

9. GUNS AND CRIME: A CASE STUDY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO¹

The rise of crime in the Caribbean has been characterized by the increased use of more powerful weapons, resulting in higher mortality levels. In 2004, Trinidad and Tobago experienced 160 firearm murders in 2004, 450 firearm woundings and 1500 non-injury firearm incidents. A major factor contributing to the surge of guns-related criminality in the region is the trafficking of narcotics which has facilitated the availability of firearms. The firearms required for protection of the contraband during transportation are smuggled in along with the drugs. Within these environments which promote the demand for weapons, reducing gun ownership is a difficult undertaking. Better gun registries, marking and tracking can help, as can improved gun interdiction in ports. In the long term progress will hinge on changes in the drug trade, changes in the gun culture, and progress in the implementation of international treaties and agreements on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

9.1. As violence has increased in the Caribbean, so too has the use of firearms. Increasingly, more powerful weapons are being used, resulting in higher mortality levels. The Caribbean has a long history of smuggling, and, as in the past, firearms are used in the transportation of illegal goods. “Guns and the illegal trade in drugs have formed a symbiotic relationship which has seen the emergence of increasing violence throughout the communities regionally” (WINAD, 2006). This chapter describes the situation in the Caribbean with respect to guns, crime, and violence. Trinidad and Tobago was selected as a case study, as it has seen a particular sharp rise in firearm-related violence over the last few years.

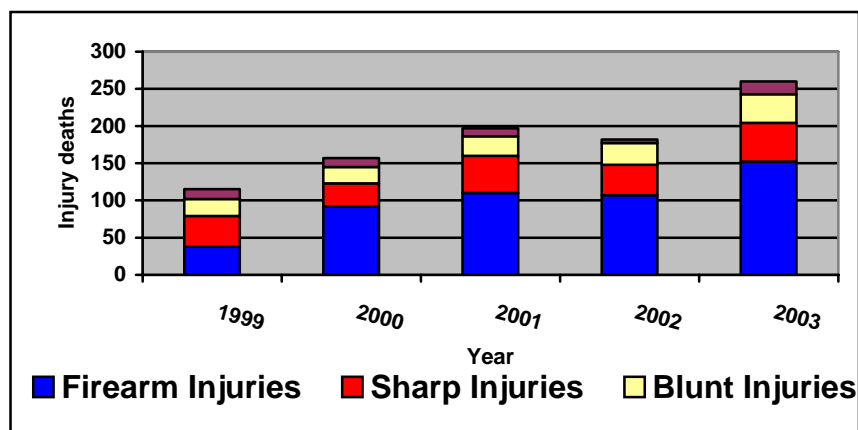
9.2. The CARICOM Regional Task Force on Crime and Security recently commissioned a report on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Caribbean (CARICOM, 2002). The resulting report identified three levels of SALW proliferation in the region: countries with *established* high levels and patterns of armed crime (Jamaica); countries with *emerging* high levels of armed and organized criminality (Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago); and countries with *indications of increased use* and availability of small arms (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines).

9.3. At that time, it was determined that, among CARICOM countries, only Jamaica fell in the first category, with indications that military-type weapons were available and that paramilitary units were operating (Burrows and Matthias, 2003). If such an evaluation were done today, Trinidad and Tobago might also be included in this tier, as the murder rate has doubled since 2002. With 160 firearm murders in 2004, these were just the tip of the iceberg with above 450 firearm woundings and 1,500 non-injury firearm incidents.²

¹ This chapter is based on a background paper prepared by Yvette Holder, consultant.

² Crime Reports from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Figure 9.1: Distribution of Injury Deaths by Type of Injury: Trinidad and Tobago, 1999-2003



Source: Central Statistical Office, Trinidad and Tobago.

9.4. For many countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, the majority of assaults and homicides were committed in past years with blunt or sharp weapons. The trend toward increased use of firearms in the commission of crime began in the 1970s in Jamaica, so that a court was established in 1974 solely dedicated to gun-related matters. In Trinidad and Tobago this change began in 2000. Before 2000, firearms were responsible for less than one-third of all homicides. By May 2006, this percentage had risen to 74 percent (see Figure 9.1 and Table 9.1). The percentage of homicides attributed to firearms in Trinidad and Tobago lies well within the range of rates of 60 percent to 93 percent seen in Latin America (Guerrero, 1998).

