COUNTRY INSIGHTS SERIES

SIERRA LEONE
WEAPONS & AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

In September 2019, UNIDIR supported the implementation of a national Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) baseline assessment in Sierra Leone led by national authorities, in particular the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLeNCSA). The objective of this round of consultations was to establish a baseline of the existing WAM activities and procedures in place, identifying areas to be strengthened, and to present recommendations for policy and programmatic responses to build a national framework governing the management of arms and ammunition.

The national consultation offered the opportunity for representatives, experts, and practitioners from various Sierra Leonean institutions and security agencies to engage in dialogue, build trust, and improve needed cooperation between them to design and implement a strong national WAM framework. Upon invitation by the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, the baseline assessment expert team had the opportunity to visit the stores of the Armed Forces Training Center (AFTC) and observe the facility as well as procedures and processes in place. The exchanges and information provided in the course of the national consultation, bilateral meetings with senior representatives of relevant national institutions with WAM oversight and the visit to the AFTC, were consolidated into a report and delivered to the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone to support its efforts in improving its national weapons and ammunition framework. UNIDIR would like to express its gratitude to the Government of Sierra Leone for their facilitation and cooperation for the baseline assessment project.

This publication is an extract of the baseline assessment report delivered to the Sierra Leonean national authorities. It is a snapshot of the summary of the main findings and options identified for the enhancement of weapons and ammunition management in Sierra Leone. **It presents the status of strategic and operational WAM efforts in Sierra Leone as identified during the baseline assessment and highlights , the practical recommendations provided to the Sierra Leonean authorities as of September 2019.**

SIERRA LEONE

POPULATION:	7.8 MILLION
REGION:	WEST AFRICA
CAPITAL:	FREETOWN
ANNUAL GDP:	3.74 BILLION
DATE OF ASSESSMENT:	SEPTEMBER 2019

METHODOLOGY

UNIDIR defines WAM in a comprehensive manner covering the oversight, accountability and governance of arms and ammunition throughout their management cycle, including establishment of relevant national frameworks, processes and practices for the safe and secure production and acquisition of materiel, stockpiling, transfers, end use control, tracing and disposal.

This holistic approach is essential in ensuring that efforts to better regulate arms and ammunition are undertaken in alignment with broader security sector, rule of law, armed violence reduction, counterterrorism, and peacebuilding processes, and not in isolation. Research emphasis is placed on national and regional approaches to WAM in pursuit of a national and regionally owned process, and to support a 'bottom-up' and evidence-based approach.

This Country Insight on Sierra Leone is part of a series of Country Insights that seek to promote knowledge, and raise visibility and awareness on the WAM context, progress made, and areas for enhancement in the African States that have conducted WAM baseline assessments with support from UNIDIR. It is aimed to serve as a reference for international partners for providing assistance and technical support for improving weapons and ammunition frameworks in the relevant country.

Information contained in this Country Insight presents key findings and recommendations of the baseline assessment conducted in September of 2019. It does not reflect the progress made or any changes implemented after the assessment and should be taken to be indicative only of the situation at the time of the assessment.

Building on the multi-year WAM baseline assessments in Africa, UNIDIR in partnership with the African Union (AU) and the ECOWAS Commission aims **to enhance knowledge and dialogue among States, regional organisations, the United Nations and expert NGOs on good practices and lessons learned, as well as on the means and methods to further strengthen national and regional approaches to WAM in Africa.**

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms	**SLeNCSA**	Office of National Security	**ONS**
Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces	**RSLAF**	Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms	**SLANSA**
Sierra Leone Police	**SLP**	International Security Advisory Team	**ISAT**
Ministry of Defense	**MOD**	Mines Advisory Group	**MAG**
Ministry of Internal Affairs	**MIA**	United Nations Development Programme	**UNDP**
Mano River Union	**MRU**		

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The proliferation of weapons was a major conflict driver in the Sierra Leone civil war (1991-2002) and, through efforts to cease hostilities or prevent their relapse into conflict, the country became a testing ground for key arms control strategies. Sierra Leone has been the target for a range of UN arms embargo measures (1997-2010), including WAM provisions imposed by the Security Council, and became the location for one of the largest UN-supported DDR programmes ever implemented. The country has designed a range of arms control programmes to tackle the illicit circulation of weapons, including weapons collections, Arms for Development Programmes and PSSM efforts, and has been at the forefront of efforts to reinforce arms control across Africa, including through its important role in the building of the regional control architecture and the recent overhaul of its national regulatory framework.

