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Addressing the Problem of SALW in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Existing Initiatives and Options for the EU

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NOTE

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SUMMARY

The spillover of internal armed conflicts in the Great Lakes subregion (GLR) over the past decade has resulted in a regional security dilemma, and lingering insecurity and lack of confidence among countries poses significant challenges. This report identifies small arms and light weapons (SALW) initiatives in the GLR and assesses their implementation. This involves measures taken to implement specific political and legal commitments under various international, regional and subregional agreements on SALW, and/or wider security sector reform initiatives that have an SALW impact. In the states concerned, these include programmes to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants, efforts to reform military and police forces and build or reinforce the capacity of border, customs and civil aviation services. Specific attention is focused on European Union (EU) and member states support to these issues, and recommendations are drawn for a more targeted EU contribution.

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ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA: EXISTING INITIATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR THE EU

Natalie Pauwels and Marta Martinelli

SALW PROLIFERATION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

The spillover of internal armed conflicts in the Great Lakes subregion (GLR) over the past decade has resulted in a regional security dilemma, and lingering insecurity and lack of confidence among countries poses significant challenges.¹ This report identifies small arms and light weapons (SALW) initiatives in the GLR and assesses their implementation. This involves measures taken to implement specific political and legal commitments under various international, regional and subregional agreements on SALW, and/or wider security sector reform (SSR) initiatives that have an SALW impact. In the states concerned, these include programmes to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants, efforts to reform military and police forces and build or reinforce the capacity of border, customs and civil aviation services. Specific attention is focused on European Union (EU) and member states support to these issues, and recommendations are drawn for a more targeted EU contribution.

Four GLR countries of particular relevance to EU peace-building and humanitarian initiatives were selected for this study: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda.² All are currently at different stages of post-conflict transition and reconstruction and yet share many similar SALW problems, and thus they offer an unprecedented opportunity to address a subregional problem comprehensively. Although this study is limited to four countries, many of the emerging recommendations are applicable to, and would have a significant impact on, SALW throughout the region.

SALW AVAILABILITY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

The GLR has endured numerous armed conflicts over the past decade and longer. Most began as internal civil wars that spilled into the territories of neighbouring states. The Rwandan and Ugandan intervention in the DRC's civil war resulted in what became known as "Africa's First World War". Armed violence continues in many areas despite a formal "post-conflict" status.³ These conflicts and the corresponding insecurity have generated a strong demand for SALW: ordinary civilians have sought arms to protect themselves in the absence of formal state protection,⁴ and all sides deliberately distributed weapons to civilians.

Over the years, countries of the GLR received both official and illicit transfers of SALW.⁵ Notably, all five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council in addition to numerous other countries sent official supplies.⁶ Rwanda alone imported weapons from five EU countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom) between 1994 and 2001,⁷ while Germany, Italy and France all authorized weapons and ammunition transfers to the DRC before the 2003 UN arms embargo was imposed. Brokers operating out of Belgium, France and the United Kingdom are known to have organized illicit arms transfers to Burundi, DRC (and

formerly, Zaire), and Rwanda.⁸ Despite the UN embargo and other restrictions on arms transfers (such as the European Code of Conduct), weapons continue to flow into the GLR.⁹

Weak or non-existent governance structures, porous borders and unregulated airspace allow for illicit arms dealers to profit from the extensive trading routes throughout and beyond the region. Poor or inadequate firearms legislation, coupled with the inability to enforce compliance with existing legislation, creates an environment amenable to the spread of illicit SALW. Weapons of one conflict are also “recycled” into the next.¹⁰ It is thus no understatement that the GLR is one of the world’s worst cases of SALW proliferation, and one that is ripe for a concerted international effort in cooperation with the countries concerned.

OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT ACTION ON SALW

This section identifies international, regional and subregional initiatives, including those that relate *directly* to combating the proliferation, possession and use of SALW, as well as broader initiatives. The latter include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, confidence-building and security cooperation initiatives, and the reform of the security services.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

United Nations Programme of Action

The United Nations' Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN PoA) of July 2001 cites the need to place particular emphasis on the post-conflict regions of the world.¹¹ Most of the measures set out in the UN PoA were subsequently taken up by regional and subregional SALW initiatives, which are outlined in sections “Regional action” and “Subregional action” of this report.

UN Firearms Protocol

The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of June 2001 is the first global, legally binding instrument on SALW, which entered into force on 3 July 2005. Of the four states studied here, only Uganda has ratified the Protocol.

REGIONAL ACTION

The specific problems posed by SALW in Africa were recognized as early as October 1999 with the convening of a Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N’Djamena, Chad. Participating states agreed to work toward harmonizing national legislation on small arms, standardizing national registration systems, and developing weapons collection and destruction projects. The subsequent adoption of the UN PoA added high-level political momentum to this process. In February 2003, the African Union’s Peace and Security Agenda listed SALW among its key priorities.

Bamako Declaration (B, D, R, U)¹²

The Organization of African Unity/African Union's (AU) Declaration on the Common African Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons was adopted on 1 December 2000. Signatory states commit to, inter alia, establishing national coordination agencies or bodies to monitor SALW proliferation, control, circulation, trafficking and reduction; build capacity to enforce national laws and effectively control SALW; adopt legislative measures to combat illicit SALW activities; develop and implement effective national management programmes for licit weapons, voluntary surrender and destruction programmes, and public awareness programs.¹³

Nairobi Declaration (Signed: B, D, R, U) and Nairobi Protocol (Ratified: U)

The Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa was adopted in March 2000. Its practical Agenda for Action and an Implementation Plan takes a two-tier approach: 1) at the national level it includes the establishment of national focal points responsible for elaborating National Action Plans and the review and drafting of national legislation on SALW; 2) a regional secretariat was established to coordinate actions, and the Declaration proposes cooperative monitoring and control of SALW transactions and the general strengthening of subregional cooperation between national intelligence, security and police forces. Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda have all established a National Focal Point (NFP).

