



WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA INSIGHT: 2023 UPDATE

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Central African Republic, 2023.

Joint disposal and destruction operation
by the *Forces Armées de la République
Centrafricaine*, MINUSCA, UNMAS.

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SUMMARY

Effective weapons and ammunition management (WAM) can reduce the number of illicit arms and ammunition in circulation, prevent the diversion of state-owned weapons to unauthorized users, and mitigate the risk of unplanned explosions of munitions, thereby contributing to the maintenance of peace and the achievement of socioeconomic and development goals. UNIDIR's *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments* is designed to support national and regional efforts to review and update policies and practices to control conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle, as well as efforts to address the illicit trade and misuse of such materiel. UNIDIR has identified 10 key functional areas for WAM, including a national coordination mechanism and a national legal and regulatory framework, as well as measures to be taken to control transfers, stockpile management, accounting including marking and record-keeping, dealing with illicit arms and ammunition, and their disposal.

This is the second annual update by UNIDIR to recognize the progress made to strengthen WAM policies and practices by 12 African States that have undertaken a WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR's methodology. The report presents national examples of progress made in 2022 in the 10 key WAM functional areas.

The update reports information provided by representatives of these 12 States on persistent and emerging challenges that they face in strengthening WAM policies and practices. More than half of these States face persistent challenges in strengthening policy and practice with regards to stockpile management, their national coordination mechanisms, and their national legal and regulatory frameworks. Several of the representatives of West African States flagged concerns for WAM that arise from the increased risk of violent extremism and the growing threat of terrorism, especially in the Liptako-Gourma region and the Lake Chad Basin. Among the examples of progress made in 2022 in strengthening WAM policies and practices, participants in the research highlighted weapon-collection activities and disposal, including destruction.



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NOTES

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ABOUT UNIDIR

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CAAP	Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme (UNIDIR)
CAR	Central African Republic
CCNAI	National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites, Niger)
CNCA	National Commission for Arms Control (Commission Nationale de Contrôle des Armes, Burkina Faso)
CNC-ALPC	National Commission for Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Reduction of Armed Violence (Commission Nationale de Contrôle des Armes Légères et de Petit Calibre et de Réduction de la Violence Armée, DRC)
CNLPAL	National Commission to Counter the Proliferation, Circulation and Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre la Prolifération, la Circulation et le Trafic Illicite des Armes Légères et de Petit Calibre, Togo)
COMNAT-ALPC	National Commission for the Fight Against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre la Prolifération des Armes Légères et de Petit Calibre, CAR)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
GNACSA	Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons
JVT	Joint Verification Team (Somalia)
LiNCA	Liberia National Commission on Arms
LiNCSA	Liberia National Commission on Small Arms
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MOSAIC	Modular Small Arms Control Implementation Compendium
NCCSALW	National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Nigeria)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SLeNCSA	Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SSF	Somalia Security Forces
WAM	Weapons and ammunition management

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	6
Box 1. The 10 key functional areas of weapons and ammunition management	7
Figure 1. WAM in Africa: Baseline assessments conducted during 2015–2022	8
Box 2. WAM baseline assessment and follow-up assessments conducted in 2022	9
2. PROGRESS MADE IN STRENGTHENING WAM IN AFRICA IN 2022	10
Figure 2. Persistent challenges in WAM functional areas	10
Box 3. Efforts to regulate craft production and artisanal weapons	11
2.1. National legal and regulatory frameworks and coordination mechanisms	12
2.2. Transfer controls	13
2.3. Stockpile management	14
2.4. Marking	15
2.5. Record-keeping	16
2.6. Profiling, tracing and processing of illicit arms and the treatment of illicit ammunition	17
2.7. Weapon collection	18
2.8. Disposal including destruction	19
3. CONCLUSION	20

1. INTRODUCTION

▼
Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.
 Ammunition destined for disposal including
 destruction. **Credit:** © MONUSCO & UNMAS DRC.



As part of his New Agenda for Peace, in July 2023 the United Nations Secretary-General highlighted that the proliferation, diversion and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) “undermine the rule of law, hinder conflict prevention and peacebuilding, enable criminal acts, including terrorist acts, human rights abuses and gender-based violence, drive displacement and migration, and stunt development”.¹ He therefore underlined the need for states to implement adequate measures to control SALW and ammunition in order to prevent and address the challenges that they cause.

WAM is the exercise of oversight, accountability and governance of conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle, from production through to use and disposal of materiel designated as surplus, obsolete or unsafe.² It covers all conventional weapons, not only SALW, as well as related systems and their ammunition. Effective WAM can reduce the number of illicit arms in circulation and prevent the diversion of state-owned weapons to unauthorized users, thereby contributing to the maintenance of peace and the achievement of socioeconomic and development goals. WAM is a funda-

mental component of conflict prevention and actions to tackle armed violence, ensuring that States can exercise governance, oversight, management and control over the full life cycle of arms and ammunition within their national territory. Box 1 provides an overview of the functional areas of WAM.

To support national and regional efforts to review and update policies and practices to control conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle, as well as addressing the illicit trade and misuse of such materiel, UNIDIR has developed – and promotes the use of – a *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments* (UNIDIR’s WAM Reference Methodology).³ Twelve African States have now conducted a national weapons and ammunition management (WAM) baseline assessment using this methodology to strengthen their national WAM frameworks, policies, and practices. This second annual update on progress made by these States seeks to highlight some of the measures that can be taken to prevent diversion and misuse of arms and to mitigate risks of unplanned explosions of ammunition.

1 *A New Agenda for Peace*, Our Common Agenda Policy Brief no. 9, United Nations, July 2023, p. 23, <https://dppa.un.org/en/a-new-agenda-for-peace>.

2 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p. xiii.

3 H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, *A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments*, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/reference-methodology-national-weapons-and-ammunition-management-baseline-assessments>.

BOX 1.