Sierra Leone enjoys a relatively peaceful context which arms control is key to preserving. While the country has largely been spared from attacks, terrorist groups, which are feeding on national stockpiles throughout the region, are operating in areas closer and closer to its borders. Potential future contagion must be prevented, including through tighter national stockpile management. Meanwhile, armed criminality is one of the main security issues the authorities are trying to tackle, including through a more robust WAM framework.

Sierra Leone has continued to demonstrate its commitment to international arms control norms and to strengthening its WAM framework. Indeed, it is State party to all major international and regional arms control instruments and is working with a range of international partners to increase its WAM capacity. Nevertheless, challenges remain at the strategic, operational and implementation levels, and work is still needed to move the country towards compliance with its international commitments and domestic regulatory framework.

OVERVIEW OF WAM ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS

SHORT TERM OPTIONS	MEDIUM TERM OPTIONS	LONG TERM OPTIONS
6 MONTHS - 1 YEAR	2 YEARS	5 YEARS

NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2 | 3 | 6

NATIONAL COORDINATION BODY

2 | 4 | 3

TRANSFER CONTROLS

4 | 1

WEAPONS MARKING

2 | 3

RECORDKEEPING

1 | 1 | 2

IDENTIFICATION AND TRACING

5

PHYSICAL SECURITY AND STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT

3 | 2 | 4

DISPOSAL

3 | 1

COMMUNITY BASED WAM

1 | 2

TOTAL NUMBER OF OPTIONS: 55

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

TECHNICAL PILLAR I: NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

KEY FINDINGS

- Sierra Leone is party to most politically and legally binding international arms control frameworks and has submitted all required Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and Programe of Action (POA) reports.
- Sierra Leone has updated its national arms control legal framework in 2012. However, as of September 2019, it did not reflect the most recent ratification of key international instruments including the Firearms Protocol, and the ATT nor WAM international technical guidelines.
- The Sierra Leonean authorities completed a full review of the Arms and Ammunition Act (AAA) in 2018, on the basis of which they provided a series of recommendations to the Ministry of Internal Affairs who in turn issued a Memorandum which is currently awaiting Cabinet approval before bills are drafted and submitted to Parliament.
- Recommendations include the expansion of the mandate of SLeNCSA and the scope of the AAA to include all arms.
- Unlike most ECOWAS Member States, Sierra Leone has decided to regulate local blacksmiths rather than ban them outright: the AAA provides for the licensing of gunsmiths by the SLeNCSA.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

SHORT TERM

I.	Include arms and related risks as part of the National Security Strategy	SLeNCSA; ONS
2.	Complete the revision and adoption process of the Arms and Ammunition Act to expand the categories of conventional arms and ammunition covered	SLeNCSA ; Parliament; Cabinet; MIA; MOJ

SHORT – MEDIUM TERM

3.	Consider reviewing relevant legal or policy framework for importing, accounting, stockpiling, handling and using commercial explosives	MOD; SLeNCSA
4.	Sensitize and raise awareness of communities, including at province levels, on the existing and, once promulgated, new legal framework	SLeNCSA; SLANSA
5.	Consider provisions for requiring basic safety and security firearms training as part of the civilian licensing process	MOD; SLeNCSA; MIA

MEDIUM TERM

6.	Once the Act has been revised by Cabinet, organise a domestic sensitization workshop with relevant national stakeholders on the content of the Act, including participation by relevant security and defence stakeholders from provinces level	SLeNCSA; SLANSA; All
7.	Continue to register local manufacturers (i.e. blacksmiths): Expand the pilot project to the 14 remaining districts (including licensing and registration)	SLeNCSA; SLANSA; Hunters Association
8.	Ensure conformity of national SOPs on WAM in peace operations with UN Missions WAM Policy	MOD; MIA
9.	Actively promote the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty Action Plan	SLeNCSA
10.	Develop and adopt an appropriate and uniquely identifiable marking format applicable to craft manufactured weapons (e.g. by corporation and district)	SLeNCSA; SLANSA; Blacksmiths Association
11.	Review and align relevant WAM legal frameworks of the Army and the Police in line with Government of Sierra Leone's International Commitments (in particular the ECOWAS Convention and the Arms Trade Treaty), as well as relevant international technical guidelines (MOSAIC and IATGs)	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA

TECHNICAL PILLAR 2: NATIONAL COORDINATION BODY

KEY FINDINGS

- While a range of security agencies were implementing WAM activities in September 2019, SLeNCSA is the official coordinating body for WAM issues.
- As of September 2019, there was no National Action Plan to guide and plan WAM activities at the strategic and operational levels.
- As of September 2019 there was no significant national budget allocated to the Commission. It is therefore largely dependent on international support.
- In parallel with the revision of the AAA, the SLeNCSA Act will also be amended to reflect widening of the focus of the Commission to all arms; as a result, the Commission will be renamed the 'Sierra Leone National Commission on Arms (SLeNCA)'.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

SHORT TERM	12. Review national coordination and oversight process for commercial explosives	MOD; MIA; ONS; MMR (NMA); EPA
	13. Develop a donor engagement and resource mobilization strategy for financing of ATT NAP and PSSM Strategic Plan, including using existing partnerships as well as frameworks relevant to SDGs	SLeNCSA; MOF; MOFAIC; MOPED; International Partners
SHORT -MEDIUM TERM	14. Continue to advocate for additional national budget to ensure SLeNCSA's presence at provinces levels	MOF; MOPED; Parliament ; SLeNCSA
	15. Continue to actively engage with Parliamentary bodies (e.g. the Presidential and Defence Oversight Committee) and other relevant national authorities to secure adequate national budget for WAM activities, including provision of equipment (such as computers and transport vehicles)	MOF; SLeNCSA; MOPED; Parliament; MOD; MIA
	16. Consider increasing SLeNCSA's capacity, including human resources, to implement future, wider mandate (focusing on all conventional weapons)	SLeNCSA; MIA; International Partners
	17. Continue to actively participate in sub-regional cooperation and coordination under the ECOWAS Convention, including considerations on the enlargement of the scope of the Convention to cover conventional weapons and ammunition	MIA; Parliament; MOFAIC; SLeNCSA; ECOWAS; SLANSA; MOD; MOPED; International Partners
MEDIUM TERM	18. Review and revise the scope of the mandate of SLeNCSA to cover the scope of conventional arms and ammunition, including through re-naming the Commission	SLeNCSA; MIA
	19. Consider, as interim measure, to embed the presence of SLeNCSA at districts and provinces level through utilizing existing national security structures	SLeNCSA; MOD; MIA; ONS
	20. Integrate arms and ammunition management activities under sub-/regional cooperative frameworks, including the Mano River Union (MRU), to address concerns arising from cross-border trafficking	SLeNCSA; MOD; MIA; MOFAIC; ONS; MRU; ECOWAS

TECHNICAL PILLAR 3: TRANSFER CONTROLS

KEY FINDINGS

- As of September 2019, there was no single, official national procurement channel in Sierra Leone; the Police and Armed Forces had their own acquisition processes with limited democratic oversight.
- Sierra Leone has procured very little materiel in recent years, and a number of international transfer control obligations are still to be embedded in the procurement process, including End User Certificates.
- Transfers to the civilian market are regulated by the AAA and fall under the remit of SLeNCSA. Unlike most countries in the region where licences are issued by security agencies, in Sierra Leone this responsibility falls to the Commission.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

21.	Ensure compliance to end user assurance for internal transfers of materiel when new materiel are imported and distributed to security forces	NRA; MOD; MIA; ONS; MOF; MOFAIC; SLeNCSA; ECOWAS
22.	Ensure that security and defence forces inform SLeNCSA about any procurement of arms and ammunition, including for reporting purposes (e.g. under the ATT)	MOD; MIA; ONS; SLeNCSA; NPPA
23.	Establish written procedures to ensure compliance with the ECOWAS exemption process (i.e. form A; form B)	MOD; MIA; ONS; SLeNCSA; MOFAIC
24.	Continue to conduct relevant training and sensitization activities for relevant security ministries to comply with relevant provisions of the ATT, including imports, transit, trans-shipment and prevention of diversions	SLeNCSA; MOD; MIA; ONS; MOFAIC; NRA; International Partners
25.	Establish end-user control systems for imports of arms and related materiel, including oversight and recordkeeping on import requests and actual reception	NRA; MOD; MIA; ONS; MOF; MOFAIC; SLeNCSA; ECOWAS

SHORT TERM

MEDIUM TERM

TECHNICAL PILLAR 4: WEAPONS MARKING

KEY FINDINGS

- Sierra Leone was the first country in the ECOWAS region to have completed the marking and registration of its State-owned weapons.
- In parallel with the marking of manufactured weapons, SLeNCSA is also exploring the marking of craft weapons at production level.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

