

WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA INSIGHT: 2025 UPDATE



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SUMMARY

Effective weapons and ammunition management (WAM) is fundamental to reducing the availability of illicit conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons (SALW), and ammunition, in circulation, to preventing their diversion to unauthorized users, and to mitigating the risk of unplanned explosions. WAM thus not only contributes to the prevention of armed conflicts and violence, including gender-based violence, but also contributes to peace, security, stability and sustainable development.

By mid-2025, 18 states – including 14 in Africa – had assessed and made efforts to strengthen their national frameworks governing the management of weapons and ammunition through their life cycle using UNIDIR's Reference Methodology for National WAM Baseline Assessments. This methodology identifies key functional areas for WAM. These range from establishing national coordination mechanisms, strategies and legal frameworks to strengthening controls over transfers, manage stockpiles, improvements to accountability through marking and record-keeping systems, dealing with illicit arms and ammunition, and final disposal.

This is the fourth annual update by UNIDIR to recognize the progress made to strengthen WAM policies and practices by those 14 African states. Information analysed for this update was collected primarily through meetings and interviews with national focal points and lead authorities, regional organizations, United Nations entities, and expert non-governmental organizations (NGOs) between mid-2024 and mid-2025. This annual WAM update provides an analysis of progress across the regional baseline of policy and practice, and highlights persistent, context-specific and emerging challenges. The update presents national examples of practices and activities that have helped in overcoming some of these challenges, as well as examples of progress that is being made in strengthening national WAM frameworks in often challenging environments.

Among these examples are the autonomous undertaking of assessments at the subnational level for evidence- and needs-based, localized actions; the development of strategies that integrate WAM into broader peace, security and development frameworks; as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This update also highlights a "multi-purpose WAM operation", and the piloting, roll out and use of certain technological solutions by several states. In addition, it reports on increased community-level engagement and transitional WAM measures. It also shows increased attention to environmentally sound disposal, including destruction practices.

Despite progress being made, certain persistent challenges remain. These include, for example, the physical infrastructure for stockpile management; accountability systems and their digitalization; effective control of craft- or artisanally produced weapons, systems and components; as well as coordination across government entities. The evolving security environment, marked in parts of Africa by violent extremism, transnational organized crime, arms trafficking and activities of non-state actors, continues to present serious risks to progress on WAM, while also underscoring the need for sustained commitment and innovative policies and practices.

Further progress will depend on reinforced national ownership and high-level political leadership and clear mandates and dedicated resources, which must be paired with continuous improvement of WAM technical capacities. Further policy-oriented and multi-stakeholder dialogues – including for the exchange of good and effective measures and practices – are critical in this regard, supported by targeted regional and international cooperation and technical assistance. With a combination of efforts, African states can continue to advance towards safer, more secure and more peaceful communities.



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NOTES

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ABOUT UNIDIR

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) – an autonomous institute within the United Nations – conducts research on disarmament and security. UNIDIR is based in Geneva, Switzerland, the centre for bilateral and multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations, and home of the Conference on Disarmament. The Institute explores current issues pertaining to a variety of existing and future armaments, as well as global diplomacy and local tensions and conflicts. Working with researchers, diplomats, government officials, NGOs and other institutions since 1980, UNIDIR acts as a bridge between the research community and governments. UNIDIR activities are funded by contributions from governments and donor foundations.

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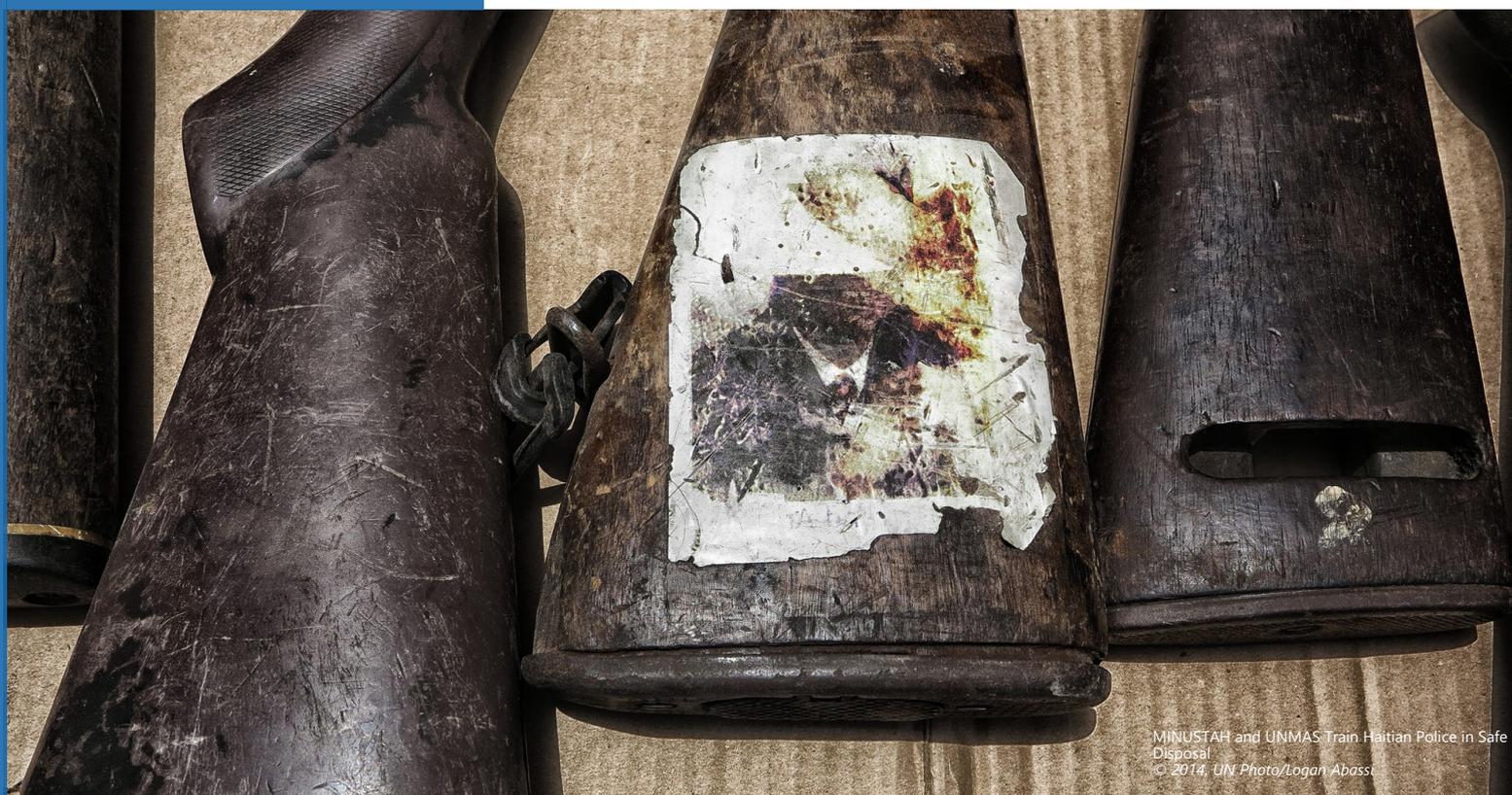
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMAT-GICHD	Ammunition Management Advisory Team of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CAAP	Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme (UNIDIR)
CAR	Conflict Armament Research
CMD	Central Monitoring Department (Somalia)
CNCCAI	National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illegal Weapons (Niger)
CNLPAL	National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms (Burkina Faso) or National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation, Circulation and Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Togo)
CNS	National Security Council (Côte d'Ivoire)
ComNat-ALPC	National Commission for Combating the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FACI	Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
GFA	Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management
GNACSA	Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons
IATG	International Ammunition Technical Guidelines
IED	Improvised explosive device
Interpol	International Criminal Police Organization
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
NAP	National Action Plan on Weapons and Ammunition Management (Sierra Leone)
NCCSALW	National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Nigeria)
NCL	National control list
NCS	Nigerian Customs Service
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ONS	Office of National Security
RECSA	Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States
SAWL	Small arms and light weapons
SLeCAA	Sierra Leone Commission on Arms and Ammunitions
SNA	Somali National Army
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SPF	Somali Police Force
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
VTF	Voluntary Trust Fund (Arms Trade Treaty)
WAM	Weapons and ammunition management

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1. INTRODUCTION



MINUSTAH and UNMAS Train Haitian Police in Safe Disposal
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In 2024, United Nations Member States adopted the Pact for the Future at the Summit of the Future, reaffirming their collective commitment to advancing international peace, security and sustainable development in a rapidly changing global environment.¹ States recognized the persistent and evolving challenges posed by the diversion, proliferation and misuse of arms and ammunition – including small arms and light weapons (SALW) – and called for strengthened action to address illicit trafficking, to close gaps in through-life ammunition management, and to effectively implement arms control and disarmament commitments.² The Pact for the Future also embeds a preventive approach by integrating illicit SALW risk-mitigation into broader conflict-prevention strategies, and it explicitly reaffirms disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation obligations relevant to weapons and ammunition management (WAM).³ States also expressed grave concern that diverted and trafficked ammunition can fuel armed conflict and violence – including gender-based violence – and undermine these goals.

The Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (GFA), adopted by Member States in late 2023, represents a significant multilateral step to reinforce national and regional efforts to strengthen WAM and enhance international cooperation and assistance.⁴ The GFA sets out 15 objectives and associated measures to ensure the safe, secure and sustainable management of all types of conventional ammunition, from manufacture to final disposal. The framework complements and reinforces existing international normative frameworks for control of conventional arms, including SALW.⁵

All these developments underscore the urgent need for a strengthened, coordinated and integrated approach to WAM at all levels – recognizing the interconnectedness of peace, security and development in order to address the evolving nature of armed conflict and reduce the human cost of weapons and ammunition.