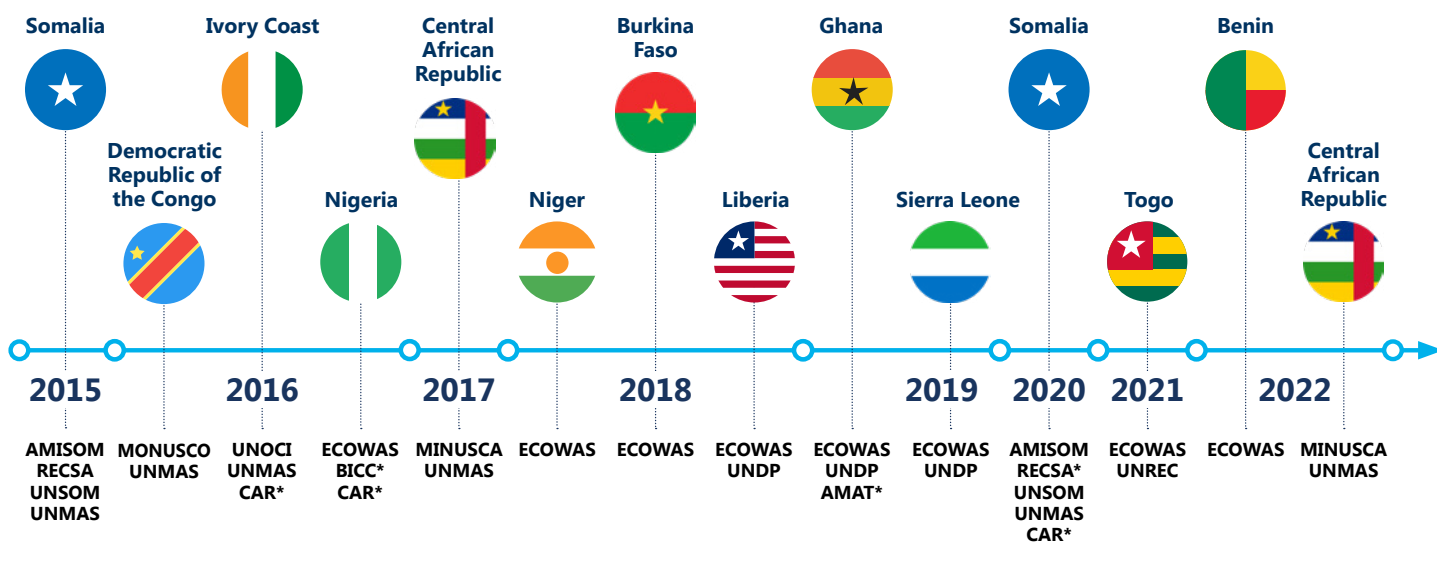
THE 10 KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT

1. A **national coordination mechanism** on WAM ensures that all relevant parts of the Government work together with national, regional and international partners to conceive, direct, monitor and evaluate safe, secure and accountable WAM policies and practices.
2. The **legal and regulatory framework** at the national level consists of the national laws, decrees, regulations and administrative documents that form the basis of the national WAM governance structure and guide their implementation.
3. Effective **transfer controls** provide for the regulation of the export, import, retransfer, transit or trans-shipment, and brokering of conventional arms, ammunition and related materiel to prevent excessive, destabilizing or illicit transfers that pose a serious threat to peace and security.
4. Effective **stockpile management** of conventional arms and ammunition ensures the operational readiness of defence and security forces, protects national strategic assets, and limits the risk of diversion. It also reduces the risk of, and mitigates the effect from, unplanned explosions of inadequately managed conventional ammunition stockpiles.
5. The **marking** of conventional arms, especially small arms and light weapons, with unique identifying marks supports accurate record-keeping. It thus aids national accounting for weapons and the tracing of points of diversion in cases where such arms have been diverted to the illicit market.
6. An effective national **record-keeping** system comprehensively records all phases of the life cycle of conventional arms and ammunition under the jurisdiction of the state (i.e. production, international transfer, national stockpile, recovery from the illicit sphere, and use or disposal). Taken together, effective marking and record-keeping systems constitute a national accounting system, which enables competent national authorities to maintain an accurate inventory of the national stockpile of conventional arms and ammunition, as well as to identify potential points of diversion.
7. **Profiling and tracing of arms and ammunition** consists of the systematic examination of information related to illicit weapons and ammunition from their point of manufacture or most recent import, through the lines of supply, to the last legal titleholder in order to determine the place and time at which the item became illicit.
8. The **processing of illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition** can support the domestic judicial process by providing information and evidence on which traffickers and violence perpetrators can be convicted, thereby helping to address impunity.
9. **Weapon collection**, whether as part of an integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process or as a separate activity, encourages individuals, groups, and communities to relinquish illegal, illicit, and unwanted weapons and ammunition.
10. The **disposal** of illicit, surplus, unwanted or obsolete conventional arms and ammunition can be conducted by destruction, transfer to another authority or entity, or sale or donation, either domestically or internationally. It can be undertaken to remove unsafe ammunition from the national stockpile, prevent diversion and illicit weapon and ammunition circulation, and reduce costs associated with maintaining unserviceable materiel.

Since 2015, UNIDIR's Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme (CAAP) has supported 12 African states to conduct a national WAM baseline assessment and, in some cases, also a follow-up assessment (see Figure 1 and Box 2). Each assessment is organized under the ownership and lead of the host Government. It consists of a national consultative process that facilitates dialogue and decision-making among all relevant national stakeholders on WAM and related issues. These national processes have been guided by UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology and supported by relevant regional and subregional organizations (in particular, the African Union and the

Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)), United Nations entities (including peace operations, special political missions and country teams, and specialized agencies and departments) and specialized non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The key findings, recommendations and options for WAM enhancement identified during the baseline assessments inform the development of a national WAM road map, which is a strategic document that provides a starting point for action to strengthen the national WAM framework.

Figure 1. WAM in Africa: Baseline assessments conducted during 2015–2022



NOTE:

AMAT: Ammunition Management Advisory Team

AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia

BICC: Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies

CAR: Conflict Armament Research

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNOCI, UNSOM:

UN peace operations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme



▲ **Central African Republic, 2020.**
 Inspection of weapons transferred and handed back to the *Forces Armées de la République Centrafricaine*, Bangui.
 Credit: © MINUSCA.

BOX 2.

WAM BASELINE ASSESSMENT AND FOLLOW-UP ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED IN 2022

During 2022, UNIDIR supported the conduct of a national baseline assessment by Benin in cooperation with ECOWAS and a follow-up assessment by the Central African Republic (CAR) in cooperation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central Africa Republic (MINUSCA) including its Mine Action Service (United Nations Mine Action Service, UNMAS).

National authorities led the assessments that identified options to strengthen institutions, policies, processes and capacities across the 10 key functional areas identified in UNIDIR's Reference Methodology. The findings from each assessment will enable national authorities in developing or updating their national WAM road

maps. The UNIDIR WAM Country Insight for CAR was published in January 2023,⁴ while that for Benin will be published before the end of 2023.

In addition, in the summer of 2022, UNIDIR was invited and supported a United Nations technical assessment of the Federal Republic of Somalia's WAM capability. It provided options for benchmarks to guide the Security Council's review of the arms embargo measures applicable for Somalia, in accordance with resolution 2607. CAAP was part of the in-country assessment team and contributed to the preparation of the report that informed consultations and the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2662 of November 2022.