In June 2005 two Ministerial Declarations were signed on the Implementation of Practical Action on SALW in the GLR and Horn of Africa, and the Best Practice Guidelines and Minimum Common Standards on Key Issues in the Implementation of the Nairobi Protocol. Several civil society initiatives have supported implementation of the Nairobi commitments. For example, a joint civil society project¹⁴ provides structural and operational support for establishing NFPs. It also includes a Civil Society Dialogue Forum on SALW to coordinate NGO activities and facilitate non-governmental organization (NGO) interaction with NFPs and the Nairobi Secretariat.¹⁵

The **Nairobi Protocol** was adopted in April 2004 during the Second Ministerial Review Conference of the Nairobi Declaration.¹⁶ It is legally binding and includes provisions on information sharing and cooperation between member states and with other relevant actors internationally and in the subregion, and seeks to encourage accountability, law enforcement and the control and management of military and civilian-owned weapons.

Brazzaville Programme of Action on SALW in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS - B, D, R)

Adopted in May 2003, the Brazzaville Programme aims to implement the UN PoA in the subregion. Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) members agreed to eight key principles for action, including: establishing a national commission; collecting and destroying illicit weapons; establishing and strengthening national SALW legislation and procedures; harmonizing national legislation and administrative procedures; strengthening the capacity of security institutions; establishing a register for arms and a database; promoting the role of civil society; and strengthening cross-border cooperation on controlling the illicit SALW trade.¹⁷

ECCAS member states also adopted a Protocol establishing a **Peace and Security Council for Central Africa (COPAX)** in February 2000 responsible for, inter alia, overseeing and

encouraging subregional cooperation in combating SALW proliferation and illicit trafficking (Article 6a).¹⁸ The multilateral military force for Central Africa (FOMAC),¹⁹ established by the same Protocol, is explicitly mandated for disarmament (Article 24f).

Mombasa Plan of Action (B, D, R, U)

An inter-parliamentary conference on SALW organized by the European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA)²⁰ in November 2003 resulted in the adoption of a Plan of Action to Curb Proliferation of Small Arms. Parliamentarians committed to: improve and harmonize legislation on SALW in the subregion; build institutional capacity (for example, the establishment of a Regional Inter-Parliamentary Network on SALW); engage civil society and the media; seek cooperation and follow-up from European parliamentarians. The most significant outcome was the signing of a **joint parliamentary agreement between Burundi, DRC and Rwanda** to work toward harmonizing respective SALW legislation (see the section on joint initiatives below). Another follow-up to the Mombasa conference was a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and AWEPA sponsored English–French handbook circulated to 2,000 parliamentarians in eight countries of the subregion.²¹

SUBREGIONAL ACTION

Given the strained relations of the past decade among GLR countries, the four countries of this study in particular, it is not surprising that, until recently, few opportunities existed for constructive dialogue on SALW issues.²² With the recent improvements, a number of bilateral and multilateral subregional initiatives are underway. They include:

Dar-es-Salaam Declaration (B, D, R, U)

The International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development the Great Lakes Region, initiated by the AU and the UN, was held in Dar-es-Salaam in November 2004. Specific protocols are expected to be drawn up on the curbing of SALW proliferation and circulation, improving border security, disarming combatants, and increasing defence and security cooperation within the region. The Conference concluded with the signing of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration.²³

UNDP-Small Arms Reduction Programme (SARP) (B, D, U)

UNDP ran a project entitled “Addressing small arms proliferation in the Great Lakes Region” from 2002 to 2005. UNDP-SARP accomplished a number of tasks, including: 1) awareness-raising; 2) technical support; 3) project formulation; 4) institutional support to the Nairobi Secretariat and the Great Lakes Conference.²⁴ The regional dimension of the project proved problematic mainly on account of the different national contexts and the ongoing violence in DRC, but also due to the limited funding for many different and varied activities. Nonetheless, the project was successful in many regards and serves as an important reference for similar future initiatives.

BILATERAL ACTION IN THE SUBREGION

A number of bilateral confidence-building measures have been established to improve security among and between the four countries. While not all specifically focus SALW, they

contribute indirectly to combating proliferation and use. They signal a significant window of opportunity for the international community to consolidate peace in the subregion.

Parliamentary Declaration on the harmonization of legislation on SALW (B, D, R)

Burundi, DRC and Rwanda Parliamentarians reached agreement in November 2003 to create a common framework for harmonizing SALW legislation, as foreseen in the Mombasa Plan of Action and the Nairobi Declaration. A Plan of Action to draft a common law on SALW was agreed at a subsequent conference in March 2004.²⁵ Priority themes at a third conference in October 2004, led to specific commitments to support the ratification of the Nairobi Protocol, support the national legislative review processes, prepare a Parliamentary Roundtable, and strengthen cooperation in subregional peace-building.

Joint Verification Mechanisms (D, R and D, U)

Joint Verification Mechanisms (JVM) were established between DRC and Rwanda, and DRC and Uganda in February 2005 to address common border security concerns and facilitate information sharing. If effective, the JVM should help ease Rwandan and Ugandan security concerns and deter further incursions into DRC territory. The DRC–Rwanda JVM, facilitated by the AU and the UN, focuses mainly on Rwandan combatants in eastern DRC and allegations that the government is supporting incursions by its forces into DRC.²⁶ The DRC–Uganda JVM (with the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) aims to verify information on the Ugandan rebel groups Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda and People’s Redemption Army operating out of north-eastern DRC.

Tripartite Mechanism on Security in the Great Lakes Region (D, R, U)

Reinforcing the role of the JVM, the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda, facilitated by the United States, established a tripartite mechanism on security in the GLR in May 2004. States commit to disarm groups operating in their respective territories and enhance dialogue on security issues. In October 2004 a Tripartite Joint Commission (TJC) was set up to oversee implementation of agreed measures. A Memorandum of Understanding, signed 23 February 2005, establishes a common intelligence and information centre to monitor incursions into the DRC, and the TJC agreed to negotiate bilateral extradition treaties. Recent signs of progress include Uganda’s expulsion of six Congolese rebels from its territory in August 2005, followed by Rwanda’s extradition of Congolese rebels in early September.

Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan (U)

Facilitated by the UNDP’s Regional Centre for SALW, this plan covers the shared border areas of Uganda, Kenya and Sudan and is currently under preparation. It involves integrated cross-border disarmament and development. Local civil society groups and community representatives are involved in its design, which will also take into account various SALW-related documents, such as the Nairobi Protocol, national SALW action plans, etc. The plan will be implemented over the period 2005–2008.²⁷

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM INITIATIVES

Military and police reform

Efficient, accountable security sector institutions play a vital role in combating SALW proliferation, possession and use. However, in the GLR existing military and police forces are often under-equipped, under-staffed, and untrained and are too often associated with human rights abuses committed against those they are meant to protect. Supporting reform in this area should form a key element of external assistance for GLR SALW initiatives. The process of reforming or building integrated national military and police forces, and incorporating selected ex-combatants through the national DDR programmes is underway. Including a specific component focusing on SALW issues in military and police training programmes would be an excellent initiative.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda all have national DDR programmes, coordinated at the regional level by a Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) under the auspices of the World Bank. The MDRP does not finance disarmament, which must be carried out by the countries themselves in cooperation with external partners where relevant (that is, the African Union Mission in Burundi/United Nations Mission to Burundi²⁸ in Burundi and the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo²⁹ in DRC). Uganda's armed forces are responsible for disarming ex-combatants who volunteer for demobilization and reintegration.

To ensure the success of the national programmes, MDRP funding should be matched by specific assistance to national disarmament initiatives, as well as collection and destruction efforts. As these programmes generally involve an initial voluntary period of disarmament, they need to be widely publicly promoted for a maximum number of volunteers to come forward. Once the voluntary period expires, coercive disarmament will need to be assessed and carried out. For instance, in eastern DRC remaining armed factions are to be forcefully disarmed by an AU-led military operation.³⁰ However, as long as security remains largely inadequate in many areas, comprehensive disarmament is unlikely.

EUROPEAN UNION ACTION ON SALW IN THE SUBREGION

BASIS FOR EU SUPPORT

The EU as such has not yet funded any of its own projects focussing specifically on SALW in the GLR. It has however supported initiatives through other organizations, notably UNDP and regional and subregional organizations such as the AU. As the main provider of humanitarian and development assistance to the countries of the GLR, the EU would do well to consider supporting initiatives that directly address SALW, which are widely known to undermine development efforts. Indeed, the EU has expressed enough political support and commitment to combating SALW for this to be justified.

Specifically, Paragraph 6 of the Council Common Position of 14 May 2001 on conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa explicitly states that the EU shall "consider support for African efforts to improve control of arms manufacture, import and export, and support for controlling or eliminating surplus small arms, as well as support for African efforts to

tackle problems relating to small arms ...".³¹ Under the EU Joint Action on SALW³² the EU committed €48.7 million (European Development Fund (EDF) financing) for SALW related projects in Africa in 2003. It has already set a regional precedent by supporting Tanzania implement its National Action Plan for SALW.³³ EU support for broader African peace-building initiatives has already borne fruit in terms of tackling the SALW issue. For instance, the International Conference on the GLR held in November 2004³⁴ resulted in the adoption of specific SALW provisions.

While most EU SALW initiatives focus more narrowly on technical approaches to weapons proliferation such as collection and destruction programmes, it is important to bear in mind that SALW problems in the GLR are intimately linked to the broader issue of SSR and DDR. The EU has made some headway in promoting SSR in the subregion with the implementation of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) police mission ("EUPOL Kinshasa") in early 2005³⁵ and a mission ("EUSEC DR Congo") to advise and assist the transition government on SSR in May 2005. Consequently, the EU is contributing to the establishment of an integrated national army in DRC,³⁶ reflecting the objectives of the EU Action Plan for ESDP Support to Peace and Security in Africa (November 2004).

The European Commission (EC) channels funds for DDR through projects run by organizations such as the UNDP and the World Bank's MDRP.³⁷ However, it does not fund SALW activities directly and does not appear to be planning to do so in the near future.³⁸ The interconnections between SSR, DDR and SALW should be formally recognized and reflected in a coordinated and parallel approach.

EU MEMBER STATE SUPPORT FOR SALW IN THE GLR

Individual EU member states contribute to SALW programmes, projects and related initiatives in the GLR. Examples include:

Awareness-raising activities

- Germany has supported a peace education programme in Ugandan schools to raise awareness of the dangers of SALW.³⁹

Disarmament, weapons collection and destruction

- Sweden has supported SALW collection in DRC.⁴⁰
- Belgium contributed €3,000,000 to UNDP's Community Recovery, Reintegration of Ex-Combatants and Small Arms Collection, Storage and Destruction Programme in Ituri, DRC.
- Bilateral EU donors to the Ituri Programme included Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden and Spain.
- France undertook disarmament operations during Operation Artemis in DRC in June–September 2003.⁴¹
- Denmark and Ireland financially support the Ugandan government's Amnesty Commission.⁴²

Demobilization and reintegration

- Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom contribute to the World Bank's MDRP. The EC also contributes financially.⁴³
- Belgium sponsors the Kamina *brassage* centre in Katanga province, DRC.

Institutional and NGO capacity-building support

- The United Kingdom's Department for International Development provided financial support to a project run by the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC), Kenya, which included capacity building for Uganda's implementation of the Nairobi Declaration, including the development of Uganda's National Action Plan.⁴⁴
- The Netherlands established a special fund for small arms projects in 2001, which has supported the UNDP's small arms programmes in the GLR through the UNDP trust fund on SALW and contributed to civil society initiatives to support the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration⁴⁵ and assistance for the Nairobi Secretariat.
- The German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) has provided implementing assistance for the Nairobi Secretariat and the development of National Action Plans.
- Germany also supported the establishment of the Ugandan NFP.⁴⁶

UNDP-SARP

- Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom provided funding for UNDP-SARP.