26.	Complete remaining marking of all state-owned weapons	SLeNCSA; MOD; MIA; International Partners
27.	Establish a procedure for marking and registering newly imported weapons, including a notification to SLeNCSA and ONS	SLeNCSA; MOD; MIA; ONS
28.	Continue to mark civilian-owned firearms	SLeNCSA; MIA; MOD; International Partners
29.	Implement sustainable Training of Trainers programme for marking to ensure maintaining of knowledge and skills	SLeNCSA; MOD; MIA; International Partners
30.	Ensure the sustainable marking programme, including through provisions for maintenance and repair of machines	SLeNCSA; MOD; MIA; International Partners

SHORT TERM

MEDIUM TERM

TECHNICAL PILLAR 5: RECORD KEEPING

KEY FINDINGS

- Electronic registries were created in parallel to the national marking programme.
- As of September 2019, there was no register for lost, stolen, recovered or seized arms and ammunition, nor for materiel that has been destroyed. There is a general absence of recordkeeping with regards to ammunition and commercial explosive at national level.
- While all security agencies in Sierra Leone have their own accounting systems, they mostly rely on paper records and are not centralised at the national level.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

SHORT TERM		
31.	Conduct ad-hoc individual checks of state-owned arms and ammunition against national database as complement to regular stock checks	MIA; MOD; SLeNCSA
SHORT – MEDIUM TERM		
32.	Expand electronic accounting system for state-owned arms and ammunition sequentially to the provinces levels	MOD; MIA
SHORT – LONG TERM		
33.	Develop national database(s) on lost, stolen, recovered and seized arms and ammunition as well as those to be destroyed	SLeNCSA; MIA; MOD
34.	Develop national baseline data on small arms ammunition in state-owned stocks with caliber, producer and year of production marks, as relevant and in consultation with international partners	MOD; MIA; ONS; SLeNCSA; International Partners

TECHNICAL PILLAR 6: IDENTIFICATION & TRACING

KEY FINDINGS

- Law enforcement agencies tend to regard the capture of illicit weapons as an end in itself, rather than an investigative opportunity.
- Domestic tracing remains very limited with no procedural framework.
- As of September 2019, SLeNCSA had never received nor issued any international tracing requests.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

SHORT – MEDIUM TERM		
35.	Develop capacity and written procedures for accurate identification of seized and recovered arms and ammunition	SLeNCSa; MOD; MIA; ONS; International Partners
36.	Strengthen capacity for initiation, responses to and exploitation of information relating to international tracing operations	SLeNCSa; MOD; MIA; ONS; ECOWAS; MOFAIC; International Partners; INTERPOL; CISU
37.	Share tracing results at appropriate regional and international forums including for ECOWAS Convention and the International Tracing Instrument	SLeNCSa; MOFAIC
38.	Share relevant information with INTERPOL and UNODC on seized and recovered materiel, as appropriate	MIA; MOD; MOFAIC; SLeNCSA
39.	Consider the development of a written national standard operating procedure (SOP) for the processing of captured/seized weapons	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners

TECHNICAL PILLAR 7:
PHYSICAL SECURITY & STOCKPILE MANAGMENT

KEY FINDINGS

- PSSM is the pillar on which most WAM efforts have focused to date, in particular the construction and refurbishment of adequate storage facilities with the support of international partners.
- Security agencies have significant needs with regards to storage facilities.
- As of September of 2019, there was no qualified national Ammunition Technical Officer (ATO) or equivalent in Sierra Leone and a severe shortage of trained armourers, which has a severely detrimental impact on the PSSM capability of the security forces.
- The main ordnance depot of the Joint Logistics Unit (JLU), which is located in the middle of Freetown, represents a real and significant hazard for the wider population and needs to be relocated as soon as possible.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

SHORT -MEDIUM TERM

40.	Continue to sensitize of high-level political actors and international partners on risks associated to conventional ammunition and explosives	SLeNCSA; SLANSA; MIA; MOD; ONS; International Partners
41.	Based on the storage needs assessment conducted for security forces, implement storage plans (new, refurbished, relocation), especially in FPBs and FOBs, where needed with international assistance	SLeNCSa; MOD; MIA; International Partners
42.	Ensure that armouries are adequately equipped with weapons racks for those armouries that currently do not have weapons racks	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners

SHORT–LONG TERM

43.	Obtain and sustain training and mentoring on conventional ammunition management personnel for the Armed Forces to increase the number of national ATOs	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners
44.	Continue to develop capacities for armourers, including through Training of Trainers, in particular at provinces levels	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners
45.	Relocate explosive store houses that are located in populated areas (e.g. JLU)	MOD; SLeNCSA; International Partners; SLANSA
46.	Ensure provision of gun safes for stations in provinces levels for those areas that currently do not have dedicated armouries	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners

MEDIUM–LONG TERM

47.	Consider and develop professional development policies and processes for staff working in the field of WAM together with relevant Ministries, including gender-sensitive approach	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International partners
48.	Give particular focus to building the capacity of personnel, including infrastructure and equipment, to monitor and conduct in-service surveillance of conventional ammunition and explosives	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners

TECHNICAL PILLAR 8: DISPOSAL

KEY FINDINGS

- All security agencies have substantial quantities of materiel awaiting destruction but do not always have the means to do so, resulting in materiel being kept in poor conditions.
- Between June and November 2019, the national authorities, with the support of international partners, succeeded in destroying most unserviceable ordnance from the JLU; small arms ammunition is currently being processed.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

SHORT -MEDIUM TERM

49.	Develop a destruction plan and ensure capacity to implement it	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners
50.	Develop a national acquisition plan for disposal equipment and materiel (including accessories)	SLeNCSa; MOD; MIA; International Partners
51.	Acquire additional small arms ammunition burning tank for RSLAF either through national budget or through international assistance	MOD; MOF; MOPED; International Partners

SHORT–LONG TERM

52.	Continue to seek specialized training and resources to develop national EOD capacity and dedicated teams	MOD; MIA; SLeNCSA; International Partners

TECHNICAL PILLAR 9: COMMUNITY BASED WAM

KEY FINDINGS

- Sierra Leone would benefit from the development and implementation of community violence reduction and cross-border trafficking programming that integrate WAM activities.
- Community violence reduction (CVR) and cross-border trafficking programming should consider civil society involvement, including youth groups and NGOs working on gender issues, to ensure sustainability and community ownership.
- Security agencies would benefit from a dedicated national action plan and capacity building on the use of force and the acquisition of less-lethal equipment.

OPTIONS FOR WAM ENHANCEMENT

SHORT -MEDIUM TERM

53.	Develop national plan and capabilities of security forces to acquire and use non-lethal items	MIA; MOD; MOF; MOPED; SLeNCSA

SHORT–LONG TERM

54.	Consider the development of CVR and cross-border trafficking programming, in cooperation with bilateral partners, regional and sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS and Mano River Union, that includes weapons and ammunition management activities (e.g. registering of civilian weapons, sensitization to updated Arms Act…)	SLANSA; MRU; MIA; ONS; MOD; SLeNCSA; International Partners
55.	Ensure the involvement of the civilian population and civil society, including NGOs engaging on gender, as well as youth groups, in the sensitization, planning and implementation of CVR and cross-border control programmes and relevant WAM activities	SLANSA and coalition of civil society orgs; SleNCSA; MRU; MARWOPNET; MSWGCA

COUNTRY INSIGHTS SERIES

SIERRA LEONE

LOOKING AHEAD

The exchange of good practices and lessons learned in strengthening WAM policy and practice in Africa seeks to enhance the knowledge of States, regional organisations and international partners on ways to establish and implement comprehensive national and regional frameworks governing the full lifecycle of arms and ammunition.

This publication presents a holistic approach to weapons and ammunition management with a special focus on the Republic of Sierra Leone. This holistic approach to WAM contributes to achieving broader peace, security, and development goals including but not limited to conflict prevention, armed violence reduction, accountable security sector, protection of civilians, and advancing the Agenda 2030.

UNIDIR encourages the Community of States, regional organisations, and relevant international partners to examine the options suggested for enhancing WAM in each Country Insight and use them as a basis to inform the planning, implementation, and assessment of future WAM projects in the relevant country.

ABOUT UNIDIR

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is a voluntarily funded, autonomous institute within the United Nations. One of the few policy institutes worldwide focusing on disarmament, UNIDIR generates knowledge and promotes dialogue and action on disarmament and security. Based in Geneva, UNIDIR assists the international community to develop the practical, innovative ideas needed to find solutions to critical security problems.

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