UNIDIR's annual update on WAM in Africa highlights progress made by African States in strengthening their national WAM frameworks, policies and practices after conducting a WAM baseline assessment. Each edition seeks to raise awareness and share lessons learned on effective national measures to overcome challenges noted in previous updates⁵ and country insights.⁶ It is thereby supporting efforts by those involved in international assistance and cooperation efforts to strengthen WAM frameworks, policies and practices in Africa.

The research and data collection for this edition includes examples of activities undertaken during January–December 2022 to enhance strategic WAM decision-making, policies and practices. The data for this publication was collected from open sources and validated via questionnaires and interviews conducted with national WAM focal points and WAM coordinating entities, as well as a select number of regional and international partners throughout 2022 and the first quarter of 2023.

Section 2 of this report presents examples of progress made by the 12 African states that have undertaken a WAM baseline assessment or follow-up assessment using UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology. It is structured around the 10 key WAM functional areas (see Box 1), although it merges the functional areas of "a national coordination mechanism" and "national legal and regula-

tory framework" in a single subsection, and "profiling and tracing of arms and ammunition" and "processing of illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition" in another. In addition, this update highlights examples of gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive WAM in cases that have been highlighted by African States. Box 3 provides an overview of the craft production of weapons, an issue that is not covered by UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology, but which has been repeatedly highlighted as a WAM challenge. Section 3 provides a short conclusion.



▼
Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2020.
Congo River Delta and surrounding areas.
Credit: © UNIDIR.

4 A. Mensah and H. Giezendanner, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Central African Republic", UNIDIR, January 2023, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-central-african-republic>.

5 A. Mensah, P. Holtom, H. Giezendanner, "Weapons and Ammunition Management in Africa Insight: 2022 Update", UNIDIR, June 2022, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-in-africa-insight-2022-update>.

6 Country Insights draw from the baseline assessment reports delivered and transmitted to the Governments of States that have undertaken a WAM baseline assessment with support from UNIDIR and its partners. They provided a snapshot of the summary of the main findings and options identified for the enhancement of the national WAM framework, capacities and practices in those countries. Country Insights are available here: <https://unidir.org/work/strengthening-wam>.

2. PROGRESS MADE IN STRENGTHENING WAM IN AFRICA IN 2022

This section presents a small sample of activities implemented during 2022 to enhance the key functional areas of WAM in the 12 African States that have conducted a national WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR’s WAM Reference Methodology. Each subsection below provides examples to highlight progress made with limited resources and capacities, demonstrating what can be achieved with political will, creativity and effective cooperation with other States, as well as regional and international organizations and non-governmental partners. The information contained in this section could be useful for other States seeking to enhance their WAM national frameworks, policies and practices; it also highlights the continuing need for international cooperation and assistance.

UNIDIR’s Reference Methodology emphasizes that gender mainstreaming in WAM should be one of the guiding principles for organizing WAM baseline assessments and proposes that gender-sensitive approaches and considerations are incorporated in discussions across WAM functional areas.⁷ The importance of this approach is reflected in research that indicates that gender norms shape how weapons are seen and used in society, as well as the differentiated, gendered and age-related impacts of weapons and ammunition, and of armed violence

more broadly.⁸ The States that contributed to this update on WAM in Africa provided examples of several activities conducted in 2022 to enhance women’s meaningful representation in and contribution to WAM, as well as ensuring that gender sensitivities are adequately considered in the programming, planning, implementation and evaluation of WAM activities. Specific examples in this regard are highlighted below in subsections 2.7 and 2.8, on weapon collection and disposal.

During the collection of information for this update, representatives of the 12 African States that have conducted a national WAM baseline or follow-up assessment were asked to indicate the WAM functional areas in which they faced “persistent challenges” to strengthening policy and practice during 2022. Eight of these 12 African States highlighted persistent challenges in strengthening their stockpile management policies and practices, compared to 7 for national coordination, 6 for the legal framework, and 5 for disposal (see Figure 2). Only a few of these representatives highlighted persistent challenges for the other WAM functional areas. As shown in each of the subsections below, progress is being made despite continuing challenges.

Figure 2. Persistent challenges in WAM functional areas

National coordination mechanism								
Legal and regulatory framework								
Transfer controls								
Stockpile management								
Marking								
Recordkeeping								
Profiling and tracing								
Processing illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition								
Collection								
Disposal								

7 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p. 8.

8 H. Salama and E. Bjertén-Günther, *Women Managing Weapons: Perspectives for Increasing Women’s Meaningful Participation in Weapons and Ammunition Management*, UNIDIR, 2021, https://unidir.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Women_Managing_Weapons_-_UNIDIR.pdf.

Participants in the research for this update mentioned craft and artisanal production, brokering and the regulation of commercial explosives as some areas for further examination (see Box 3). In order to gain a better understanding of the scope of the challenges in these areas, and to learn how other African states have addressed these challenges, these individuals proposed new efforts and initiatives to:

- Develop appropriate provisions in national legislation and regulatory frameworks
- Conduct research and surveys to gain knowledge on the scope and extent of emerging problems
- Facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges and opportunities for sharing lessons learned and experiences

Several of the representatives of West African States flagged concerns for WAM posed by the increased risk of violent extremism and the growing threat of terrorism, especially in the Liptako–Gourma region and the Lake Chad Basin. They also highlighted prevention and response WAM measures, including strengthening stockpile management, conducting awareness raising and weapon-collection activities, and improved border control measures. Future editions of the WAM in Africa Insight series will continue to highlight new and emerging challenges, alongside the positive examples of progress being made to strengthen national and regional WAM policies and practices in Africa.

BOX 3.

EFFORTS TO REGULATE CRAFT PRODUCTION AND ARTISANAL WEAPONS

Illegal craft production of small arms and light weapons is a global challenge, but one which has been highlighted as a key challenge in several African WAM baseline assessments. For example, approximately 68 per cent of the SALW recovered in Nigeria in November 2022 were craft-produced in the country.⁹ While some of these weapons were produced for hunting purposes, craft-produced small arms are used in criminal activities in the country and across West Africa. The borders of West Africa are porous and craft production has increased in the region in recent decades – in terms of both the number of producers and the volume of weapons. The Governments of West African States are therefore increasingly focusing attention on how to limit the impact of craft-produced and artisanal weapons on rates of crime and armed violence.

The 12 African States that contributed to this update presented different national approaches to dealing with the craft production that takes place in their country. Benin, Burkina Faso, the DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone have provisions to regulate craft production in their national laws on arms and ammunition control. These provide for licensing and national registers of authorized craft-producers. For Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, national legislation prohibits and criminalizes craft production.