- 1 United Nations, General Assembly, “The Pact for the Future”, resolution 79/1, adopted at the Summit of the Future, 22 September 2024.
- 2 United Nations, “The Pact for the Future”, Action 26. See also UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), A/CONF.192/15, July 2001.
- 3 United Nations, “Pact for the Future”, Action 14, para. 35(h), on protecting civilians; Action 18, para. 39(f), on prevention and conflict risk-mitigation, including SALW; Action 23 on sustaining peace and security linkages; and Action 26, paras. 47(g–h), reaffirming disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation obligations.
- 4 See, for example, Théo Bajon, *Weapons and Ammunition Management in Africa Insight: 2024 Update* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2024). See also United Nations, General Assembly, “Through-life conventional ammunition management”, Resolution 78/47, 4 December 2023.
- 5 Notably the United Nations Programme of Action on SALW, the International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Firearms Protocol.

Effective WAM ensures the exercise of oversight, accountability and governance of conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle – from production and acquisition to storage, transfer, end-use control, tracing and disposal.⁶ It encompasses conventional weapons, including SALW, and ammunition. Effective WAM reduces illicit weapons and ammunition in circulation, prevents the diversion of state-owned materiel to unauthorized users, and mitigates the risks of

unplanned explosions. In doing so, WAM contributes to peace, security, stability and socio-economic development. It is also a fundamental component of conflict-prevention and -management activities and efforts to address armed violence. (See Box 1 for an overview of the key functional areas of WAM).

BOX 1.

Key functional areas of weapons and ammunition management

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.

The **legal and regulatory framework at the national level** consists of the laws, decrees, regulations and administrative documents that form the basis of the national WAM governance structure and guide their implementation.

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.

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.

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 trackability and tracing of weapons and ammunition.

An effective national **record-keeping** system comprehensively records all phases of the life cycle of 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). It aids national accounting, trackability and tracing of weapons and ammunition.

Taken together, effective marking and record-keeping systems constitute a national accounting system, which serves several purposes including accurate, timely inventorying of the national stockpile of conventional arms and ammunition.

Profiling and tracing of weapons 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.

The **processing of illicit weapons and treatment of illicit ammunition** can support the domestic judicial process by providing information and evidence which can be used to convict traffickers and violence perpetrators, thereby helping to address impunity.

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/or unwanted weapons and ammunition.

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.

6 Hardy Giezendanner and Himayu Shiotani, *A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2021), p. 7.

To support national and regional efforts to review and update policies and practices to control and manage weapons and ammunition throughout their life cycle, UNIDIR has developed a Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments (UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology).⁷ Since 2015, this tool has been used by 18 states – including 14 in Africa – as they conduct national assessments and work to strengthen their national frameworks, policies and practices (see Figure 1). Three of these states have also conducted follow-up WAM assessments to record progress that has been made or to expand and refine the reference baseline as well as identify further options over time. The Reference Methodology has also informed United Nations Security Council processes for benchmarking, implementation, reporting and monitoring of arms embargoes.⁸

Each assessment is led by the host government and organized as a national consultative process, facilitating dialogue and decision-making on WAM and related issues among all relevant stakeholders. Key regional and subregional organizations – including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) – as well as United Nations entities and specialized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have supported these processes. The findings, recommendations and enhancement options identified during baseline or follow-up assessments inform the development or review of strategic approaches and national road maps. A road map is a strategic document that provides a starting point for a continuum of action to strengthen the national WAM framework in a comprehensive manner, including, where needed, through international cooperation and assistance.

BOX 2.

UNIDIR Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme's research and work to strengthen national, regional and multilateral approaches to WAM, mid-2024–mid-2025

During the period covered by this update, two states – the Gambia (2024) and Senegal (2025) – undertook a WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology in cooperation with ECOWAS and UNIDIR. The resulting road maps include identified options developed to strengthen their national WAM frameworks. In Somalia in 2025, the national lead authority in cooperation with the focal points of federal member state undertook, for the first time, subnational assessments using UNIDIR's Reference Methodology autonomously. The findings informed the revision of the national WAM strategy, specific strategies and action plans.⁹

At the regional level, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) with its Regional Peace and Disarmament Centres organized informal consultative meetings in 2024 on the operationalization of the GFA, including with African states. UNIDIR's Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme (CAAP) contributed substantively to these meetings, alongside other partners such as Conflict Armament Research (CAR) and the Ammunition Management Advisory Team of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (AMAT-GICHD). In mid-2025 UNODA, UNIDIR, CAR and AMAT-GICHD released a Voluntary Guide that they had jointly developed on facilitating the implementation of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management.¹⁰ UNIDIR also provided insights and lessons arising from reporting on conventional arms control in support of future reporting by states on the implementation of the GFA.¹¹

At the multilateral level, UNIDIR's CAAP acted as an implementing partner of UNODA for the review and update of Aide-Mémoire: Options for Reflecting Weapons and Ammunition Management in Decisions of the Security Council. The revised, third edition of Aide-Mémoire and a WAM dashboard are planned for release in late 2025. Upon request, CAAP in mid-2025 participated in a United Nations Security Council-mandated assessment of the arms embargo targeting Al-Shabaab.¹²

UNIDIR continues its research and work in support of comprehensive and holistic approaches to WAM, and the targeted integration of through-life WAM into broader conflict-prevention and -management activities and peace and security efforts.

7 Giezendanner and Shiotani, *A Reference Methodology*, p. 13. See also Bajon, *2024 Update*.

8 For more information, see, for example, Bajon, *2024 Update*, p. 8.

9 "Federal Member States: Weapons & Ammunition Management Baseline Insights", report shared with the author by a focal point consulted within the CMD.

10 See UNIDIR, UNODA, CAR, GICHD-AMAT, *Implementing the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management: A Voluntary Guide* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2025).

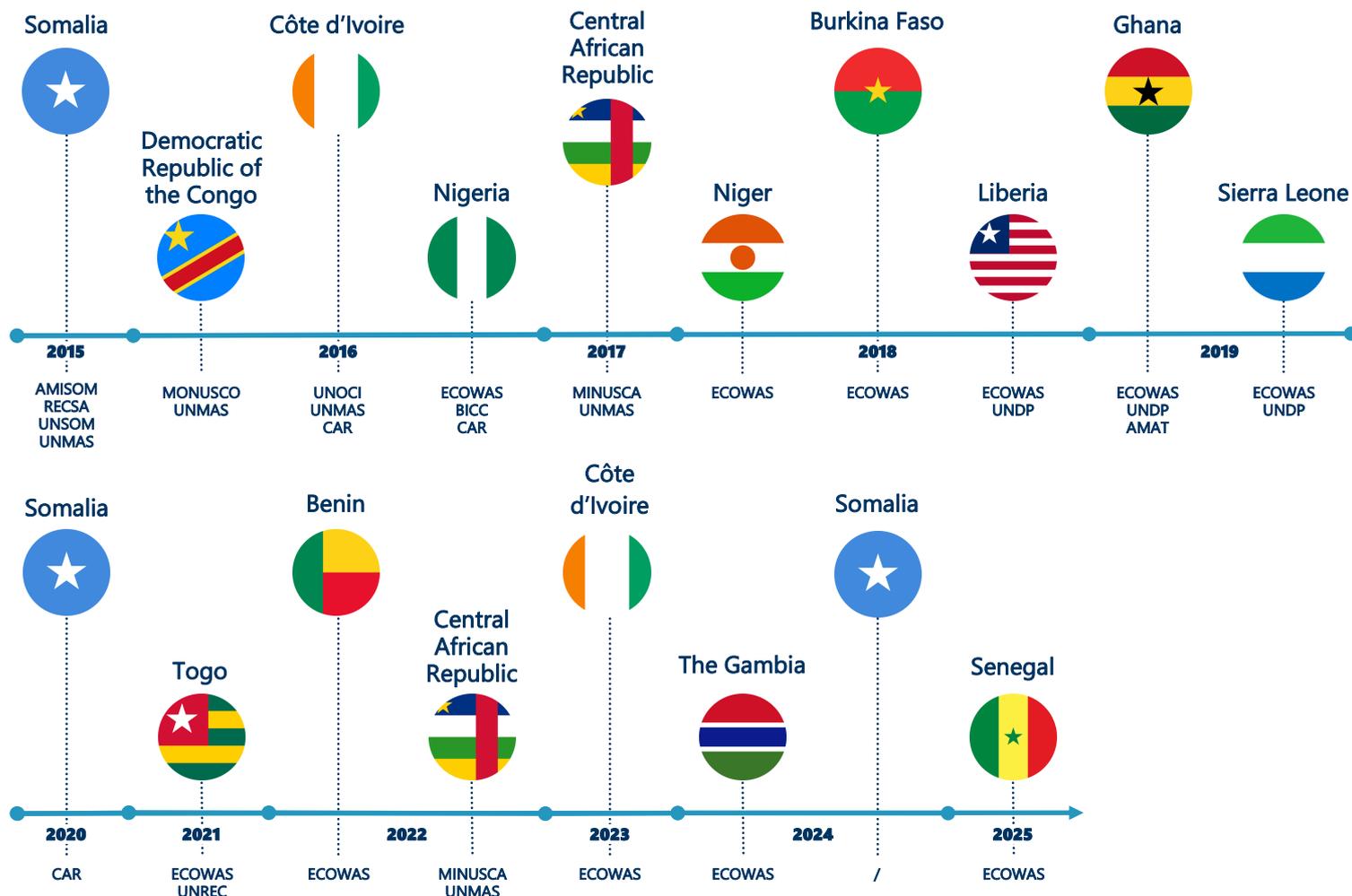
11 Ruben Nicolin, Paul Holtom and Anabel García García, *Insights from Reporting on Conventional Arms Control: Supporting Preparations for Reporting on Implementation of the Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2025).