Taking stock of all member state initiatives and activities underway in the region is an important step in designing a concerted, effective EU approach to addressing the SALW problem in the GLR. The coherence and complementarity of such action requires precise knowledge of existing and planned initiatives.

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: BURUNDI

Among the SALW issues confronting Burundi are a) the availability of arms to regular and irregular forces as well as amongst the population; b) its geographical position bordering with DRC, which is itself undergoing a transition phase; c) refugee movements in and out of the country carrying arms for self-defence or for trade. Additional problems include: a) the total lack of accountability and the impunity surrounding actions carried out by regular and irregular armed forces making frequent use of small arms against civilians in violation of the most elementary humanitarian laws; b) the presence of corrupt elements in the government itself as well as in the local administration and police forces; c) the availability of small arms to civilians exacerbating the lethality of local disputes; d) the bleak poverty making possession of arms an asset for income or self-defence. Unfortunately, in establishing priorities for action the long term investment required by a thorough approach to SALW issues may take second stage to other urgent considerations. Nonetheless, some tentative advances have been made.

Implementing international and regional SALW commitments

Burundi's implementation of its commitments under various international and regional SALW agreements are largely limited to establishing key institutional structures required under the Nairobi Declaration and a legislative review process. External assistance could considerably bolster these steps, particularly in building the capacity of Burundian administrative services on the issue.

Burundi is an active participant in the regional framework established by the Nairobi Declaration. It inaugurated an NFP on SALW in February 2003. Its mission is to establish a national database on arms, arms traffickers and gun owners and propose updates to the legislation notably provisions on manufacture, possession and use. Its work had been complicated until the last rebel renounced its armed activities in April 2005.⁴⁷ Firearms legislation in Burundi dates back to 1971 and lacks a categorization for SALW. This makes it difficult to prohibit their use⁴⁸ and, although the legislation conforms at least partially to the provisions of regional and international agreements on SALW, it crucially lacks provisions covering brokering, disposal and destruction of collected SALW, or the obligation for certain state employees to have a licence for the possession of arms⁴⁹. However, as mentioned above, the joint parliamentary agreement between Burundi, DRC and Rwanda seeks to harmonize their respective SALW legislation (see section on Bilateral action in the subregion).

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

SALW availability is addressed mostly within the framework of the World Bank's MDRP. Following the 2002 ceasefire agreement with the rebel group *Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie–Forces pour la défense de la démocratie* (CNDD–FDD), the government began to prepare a four-year national demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration programme (DRRP) which aimed to:

- demobilize 55,000 soldiers from the Burundi army, members of armed political parties and movements and, subsequently, members of the integrated Burundi National Defence Force, as well as support their reintegration into civilian life;
- support the reinsertion of an estimated 20,000 Guardians of the Peace and 10,000 militias; and
- contribute to the reallocation of government expenditure from defence to social and economic sectors over a period of five years.

The government has set up a National Commission to oversee implementation of the program.⁵⁰ These institutions set up two demobilization centres, and demobilization began in December 2004.⁵¹ The first phase involves the demobilization of 14,000 ex-combatants and includes the formation of an integrated National Defence Force and the training of army troops and of police forces.⁵² Several problems encountered in implementing the program, however, call into question its viability.⁵³

Civil society initiatives

Burundi is a deeply polarized society with a history of single party rule, which has not favoured the development of interest groups or an open dialogue with grassroots organizations. Civil society initiatives, primarily for peace-building do exist, some of which are relevant to combating SALW.⁵⁴

SALW awareness raising

- The Association for the Protection of Victims of Conflict organizes SALW awareness-raising activities through workshops, debates and advocacy. It also focuses on SALW-related human rights violations and gender violence and advises people on the negative effects of small arms detention;
- The Education Centre for Environmental Development organizes educational activities, targeting youth in particular, on the consequences of armed activities on the environment and the ecosystem;
- The Colony of Pioneers for Development prioritizes action against the spread of SALW and the consequences of their use, especially against women and children. It organizes workshops, debates and educational activities in Bujumbura;
- The Young Christians Association for Central Africa, based in Bujumbura and active in the north of the capital, helps youth and children especially from very poor areas and offers shelter and accommodation. Education programmes are also envisaged to help young people who have resorted to violence or are part of youth gangs;
- The Association for the Support to Vulnerable People in Africa organizes activities focusing on vulnerable groups such as children and victims of armed violence, and HIV affected people. While SALW are not its main focus, information events on this topic are organized when it is relevant to its work.

Peace-building and dispute settlement

- The *Compagnie des Apôtres pour la Paix* (CAP) is engaged in peace-building initiatives and mediation of local disputes. Nduwamahoro is a Catholic organization especially active in reconciliation and local mediation activities. It organizes peace education in schools and conducts research favouring reconciliation in Burundi.

International NGOs also help the stabilization of the country, featuring most prominently (but not exhaustively) Human Rights Watch (human rights issues including the use of SALW for violations); International Alert (training in mediation activities and third party intervention); Search for Common Ground (grass-roots mediation; youth education; radio peace activities; gender awareness); Handicap International (mine issues and vulnerable groups); and *Médecins sans Frontières*.

CASE STUDY 2: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The widespread availability of SALW is a major impediment to the DRC and in the greater subregion. A field assessment carried out by UNDP in February–March 2002 found a “massive concentration of weapons (in the millions) in the region, and in particular eastern DRC (Orientale, North and South Kivu and northern Katanga regions).”⁵⁵ Civil society groups have documented the link between SALW and human rights violations⁵⁶ and a recent report by Amnesty International provides alarming details about the use of arms to commit sexual violence, recruit child soldiers, murder, plunder and other atrocities in eastern DRC.⁵⁷

In DRC the problems associated with SALW proliferation and use are intimately linked to several different but inter-related issues that form the basis for action on SALW: a) the existence of a UN arms embargo on the country; b) the implementation of the various international and regional commitments on SALW, such as the Nairobi Declaration and Protocol; and c) the reform

of the security sector, which includes the establishment of integrated military and police forces and DDR of the remaining ex-combatants.