9.5. The share of woundings committed with a firearm has actually decreased as the number of murders with firearms has increased. This is likely a reflection of the increasing lethality of weapons used (see Table 9.2).

Table 9.1: Murders Committed in Trinidad and Tobago Using a Firearm, 2001-2006

Year	Number of Murders Committed with Firearms	Total Number of Murders	Percent Murders Committed with Firearms
2001	82	151	54 percent
2002	102	172	59 percent
2003	158	229	69 percent
2004	182	259	70 percent
2005	273	386	71 percent
Jan-May 2006	123	166	74 percent

Source: Modus Operandi, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

Table 9.2: Woundings Committed in Trinidad and Tobago Utilizing a Firearm, 2000-2005

Year	Total Number of Woundings	Percent Woundings Committed with Firearms
2000	383	53
2001	470	43
2002	649	49
2003	790	n/a
2004	615	40
2005	724	40

Source: Modus Operandi, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

SOURCES

9.6. There are several sources for these firearms. They may be diverted from legal owners in the country, or they may be purchased overseas (legally or illegally) and smuggled into the country. Diverted weapons come from both private owners and the protective services. In Trinidad and Tobago, authorized users of legal arms are robbed and sometimes killed for their weapons. Army and police guns go missing at intervals, and weapons that are stored at police stations for safe-keeping, especially those whose owners may be deceased, are also targets for diversion to criminal use. It is believed, however, that diverted firearms are not the main source of weapons involved in crime. That role is filled by weapons smuggled into the country (Holder, 2006).

9.7. Smuggled firearms are sourced from South and Central American manufacturers of light arms, among others. Suppliers are from Brazil (which is licensed to manufacture Beretta, Colt, and Taurus makes); Venezuela (Smith & Wesson); Mexico; and the Dominican Republic (Klare and Anderson, 1996). These countries all make firearms for domestic sale and for export, ostensibly to governments and licensed private owners.

9.8. Weapons manufactured or otherwise available in South America are smuggled through Venezuela, Suriname and Guyana to Trinidad and Tobago via fishing vessels and private pleasure boats. Some proceed to the United States and Europe, all part of the northward shipping of contraband. Weapons from the United States and Canada are transported southward in the shipping of the proceeds from the sale of illegal drugs.³

9.9. Guns and other weapons are also available from disbanded guerrilla troops in post-conflict situations. Some of these are weapons that were supplied covertly two decades ago by the Cold War powers to friendly insurgents in the region. Within the Caribbean region, there is a stock of weapons surplus from previous armed conflict such as the Grenada intervention. Other countries with armed instability such as Haiti,

³ Certain established routes have been defined (Burrows and Matthias, 2003). These are: Jamaica southwards through the Caribbean island chain; Guyana/Trinidad and Tobago northward through the same chain; St. Lucia – St. Vincent and the Grenadines – Martinique triangle, and; St. Maarten – Antigua – St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Nicaragua and Guatemala can also be source and destination countries for the supply of illegal arms.

9.10. Another major source of firearms is the United States, the world's leading manufacturers of arms. Production, sale and exports of all arms from the United States are subject to a variety of laws and regulations which govern the conditions under which the sales may occur and stipulate the use to which firearms may be put, even when transferred to a third party. These laws and regulations pose few or no obstacles to those wanting to buy a handgun, and unevenly enforced export regulations have made the U.S. a major supplier of illicit arms to Latin America and the Caribbean. Latin American governments report that more than half of all unlawfully acquired firearms were of U.S. origin (Klare and Anderson, 1996).