12 Led by the Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD) of the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2776 (2025).

National Commission for Combating the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Central African Republic) © 2025 CAR



Figure 1. WAM in Africa: Baseline and Follow-up Assessments conducted during 2015–2025



Note on supporting organizations:

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

RECSA: Regional Centre on Small Arms

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNIDIR's Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme (CAAP) conducts research and works in support of efforts by states and other parties to strengthen national, regional and multilateral approaches to WAM, including in Africa (see Box 2 for an overview). UNIDIR's Annual WAM in Africa Insight update highlights progress made by African states to strengthen their national WAM frameworks, policies and practices following the conduct of a WAM baseline (or follow-up) assessment using UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology. Each edition aims to raise awareness of both the challenges encountered and the efforts made in overcoming them. It also identifies effective national measures, building on previous annual updates and country-specific WAM Insights.¹³ This supports efforts by all those involved in strengthening WAM frameworks, policies and practices across Africa, including through cooperation and assistance. Since publication of the previous annual WAM update, in mid-2024, UNIDIR has continued to facilitate and contribute to international dialogues on international cooperation and assistance to strengthen WAM. This drew on findings and lessons from regional and national contexts (as shown in Box 2).

The research and data collection for this annual WAM update involved desk research and contacting national focal points and authorities in the 14 African states that have undertaken a WAM baseline assessment. They focused on monitoring progress made in implementing options and recommendations identified during the baseline assessments by national authorities. The information was complemented and validated through interviews with select regional and international partners as well as open-source information from mid-2024 to mid-2025. Some challenges were faced in the collection of timely, accurate, first-hand information this year. Nevertheless, a sufficient number of progress updates, challenges and lessons learned, as well as good, effective measures and WAM policies and practices were shared.

Section 2 of this report provides examples of progress made, and activities undertaken and challenges faced from mid-2024 to mid-2025 by states that have undertaken a national WAM baseline assessment. It is structured according to the 10 WAM functional areas (see Box 1). Section 3 then provides some observations and a short conclusion.



13 See UNIDIR "Strengthening weapons and ammunition management."

2. PROGRESS MADE IN STRENGTHENING WAM IN AFRICA IN 2024-MID-2025

This section provides an analysis of progress made by, as well as variations between, states in developing and strengthening comprehensive national WAM frameworks. It presents updates and a sample of activities implemented between 2024 and mid-2025 to enhance key functional areas of WAM in the 14 African states that had undertaken a national WAM baseline or follow-up assessment using UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology. These were activities based on the options and recommendations identified at the time by national authorities. Each subsection highlights progress made to enhance specific WAM functional areas. Some contextual information is provided for each, followed by the options identified by national authorities in the road maps that resulted from baseline assessments, challenges encountered and overcome, and the impacts their implementation has had or is expected to have.

Among the examples demonstrating progress achieved in 2024–mid-2025 are:

- The autonomous undertaking of assessments at the subnational level for evidence- and needs-based, localized actions
- The development of strategies that integrate WAM into broader peace, security and development frameworks, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- What may be referred to as a “multi-purpose WAM operations”
- The piloting, use and roll out of certain technological solutions by several states, including as they pertain to national accounting systems

In addition, increasing attention is being paid to:

- Community-level engagement
- Transitional WAM measures to reduce risks posed by arms and ammunition in communities
- Environmentally sound disposal including destruction practices

There are also encouraging signs of advances in:

- The review and strengthening of legal and regulatory frameworks, in line with international obligations and commitments

- Strengthened national WAM coordination mechanisms, including the scope, level and depth of coordination

However, challenges also remain and seem certain to persist. From the sample examined, these most commonly relate to:

- The modernization of legal and regulatory frameworks and their harmonization with international and regional instruments¹⁴
- Aspects of coordination at the national level

At the more operational level, challenges persist regarding:

- Effective management of stockpiles (for both weapons and ammunition)
- Accounting, including marking and record-keeping systems
- Achieving a sufficient level and degree of centralization
- The full, complete and appropriate processing of material recovered from the illicit sphere

Further, some consulted as part of this research also noted challenges in:

- Developing an approach to increasingly craft-produced or artisanal weapons, systems and components
- Managing arms in remote and border areas

The enhancement options identified through national assessments conducted in 2024 and 2025 by the Gambia and Senegal seem to reflect some of these trends – several of their recommendations focused on strengthening these specific areas.

Gender mainstreaming, promoted as a guiding principle in UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology, continues to gain traction in national WAM policies and practices. Furthermore, in 2024–mid-2025, several national authorities, focal points and stakeholders continued to implement activities aimed at increasing women's participation and influence in WAM, working closely with civil society. They also raised awareness within communities about the gender dimensions of arms control.

¹⁴ In some African regions, State-led processes are ongoing to review regional normative frameworks. See, for example, UNIDIR and RECSA launch comprehensive review of the Nairobi Protocol, 14 July 2025.

2.1 National coordination mechanism and strategy

Establishing and implementing effective through-life WAM requires cooperation and coordination among a wide range of actors at different levels. A national coordination mechanism for WAM ensures that all relevant entities of the government work in coordination with each other and with regional and international partners to conceive, direct, monitor and evaluate safe, secure and accountable WAM practice. Relevant international and regional instruments recommend that a government entity is designated or established to lead overall policy direction and coordination for national WAM-related efforts. This can include the development, adoption and implementation of a national WAM strategy or action plan. The national coordination mechanism and national WAM lead entity thus play a key role in initiating and coordinating the establishment, review or update of national laws, regulations and procedures. The mandate for the mechanism and entity is usually established in the national legal and regulatory framework.

Previous annual WAM updates indicated that several states in West Africa (e.g., Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia) were in the process of establishing, or had established, fully fledged national WAM lead authorities. Moreover, they had strengthened and geographically expanded coordination mechanisms, as well as subnational units or bodies for WAM operations and activities.¹⁵ Research conducted for this WAM update found further progress being made by these and other states (e.g., Somalia).

As in other West African countries, **Ghana** faces persistent arms-related threats and security challenges linked to arms trafficking (including across borders and at major entry points), as well as the proliferation of craft-made weapons. The Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (GNACSA) has long served as a key mechanism to coordinate aspects of through-life management of weapons and ammunition. However, the 2019 national WAM baseline assessment found that GNACSA's mandate was limited in scope and that Ghana lacked a single, centralized national lead authority providing

overall policy guidance and direction on WAM. A recommended option resulting from the assessment was therefore to empower the National Commission with a broader mandate, greater visibility and resources to coordinate full life-cycle WAM across agencies and to extend the geographical scope of coordination to remote and border areas, including oversight at points of entry.¹⁶

Since 2020, Ghana has made notable progress in operationalizing and expanding GNACSA's presence and capabilities.¹⁷ By 2024, five regional offices and eight border offices – including at strategic locations such as Tema Port and key border posts in Elubo, Paga, Hamile, Sampa and Aflao – had been established, thereby expanding GNACSA's field presence and embedding trained officers closer to areas most vulnerable to diversion and arms trafficking.¹⁸ This expansion, supported by international assistance providers such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has enabled GNACSA to work more closely with security agencies, facilitate joint operations and strengthen law enforcement intelligence-led interventions at critical points of entry.

In **Nigeria**, a major milestone was achieved in June 2024 when the President signed into law the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons Act.¹⁹ The Act provides the legal basis for the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) as the central coordinating body for the control of SALW and the management of ammunition in Nigeria.²⁰ The NCCSALW, within its focus on SALW and ammunition, is mandated to oversee, regulate and enforce compliance with arms control obligations and commitments, both national and international. The implementation of the act as well as the full operationalization of the NCCSALW are expected to result in improved policy coherence and inter-agency coordination, and the creation of unified procedures for SALW control and ammunition management.

15 See, for example, Anna Mensah, Hardy Giezendanner and Paul Holtom, *Weapons and Ammunition Management in Africa insight: 2022 Update* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2022), p. 9. See also Anna Mensah, Hardy Giezendanner and Paul Holtom, *Weapons and Ammunition Management in Africa Insight: 2023 Update* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2023), in particular pp. 12–13.

16 Savannah de Tessieres and Himayu Shiotani, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Ghana* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020), pp. 5–6.

17 Mensah et al. *2022 Update*, p. 9.

18 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Fifth Review Conference, Statement by the Republic of Ghana, 25–29 November 2024.

19 "Tinubu has signed bill for establishment of centre for arms control – NSA", *Punch*, 2 July 2024; and Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons Bill, 2021.

20 See, for example, Mensah et al., *2022 Update*, p. 9. See also Mensah et al., *2023 Update*, in particular p. 9.

In **Somalia**, the baseline assessment approach and UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology have been utilized through a multi-stakeholder process. Between 2014 and 2020 a baseline was established, updated and expanded by the Office of National Security (ONS) of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in cooperation with UNIDIR, expert NGOs, and regional and United Nations partners.²¹

In 2020, this culminated in the FGS's adoption of the first National WAM Strategy (2020–2025). The implementation of this strategy by the ONS, federal member states and international, regional and local partners contributed to the recognition by the United Nations Security Council of progress being made in WAM and the eventual lifting in 2023 of the 30-year-old arms embargo.²² The Council simultaneously established new United Nations sanctions, including an arms embargo against al-Shabaab and other non-state actors that continue to acquire and use weapons, systems and

components, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs), in attacks against military and civilian targets in populated and remote areas,²³ posing a threat to peace, security and stability.²⁴

Over the past 10 years, the FGS has consistently recognized the need for – and pursued – a comprehensive, holistic and integrated approach to life-cycle WAM. However, a key challenge at the strategic and operational levels since 2022 has been the incremental expansion of the established WAM framework, system, strategy and plans beyond Mogadishu to institutions of federal member states and regions. This includes some high-risk areas with varying or limited operational WAM capacity. In 2022, a national consultative process on making progress towards this objective resulted in several key options and recommendations. The FGS has pursued these in cooperation with institutions of federal member states,²⁵ stakeholders and partners.