The UN arms embargo

The United Nations Security Council initially imposed a limited arms embargo in July 2003.⁵⁸ The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) was responsible for monitoring the embargo and for carrying out weapons collection and destruction operations and disarming armed groups and individuals. The initial embargo proved highly inadequate.⁵⁹ As a result, the embargo was renewed and extended to cover the entire country, with the exception of the integrated national security forces.⁶⁰

The first report of the UN Group of Experts⁶¹ identified several key factors that explain the continued existence of armed groups and the trafficking of illicit weapons in eastern DRC, including: the absence of central government authority over parts of the country; the collusion of members of the transition government with many of these activities in areas that remain technically under their control; the links between illicit and illegal natural resource exploitation and the illicit arms trade; and the existence of extensive transborder illicit trade networks. The January 2005 report cites ongoing concerns, particularly with illicit weapons shipments. It recommends regulating civil aviation and reforming customs and immigration procedures throughout the subregion.⁶²

Implementing international and regional SALW commitments

DRC has a long way to go toward fulfilling various commitments under the relevant international and regional SALW initiatives. Most of the country's efforts touching on SALW have so far been indirect, concentrating on the DDR and SSR processes. This is unsurprising given that it is still at a very fragile point in the post-conflict transition process, which involves no less than the (re-)building of the state apparatus. The transition government has however taken some limited steps toward fulfilling its commitments to address SALW.

The DRC NFP for SALW was established within the Foreign Affairs Ministry on 31 March 2003 and officially launched on 10 October 2004.⁶³ It is to undertake a review of national SALW legislation. This will provide vital input into the initiative taken by parliamentarians from DRC, Burundi and Rwanda to create a common framework for harmonizing SALW legislation, as foreseen in the Nairobi Declaration, Mombasa Plan of Action and the Brazzaville Programme of Action.⁶⁴ The NFP has organized a national public awareness campaign on SALW trafficking. Local authorities have followed suit. For example, the provincial authorities of North Kivu launched a community awareness campaign in September 2004 to sensitize the civilian population about the distribution of weapons to civilians.⁶⁵

Security Sector Reform

The Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) that began in February 2002 in Sun City, South Africa, led to the signing of a number of agreements, including the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement setting out the terms of the transition from war to peace. Participating armed factions signed a "Memorandum on army and security" in March 2003 outlining the mechanism for building an integrated Congolese national army. This process is already underway with the establishment of a Joint Commission on Security Sector Reform. It includes two subcommissions on the military and police to coordinate implementation. Creating integrated forces is a complex process, particularly

given the parallel DDR process (discussed below), as selected demobilized ex-combatants will need to be integrated into the new national forces.

The EU is contributing to police reform with the launch of its first civilian policing operation in Africa, "EUPOL Kinshasa", in early 2005 and a SSR mission "EUSEC RD Congo" in May 2005. The first involves the deployment of European civilian police officers along the chain of command of a 1,000-strong Integrated Police Unit in Kinshasa established under the auspices of the EC with EDF financing.⁶⁶ The latter involves the provision of advice and assistance to the Congolese government in the establishment of an integrated national army. The launch of these ESDP missions "confirms the determined political commitment of the EU vis-à-vis the DRC transition process as well as MONUC."⁶⁷ Moreover, EU member states France and Belgium have individually supported the training and equipping of rapid intervention forces and integrated police brigades, and the Netherlands and United Kingdom have offered technical support to the transition government. While it is inevitable that reforming the security sector will also require material inputs, including the provision of arms and ammunition, this process needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that they do not aggravate rather than reinforce the security situation. Provisions under EUPOL Kinshasa include a system for ensuring full accountability and terms of use for all equipment provided by the EU and member states.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

Closely linked to these developments is the DDR process. The transition government officially launched a national DDR programme on 13 September 2004 under the aegis of the World Bank MDRP. Institutional structures were established to design, coordinate, implement and oversee the Programme. MONUC plays a central role in assisting the transition government with disarmament and has also undertaken to destroy ammunition and weapons collected in the framework of DDR programmes. In March 2004, 17,187 ammunition rounds were destroyed in Lubero.⁶⁸ A year later, MONUC seized more weapons suspected of having originated in Uganda, during a cordon and search operation.⁶⁹

In Ituri, following consultations between the government, UNDP and MONUC, a separate Operational Framework for the Spontaneous and Voluntary Disarmament of Armed Groups was adopted on 20 January 2004. The Ituri programme targeted about 15,000 combatants. The period for voluntary disarmament expired on 1 April 2005, although in practice registration and demobilization continued until late June. It was eventually integrated into the national DDR programme. The programme had a measure of success even though several armed groups refused to participate. The total number of demobilized combatants stood at 15,849 (11,119 men, 253 women, 3,923 boys and 554 girls).⁷⁰ While an official UN report cited a total of 6,200 weapons collected through the programme, 70% were apparently "unserviceable",⁷¹ suggesting that many ex-combatants turned in only what was necessary to receive benefits and not to fully disarm.

The African Union's Peace and Security Council agreed in January 2005 to the forceful disarmament of all remaining armed groups and militias in eastern DRC as a matter of urgency.⁷² The failure of the rebel group *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* to lay down its arms as agreed during negotiations with the DRC transition government in Rome in spring 2005 led the AU to reiterate its decision to send an enforcement mission to eastern DRC.⁷³ The success of this operation could prove decisive for the future stability and security of eastern DRC and for bilateral relations between DRC and Rwanda.