9.11. One of the main strategies employed by arms traffickers to procure guns is the use of "straw purchasers." These are acquaintances, relatives or persons hired to purchase guns in the United States from gun dealers, at gun shows or directly from manufacturers.⁴ Larger orders are sometimes procured through use of counterfeit importation certificates, with the involvement of gullible or corrupt local government officials of the transit country. Trading on the knowledge that end-use checking is sloppy, these shipments are procured for an apparently legitimate use and then forwarded to a third country. Guns thus obtained become part of the stockpile of weapons available on the black market.

9.12. Finally, there are also cases of persons purchasing firearms at a gun shop in a foreign country and bringing them into the country undetected among luggage. Guns so purchased may or may not be licensed and registered for use in the destination country.

9.13. All of these guns, procured from the above-mentioned sources and by the various mechanisms, contribute to the stockpile of circulating illicit firearms. However, due to poor forensic investigation of firearm-related crimes and non-existent tracking of firearms, it is not possible to know what contribution each of these sources makes to the problem of guns and criminality in Trinidad and Tobago.

REGISTRATION OF FIREARMS AND SEIZURES OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS

9.14. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Organized Crime, Narcotics and Firearm Bureau (OCNFB) was established in 2004. Under the Firearms Act, the Commissioner of Police is empowered to keep a national Firearms Register, although the actual existence of this database is unclear.

9.15. Seizures of firearms by the police and, more recently, the Organized Crime, Narcotics and Firearm Bureau have risen from 132 in 2000 to 199 in 2005 (Table 9.3). It

⁴ Attention has focused on a group of Californian handgun manufacturers—including Jennings, Bryco and Lorcin—whose weapons have been implicated in many violent crimes in the U.S. and whose security arrangements are said to have been questionable. The weapons, mainly 9 mm and more recently .38 pistols are available, affordable (approximately US\$ 50), small enough to be easily concealed but lethal. Wintemute, G. "Ring of Fire: The Handgun Makers of Southern California." Davis, California. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/guns/ring/companies.html>

is not clear whether this increase is due to increased enforcement efforts or to a greater supply of illegal weapons.

9.16. The vast majority of the weapons seized are the 9 mm pistols and .38 revolvers commonly used by criminal groups everywhere. Military weapons are rare. The seized weapons are disposed of according to the direction of the Magistrate presiding over the case. They may be returned to circulation either as additions to the Police armory or auctioned. This adds to the fluidity of the legal status of weapons and makes the need for identification and tracking even more critical.

Table 9.3: Firearm Seizures in Trinidad and Tobago

Year	Firearms Confiscated by Police	Firearms seized by the OCNFB¹	Ammunition seized by the OCNFB
2000	132		
2001	138
2002	146
2003	179 (Sept 15)	...	
2004	Not available	73	1215
2005	175	24	1592
Jan-Mar. 2006	Not available	9	238

Source: Modus Operandi, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

DEMAND

9.17. Understanding the epidemiology of guns and criminality, is clearly useful in design interventions and monitoring their effectiveness. One way to do this systematically and thoroughly is through the use of a tool used in determining risk of injury: Haddon’s matrix (Haddon, 1972). The matrix examines the characteristics of persons involved in gun-related crime, the instruments or vectors/agents, and the physical circumstances and socio-economic factors that contribute. The analysis is conducted along a temporal axis for each component, looking at the factors that pre-dispose, those that facilitate during the event, and those that hinder recovery after the event.

9.18. The application of the matrix to gun-related crime and the issues that may affect it are illustrated in Table 9.4. The discussion below will focus on some of the principal risk factors for hosts (young men of low socio-economic status); the physical and social environment (ghettos, garrison communities and gun culture); and agent/vector (drug trafficking and gun-related criminality).