In Sierra Leone in 2022, Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SLeNCSA) presented the key findings of a study on local gun manufacturers and craft production at the National Security Council Coordinating Group (a national security coordination mechanism composed of representatives from all Sierra Leonean national defence, security and law enforcement agencies). The presentation and study provided useful data for Sierra Leone's national authorities to better understand the drivers of demand and the trade dynamics for craft-produced weapons in the country. They also outlined considerations to promote alternative livelihoods for those involved in craft production rather than their criminalization. There are early signs that the research will inform future regulatory approaches. Of particular interest for this update are the three main recommendations of the research:

1. Conduct national surveys and research on the issue of craft production to better inform government action in this sphere
2. Facilitate the establishment of an association of individuals involved in craft production and related trade activities to encourage their registration and regulation
3. Provide training and sensitization activities on national arms and ammunition laws to those involved in craft production

⁹ This information was received during an interview with officials from the NCCSALW on 21 March 2023.

2.1. NATIONAL LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The national legal and regulatory framework consists of national laws, decrees, regulations and administrative procedures for controlling and regulating the life cycle of conventional weapons and ammunition. These form the basis of the national WAM governance structure.¹⁰ To enable competent national authorities and relevant stakeholders to effectively implement on the national level relevant international and regional instruments, States domesticate the obligations and commitments contained in those instruments into their national frameworks governing weapons and ammunition. Several international and regional instruments contain an obligation or commitment to establish or designate and maintain a government entity to provide overall policy direction and coordination for national WAM-related efforts.¹¹ These two functional areas are often related, as the national coordination mechanism will play a key role in initiating and coordinating the establishment, review, or updating of national laws and regulations, while the mandate for the national coordination mechanism is often established in the national legal and regulatory framework.

As shown in Figure 2, more than half of the African States that have conducted a WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR's Reference Methodology have indicated that they face challenges in strengthening their national legal and regulatory frameworks and coordination mechanisms. UNIDIR's research indicates that national coordination mechanisms should be strategically placed within the national security architecture to facilitate their work in initiating, implementing, coordinating, monitoring and reporting on activities to improve WAM policies and practices.¹² Additionally, to ensure effective cooperation with key security agencies and capacity to ensure sustainable national ownership of the WAM sector, it is recommended that such entities have an appropriate mandate, ideally in national legislation or regulations, and that they are well-resourced. Several of the States featured here have highlighted that, when their national legal frameworks do not provide a mandate for the national coordination mechanism, this can have an adverse effect on the functioning of the mechanism. At the same time, several States that contributed to this update explained that the main challenge to strengthening national legal and regulatory frameworks is that it is a lengthy process

to develop, draft and adopt national WAM-relevant legislation and regulations, and it is not so easy to receive sustainable and dedicated technical assistance for this process. Therefore, the sharing of lessons learned on effective practices and good examples on the regional and international levels might also facilitate peer-to-peer learning and support in this field.

Despite the challenges noted above, in September 2022 **Liberia's** President signed and enacted an amended Firearms and Ammunition Control Act, which addressed gaps in the national WAM framework and expanded the mandate of the national WAM coordinating entity.¹³ In 2018, Liberia's WAM baseline assessment road map had listed among its objectives the domestication of relevant international and regional instruments to which it is a party, including the expansion of the mandate of the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA), to enable coordination and effective implementation of all Liberia's international commitments in conventional arms control, especially the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).¹⁴



Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2015.
Mortars collected for future demolition.
Credit: © UNMAS/Lorene Giorgis

Shortly after the conclusion of the WAM baseline assessment, the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) awarded funding to Liberia for a project entitled, "Drafting legislations to support the effective implementation of the ATT in Liberia".¹⁵ LiNCSA implemented this project with a civil society partner to review the existing legislation and make proposals for revisions to the 2015 Firearms and Ammunition Control Act to domesticate the ATT. During 2019–2021, LiNCSA received international assistance to

10 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, pp. 51–53.

11 See section II.4 of the United Nations, Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, A/CONF.192/15, 20 July 2001, [http://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15\(SUPP\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15(SUPP)).

12 A. Mensah, H. Giezendanner and P. Holtom, "Weapons and Ammunition Management in Africa Insight: 2022 Update", UNIDIR, 2022, p. 18, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-africa-insight-2022-update>.

13 This progress story was shared by the Chairman of LiNCSA during an interview with UNIDIR on 28 March 2023.

14 F. Seethala and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Liberia", UNIDIR, December 2020, p. 4, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-liberia>.

15 Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund, "Final report: Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA)", Project no. ATT.VTF.G2017.009LBR, 29 January 2019, https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/Liberia_-2017_VTF_-_Final_Report/Liberia_-2017_VTF_-_Final_Report.pdf.

review and redraft the legislation, as well as support to hold a series of consultations with national stakeholders, including representatives of Liberia's media, civil society and state security forces. The draft bill was then presented to the legislature for consideration by relevant parliamentary committees.¹⁶ The Liberian House of Representatives passed the bill in late June 2022, and the amended Firearms and Ammunition Control Act was enacted into law on 12 September 2022.¹⁷ The amended law not only provides for a broadening of the mandate of the coordination mechanism, but also includes new provisions for the criminal prosecution of crimes related to arms and ammunition, the regulation of explosives and craft-produced weapons, as well as transfer controls. As of mid-2023, the renamed and expanded Liberia National Commission on Arms (LiNCA) was in the process of developing administrative regulations to support implementation of the law and to harmonize penalties with the national penal code.

One of the most interesting elements of the amended Firearms and Ammunition Control Act is the change of the mandate of Liberia's national WAM coordinating entity from LiNCSA's focus on small arms to cover all arms. LiNCA's expanded mandate now enables it to serve as the competent national authority for all issues related to conventional arms and ammunition management, encompassing the coordination and implementation of national WAM strategies and the ATT. The expansion of the National Commission's mandate has also enhanced its work by allowing it to develop comprehensive multi-year plans to address conventional arms risks and threats, providing for an increase in LiNCA's budget and allowing it to self-raise additional funds to implement its multi-year plans, through the establishment of a Trust Fund for Arms Control Activities.¹⁸ This progress has resulted in a boost in LiNCA's resources, an increase in its leverage via the expanded legal mandate, and its further institutional strengthening to facilitate its work coordinating WAM activities on the national, regional and international levels.