Civil society initiatives

Domestic and international civil society groups are extensively involved in SALW-related activities in the DRC, playing an important, although often overlooked, role in combating the proliferation and use of these weapons. In November 2004, the *Réseau congolais d'action sur les armes légères* (RECAAL), an umbrella organization for civil society groups working on SALW issues, was established. The following section presents a non-exhaustive thematic list of projects and activities undertaken by civil society organizations in the DRC:

Facilitating disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The *Programme Oecuménique de Paix et Transformation des Conflits et Reconciliation*⁷⁴, based in northern Katanga Province, sponsors a project involving the voluntary demobilization of ex-combatants in exchange for in-kind and monetary contributions (bicycles, clothing and US\$ 10).⁷⁵

Institutional capacity building. AWEPA organized a seminar to train DRC parliamentarians and government staff oversight, preparing legislation, peaceful conflict management and legislative harmonization with Parliaments in the region on the control of the spread of SALW.

Awareness raising. AVREO (Volunteer Association for the Recuperation of War-orphaned, Abandoned, Malnourished and Displaced Children), based in Uvira and Kiliba, South Kivu, runs a number of initiatives including a campaign against SALW trafficking and proliferation via Lake Tanganyika and the Minembwe airstrip. It also organizes, in partnership with the International Action Network on Small Arms, a community awareness-raising campaign on demobilization and disarmament of child soldiers. The *Groupe de Réflexion et d'Echanges sur la Paix et la Non-Violence* (GREN) organizes meetings on SALW with authorities from various sectors, while the *Initiative pour la Prévention des Conflits* meets journalists to promote awareness of the Nairobi Declaration.⁷⁶

SALW as a public health issue. Congolese Physicians for Peace (CPP)/International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War-DRC organized workshops on “The role of the medical community in the prevention of SALW-related deaths and injuries” in Kinshasa in 2004.⁷⁷ CPP has also been carrying out epidemiological research on causes and effects of SALW injuries in eastern DRC.⁷⁸

Promoting the role of local civil society in SALW. The Africa Peace Forum, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), CPP, and *Groupe d'action pour la mobilisation et la réinsertion des enfants soldat* organized three workshops⁷⁹ on the role of civil society in combating the illicit traffic in SALW in DRC and the Great Lakes region in 2004.

CASE STUDY 3: RWANDA

More than a dozen countries helped fuel conflict in Rwanda by supplying weapons, considerable amounts of weapons were purchased through private sources on the open market.⁸⁰ Ironically, the realization that United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) troops were confronted with arms of western origin was among the main factors spurring international initiatives to limit the spreading of SALW.⁸¹

Implementing international and regional SALW commitments

Rwanda is beginning to engage politically and more consistently with SALW issues, notably in fulfilling commitments under the Nairobi Declaration. As such, the country established an NFP in March 2003. The Rwandan NFP has been quite active organizing, for instance, a workshop on engaging civil society in fighting SALW proliferation. Two seminars on SALW and community policing were also organized in collaboration with the Rwanda National Police in June and October 2004. Rwanda's most recent national SALW legislation dates to 2000.⁸² While national legislation conforms to most of the regional and international agreements as far as control on civilian possession and use and trade are concerned, shortcomings persist in record-keeping and marking; import; export and transit; manufacture and seizure, disposal and enforcement. As in the case of Burundi, the Rwandan law does not include provisions on brokering.⁸³ A new firearms law is being drafted.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

Rwanda set up its own national DDR programme (RDRP) to deal with the disarmament and demobilization of combatants, and carried out the first phase in 1997–2001 with mixed success. A 2001 UNDP-led⁸⁴ evaluation of the first stage found that external financial and political factors were seriously affecting the programme.⁸⁵ The report concluded that persistent insecurity of Rwanda's borders and Rwanda's continued implication in the DRC prevented the downsizing of armed forces and of military expenditure. The country's instability limited financial assistance thus reducing the ability of the programme to provide adequate assistance to demobilized combatants. A Technical Assistance mechanism to ensure appropriate planning, coordination and implementation was also notably absent.

The second phase of the RDRP started in December 2001 and incorporated the lessons learned from the UNDP assessment. The national programme was brought within the MDRP framework and as of April 2003 it assisted around 32,000 ex-combatants.⁸⁶ Some improvements in Rwanda and DRC relations have led to joined efforts for a sensitization strategy that provides timely, correct and consistent information to "candidate applicants" for the programme. According to MONUC as of 7 February 2005, 7,072 Rwandan fighters and their dependents had been voluntarily repatriated from DRC.⁸⁷

Civil society initiatives

Rwanda has been cautiously opening up to local civil society organizations. The umbrella organization Research Agency for Cooperation and Development (ACORD) is particularly active with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); reconciliation and peace-building initiatives; and research on antipersonnel landmines in Rwanda. The Association "Modeste et Innocent" supports peace education. The umbrella organization League for People's Rights is active in Burundi, Congo and Rwanda, primarily in the field of human rights and development, advocating reconciliation.

Rwanda also hosts a number of international NGOs that touch on SALW issues. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International focus on SALW-related human rights abuses, while SaferAfrica and SaferRwanda monitor progress on a range of issues, from legislative developments to the Nairobi process and DDR issues.

CASE STUDY 4: UGANDA

While on the whole, Uganda has enjoyed a long period of relative stability, armed violence continues to mark various parts of the country, predominantly in the north. Uganda also hosts a large refugee community, mainly from neighbouring Sudan but also DRC and Rwanda.⁸⁸ As in the case of DRC, the proliferation of SALW has been very difficult to check due to a combination of poor security sector capacity and porous borders.⁸⁹ Finally, the country faces considerable problems with small arms linked to the customary practice of cattle rustling. Previously conducted on a limited scale with simple weapons such as spears, this had escalated into devastating and large-scale armed violence due to the presence of small arms.⁹⁰

Uganda is a major recipient of donor assistance. While most of this assistance goes toward traditional aid projects, there is an increasing interest in funding projects that support segments of the population most heavily impacted by ongoing conflict, such former child soldiers and children “at risk”, and IDPs.