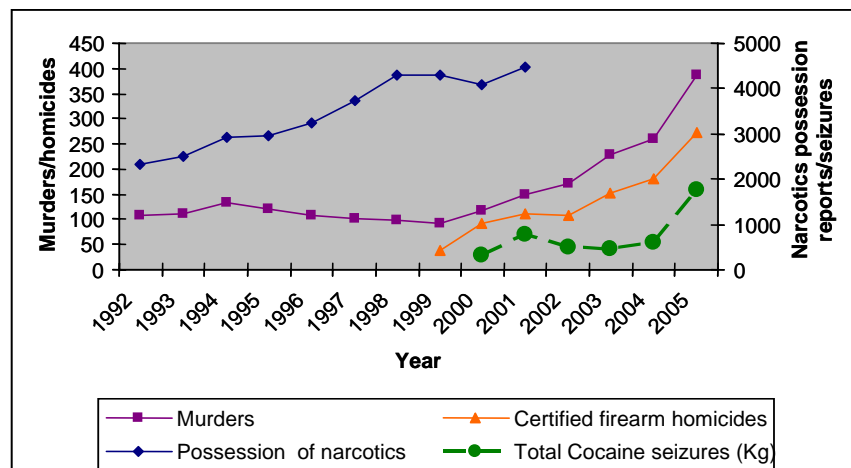
VICTIMS, PERPETRATORS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

9.19. Across the region, certain characteristics are common to both perpetrators and victims in gun violence. Research conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean shows that the majority of victims and perpetrators of violence are young men of low socio-economic status, with a low level of education and poor prospects for income generation,

who have witnessed violence at close range. These findings are consistent with those from a study that showed the effects of socio-economic status, educational levels, family functioning and exposure to violence on levels of aggression and delinquency in Jamaican children (Samms-Vaughan, 2000). In Trinidad and Tobago, more than half (59 percent) of the victims of fatal firearm assaults were males aged 15—34 years.

9.20. Across the hemisphere, the communities from which at-risk persons originate and in which the acts of gun-related criminality tend to be concentrated bear many similarities. Called “ghettos” in North America, *barrios marginales*, *villas miseria*, *barrios callampa*, *pueblos jovenes* or *favelas* in Latin America (depending on the country) and “garrison communities” in the Caribbean, they tend to be urban, densely populated and underserved, with lower than national levels of most social indicators and standards of living. The term “garrison community”, originally described the urban enclaves of violence such as Trench Town in Jamaica, which supported the competing political parties in the 1960s and 1970s. Now it refers to those communities where poverty and violence combine to produce a space of high levels of personal insecurity for community residents (WINAD, 2006). Not only in Jamaica, but also in Guyana (Buxton) and Haiti (Cite Soleil) as well as in Trinidad and Tobago (Laventille), these communities are the foci of crime and violence.

Figure 9.2: Police Reports of Narcotics Possession and Murders, and Certified Firearm Homicides, Trinidad and Tobago, 1992-2005



Sources: Central Statistical Office, Trinidad and Tobago, Drug Interdiction Unit, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

DRUG-TRAFFICKING AND GUN-RELATED CRIMINALITY

9.21. A major factor contributing to the surge of guns-related criminality in the region is the trafficking of narcotics, which has facilitated the availability of firearms. More specifically, the firearms required for protection of the contraband during transportation are smuggled along with the drugs. The illegal drugs are also traded for foreign exchange and for illegal firearms from the U.S. These weapons are used for protecting turf, for intimidating customers and competitors, for empowering recruits into the distribution

networks (or gangs), for maintaining discipline within them and for executing informers. In fact, drug trafficking has spawned a vibrant industry, namely, *guns for hire* (see Box 9.2)—a service particularly useful to addicts who need to commit crimes to support their habit and hence perpetrate more violent crimes. From this has spun off another criminal industry, contract murders (Holder, Y. 2006). Figure 9.2 shows how narcotics, firearms and related crimes have seen a similar upward trend in recent years.

Table 9.4: Modified Haddon Matrix Applied to the Analysis of Gun-Related Criminality (GRC)

