by State Department and relevant agencies that will allow Congress to understand the challenges and successes of current efforts to address illegal arms trafficking and inform future strategies.
- Prohibiting the Department of Commerce from promoting small arm sales globally throughout the transfer of authority period.