Of the four states analysed in this report, Uganda has made the most significant progress in implementing agreed norms and measures on SALW. Uganda is a signatory to all the relevant declarations and protocols. It has ratified both the UN Firearms Protocol and the Nairobi Protocol, and is making good strides in implementing its national Plan of Action on SALW. While most of the government’s SALW-related efforts are focused on implementing these various commitments, it also has an Amnesty Law to entice rebel fighters to demobilize, and a national DDR programme launched in February 2005.

Implementing international and regional SALW commitments

As a full party to the Nairobi and UN Protocols, Uganda has made considerable headway in its commitments to implement the various provisions set out in both documents. The EU could contribute to ensuring that Uganda lives up to its commitments and emerges as concrete example of best practice on SALW in Africa.⁹¹

Institutions. Uganda was among the first countries to establish an NFP in October 2001. The NFP elaborated the National Action Plan (NAP), officially launched in March 2005,⁹² and identifies implementation strategies. The NAP focuses on stockpile control and management, reducing SALW circulation and possession, and combating proliferation and covers a three-year period.⁹³ Technical expertise was provided by the United Kingdom’s Global Conflict Prevention Pool, as well as NGOs including Saferworld and SaferAfrica. Uganda has also established and trained Regional Task Forces to implement the NAP at the local level.⁹⁴

Needs assessment. Prior to developing the NAP, the Ugandan government undertook a mapping project conducted by SaferAfrica and Saferworld to assess the extent and nature of the SALW problem in Uganda. This involved the collection of information vital to developing the NAP, such as the extent of illicit SALW proliferation; its impact on security and socio-economic well-being; firearms ownership, trafficking, transport; regulations and administrative procedures; security sector capacity to deal with the problem; popular attitudes to firearms and security; the availability of resources, etc.⁹⁵

Weapons collection and destruction. The destruction of large stocks of surplus and illicit SALW is to be undertaken by the NFP with UNDP assistance, on the basis of the findings of the mapping project. Moreover, the UNDP has assisted in the establishment of a comprehensive weapons

collection, stockpile management and destruction programme for the country.⁹⁶ Unfortunately, as pointed out in a recent Ugandan Parliamentary Committee report on Defence and Internal Affairs, insufficient funding for SALW and the lack of a separate budget line for SALW initiatives “will make Uganda lag behind other countries in the region, indeed draw others back.”⁹⁷

Legislation. Uganda has undertaken a legislative review process with a view to improving national SALW controls. Its current legislation, the 1970 Firearm Act, lacks proper definitions and has been deemed generally outdated and ineffective. Specifically, the government issued enhanced guidelines for licensing and monitoring firearms in 2002, and recently announced that new legislation will be drafted making legal firearms ownership tougher for individuals.⁹⁸ Uganda’s accession to the UN Firearms Protocol requires it to implement provisions on criminalization of illicit SALW activities. In early April 2005, it announced plans to carry out a census of legally owned guns and to launch a voluntary weapons collection programme.⁹⁹ The government¹⁰⁰ is also reviewing regulations and administrative procedures for import, export, transit and transport of SALW and explosives, national SALW manufacturing, and stockpile management.¹⁰¹ In developing SALW legislation and policy, Uganda has followed the Best Practice Guidelines adopted by signatories to the Nairobi Declaration¹⁰² and has endeavoured to include a broad range of civil society actors and stakeholders in this process.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

Responsibility for disarmament lies exclusively with the government, particularly the armed forces, which carry out DDR activities. Uganda has considerable experience in designing and implementing a national DDR programme.¹⁰³ The government first requested participation in the World Bank’s MDRP in November 2002 following the withdrawal of its last troops from DRC. However, as the government was required to carry out an extensive Defence Review to identify needs and capabilities of its armed forces prior to drawing up a national DDR programme,¹⁰⁴ there were lengthy delays and the programme only began in February 2005.¹⁰⁵ It is managed by the government’s Amnesty Commission (AC).¹⁰⁶

In light of the extensive insecurity in Karamoja district, the government launched a disarmament programme in December 2001. The programme, run by the AC, was implemented in two key phases: voluntary and forcible disarmament.¹⁰⁷ In the first phase weapons were surrendered in exchange for in-kind goods such as ploughs (contributed by the EU and the British High Commission) and water wells,¹⁰⁸ but also iron sheets, maize grain and water.¹⁰⁹ The forceful disarmament exercise ended prematurely and registered only limited success.¹¹⁰ In its 2003 report, the AC cited “inadequate funding and facilitation for implementing the priority actions for amnesty.”¹¹¹ Nonetheless, in September 2004 the government set up Committees to resume forcible disarmament and appointed a special Presidential Assistant on Disarmament.¹¹²

More recently, the approach to Karamoja district has evolved from a national initiative to a broader subregional initiative involving the three countries impacted by the violent combination of SALW proliferation and cattle rustling: Uganda, Kenya and Sudan. The governments have repeatedly acknowledged the need for a coordinated approach to the problem of SALW proliferation.¹¹³ Uganda and Kenya, facilitated by the UNDP’s Regional Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons, are developing the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan 2005–2008. On the Ugandan side, the Karimojong are reportedly prepared to hand in weapons in return for their involvement in community-based security initiatives,¹¹⁴ which could include: establishing police posts at strategic locations along the border and joint border patrols; improving

facilities for storing SALW and the public destruction of SALW; sensitising and raising awareness among citizens of the adverse effects of SALW and about disarmament processes through cross-border community radio programmes; enlisting the support of politicians at all levels for community based voluntary disarmament; and facilitating and supporting cross-border peace-building efforts and cross-border NGO collaboration.¹¹⁵