21 The comprehensive reference baseline has been codified by the ONS in cooperation with UNIDIR in several documents and reports over the years. See "Strengthening National Weapon and Ammunition Management Framework in the Federal Republic of Somalia: Baseline Discussion & Elaboration of a National WAM Strategy", National Consultative Meeting, organized by the ONS, with technical support from UNIDIR and Conflict Armament Research, 24–25 February 2020. See also the primary reference document, "Towards a National Framework for Arms and Ammunition Management in the Federal Republic of Somalia: A Narrative Report 2014–2017", UNIDIR, 2017. See also "Tracing Illicit Weapon Flows in Conflict and Security Transitions: A Case for Managing Recovered Weapons in Somalia", UNIDIR, 2020; "An Innovative Approach to United Nations Arms Embargoes: Strengthening Capacity to Manage and Verify Weapons and Ammunition in Somalia", UNIDIR, 2020; Himayu Shiotani et al., *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Somalia* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020); "Towards a National Framework on Arms and Ammunition Management in the Federal Republic of Somalia (second consultative process)", March 2016 (non-public document); and "Weapons and Ammunition Management in the Federal Republic of Somalia", 2015 (non-public document).

22 See United Nations Security Council resolution 2714 (2024).

23 See "Somali Militants Target Presidential Convoy in Bomb Attack, President Safe", Reuters, 18 March 2025.

24 See United Nations Security Council resolution 2713 (2023) and relevant subsequent resolutions.

25 These are: strengthen coordination modalities for regular consultations between FGS institutions and federal member state stakeholders, as well as with international partners/donors; undertake outreach and consultations with federal member state institutions to build political support for coherent national action and facilitate the establishment of subregional coordination structures through the Regional Security Offices (RSOs); strengthen the capacity of RSOs to coordinate action among federal member state institutions through sensitization and training; as well as to establish a national coordinating mechanism to steer, coordinate and oversee all matters relating to WAM in the country and lead a whole-of-government approach.

From 2024 to early 2025, the ONS Central Monitoring Department (CMD) in cooperation with focal points within federal member state institutions undertook research and, for the first time, autonomously conducted specific baseline assessments across four federal member states (Jubaland, South West State, Galmadug, and HirShabelle) using UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology (see Box 2 above).²⁶ The findings from these assessments, validated through a national WAM coordination platform, have led to the ongoing revision and expected update of the national WAM strategy, as well as the development of specific strategies and action plans. Cooperation and coordination by the CMD with all parties involved, as well as continued support, will remain critical for the implementation of these localized strategies and plans, and they are expected to be carried forward through more formalized coordination structures (e.g., committees, mandates/terms of reference, etc.) as well as joint activities. However, the updates presented here already represent yet another important step in incrementally expanding Somalia's national WAM frameworks, systems, institutional and operational capacities as well as existing procedures beyond Mogadishu and across the country.

In **Sierra Leone**, multiple arms- and ammunition-related risks, as well as decreasing national, regional and international attention coupled with a previous reliance on international assistance. By 2019, this underscored the need for a unified national strategic approach to enhance coordination, reduce diversion risks, and integrate WAM into broader peace and security frameworks. The WAM baseline assessment in that year therefore recommended the development of a comprehensive national strategy, underpinned by a national action plan, including clearly defined priorities and measurable targets.²⁷

A major milestone was achieved with Sierra Leone's first National Action Plan on Weapons and Ammunition Management (NAP) developed by the Sierra Leone Commission on Arms and Ammunition (SLeCAA) and national stakeholders, with technical support from the Small Arms Survey.²⁸ The action plan development process was aligned with national planning procedures and included key entities such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development,

and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It culminated in formal adoption of the NAP by the Government of Sierra Leone in December 2024. The NAP provides a clear road map for WAM activities at both strategic and operational levels, with key priorities including:

- Institutional capacity-building for agencies involved in arms control, including training and resource enhancement for the SLeCAA and security forces
- Risk reduction of unregulated conventional arms and ammunition, through improved stockpile management and marking and tracing procedures
- Integration of population needs, incorporating gender, age and disability considerations into WAM policy and practices to ensure inclusive implementation

What makes this example particularly interesting is that the NAP articulates the linkages between through-life WAM and national security, peace and development (e.g., aligning the NAP with Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan²⁹ and the Sustainable Development Goals). It also identifies priority actions, both domestic and international, to be undertaken through cooperation and assistance.³⁰

The operationalization of the NAP has already strengthened national coordination and is supporting the clarification of roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, it has fostered a more systematic approach to decision-making and the management of resources. The plan is expected to be resourced through a balanced mix between national resources and those acquired through international cooperation and assistance. As the first Sierra Leonean NAP of its kind, the plan establishes a monitoring and evaluation framework to track implementation and draw lessons for future iterations.³¹



26 "Federal Member States: Weapons & Ammunition Management Baseline Insights".

27 Savannah de Tessières and Himayu Shiotani, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Sierra Leone* (Geneva UNIDIR, 2020).

28 "Sierra Leone's National Action Plan on Weapons and Ammunition Management Validated," *Awoko*, 17 September 2024.

29 Government of Sierra Leone, *Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024–2030* (Freetown: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2024).

30 Kheira Djouhri and Julien Joly, *Developing Strategies and National Action Plans on Small Arms Control* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2025).

31 The strengthened role and authority provided to SLeCAA by the national legal and regulatory framework are highlighted in Bajon, *2024 Update*, p. 15.

2.2 Legal and regulatory framework at the national level

The national legal and regulatory framework consists of national laws, decrees, regulations and administrative procedures for regulating the life cycle of conventional arms and ammunition. These form the basis of a national WAM governance structure. To enable the competent national authorities and relevant stakeholders to effectively implement relevant international and regional instruments at the national level, states integrate the obligations and commitments contained in those instruments into their domestic frameworks for governance of weapons and ammunition. Ensuring that this is done in a sufficiently uniform, harmonized and logical manner is fundamental to operationalizing WAM by the relevant national authorities.

In **Ghana**, the national WAM baseline assessment identified critical gaps in the legal and regulatory framework. National experts found that the framework was outdated, fragmented and lacking key provisions to effectively implement through-life WAM activities. One of the key recommendations identified by national authorities during the assessment was therefore the conduct and completion of a comprehensive national legal review process, coupled with the development and adoption of standard operating procedures (SOPs), and the harmonization of the national legal and regulatory framework with obligations and commitments in international and regional instruments.³² Such legal review processes, which are fully nationally led and owned, can take time, and may also be influenced by developments at the international level (e.g., the adoption of the GFA).

In 2024, Ghana made some progress in its national legal review process by advancing the review and development of draft legislation to establish a new arms control regime. At the time of writing, the draft was under consideration at the Ministry of the Interior. Further steps to be taken include reviews by different branches (i.e., executive, judicial and legislative) of the government.

National experts consulted for this research therefore highlighted the need for continuous, targeted sensitization and awareness-raising activities among not only public institutions and high-level authorities, but also societal stakeholders at large. GNACSA is undertaking this in cooperation with national (including civil society) and international partners. Once adopted, the new legislation will enable the full operationalization of WAM activities and, more broadly, will also constitute a demonstration of political will, leadership and commitment by the Government of Ghana to exercising oversight, accountability and governance of conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle.

The 2024 WAM update highlights the significant progress made by **Liberia** in strengthening its national legal and regulatory framework through the adoption of the 2022 Firearms and Ammunition Control Act.³³ Between 2024 and 2025, further progress has been made with the codification of the act into regulations and administrative procedures. This has enabled its effective implementation, including as it pertains to the risk-based approach to access by civilians to SALW and ammunition.

In early 2025, the President enacted an executive order (no. 141)³⁴ that further developed the licensing and registration system and requiring civilian firearms to be registered within a one-year period. The introduction of this measure was accompanied by a time-bound (12-month) amnesty. Oversight of this process is entrusted to the Liberia National Commission on Arms (LiNCSA), and the Liberia National Police (LNP). Implementation had started by March 2025. Collectively, these reforms represent a decisive step towards enhancing national security and reducing risks posed to communities by unregulated and unauthorized arms and ammunition in civilian hands and by armed violence, including gender-based violence.

Aerial View of Niger River, Mali © 2013, UN Photo/
Marco Dormino



32 de Tessieres and Shiotani, *Ghana*.

33 See Bajon, *2024 Update*, p. 15.

34 "Liberia Begins Firearms Registration for Civilians," AllAfrica, 16 May 2025.

2.3 Transfer controls

Illicit transfers of conventional arms and ammunition can fuel or prolong conflicts, violent crime and instability. They can also facilitate or be used to cause abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. 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, as applicable, imports, retransfers, transit and trans-shipment, and brokering). National controls on transfers must be designed and implemented to reduce the risks of diversion of arms to unauthorized users and the illicit trade.