2.2. TRANSFER CONTROLS

Illicit transfers of conventional arms and ammunition can fuel or prolong conflicts, violent crime and instability, and can facilitate or be used to commit grave abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law.¹⁹ The negative consequences for

sustainable peace and development have been well documented. It is therefore important for States seeking to develop a comprehensive and effective WAM framework to have a national system for regulating international transfers of conventional arms and ammunition, including imports, retransfers, transit and trans-shipment, and brokering. It is notable that, of the States consulted for this update, only Benin highlighted transfer controls as a WAM functional area in which there is a persistent challenge. At the same time, very few of the African States that have conducted a WAM baseline assessment highlighted progress in strengthening national transfer controls, despite all having options for enhancement in this functional area.



Federal Republic of Somalia, 2020.
Coast south of Mogadishu. Credit: © UNIDIR.

The **Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)** provided information on several measures to further strengthen its import controls and implement the WAM provisions contained in United Nations Security Council resolution 2607.²⁰ The FGS confirmed in March 2023 that it had established a centralized import control system, for which the Halane Armoury is the main central processing point for all weapons and ammunition purchased by or donated to the FGS.²¹ By early 2022, the FGS completed the transition of a previously temporary import control structure into a permanent one. The import control system now has designated national authorities mandated to conduct the import authorization process. The number of high-level government officials authorized to sign and issue

16 Front Page Africa, "LiNCSA engages lawmakers, civil society stakeholders and the media on the speedy passage of proposed draft amendments to domestic firearms control legislations", 12 July 2021, <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/linca-engages-lawmakers-civil-society-stakeholders-and-the-media-on-the-speedy-passage-of-proposed-draft-amendments-to-domestic-firearms-control-legislations>.

17 Liberia National Commission on Arms, "Liberian Senate passes amended Act to establish the Liberia National Commission on Arms and Amendments to the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act (FACA) of 2015", 7 July 2022, <http://linca.gov.lr/others.php?&7d5f44532cbfc489b8d-b9e12e44eb820=NDE1>.

18 This progress story was shared by the Chairman of LiNCA during an interview with UNIDIR on 28 March 2023.

19 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p. 55.

20 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2607 (2021), S/RES/2607, 15 November 2021, [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2607\(2021\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2607(2021)).

21 O. Alturk, "U.S. and Somalia partner to save lives", U.S. State Magazine, June 2022, <https://statemag.state.gov/2022/06/0622itn04>.

end-use and end-user documentation has been limited within ministries, in line with relevant international standards and guidelines.²² Records of end-use and end-user documentation exchanged with the export control authorities of the supplying State, are kept by the Office for National Security (ONS), and within designated ministries. The Somalia National Army is using a standard operating procedure (SOPs) for processing imported arms and ammunition through the centralized import control system, which covers verification, import marking and registration, and storage prior to distribution to the authorized units.²³

During the period covered by the update, the Joint Verification Team (JVT) in Somalia, further strengthened efforts to verify information on imported weapons that have been distributed to Somalia security units.²⁴ Trained officers around Somalia also enter information on newly received weapons into a data-collection application on a mobile phone, which can then be cross-checked by the JVT and the ONS, and compared with import records.²⁵ For example, as of March 2022, the JVT had registered and verified approximately 6,660 weapons belonging to the Somali Police Force in Banaadir region and Galmudug and South West states through on-site and remote verification. This has contributed to an increase in transparency and accountability regarding imported weapons that have been distributed to units.

2.3. STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT

Effective stockpile management ensures the operational readiness of national security forces, prevents theft and the diversion of state-owned weapons and ammunition, and enables the timely identification and disposal of obsolete and surplus materiel.²⁶ In order to effectively manage weapons and ammunition and prevent their diversion, there is a need for adequate infrastructure, training for personnel, and regular maintenance and inventory checks, all according to established international standards. Measures are also required to ensure the safety of conventional ammunition, which may deteriorate or become damaged unless it is correctly stored, handled and transported; damage or deterioration may result in unplanned and accidental explosion at munition sites with the risk of significant loss of life, damage to infrastructure and costs for clear-up operations.²⁷ Despite significant international assistance and cooperation

efforts to strengthen physical security and stockpile management conditions in African States, especially in member States of ECOWAS, stockpile management is the functional area in which the largest number of African States that have conducted a WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR's Reference Methodology face persistent challenges (8 of the 12 states covered in this update).



The African States that highlighted persistent challenges in strengthening stockpile management of weapons and ammunition indicated that their financial, technical and logistical needs are unmet, as well as highlighting the fact that armouries and depots are at risk of looting and diversion of materiel to unauthorized armed actors, including groups designated as terrorist groups and non-State armed groups. These States highlighted a desire to move away from relying on international assistance and cooperation towards national funding to ensure a sustainable approach to address pressing infrastructure and training needs in this WAM functional area. On this point, reference was again made to the importance of gaining the attention of key national decision-makers to ensure the allocation of sufficient resources to ensure sustainable national ownership in this domain. Furthermore, several of these States expressed a desire to establish and maintain specialist training programmes for national security agencies on conventional arms and ammunition stockpile management to ensure sustainable national expertise in this WAM functional area.

22 Modular Small-Arms-Control Compendium (MOSAIC) Module 03.21, "National Controls over the End-user and End-use of Internationally Transferred Small Arms and Light Weapons", <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOSAIC-03.21-2014EV1.0.pdf>.

23 According to an unpublished report from a WAM Coordination Conference held in March 2023 in Mogadishu, there are now 10 national SOPs for managing weapons and ammunition, covering (inter alia): general procedures, procedures for weapons, procedures for ammunition and explosives, accounting of weapons and ammunition, marking of weapons, destruction of weapons and ammunition, transport of weapons and ammunition, reception and documentation procedures, and captured weapons. In addition, there is an FGS ATMIS SOP for the management of captured/recovered weapons.

24 The JVT supports the physical verification of arms and ammunition provided to the FGS. See Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2014/9, 22 May 2014, <https://undocs.org/en/S/PRST/2014/9>.

25 Federal Government of Somalia, Report of WAM Coordination Conference held in March 2022 (Unpublished report with limited distribution).

26 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p. 59.

27 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p. 61.

Togo's WAM baseline assessment of December 2021 highlighted concerns with the looting of arms and ammunition storage sites located in remote or border areas by groups designated as terrorist groups operating in the Lake Chad Basin and the Liptako–Gourma region.²⁸ The WAM baseline assessment road map therefore recommended as a high priority for action the rehabilitation, refurbishment and construction of weapon and ammunition storage sites to increase their physical security, in accordance with international standards and guidelines. In 2022, and with international cooperation and assistance, Togo's National Commission to Counter the Proliferation, Circulation and Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CNLPAL) renovated an armoury for the Togolese National Police to meet international standards. This included measures to better control access (i.e., installation of windows and gates) and to improve stockpile management in order to facilitate regular inventories and the early detection of theft and diversion (i.e., the use of racks and chains for organizing and storing weapons).²⁹ In addition, the Togolese security forces supporting counter-terrorism efforts in Savanes region, northern Togo, acquired temporary mobile armouries to better secure materiel in remote and border areas.