	<i>Host (victim, perpetrator)</i>	<i>Agent/vector (firearm and bullets)</i>	<i>Physical environment (location)</i>	<i>Social environment (societal)</i>
Pre-event (before gun-related criminal act)	Factors predisposing to involvement in GRC – male youth, low SES, aggressive, poor education, under-employed	Factors predisposing involvement of guns viz. availability of and access to guns – drug-trafficking, inability to trace guns and identify and destroy supply routes, lax control of gun import/exports	Physical environments pre-disposed to GRC – certain locations, times etc.	Factors in the socio-economic environment that pre-dispose for GRC-GRC as an acceptable form of social behavior or employment; corruption; narco-trafficking
Event (when gun is taken out and fired)	Personal factors protecting or exposing persons involved in GRC	Factors affecting ability to inflict injury - lethality of guns and ease of use	Factors of the physical environment that facilitate GRC-exposure of victims or protection of perpetrators	Factors of the socio-economic environment that facilitate GRC e.g. protection of perpetrators including non-involvement
Post-event (after victim is shot))	Factors that lessen the effects of the event on persons involved in GRC e.g. emergency treatment, rehabilitation of victim; apprehension, detention and rehabilitation of perpetrator	Factors influencing ability of gun to inflict injury after the event e.g. availability of gun for re-use in another crime	Factors that influence the effects of GRC e.g. escape routes for perpetrators; emergency routes for victims; rapid response to events culminating in swift justice	Factors that affect the results of GRC e.g. emotional and financial support to families (of both victim and perpetrator); risk of reprisals; expeditious and just resolution of cases – ineffective policing, outdated and irrelevant legislation, weak judiciary

Notes: GRC = Gun-related crime; SES = Socio-economic status

Box 9.1: Young Men, Drugs, and Guns

In Trinidad and Tobago, young men, especially those just out of prison and those with little prospect of employment, are targeted by drug suppliers who control the communities, empowered by the illegal guns that they possess and the profits of their illicit trade (WINAD, 2006). These recruits are approached with a quota of cocaine and the necessary weapons to protect their turf. Refusing the offer will mean continued hardship and deprivation, or even death. The situation is further exacerbated by political patronage, whereby these communities are the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation projects which are often controlled by the community drug supplier.

Despite the great risk of death or injury and the lesser risk of detection, the sale and distribution of narcotics within the territory have proven lucrative for those persons engaged in the trafficking. Established in structured networks with suppliers, distributors, couriers, retailers, and enforcers, there are 66 known gangs with more than 500 members, according to the Ministry of National Security in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these gangs now engage in kidnapping, with ransom demands that include heroin and cocaine.

In addition to these economic factors, sociological factors also play a role in the fascination of male youth with guns. Disadvantaged, disenfranchised, dispossessed, influenced by a constructed stereotype of masculinity which embraces violence, and threatened by surrounding social and economic forces, young males feel empowered by the possession of a gun. With a gun, they can instill fear, settle disputes to their satisfaction, command respect and demand sexual favors. Indeed, for the first ten months of 2005 in Jamaica, 16 percent of rapes were at gunpoint (Amnesty International, 2002). For \$TT 100, the price of a gun and ammunition, a young man with nothing apparently going for him, can purchase some self-esteem for one hour. With a gun and in a group of others who share the same negative feelings, a “posse”, he is protected, he belongs and he has worth. Forces such as these drive the demand for firearms.

Source: Holder, 2006

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

9.22. Consideration of the issues described in Haddon’s matrix should guide the formulation of interventions. If acts of gun-related violence are considered as an event in a spectrum of actions that begins with those factors that operate during the pre-event phase of the matrix, then decision makers are presented with a host of opportunities to prevent the occurrence or recurrence of gun-related criminal acts. Those interventions that act upon factors that predispose involvement in gun-related crime and the environment are discussed in more detail in the chapters on youth violence, drugs, criminal justice reform, and the policy chapter. Here, the discussion is limited to those interventions that are specific to guns and criminality. Table 9.5 lists the various possible interventions that are specific to guns and ranks them according to their potential impact as well as priority and difficulty. Few of these interventions have been subjected to rigorous evaluation, particularly in the Caribbean context. However, some have shown enough promise that they are worth trying and are discussed below.

9.23. **Gun Control:** Since there is no domestic manufacturing of firearms in the English-speaking Caribbean, one obvious option would be to ban guns altogether. Effectiveness of such a measure is highly debatable, however, as shown by the experiences in other countries. In fact, opponents of gun control laws point out that Jamaica, despite banning guns, has had an increasing gun homicide rate, as did the United Kingdom and some states in Australia.