In **Ghana**, a key aspect of the national legal review process (see Subsection 2.2) is the harmonization of the national legal and regulatory framework with the commitments and obligations of international instruments to which Ghana is a state party. At present, GNACSA faces challenges in fully exercising controls over international transfers of conventional arms and consistently complying with ECOWAS exemption processes. This is partially due to the absence of a comprehensive, fit-for-purpose and enforceable national control list (NCL), which is an essential component a transfer control system as it defines categories of conventional arms subject to national controls over international arms transfer.³⁵



Ghana has made significant efforts as a state party to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), with significant progress in 2024 on the review and development of a comprehensive NCL. At the time of drafting this update, the draft list is reportedly under review and pending Cabinet approval.³⁶ National experts consulted have highlighted, here too, the need for

continuous, targeted sensitization and awareness-raising activities, which GNACSA is undertaking in cooperation with national and international partners. Once adopted, the NCL is expected to be issued as a subordinate regulation or implementation decree. This will enable the competent national authorities to effectively exercise controls of conventional arms, including SALW, ammunition, parts and components, as well as several other items, thereby contributing to national and regional security and stability.³⁷

In **Nigeria**, several systemic and operational risks of diversion and confirmed cases of illicit arms trafficking were identified at the time of the baseline assessment. These underscored the need to strengthen controls over transfers, including the involvement of customs and border control as well as law enforcement agencies. Today, Nigeria continues to confront significant threats posed by diversion and the illicit proliferation of weapons and ammunition.

Major security operations are frequently affected by sophisticated arms trafficking networks. For example, in 2024 and early 2025, following a series of intelligence-driven law enforcement operations, the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) intercepted and handed over a significant cache of trafficked arms – comprising 1,599 SALW and 2,298 rounds of ammunition – to the NCCSALW.³⁸ Another notable example was the interception at Onne of 844 SALW and over 112,000 rounds of ammunition in 2024.

Key factors enabling these successful operations included enhanced inter-agency cooperation and information-sharing (e.g., between the NCS and the NCCSALW), strengthened verification and scrutiny exercised when checking transfer documentation (e.g., shipping documents), as well as international cooperation with partners. These changes in practices have led to successes in countering diversion and reducing illicit arms flows. In addition, changed practices and operational capacities built since 2016 also strengthened coordination between the NCS and the NCCSALW in ensuring accountability over material recovered from the illicit sphere from their moment of initial registration all the way to their final disposal through destruction.

35 de Tessieres and Shiotani, *Ghana*.

36 Statement by the Republic of Ghana, p. 2.

37 A national control list is an official, legally enforceable list that specifies which items and activities require government authorization. It typically includes: (a) conventional arms categories; (b) ammunition and parts/components; and, where applicable, (c) selected dual-use items and related technologies. Ghana's draft NCL reportedly extends beyond the ATT's minimum scope to encompass components and certain dual-use items relevant to weapons and ammunition management.

38 Oluwakemi Dauda, "Updated: Customs Hands Over Massive Arms, Ammunition to NSA in Lagos", *The Nation*, 13 February 2025.

2.4 Stockpile management

Effective stockpile management ensures the operational readiness of national security forces, prevents the theft or diversion of state-owned weapons and ammunition, and enables the timely identification and disposal of obsolete and surplus materiel. In order to effectively manage stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, there is a need for adequate physical infrastructure, training of personnel, and regular maintenance and inventory checks. These should all follow established international standards. Measures are also required to ensure the safety of conventional ammunition, which may deteriorate or become damaged if not correctly stored, handled and transported. That may result in unplanned explosions at munition sites, with the risk of significant loss of life, damage to infrastructure and costs for clear-up operations.

In **Burkina Faso**, the national WAM baseline assessment, led in 2018 by the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms (CNLPAL) in cooperation with UNIDIR, highlighted the need – following international standards and guidelines – to strengthen stockpile management, enhance inter-institutional coordination (between the two national lead entities existing at the time) and increase operational capacity (including personnel).³⁹ Since then, securing stockpiles and reducing the security (and safety) risks posed by the spread of violent extremism and the acquisition of weapons and ammunition by non-state armed groups has become ever more important.

The National Commission for Arms Control (CNCA, which replaced the CNLPAL) continued in 2024 to reinforce in particular the physical infrastructure for the management of state-held weapons and ammunition. It focused on the rehabilitation and upgrading of several storage facilities and the use of mobile storage solutions, in addition to building operational capacity (through personnel training), with technical support from the NGO Mines Advisory Group (MAG). Between 2016 and 2024, lead authorities, with support from MAG, built or strengthened about 90 items of physical infrastructure across the national territory. Additionally, a national centre dedicated to the secure processing of weapons, such as marking or disposal (including destruction), was established with support from international partners.⁴⁰ While these achievements are remarkable, the continued risks of diversion and theft due to the volatile security climate mean that more and different efforts are probably needed in order for national

lead authorities to be able to ensure long-term oversight.

Similarly in **Togo**, there are risks of diversion, of illicit proliferation, of misuse and of unplanned explosions, as well as economic costs associated with ineffective storage. National authorities and experts during the WAM baseline assessment in 2021 thus identified the need to strengthen the management of stockpiles as an urgent priority. This includes the development of national procedures, in line with international standards (the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium, MOSAIC, and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, IATG). A related need is the building of institutional capacity for decision-making processes that require the involvement of several key ministries. These include, in particular, decisions on joint risk assessments, prioritization, the allocation of resources, and the sequencing of the rehabilitation or construction of costly infrastructure.

Using the road map, authorities made remarkable progress in this area in 2024, in cooperation and with support from partners such as MAG, the Halo Trust and the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF). This included, for example, the rehabilitation of the armoury of the Republican Intervention Company (CRI) police force in Lomé, overseen by the Ministry of Security, and the refurbishment of two temporary storage solutions of the police and the Water and Forestry Services (for the storage of wildlife-related seized material), overseen by the Ministry of the Environment. In parallel, various security and defence forces and other services (including from the Police) built their operational (personnel) capacity through the use of existing operating procedures.

To sustain further progress, a national expert consulted for this update noted efforts to review existing procedures and develop a national (formal, written) SOP. This may cover – individually or separately – stockpile management and the processing of illicit material. Following adoption, such SOPs allow the further strengthening of operational capacities by streamlining good, effective national practices and monitoring and evaluating their implementation. This extends to remote areas, where infrastructure and operational capacity remain limited. These actions have nevertheless already improved the safety and security of stockpiles in key locations and operational (including human) capacities, thereby contributing to safety and security in cities.

39 Hardy Giezendanner, Franziska Seethaler and Himayu Shiotani, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Burkina Faso* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020).

40 Information was provided by a representative of the National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CNCA) in an author interview; support cited included assistance from the United States Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and the German Federal Foreign Office.

In a similar vein as Togo, in 2024 **Côte d'Ivoire** also made targeted progress under its WAM framework to strengthen the management – including safety and security – of its stockpiles. It did this by addressing gaps identified during the national baseline assessment.⁴¹ The 2024 annual WAM update highlighted sustained, strengthened operational capacity through the integration of guidance and SOPs into the curriculums of the Military Training School.⁴²

Between 2024 and mid-2025, efforts continued and further progress was made. Much physical infrastructure of the Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FACI) were built or strengthened, and mobile

storage solutions installed.⁴³ A noteworthy example is a facility at the National Commission for Combating the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (ComNat-ALPC) for temporary storage of weapons recovered in field operations in remote border and high-risk areas by the military and police. This maintains the chain of custody and allows faster judicial processing by military or civilian justice institutions. This, in turn, is expected to contribute to increased accountability and, more broadly, to the fight against impunity in the Côte d'Ivoire.



Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire
© 2014, UN Photo/Abdul Fatah

2.5 Marking

The marking of conventional arms, especially SALW, with unique identifying marks supports accurate record-keeping. It thus aids national accounting for weapons and their trackability, as well as tracing of weapons and ammunition. National marking systems are therefore closely linked to national record-keeping systems (see Subsection 2.6 below), which also enable the identification of potential points of diversion from stockpiles or other sources of illicit material in a given context.

In **Ghana**, the marking of weapons emerged as one of the key national priorities from the national baseline assessment and was included in the road map.⁴⁴

While the country had already made progress in this regard, including marking weapons of the Armed Forces, a fully -fledged, sustainable and sufficiently resourced national marking programme remained to be developed and implemented. For example, further action was required to develop and adopt a formal, national marking SOP; additional marking equipment needed to be acquired; state-held police weapons needed to be marked; and expanded operations were required to eventually also mark (and register) weapons in civilian hands in the future.⁴⁵

41 Claudio Gramizzi, Hardy Giezendanner and Daniel Golston, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Côte d'Ivoire* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020).

42 Bajon, *2024 Update*, p. 14.

43 These include (a) installing two outfitted containers for the FACI at Téhini and Doropo to expand secure storage capacity in northern operational areas; (b) installing two containers for the Gendarmerie at Kong and Tengrela to align with national standards and procedures previously adopted and to thereby standardize storage conditions and procedures across units; (c) constructing armouries for both the Water and Forest Service and the ComNat-ALPC to remedy previously insufficient secure storage for seized and state-held arms; and (d) setting up a dedicated transit container for pre-collected weapons (i.e., arms temporarily gathered during field operations prior to formal seizure) at ComNat-ALPC to enable safe temporary custody and timely processing pending final disposition.

44 de Tessieres and Shiotani, *Ghana*.

45 de Tessieres and Shiotani, *Ghana*, pp. 6–7.