2.4. MARKING

Effective marking of weapons supports accountability in the national WAM framework and enables the competent national authorities to maintain accurate national inventories, as well as to identify potential points of diversion from stocks.³⁰ Markings on the packaging of SALW and the inclusion of unique identifiers or of lot or batch marking of explosive ammunition can also facilitate tracing efforts. Marking of conventional arms requires technical capacity and resources in the form of an adequate number of functioning marking machines as well as qualified personnel to operate, maintain and store the machines. In preparing this update, several African States highlighted persistent challenges with regards to equipment, technical expertise and the means to mark conventional arms located in remote areas. Some States also stated that programmes that were in place but not completed before the COVID-19 pandemic have not yet resumed.

Niger's WAM baseline assessment road map of 2018 recommended the adoption of a national weapon-marking strategy and the implementation of a national marking programme to improve the security and accountability of State-held arms.³¹ A national weapon-marking strategy

was adopted by late 2018, as a result of awareness raising and sensitization activities conducted by Niger's National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (CCNAI). In 2022, with international cooperation and assistance, the CCNAI acquired three MC2000 marking machines and software for recording information on marked arms, and also received training for personnel to conduct marking. During the year, the CCNAI coordinated the marking of arms belonging to the National Guard attached to the Ministry of Interior, Public Security, Decentralization, Customary and Religious Affairs in three of its eight operational regions (Niamey, Maradi and Diffa). As of early 2023, close to 8,000 state-owned weapons had been marked according to the provisions of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW. Additional funds are required to continue the marking exercise in the remaining regions. Efforts undertaken in 2022 could help Niger to facilitate any future tracing efforts.³²

Since completing the WAM baseline assessment in 2016, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo's** National Commission for Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Reduction of Armed Violence Reduction (CNC-ALPC) has made progress in expanding marking activities throughout the country. Given the risk of diversion to non-state armed groups and groups designated as terrorist groups in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces, in eastern DRC, the marking of state-held weapons in these provinces was a priority in the CNC-ALPC's 2018–2022 national strategy and action plan for the management of weapons, including SALW, and ammunition. In order to achieve this objective, national authorities overcame three sets of challenges:

1. There was a lack of awareness among high-level military authorities. The CNC-ALPC addressed this by conducted awareness-raising activities.
2. There was a need to establish capabilities for marking. The CNC-ALPC achieved this via training for different national authorities in the military, justice and civilian spheres. With international support, a train-the-trainers approach was used to build capacity and establish teams to undertake marking.
3. The DRC had to find a way to mark weapons in the conflict-affected eastern provinces. The CNC-ALPC and national authorities addressed this by establishing a specific weapon-marking plan, in cooperation with international partners. As a result of this detailed planning, the CNC-ALPC was also able to address the logistical challenges posed by the size of the national territory and by the transportation of experts and machines from Kinshasa to the east.

28 M. de Groof and T. Bajon, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Togo", UNIDIR, 2022, p. 10, <https://unidir.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/UNIDIR-WAM-Country-Insight-Togo-EN.pdf>.

29 See MOSAIC Module 05.20, "Stockpile Management: Weapons", <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOSA-IC-05.20-2012EV1.0.pdf>.

30 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p.66

31 S. de Tessières, S. Wilkin and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Niger", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-niger>.

32 This progress story was shared by officials of the CCNAI during an interview held on 29 March 2023.



▲ Central African Republic, 2022.

National WAM workshop, Bangui.

Credit: © ComNat-ALPC, UNIDIR, MINUSCA & UNMAS CAR.

By November 2022, almost 264,300 state-held and licensed civilian arms had been marked in Kinshasa and in the conflict-affected provinces in eastern DRC. These weapons have been marked in accordance with the established national marking code, which is aligned with the Nairobi Protocol's regional standards and international standards. Newly imported weapons are also centrally processed and marked at the central logistics base of the armed forces in Kinshasa, prior to their distribution to units.

In addition to marking weapons, progress has been made in two other related functional areas: registration and tracing. Marked weapons are registered locally and also recorded in the DRC's national central database. The expansion of marking activities has improved accountability in the DRC and enhanced the Government's capacity to track the weapons in its national stockpile, as well as to trace diverted or recovered weapons. There are also examples of civilian and military justice authorities taking trace results into account, leading to judicial action. The CNC-ALPC plan to include the continuation and expansion of marking activities in the upcoming and planned 2023–2028 national strategy and action plan.

2.5. RECORD-KEEPING

Effective record-keeping promotes transparency and accountability in a national WAM system and facilitates end-use monitoring and tracing efforts. International instruments require or recommend that, within available capacities and resources, States keep comprehensive records on their arms and ammunition that cover international transfers, the national stockpile of state-held weapons, and arms and ammunition in civilian hands. This includes weapons and ammunition recovered from the illegal or illicit sphere, as well as holdings that are scheduled for disposal whether by destruction, deactivation, donation or sale.³³ Relevant international and regional instruments and standards recommend centralization of the record-keeping system, managed by a competent authority of the State.³⁴

Ghana's 2019 WAM baseline assessment established that, while all security agencies had an accounting system in place with computerized registers at headquarters-level, field units used paper-based systems and seized weapons and ammunition were not being systematically registered. Ghana's WAM baseline assessment road map therefore recommended two steps to support the establishment of

³³ Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p.70

³⁴ MOSAIC Module 05.30, "Marking and Recordkeeping", <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/MOSAIC-05.30-2022EV1.2.pdf>

a centralized electronic national record-keeping system for all authorized SALW in the country, both state-held and civilian-owned, as well as for illicit arms and ammunition:

1. The creation of electronic accounting systems for arms and ammunition within security agencies
2. The procurement of software and hardware for electronic accounting of all arms and ammunition registered in the country.³⁵

With international assistance, in 2022 the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (GNACSA) established the Ghana Arms Database to facilitate the recording, examination and reporting of national data on arms and ammunition. The web-based application is designed to generate data and national statistics on SALW to support monitoring of progress to reduce illicit arms flows in accordance with target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also designed to inform evidence-based policy interventions to counter the trafficking and proliferation of weapons and ammunition in Ghana.³⁶ GNACSA collaborated with the Regional Statistics Unit of the Ghana Police Service to implement a pilot project across 14 divisional and 42 district police stations in the Greater Accra region to test the feasibility and reliability of the database ahead of its national roll-out. All parties determined that the pilot project was a success, and the Ghana Arms Database will be rolled out nationally to increase Ghana's capacity to record arms and ammunition data and to provide data to support the analysis of arms- and ammunition-related crimes, including countering diversion and helping to facilitate arms-tracing requests.³⁷

2.6. PROFILING, TRACING AND PROCESSING OF ILLICIT ARMS AND THE TREATMENT OF ILLICIT AMMUNITION

The identification, profiling and tracing of illicit arms and ammunition support early-warning mechanisms by identifying demand for, and sources of, arms and ammunition in specific areas or among particular groups. Ideally, this process begins by examining information contained within national borders to determine the point of diversion. Then, if the source of the arms and its point of diversion appear to be outside the national territory, the process would turn to the international level. This information can contribute to efforts to prevent armed violence and de-escalate conflict.