Supporting this view is the fact that in various countries of the region, a “gun-for-rent” market has emerged, effectively sidestepping potential supply reductions. However, various measures can be put in place that can make gun control more effective.

9.24. Most gun control legislation in the Caribbean is aimed principally at legally acquired firearms, is poorly enforced, and has little impact on illicit guns. A systematic strategy that is more likely to be effective is one that first addresses the acquisition of illegal firearms, as it is believed that only a minority of registered arms are used to commit crimes. The first step in blocking the illicit trafficking of light arms would involve tight controls of vendor and purchaser, with strictly enforced regulations governing:

- Local sales with thorough background checks, close scrutiny of purchasers to deter the use of “straw purchasers” and an index of suspicious persons who purchase more than one gun in a stipulated time period. Annual inspection and licensing of firearms with follow-up may also serve as a deterrent.
- Exportation of firearms with documented approval after thorough checks by the supplying or manufacturing state on the *bona fides* of the purchasers, the use to which the firearms would be put and verification of their final destination. These checks should involve the authorities of the receiving state including the issuance of an import license.
- Importation of firearms with the issuance of an import license by the authorities of the purchaser’s state.
- Transfer of firearms as *per* exportation and importation with notification of the supplier state.
- Preventing the illicit trafficking in light arms is a responsibility to be shared among the producing, selling, and destination states, whether intermediary or end-users, with open and transparent communication among all. A good place to start is with the signing, ratification, and enforcement of international treaties and conventions such as the United Nations Protocol on the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms and the Organization of American States’ Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials. Many states in the region have not signed, much less ratified, these international agreements (see Box 9.2 on the UN resolution and Plan of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.)⁵

⁵ Arms control was also an important issue at the 2004 Hemispheric meeting of the Ministers of Security in Quito. LAC countries called on all gun manufacturing countries—and on the USA in particular—to tighten up their gun manufacturing and export measures to reduce the diffusion of guns in the region.

Table 9.5. Possible Interventions Specific to Guns and Criminality

Priority	High Impact	Medium Impact	Low Impact
High	<p>Intensified air and sea-port surveillance</p> <p>Training of Customs officers to search for guns and their components</p> <p>Training of Police officers for improved gun-related crime investigations</p> <p>Promotion of and compliance with international treaties and conventions to abolish the illicit trade in firearms</p>	<p>Intensified patrols and searches (difficult to sustain)</p> <p>Strictly enforced import/export control on guns</p>	<p>Bullet-proof vests; self-defense mechanisms</p>
Medium to High	<p>Improved emergency health services for gun trauma</p> <p>Acquisition of gun forensics and ballistic examination capability</p> <p>Marking and tracing of guns to identify routes and modes of illicit gun trafficking</p>	<p>Implementation and enforcement of regulated procedures for the licensing, training in the use and storage of guns</p> <p>Storage and disposal of seized guns</p>	<p>Institution of a Gun Court to expedite cases</p>
Low	<p>Resocialization from a “gun culture”</p> <p>Counselling to reduce risk of reprisals</p>	<p>Gun buy-backs</p>	<p>Gun control/prohibition</p>

Box 9.2: UN Resolution and Plan of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons

The impact of gun violence has not gone unnoticed by the international community, albeit quite late. Since 2001, at several international fora, many under the aegis of the United Nations, world leaders expressed grave concern at the negative effects on development, peace, security and human rights posed by the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The United Nations General Assembly endorsed a resolution addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of illicit or excessive Small Arms and Light Weapons and proposed a Program of Action that calls on States to take steps to curtail the illicit traffic of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The *Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* defines measures that governments of member states should take to control the black market trade in arms. It not only makes recommendations on the control of imports, exports and transfers to prevent diversion to illicit use, but also requires member states to

- Make illicit gun production/possession a criminal offense
- Establish a national coordination agency on small arms
- Identify and destroy stocks of surplus weapons
- Keep track of officially-held guns
- Disarmament, Demobilizations & Re-integration (DDR) of ex-combatants, including collection and destruction of their weapons
- Support regional agreements and encourage moratoria
- Mark guns at point of manufacture for identification and tracing
- Maintain records of gun manufacture
- Engage in more information exchange
- Ensure better enforcement of arms embargoes
- Include civil society organizations in efforts to prevent small arms proliferation

Sources: WHO, 2001; UN, 2001.