By 2024, GNACSA had made further progress and had implemented some of these requirements, including through international cooperation and assistance received from partners. What is most interesting in this example is the recognition by high-level national authorities of the benefits of marking, traceability and accountability for weapons and their (mis-)use. This led to activities to mark weapons being intensified ahead of the 2024 elections. This is significant as it constitutes a recognition that weapon marking is not just a technical requirement – it is, more importantly, also a critical preventative and deterrent measure that strengthens accountability over weapons and their potential (mis-)use, including before, during and after electoral periods and in election-related incidents and violence. This example demonstrates what can be achieved with political will and high-level leadership and cooperation at various levels, at the cost of comparatively little resources. This sort of action contributes to public safety and confidence in security, rule of law and democratic institutions.⁴⁶

Sierra Leone was, by the time of its 2019 national WAM baseline assessment, recognized as a “champion” as a result of national efforts and international cooperation and assistance during the post-conflict period. The vast majority of state-held weapons had been marked and it had advanced record-keeping systems. Many of the options and recommendations that resulted from the WAM assessment focused on sustaining and expanding existing institutional and operational capacities, and good, effective practices and procedures – and doing so in a changing environment of international assistance and support.

This included, for example:

- Completion of the marking of a small number of unmarked SALW in the national stockpile
- Development and implementation of a procedure for marking newly acquired and imported weapons
- Building personnel capacity through a sustainable approach (e.g. training)
- Ensuring the maintenance of marking equipment
- Eventually expanding the national programme to the marking of civilian-held weapons.

A major milestone was achieved five years later, in 2024, through a first-of-its-kind multipurpose WAM operation that successfully verified 3,211 arms, marked 268 previously unmarked arms and re-marked 87 weapons. It also accounted for,

registered and ensured proper stockpiling of state-held weapons in North-West province. The operation was conducted by a specialized multi-agency team composed of the SLeCAA, the Sierra Leone Police and the Armed Forces. Safety and security risk assessments of armouries were also conducted during the operation, in addition to an evaluation of the implementation of accounting procedures. Unserviceable material was identified for disposal (see Subsection 2.10 below).

The operation made a significant and timely contribution to safe, secure and accountable WAM in these regions. It raised awareness and increased accountable working methods at the individual level, while also building institutional trust and cooperation between the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Internal Security and the SLeCAA. It created a replicable model for incremental expansion and operations in other regions and provinces. Further, it strengthened Sierra Leone’s national WAM framework at a time when it was facing increased potential arms-related risks and threats posed by spillover from developments, insecurity and instability in the region.



The national authorities of the **Central African Republic** identified during the follow-up baseline assessment in 2022 a need to fully operationalize an expanded, comprehensive national programme for weapon marking. The renewed national strategy and action plan (2024–2028) adopted by the Government provided further impetus in this regard. Its implementation started in 2024, and international support for its implementation is coordinated by the ComNat-ALPC.⁴⁷ Through technical assistance received from partners, national authorities undertook further marking operations in 2025 as part of a broader effort to strengthen traceability and accountability across security institutions identified in earlier assessments. In May 2025, operations for the marking of weapons of the Armed Forces continued, and a

phased approach is expected to extend them to the gendarmerie, police and other security services.

These ongoing efforts are accompanied, or expected to be accompanied, by further strengthened operational capacity. The renewed impetus and the strengthened national marking programme also contribute to, among other things, accountability exercised over recovered weapons, their traceability and disposal. Further down the line, it will be important for the national marking programme to be expanded to border and customs agencies, in order to sustain and expand the gains from traceability and to support transfer control objectives in the evolving post-embargo environment.

2.6 Recordkeeping

An effective national record-keeping system comprehensively records weapons and ammunition within the jurisdiction of a state. This includes records of international transfers, the national stockpile, arms and ammunition in civilian hands, weapons and ammunition recovered from the illegal or illicit spheres, as well as records of materiel that has been disposed of (e.g. destructions, international sales, donations). Relevant international and regional instruments and standards recommend a centralized record-keeping system, managed by a competent authority.

In **Somalia**, the national WAM baseline assessments have identified record-keeping as a key area for improvement. They recommended the establishment of effective, digitalized and comprehensive weapons and ammunition databases to ensure traceability, accountability and oversight across both federal and state levels.⁴⁸ The most recent assessment noted disparities in the implementation of record-keeping practices: in Mogadishu, there are robust systems, such as the registration and digitalization of weapons held by the Somali National Army (SNA) and Police Force (SPF); elsewhere, systems are less developed, and the roll out of SOPs and capacity-building for federal member states was recommended as an urgent priority.

As highlighted in the 2024 WAM Update, Somalia has since 2020 further strengthened its national accounting system through the development, pilot

-testing, roll out and implementation of a comprehensive national WAM database.⁴⁹ Somalia has operated a centralized system for many years, whereby arms imported for the SNA and the SPF are marked and registered upon import at a central location prior to distribution to units.⁵⁰ By 2024, more than 20,000 weapons of the SNA and more than 8,000 weapons of the SPF had been digitally recorded.⁵¹ In addition, mobile applications are used to register, verify and account for weapons at the point of (end-)use, including in remote locations.

As part of efforts highlighted above (see Subsection 2.1), further progress was achieved in 2024, with the ONS Central Monitoring Department bringing the accounting system and database into operation in priority locations in federal member states, accompanied by operational capacity-building. In order to strengthen institutional and operational capacities, the existing set of SOPs was also reviewed and ammunition management aspects were included. Further, in a world first, Somalia tested a new technological solution, AmTag, that allows for – and further strengthens – trackability and traceability of ammunition. Taken together and in line with identified national priorities, all of these efforts, ongoing operations and activities are laying the groundwork for adapting, tailoring and strengthening the accounting system and decentralizing it further as appropriate.

47 This was highlighted in Bajon, *2024 Update*, p. 13.

48 Shiotani, Himayu, Leff, Jonah, Giezendanner, Hardy, Golston, Daniel, and Mohammed, Einas. "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Somalia." Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020.

49 Bajon, *2024 Update*, p. 21.

50 See UNIDIR, *Towards a National Framework for Arms and Ammunition Management in the Federal Republic of Somalia: A Narrative Report 2014–2017*, 2017.

51 United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2024/751, p. 6.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the 2023 national WAM follow-up assessment identified the need for national accounting to be more, and more appropriately, centralized, including digitalization of the record-keeping system as a top priority. Country Insights and previous annual WAM updates have shown that this usually begins with identifying the ministries with custody of records, the purposes of these records and their desirable interoperability. Then, once a new system or specific platform is introduced, a phased approach is used to roll it out incrementally to users or specific locations.⁵²

As highlighted in the 2024 WAM Update, under the leadership and direction of the National Security Council (CNS), Côte d'Ivoire piloted a

computer-based record-keeping system and platform (known as the Computerized WAM System, SIGAM) for the police, in cooperation with ComNat-ALPC.⁵³ Since then, progress has continued, with its expansion to the Ivorian Customs Service in December 2024. This now provides for real-time information-sharing on movements of weapons and ammunition at borders. While these efforts are still ongoing, it has already enabled a more data-driven oversight by the CNS, supported by the ComNat-ALPC. There is potential for this to strengthen controls over international arms transfers, and for a more targeted fight against illicit transfers and arms trafficking, including into Côte d'Ivoire.

2.7 Tracing of arms and profiling of ammunition

The identification, profiling and tracing of illicit arms and ammunition can support early-warning mechanisms, prevention of armed violence and de-escalation of conflict by detecting demand for and sources of weapons and ammunition in specific areas or among particular armed groups.⁵⁴ Ideally, this process begins by examining information about the point of diversion within a national territory. If the point of diversion appear to be outside the national territory, then the process would turn to the international level. 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.

In **Niger**, the 2018 national WAM baseline assessment highlighted the country's limited capacity to trace and profile seized weapons and ammunition. This resulted in weak understanding of the origins of the supplies of armed groups and their procurement networks. The assessment recommended the establishment of systematic procedures for processing captured arms; the strengthening of the use of tracing tools (e.g., Interpol's iARMS platform); and the reinforcement of the operational capacities of the existing national authority, the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illegal Weapons (CNCCAI), as the lead coordinator of tracing requests alongside improved inter-agency cooperation and record-keeping in line with international standards.⁵⁵

In 2024, Nigerien authorities, including law enforcement, achieved some progress in

strengthening their institutional and operational capacities to address and prevent illicit arms flows, including through enhanced regional and international cooperation and assistance. Notably, the latter was reflected through participation in a subregional operation conducted with authorities from neighbouring states and through the use of Interpol resources and tools. For example, the Interpol iARMS platform allowed national authorities to successfully trace a Tokarev TT pistol and a Kalashnikov PMK rifle, among others, and to map their origin and trafficking routes. Eight seized weapons were profiled and traced via iARMS. While the numbers are not yet significant, in a challenging context such as Niger's (affected by armed conflict and non-state armed groups and groups designated as terrorist groups), these efforts demonstrated the practical utility and benefits of weapon tracing. For example, the revealing of supply chains and procurement networks took a qualitative step forward from ad hoc practices towards more institutionalized ones.



52 Théo Bajon, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Republic of Côte d'Ivoire* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2025).

53 Bajon, *2024 Update*, p. 21.

54 See, for example, Joshua Angelo Bata, Matilde Vecchioni and Ursign Hofmann, *Pathways to Action: Harnessing Arms Flow Data for Conflict Early Warning: Insights from 2024 Expert Exchanges* (Geneva: UNIDIR, CAR, PRIO, VIEWS, 2025).

55 Savannah de Tessières, Sebastian Wilkin and Himayu Shiotani, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Niger* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020).