▲
Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2018.
Ammunition profiled. Credit: © CNC-ALPC, MONUSCO.

In addition, States should process illicit arms and treat illicit ammunition as part of investigations and domestic judicial processes relating to the possession, use, trafficking or diversion of the illicit materiel. It is therefore important for States to have appropriate laws and procedures for the marking, recording, storing and responsible disposal of illicit arms and ammunition to ensure that they are not diverted again into the illicit market.

In preparation for this update, only a few African States highlighted that they face persistent challenges with the profiling, tracing and processing of illicit arms and the treatment of illicit ammunition (see Figure 2). These States emphasized that their challenges include low technical expertise; and that to build national capacity would require international assistance and cooperation including for training.

The **Central African Republic's** WAM baseline assessment of 2017 and follow-up assessment in 2022 highlighted the widespread practice of CAR's defence and security forces (re-)integrating recovered weapons and ammunition into national stockpiles without the necessary, systematic and adequate controls and measures.³⁸ The WAM baseline assessment road map of 2017 there-

35 S. de Tésières and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Ghana", UNIDIR, December 2020, p. 7, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-ghana>.

36 The database was developed in adherence to strict security protocols and procedures and conforms with the Ghana Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843), which lays out guidelines for the gathering, use and dissemination of information.

37 The UNIDIR research team obtained information on this progress story following its presentation by GNACSA during a high-level ATT implementation workshop organized in Ghana in February 2023.

38 For the purposes of this document, the term "recovered" refers to arms and ammunition captured (e.g. by militaries in military operations), seized (e.g. by law enforcement, customs and border agencies), collected or surrendered (e.g. during disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes or community violence reduction activities), or found (e.g. in caches). In some such contexts, weapons may be disposed of by integration into the national stockpiles of security forces and services. Recovered ammunition should never be integrated into a national stockpile. See S. de Tésières, H. Shiotani and S. Wilkin, *The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions*, UNIDIR, 2019, pp. 5, 18, 19, <https://unidir.org/publication/role-weapon-and-ammunition-management-preventing-conflict-and-supporting-Security>.

fore recommended the development and use of a national written procedure document for processing recovered weapons. This would include guidance on record-keeping, tracking and tracing, storage, and marking of recovered weapons that will be reintegrated into the national stockpile.³⁹ When the follow-up assessment took place in April 2022, this measure to support efforts to prevent diversion had not been completed, although a process was under way to prepare a set of SOPs entitled “Guidelines for the Management of Seized or Surrendered Weapons, Components and Ammunition”. The WAM follow-up assessment road map therefore recommended the finalization of this process and the use of the guidance throughout the country.⁴⁰ Shortly after the conclusion of the assessment, CAR’s National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (COMNAT-ALPC), with international cooperation and assistance, finalized the draft of the SOP and conducted dialogue meetings with political, military and security entities to validate the SOP. The draft SOP includes provisions for the registration, identification, transportation and integration of recovered weapons into national stockpiles, as well as guidance for tracking, tracing and investigating recovered weapons. It was finalized in 2022 and prepared for adoption in 2023 by relevant ministries. When used, the SOP is expected to standardize practices for processing recovered weapons in an accountable manner in CAR.⁴¹

2.7. WEAPON COLLECTION

Weapon-collection programmes help to reduce the quantities of unwanted, illegal and illicit weapons that might otherwise be used in armed conflict or armed violence.⁴² When implemented as part of broader efforts to address the root causes of violence and conflict, rather than as stand-alone or ad hoc activities, weapon-collection programmes can contribute to sustainable peace, security and development efforts.⁴³

Several of the States that shared information on progress made in weapon collection for this update emphasized how such efforts have benefitted from the active involvement of women in decision-making roles and in collec-

tion activities. It is also the functional WAM area in which gender-sensitive approaches were most commonly highlighted. **Burkina Faso’s** National Commission for Arms Control (CNCA) placed particular emphasis on the role of a women’s association in the collection of obsolete weapons in local communities in the west of the country, noting that it also inspired action by other associations across the country.⁴⁴

During **Togo’s** WAM baseline assessment, which took place in December 2021, national authorities underscored concerns with the level of civilian-held unregistered weapons, with an estimated 58,000 firearms in civilian hands.⁴⁵ The baseline assessment road map recommended conducting a weapon-collection programme as one option for addressing the government’s concerns. In September 2022, as part of the African Union’s weapons amnesty month and with international assistance and cooperation, Togo’s CNLPAL implemented a weapon-collection programme that collected at least 824 weapons in the Savanes, Kara and Centrale regions of Togo.⁴⁶

The CNLPAL designed and organized the collection initiative in four phases. First, the CNLPAL used radio, television and social media platforms to sensitize the targeted communities on the risks associated with the possession of illicit weapons and the planned weapon-collection programme. Second, to encourage the participation of key stakeholder groups in targeted communities, the CNLPAL shared knowledge of weapon collection with representatives of national security agencies, journalists, traditional leaders and civil society organizations, in particular women and youth groups. The third phase constituted the collection of illicit craft-produced weapons, unlicensed weapons and weapons that had been used for hunting, but which no longer functioned. The final phase consisted of a symbolic weapon-destruction ceremony in Togblékopé on 7 October 2022. The government considered the weapon-collection project to have been a success, especially the awareness raising and engagement of a wide set of stakeholders in the fight against the circulation of illicit weapons. There is therefore a desire to organize weapon-collection initiatives in other regions when adequate funds are available.

39 H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, “Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Central African Republic”, UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-central-african-republic>; Mensah and Giezendanner, 2023.