9.25. **Improved interdiction of illegal guns.** Until cessation of the black market trade in light firearms becomes a reality, a “stop-gap” measure is to thwart as effectively as possible all efforts to land illegal guns. For the island countries of the Caribbean, this requires intensive surveillance of the coastline by naval police equipped with suitable watercraft. This is an expensive but necessary undertaking, especially for small island countries, as improved marine surveillance serves several purposes. Not only does it deter arms trafficking but also drug trafficking, piracy and trafficking in people.

9.26. The second means of illegal entry of firearms is their carriage through an official port of entry (air or sea) without detection. Legally entering yachtsmen or airline passengers, and their possessions, are subject to search by customs officers who are trained to seek dutiable goods and drugs, not firearms. To stem this, it is imperative that customs officers be trained to search for guns, to be able to recognize their component parts and to be aware of the methods of concealment of firearms and ammunition.

9.27. **Marking, Registration and Licensing:** The final source of firearms for use in criminal activity is the in-country diversion of legally acquired firearms and ammunition to illegal use. To prevent the re-use of weapons in gun-related crimes, it is critical that guns should be traceable and that weapons seized should be securely stored and properly disposed of. This requires effective procedures for acquisition, marking, licensing,

registration, operation and storage. National gun registries are rare in the Caribbean. Licensing and use of firearms should also include an emphasis on the control of and accountability for ammunition, and not just for the firearm. Careful oversight needs to be given to the secure storage of firearms (both private and public storage), with clear guidelines on storage requirements, strict control with rigorous inspection procedures including a checklist, reporting format, periodicity, audits of ammunition and general accountability. These protocols need to apply to civilian users, rifle clubs, private security firms, Police Services, and the Defense Force.

9.28. **Criminal Justice System:** Firearms enforcement requires police officers with the necessary forensic technology and knowledge to effectively gather, preserve and present evidence. This technology should include a forensic facility that especially provides for firearm forensics and ballistic examinations required for solving gun-related crimes. For every state to possess this facility may be burdensome and expensive. But it should certainly be possible to have it available in the largest Caribbean states or, at the very least, as a shared regional resource. The establishment of a “Gun Court”, such as the one Jamaica has had since 1974, would expedite the processing of firearms cases.

9.29. **Data:** Analysis of the situation with respect to gun-related criminality, the investigation and solving of cases, the monitoring of interventions, all require data—which does not currently exist in an easily accessible or useable form. Furthermore, with respect to guns and criminality, given the linkages with other countries within the Caribbean region and on the American and European continents, these data need to be compatible and comparable so that it may be shared among all stakeholders. Registries with information on purchasers, gun markings and tracings, databases on ballistics, on gun transfers and movements are but a few of the useful data tools in the fight against guns and crime. Mechanisms need to be instituted for the sharing of information within countries across agencies and sectors and across countries to facilitate the tracking of firearms used in the commission of crimes and the identification of persons engaged in the smuggling of firearms.

Box 9.3: Gun Buybacks

One well-known intervention that has been used to withdraw illegal guns from circulation has been that of gun buybacks. Attempted in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, buybacks have met with variable success. The exercise in Saint Lucia, where \$EC 2,500 (about US\$1,000) was offered for each illegal working gun tendered, was hailed a success for recovering 150 guns in the course of ten months. Yet the Trinidad offer of \$TT10,000 (about US\$1,600) per firearm attracted few takers (Holder, Y. 2006). Proponents of gun buybacks maintain that every gun turned in is one less available for perpetrating crime, while opponents argue that the guns turned in are not the ones used in crime. The international literature on the effectiveness of gun buybacks is rather pessimistic about their effectiveness (U.S. Surgeon General, 1999; Cook et al., 2001; Kennedy et al., 1996; Sherman, 2001; Retuer and Mouzos, 2003).