Niger's national WAM framework now enables more effective disruption of illicit arms flows, thereby enhancing accountability and aligning procedures with regional and international standards. Lessons learned include the importance of regional and international cooperation (e.g. through Interpol), including on matters pertaining to weapons tracing, and the importance of further institutionalizing and strengthening the CNCCAI's coordinating role in tracing and information-sharing. Nonetheless, persistent challenges remain, particularly in fully integrating digital accounting systems at all administrative levels, securing resources as well as continuous efforts to strengthen coordination and to sustain and expand tracing and profiling efforts nationwide.

In **Ghana**, the baseline assessment identified the limited national capacity to trace recovered arms as a critical area for improvement. It also identified a prevailing tendency among law enforcement agencies to treat the recovery of illicit weapons as the conclusion of an incident, rather than the starting point of an investigation. During the assessment, national authorities and experts

recommended a series of targeted actions to address this, including the development of an SOP for tracing; strengthening and formalizing dedicated tracing units; integrating tracing efforts into broader investigative processes; and establishing robust information-sharing mechanisms both within the country and internationally.⁵⁶

Ghana made some further progress in this key area in 2024. This was demonstrated by the successful tracing of several trafficked SALW recovered from crime scenes, whose movement before arriving in Ghana was mapped across at least three countries.⁵⁷ This was made possible by improved coordination between the GNACSA and law enforcement agencies, as well as collaboration with external partners. It enabled some mapping of certain trafficking routes and informed more targeted investigations and threat assessments against illicit arms flows. These efforts are still ongoing. Considering and implementing the nationally identified options has potential to further strengthen Ghana's fight against illicit arms flows, proliferation and trafficking into and across



MINSUCA
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2.8 Processing of illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition

The processing of illicit arms and the treatment of illicit ammunition encompass all measures taken from the moment these items are recovered – whether seized, captured, surrendered, collected or found – through their secure handling, transport, storage and judicial processing to their eventual disposal. This functional area is critical to effective WAM as it helps to prevent the re-circulation of illicit material, supports criminal justice processes, and contributes to broader security and stability.

In **Niger**, the national WAM baseline assessment identified major deficiencies in the processing of

illicit arms and the treatment of illicit ammunition. Notably, it highlighted how standardized procedures were insufficient for handling, securing, and either destroying or managing seized weapons and ammunition. The assessment emphasized as a critical short-to-medium-term priority the securing and destruction of seized material, and urged the establishment of clear procedures and mechanisms for the destruction or secure storage of confiscated arms and ordnance, as well as the regular training of security forces.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ de Tessières and Shiotani, *Ghana*.

⁵⁷ Republic of Ghana Ministry of the Interior, "Programme Based Budget Estimates for 2024: Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for 2024–2027, 2024.

⁵⁸ de Tessières et al., *Niger*.

In 2024, Niger demonstrated some progress in this area through law enforcement operations targeting arms trafficking networks: during a coordinated interdiction on routes from Libya and Nigeria, authorities not only seized substantial quantities of illicit weapons (including assault rifles, M2 machine guns), ammunition and related material, but also ensured that these items were immediately secured, documented and processed according to defined procedures, with judicial investigations initiated against major traffickers.⁵⁹ This shift reflected improved inter-agency coordination and increased technical capacity supported by international partners. It has led to more systematic management of seized conventional arms and ammunition. The experience highlights that external assistance and ongoing capacity building are vital for sustaining operational improvements. However, persistent challenges remain, especially the need for expanded resources to maintain and dispose of growing seizure stockpiles, the need for full nationwide adoption of standardized processing procedures, and the continued risk that limited infrastructure in remote regions may undermine otherwise significant gains.

In **Sierra Leone**, the national WAM baseline assessment identified the processing of illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition as priority areas in need of improvement. This applied especially to the development of national

standardized procedures for recovered weapons.

In 2024, Sierra Leone made progress in the processing including the disposal of recovered illicit arms. Operations coordinated by the SLeCAA, in partnership with the Sierra Leone Police and the judiciary, resulted in the effective enforcement of firearms licensing renewal regulations in Western Area (which includes the capital, Freetown). This led to the seizure of unlicensed weapons, improved compliance and increased public engagement with the arms registration requirements. For example, in July 2024, the judiciary handed over 26 assorted unserviceable and seized weapons to SLeCAA for planned destruction by the end of the year. This represents a notable step towards safe disposal of illicit weapons. These actions were complemented by practical engagement with rangers in key border communities to improve control and documentation of seized weapons.⁶⁰

Through clear multi-agency collaboration, improved public compliance, and the handover and scheduled destruction of unserviceable weapons, Sierra Leone has built stronger, more transparent processes, offering useful examples that can be applied in other areas. Establishing a comprehensive electronic register for all seized and destroyed materiel and securing sustained resources for ongoing WAM activities still remain critical and could further strengthen this area.

2.9 Weapons collection

Weapon-collection programmes help to reduce the quantities of unwanted, illegal and illicit weapons that might otherwise be used in armed conflict or other armed violence. Rather than being implemented as stand-alone activities, such programmes can contribute most effectively to sustainable violence prevention, peace, security and development when they are implemented as part of broader efforts to address the root causes of violence and the demand for weapons. This can be through, for example, enhanced presence and protection by the state or opportunities and trust-building in the state and between communities. Weapon-collection programmes are often facilitated by positive or negative incentive schemes (e.g., alternative livelihoods), the promotion of peaceful means of conflict resolution, and a strong involvement of communi-

ties and individuals with a view to preventing violence and crime and to reducing the availability of and trafficking in illicit and illegal SALW and their ammunition among civilians.

In **Togo**, weapon collection has emerged as a key functional area as part of efforts to strengthen the broader national WAM framework. Togo faces significant arms-related risks and threats, including the widespread circulation of civilian-held arms, unregistered weapons and craft-produced firearms. To address these issues – especially amid regional instability, the threat of violent extremism and during election periods – Togo's road map includes the development of programmes to raise risk awareness among the civilian population and the establishment of a voluntary weapon-surrender and -collection scheme.⁶¹



A landscape in Gao, Mali
© 2013, UN Photo/Marco Dormino

59 ENACT, *Firearms Trafficking in Central and Western Africa*, Analytical Report (Lyon: Interpol, May 2024).

60 de Tessières and Shiotani, *Sierra Leone*.

61 Théò Bajon and Mohamed Coulibaly, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Togolose Republic* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2023).

In 2024, Togo made some progress in this area through the efforts of the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation, Circulation and Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CNLPAL). The CNLPAL intensified public sensitization initiatives, carrying out campaigns such as “Let’s Commit to Elections without Weapons” in the lead-up to legislative and regional elections in April 2024. These activities engaged stakeholders across political, security, traditional and civil society domains in major cities (including Dapaong, Sokodé, Kara, Atakpamé, Kpalimé and Tsévié) to deliver messages on non-violence and safe participation. In the Savanes region, which faces heightened security threats, the CNLPAL together with inter-ministerial and local community partners organized citizen meetings to raise awareness about the dangers of illicit arms and IEDs. Together, these actions reached approximately 400 direct beneficiaries and contributed to increased risk awareness. The latter was evidenced by enhanced community reporting of suspicious activities (e.g., local alerts on potential arms trafficking in border areas) and improved early-warning mechanisms through better information-sharing among stakeholders.

While this could help in reducing immediate risks during sensitive periods (e.g., elections) by promoting non-violent behaviour, tangible outcomes such as voluntary weapon surrenders were limited: a collection scheme (including time-bound amnesties and legal provisions) is yet to be fully established. Moreover, Togo continues to face persistent challenges in scaling up localized action and fully closing the gaps in weapon collection and registration, especially among hard-to-reach communities.

In **Sierra Leone**, the national WAM baseline assessment emphasized the need to strengthen voluntary weapon-surrender and -collection processes by prioritizing community engagement and awareness-raising and by strengthening coordination among relevant stakeholders.⁶²

In 2024, the SLeCAA Communication Department proactively launched a series of structured programmes on public radio and regionally coordinated community-engagement sessions, supported by the activation of Volunteer civil society Taskforce members in two (Northern and Southern) of the country’s five provinces. These initiatives not only raised public awareness and understanding of SLeCAA’s mandate, but also of the risks associated with illicit and illegal arms possession. They also led to increased reporting of illicit arms holdings and fostered greater community involvement and engagements in arms control efforts at the community and chiefdom

level. This, in turn, facilitated voluntary surrender and collection, resulting in the handover of seized weapons to authorities for secure storage and eventual destruction.

Taken together, SLeCAA’s strengthened institutional capacity, including the operations and activities of its Communication Department, have led to the involvement of broader societal stakeholders (including community members, women, men and young people) to identify and address risks associated with illicit arms. The experience highlights that inclusive, locally tailored strategies for communications and civil society engagement, particularly using mass media and trusted community actors, can be an effective model. However, further progress in this area required continuous resources, and it is important to sustain these efforts for more long-term behavioural and societal change, with many illicit and illegal arms still posing risks to civilians in Sierra Leone.

In **Côte d’Ivoire**, the national WAM follow-up assessment highlighted persisting challenges linked to the wide spread of weapons in unauthorized civilian hands. This was due partly to a 2012 change in the national legal and regulatory framework that rendered these weapons illicit and illegal. In response, the assessment emphasized the importance of supporting community-based voluntary disarmament and of ensuring robust institutional coordination under the ComNat-ALPC.⁶³

In 2024, Côte d’Ivoire intensified its efforts with three targeted community disarmament operations. These were preceded by intensive awareness-raising campaigns, active involvement of local leaders and civil society organizations. These three operations include positive incentives, such as community infrastructure projects (e.g. water points), livelihood assistance for revenue-generating activities and individual vocational support for ex-weapons holders, supported by the national voluntary disarmament fund. This was underpinned by a time-bound amnesty that provided secure mechanisms for voluntary surrender without fear of prosecution. These operations achieved the collection of 750 SALW and 655 different ammunition. All of these items were inventoried and transferred to relevant authorities for secure storage and subsequent disposal including destruction. Despite this progress, persisting challenges remain, notably the need to develop an approach to better regulate the registration of artisanal and privately held weapons and to secure the resources required to scale up and maintain collection efforts.