40 Mensah and Giezendanner, 2023, p. 19.

41 This progress story and accompanying documents were shared by a representative of CAR’s COMNAT-ALPC and an international partner that supported the process (i.e., the Mine Action component of MINUSCA).

42 Giezendanner and Shiotani, 2021, p. 80.

43 MOSAIC Module 05.40, “Collection of Illicit and Unwanted Small Arms and Light Weapons”, <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOSAIC-05.40-2012EV1.1.pdf>.

44 This progress story was shared by officials of the CNCA via a questionnaire sent to UNIDIR on 11 May 2023.

45 de Groof and Bajon, 2022, p. 16.

46 United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, “The African Union Peace and Security Council and UNODA commemorate the Africa Amnesty Month in Togo”, 22 September 2022, <https://disarmament.unoda.org/update/the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-and-unoda-com-memorate-the-africa-amnesty-month-in-togo>.

2.8. DISPOSAL INCLUDING DESTRUCTION

United Nations guidance recommends destruction as the preferred method for the disposal of surplus, unwanted or obsolete conventional arms and ammunition.⁴⁷ States use various methods for disposal, which should be outlined in their national WAM legal and regulatory frameworks. The exact method used for disposal will also vary depending on capacities and resources. This subsection introduces examples of a strategic approach for disposal of recovered weapons by destruction (Nigeria) and building national capacity to undertake safe and secure destruction of surplus ammunition (Sierra Leone).

Participants involved in the 2016 WAM baseline assessment for **Nigeria** did not highlight surplus conventional arms and ammunition as a priority area for action.⁴⁸ However, in 2022, Nigeria's National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) sought international cooperation and assistance to enable the safe and secure destruction of weapons that had been recovered across the country during 2020–2021. The recovered weapons included craft-produced weapons, pistols, assault rifles, pump action guns, machine guns and sub-machine guns. In preparation for the destruction of recovered weapons, 12 officers from the NCCSALW received training in weapon handling to ensure safe for destruction and transportation, as well as in the overall supervision of destruction activities and the operation of destruction machinery. In preparation for the destruction, the NCCSALW recorded information on the weapons to be destroyed, including pictures, in Nigeria's national SALW database and shared this information with the security agencies involved in the recovery of these weapons for the agencies to verify them and authorize their destruction. The weapons were then transferred to the destruction site at the Nigerian Army's Command Engineering Depot at Rigachikun, Kaduna. During November–December 2022, 2,170 recovered weapons were destroyed via cutting

and smelting methods. Overall, this activity not only ensured that these weapons will not be diverted into the illicit market, but also helped to build national capacity for destruction and demonstrated how a government entity, commercial entity and NGO could work together to successfully dispose of unwanted conventional weapons. The NCCSALW also indicated that the process showed the need to develop a national SOP for processing and disposing of recovered weapons, as well as encouraged planning for more frequent destruction activities.⁴⁹

A key finding of the September 2019 WAM baseline assessment in **Sierra Leone** was a concern with the low number of trained personnel in good practices in stockpile management, especially the lack of Ammunition Technical Officers or equivalent qualified personnel in Sierra Leone's national security forces.⁵⁰ The baseline assessment road map therefore recommended several options to strengthen technical competence in this area, as well as ensuring the meaningful participation and representation of women in such training. In November 2022, the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SLeNCSA), with international cooperation and assistance, trained 12 police and military personnel on conventional ammunition disposal. The training represented an important element of efforts to establish a national standing pool of explosive ordnance disposal experts, in preparation for the demolition of thousands of unserviceable high explosives and the incineration of several million rounds of small arms ammunition. Three of the 12 personnel trained were female officers from the national police force and the armed forces. The selection of qualified female officers for the training is part of SLeNCSA's steps to support ongoing gender mainstreaming efforts in Sierra Leone's defence and security forces. Future editions of the WAM in Africa Insight series will report on progress made in the disposal of ammunition in Sierra Leone.



▲ Sierra Leone, 2019.
Swearing in of an all-female battalion of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.
Credit: © SLeNCSA, UNIDIR.

47 MOSAIC Module 05.50, "Destruction: Weapons", p. 3, <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOSA-IC-05.50-2012EV1.0.pdf>; Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards 04.10, Disarmament, p. 30, <http://www.unddr.org/modules/IDDRS-4.10-Disarmament.pdf>.

48 M. Lewis and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Nigeria", UNIDIR, December 2020, p. 7, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-nigeria>.

49 This information was received during an interview with officials from the NCCSALW on 21 March 2023.

50 S. de Tessières and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Sierra Leone", UNIDIR, November 2020, p. 8, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-sierra-leone>.

CONCLUSION



▼ Federal Republic of Somalia, 2018.

AMISOM soldiers preparing armed vehicle, Mogadishu.
Credit: © UNIDIR.

This update presents a holistic approach to weapons and ammunition management with a special focus on progress made by 12 African states in improving their WAM frameworks and practices after undertaking a WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR's Reference Methodology. This holistic approach to WAM contributes to achieving broader peace, security and development goals including, but not limited to, conflict prevention, armed violence reduction, an accountable security sector, protection of civilians and advancing reducing the human cost of weapons.

The examples provided above of progress made by different African States in various WAM thematic areas seeks to show not only the types of measure that can be taken to strengthen WAM policies, practices and capacities at the national level, but also the linkages between different thematic WAM areas – for example, the relationship between marking, record-keeping, profiling, tracing and processing of illicit arms and the treatment of illicit ammunition. This update also highlights the importance of ensuring that efforts to monitor progress in the WAM

domain take into account cross-cutting issues such as gender-mainstreaming and gender-sensitive WAM practices, as well as the need to consider challenges that are relevant for WAM but which are not currently explicitly addressed in the UNIDIR WAM Reference Methodology – that is, craft production and border controls.

A key lesson shared in the previous, 2022 update on WAM in Africa Insight remains central to the success stories shared above: enhancing national ownership among all relevant national stakeholders and high-level sensitization of political actors and government officials on the importance of WAM are essential to making further progress to strengthen WAM in Africa.⁵¹

The hope is that this update will encourage States, regional organizations and relevant international partners to consult UNIDIR's WAM Country Insights and the annual update series to support the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of future WAM projects.

51 A. Mensah, P. Holtom, H. Giezendanner, "Weapons and Ammunition Management in Africa Insight: 2022 Update", UNIDIR, June 2022, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-in-africa-insight-2022-update>.

WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA INSIGHT: 2023 UPDATE

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 progress made by 9 African states in improving their WAM frameworks and practices after undertaking a WAM baseline assessment with support from UNIDIR. 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 consult its WAM Country Insight and Annual Update series as a useful reference to support the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation for future WAM projects.



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