62 de Tessières and Shiotani, *Sierra Leone*.

63 Bajon, *Republic of Côte d’Ivoire*.

2.10 Disposal

United Nations guidance recommends destruction as the preferred method for the disposal of surplus, unwanted or obsolete conventional arms and ammunition. States use various methods for disposal, which should be outlined in their national legal and regulatory frameworks for WAM. The exact method used for disposal will also vary depending on capacities and resources.

In **Sierra Leone**, the national WAM baseline assessment identified as a priority the development and operationalization of a national destruction plan; enhanced technical capacity for explosives disposal; acquisition of specialized equipment; and regular destruction activities to address large quantities of unserviceable and obsolete weapons and ammunition stored by security agencies.⁶⁴

Through international cooperation (including assistance received by Sierra Leone from the ATT VTF, with MAG as implementing partner), SLeCAA facilitated the disposal through destruction of 80,558 rounds of small-calibre ammunition and 300 high explosives in Kabala and Makeni in 2024. The acquisition of dedicated destruction machinery in late 2024 enabled these disposal activities and allowed SLeCAA to organize the high-profile destruction of more than 3,000 unserviceable weapons in February 2025 at Murray Town Barracks in Freetown. Further disposals, including destruction operations, are planned across five newly designated sites. Overall, this acquisition of destruction machinery has substantially strengthened Sierra Leone's institutional and operational capacity to manage arms and ammunition disposal in line with international standards, thereby reducing risks of diversion, trafficking and accidental explosions.

National authorities see and recognize these operations as replicable nationwide. Its sustainability will depend on institutionalizing technical expertise and national resource availability, among other things. Nevertheless and more broadly, the reduction of risks posed by unsafe, insecure or obsolete stockpiles that has been achieved so far has enhanced national security and contributed to wider peace and development goals, at both the national and local levels.

In **Liberia**, the national WAM baseline assessment highlighted the urgent need for clearer procedures and systematic disposal (including destruction) of surplus, obsolete, unwanted and illicit weapons and ammunition, including items recovered through seizures and voluntary surrenders.⁶⁵

In 2023–2024, the country made significant progress by conducting a large-scale, public destruction exercise that disposed of over 255,000 small arms, rounds of ammunition, explosives and related materials. These had been either used in crimes or voluntarily surrendered by communities nationwide.⁶⁶ A key lesson learned from this process has been the importance of community engagement and ensuring the public visibility of destruction activities. Such measures not only enhance transparency and accountability but also build public trust in national disarmament initiatives and serve as a deterrent to the illicit possession of weapons.

In **Benin**, the 2022 national WAM baseline assessment identified the need to strengthen institutional capacity for the safe and sustainable disposal of surplus and obsolete weapons and ammunition. Notably, this was to be achieved through the operationalization of destruction practices aligned with international standards, better documentation and tracking of disposal processes,⁶⁷ and environmentally responsible methods.

Acting on these identified national priorities, Benin's Defence and Security Forces, overseen by the Directorate of Armed Forces Equipment (DMA) and with strategic input from the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms (CNLCPAL), conducted a major operation in July 2024 that destroyed more than 2 tons of obsolete weapons and ammunition at the Dan firing range in Djidja.⁶⁸ This and previous operations benefited from support from international partners, which continue to provide operational capacity-building support. Key factors that enabled this progress include strengthened multi-agency coordination, capacity-building and targeted international support.

64 de Tessières and Shiotani, *Sierra Leone*.

65 Franziska Seethaler and Himayu Shiotani, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Liberia* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020).

66 United Nations Programme of Action and International Tracing Instrument, 4th Review Conference, Statement by Liberia, 18–28 June 2024.

67 Théo Bajan and Mohamed Coulibaly, *Gestion des armes et des munitions – Aperçu de pays: République du Bénin* [Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Republic of Benin] (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2024).

68 "Bénin : Plus de 300 tonnes d'armes obsolètes détruites par la sécurité nationale et régionale" [Benin: Over 300 tonnes of obsolete weapons destroyed by national and regional security forces], *Journal du Bénin*, 11 July 2024.

Certain challenges persist. These include, for example, the need for targeted and effective engagement of affected communities near destruction sites, as well as the protection of the environment. Importantly, however, since 2020 Benin has safely destroyed over 300 tons of obsolete, unsafe or unstable ammunition. This not only reduced economic costs associated with the storage of such material, but also significantly reduced risks of diversion, illicit proliferation and accidental explosion. More broadly, it has contributed to security, stability, peace and sustained development in the country.

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** continues to grapple with significant challenges in WAM amid ongoing armed conflicts, widespread illicit proliferation of SALW by non-state armed groups, porous borders, and a dynamic security environment that heightens risks of diversion and violence. The 2016 national WAM baseline assessment highlighted the need to reinforce technical capacity for disposal of weapons and ammunition, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the verification, planning and destruction of obsolete, unserviceable, and captured SALW and ammunition.⁶⁹

In 2024, progress was achieved with the organization by the National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CNC-ALPC) of a public destruction operation in Kasangulu, in Kongo Central province.⁷⁰ This high-visibility event, which followed a successful “amnesty month” collection campaign, saw the safe destruction of weapons and ammunition removed from circulation. Supported by national authorities and international partners, including the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) within the United Nations Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO),

the operation demonstrated improved on-the-ground, decentralized capacity for timely destruction – in line with international standards – of collected materiel outside Kinshasa.

Among persist challenges are further developing technical capacities at the provincial level, securing sustainable resources for future destruction campaigns, and fully institutionalizing systematic identification and disposal of surplus or obsolete materiel. Continued investment in these areas will be essential to consolidating gains and meeting international good and effective practices in this key functional area.

Senegal is the newest addition to the community of African states that have conducted a WAM baseline assessment. Following its April 2025 assessment, national authorities have made some notable progress in the disposal of obsolete and surplus ammunition. A series of disposal operations have been conducted, in cooperation with international partners (e.g., MAG) at the national disposal facility in Thies, with the aim of significantly reducing the stockpile of unsafe ammunition.

These disposal activities, coordinated under the supervision of the Directorate of Equipment (DIRMAT) and supported by multi-agency collaboration under the coordination of the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (ComNat/ALPC), represent a critical advancement in mitigating the risks associated with ageing and potentially hazardous ammunition. Senegal’s ammunition-disposal efforts complement its ongoing improvements in inventory management, marking and record-keeping. They reflect the country’s commitment to strengthening its national WAM framework in line with regional and international commitments.



Aerial view of Monrovia Beach, Liberia
© 2014, UN Photo/Ari Gattans

69 Claudio Gramizzi, Hardy Giezendanner and Daniel Golston, *Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: The Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2020).

70 “RDC : la Commission Nationale de Contrôle des Armes Légères et de Petits Calibres met en œuvre son plan national et veille à la mise en œuvre des recommandations de l’ONU” [DRC: The National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons implements its national plan and ensures the implementation of UN recommendations], Actualite.cd, 7 July 2024.

3. CONCLUSION



Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire
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This Annual WAM in Africa Insight update underscores – once again – the importance of a comprehensive, holistic and integrated approach to weapons and ammunition management. It highlights in particular the achievements and progress made in 2024/25 by 13 African states in strengthening their WAM frameworks and practices after undertaking a WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR's WAM Reference Methodology. By advancing national WAM frameworks and practices, these efforts continue to support wider objectives of peace, security and sustainable development. These objectives include conflict prevention, the reduction of armed violence, improved governance of the security sector, and the protection of civilians from the human and socio-economic costs of weapons.

National authorities and experts participating in this research have pointed to the persistence and evolution of risks associated with the diversion, illicit proliferation and trafficking of weapons and ammunition. These include the continuous spread of violent extremism, which exacerbates what are already increasingly dynamic and volatile security environments and which fuels transnational criminal activities. These threats, which are facilitated – and are exacerbated by – illicit arms and by illicit cross-border arms trafficking, undermine regional stability and efforts towards sustainable development.

Strengthening national and regional frameworks for through-life conventional weapons and ammunition management remains vital. Key enablers, as highlighted in the examples given here, include community-based approaches in addition to national and regional cooperation. The progress outlined in this update also demonstrates

the interconnections between different WAM functional areas (e.g., the legal and regulatory framework) and national coordination mechanisms (e.g., marking, record-keeping, tracing, and processing of illicit weapons and ammunition), as well as their combined contribution to effective oversight and accountability.

A recurring lesson throughout this and past updates is the centrality of national ownership and high-level political commitment to the effective implementation and continuous improvement of WAM systems, policy and practice. Sensitizing all national stakeholders and engaging at higher political levels remain key to ensuring progress and achieving long-term goals.

This update further emphasizes the need to address a range of cross-cutting and emerging issues. These include continuous efforts for gender mainstreaming in WAM, addressing craft production, the complexity of WAM in remote areas and border management as well as integrating criminal justice responses to trafficking and proliferation. Effective through-life WAM also requires tackling underlying drivers of demand for weapons, which are increasingly receiving attention.

Looking ahead, in responding to both current and future challenges it will be essential to continuously strengthen national WAM systems. This must be underpinned by shared good practice and effective measures, sustained international cooperation, and a commitment to innovation and adaptation. With coordinated efforts across national, regional and international levels, African states are well placed to further advance their WAM frameworks, thereby contributing to a more peaceful, secure and prosperous continent.

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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.

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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