Civil society initiatives

Much of the focus of civil society on peace and development-related is on problems linked to IDPs and child soldiers—both key issues in the country.¹¹⁶ The government has sought to include local civil society in its SALW activities. As part of the government’s mapping exercise described above, the NFP, together with Saferworld, SaferAfrica and the Uganda Joint Christian Council organized a “train the trainers” workshop in 2004 to build capacity of local civil society groups to support the implementation of the Ugandan NAP at the local level.¹¹⁷ Five hundred population surveys were conducted throughout Uganda to measure security perceptions and the extent of firearms proliferation.¹¹⁸ This is vital given that an earlier study revealed that beyond Kampala there is little awareness among civil society organizations of the problems associated with firearms proliferation, and few have specifically addressed firearms control.¹¹⁹

To date, much of the action taken by civil society has been instigated by the Uganda Action Network on Small Arms (UANSA), the national umbrella organization for NGOs and individuals working on SALW. UANSA sponsors public awareness projects, collecting and analysing data, organizing workshops and training civil society groups on SALW issues. Some initiatives focusing on SALW as a public health issue have been undertaken, notably by the Ugandan Association of Medical Workers for Health and Environmental Concerns.¹²⁰ Civil society groups have also reportedly conducted community-based weapons collection and destruction programmes, but no specific data or information could be collected to corroborate this.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EU ACTION ON SALW IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Generally speaking, developing an EU strategy for SALW in the region should clearly set out the objectives sought by the planned intervention and indicate the respective roles of the EU, national governments and other actors. It should also clearly indicate the contributions the EU could offer at the national, regional and international level. Since the EU has gone to great lengths to make aid delivery more predictable and effective, notably through the drafting of Country Strategy Papers and five-year National Indicative Programmes, a general recommendation is to integrate SALW, DDR and SSR into the development of these policy tools. Moreover, the link between these three issues should be made explicit. Finally, the EU should take stock of all efforts by member states, the Commission and Council that touch on these three areas in order to ensure effective coordination, coherence and complementarity.

Specific recommendations for EU action on SALW in the GLR should focus on the following four priority areas: practical disarmament, combating proliferation, state capacity building to implement various commitments on SALW and SSR/DDR, and encouraging the involvement of stakeholders/civil society in combating SALW.

PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT

“Disarmament” in DDR

Overall, there is a clear need for assistance in implementing disarmament programmes in the region, as disarmament is excluded from MDRP financing. Poorly managed disarmament programmes can result in the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons possessed by ex-combatants, who may be inclined to sell or simply retain some of their weapons when volunteering for demobilization. The EU could consider channelling support for disarmament through the relevant international partners in the countries concerned (for example, MONUC and UNDP in DRC, United Nations Operation in Burundi in Burundi). In Uganda, the EU should encourage the government to follow through on promises to begin registering weapons held by private individuals and public organizations, as announced in recent months. Moreover, it could contribute financially to the government’s AC to process the current backlog of ex-combatants volunteering for demobilization before they become weary of waiting and risk resorting to alternative methods of ensuring their livelihoods.

SALW feasibility studies

One significant problem in effectively tackling the SALW problem in the region concerns data availability. There are no precise data on SALW possession. The EU could envisage sponsoring surveys of SALW possession to determine the extent to which SALW pose a security threat in each country (that is, cultural attitudes to gun possession/use; cost and availability of weapons; threat perceptions among different socio-economic groups; measure popular support for disarmament initiatives). These could be further broken down into regions or districts for each country, since security environments differ significantly in many parts of the same country. The SaferAfrica/Saferworld mapping projects in Uganda and Tanzania are good examples of this type of initiative.

COMBATING PROLIFERATION

Weapons collection and destruction

Weapons need to be taken out of circulation through collection and destruction programmes, including public ceremonies. These programmes are not merely important for their symbolic value, but can also have a positive psychological impact on a war-weary population and build confidence in the peace-building process. The EU could mobilise its own significant experience accumulated in countries like Albania and Georgia, but also in Mozambique where it supported “Operation Rachel”—a joint operation involving Mozambican and South African police to collect and destroy weapons caches.¹²¹ Similar operations could be envisaged between DRC and Uganda, and between DRC and Rwanda. In Uganda, despite the drafting of a comprehensive weapons collection, stockpile management and destruction programme, the NFP lacks funding for its implementation, to which the EU could support.

Developing and harmonizing SALW legislation

The need for robust and harmonized SALW legislation was outlined as a priority in most of the regional SALW initiatives. The EU could provide technical support for developing national administrative procedures on SALW possession, use, manufacture and sale. It could support,

through sending technical experts, the drafting of national gun control legislation that reflects relevant international and regional commitments.

CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Institutional support

The EU could provide valuable assistance to NFPs in line with each country's commitment to implement the Nairobi Declaration. Whereas NFPs have been established in all four countries, the lack of substantive resources at their disposal seriously undermines their efforts. Supporting these national institutions is in line with the EU and international donors' stated desire to promote and encourage "African ownership".

Connecting SALW to SSR and DDR

Appropriate, effective and accountable security sector institutions charged with enforcing compliance with SALW laws urgently needed. These include police and military forces, but also intelligence services. The ESDP policing and SSR missions recently launched in DRC could incorporate training and advice on combating illicit SALW proliferation. The same is true for army and police training by EU member states (notably France and Belgium) in DRC. Thus far, the ESDP missions have focused exclusively on DRC. As the EU does not have unlimited funding to extend or multiply its operations indefinitely, it should consider whether ESDP missions are indeed the most effective and efficient method of achieving the stated goals, or whether it would be more fruitful to channel these funds through programmes and projects run by other multilateral organizations and agencies.

Supporting border and customs control and surveillance

Building on the EU's existing police training operation in DRC, additional support for capacity-building in border control and surveillance, with a focus on SALW monitoring and verification, should be envisaged. This could take the form of an EU-sponsored training programme for customs officials in the region. Moreover, the results of this training could prove useful in combating the illicit trade in natural resources that has been linked to conflict in eastern DRC in particular.¹²² These issues could be integrated into the tasks of the EU SSR mission to DRC, "EUSEC RDC" (see section on European Union action on SALW in the Subregion).

Supporting civil aviation control and surveillance

As with border and customs control and surveillance, the EU could provide material, personnel and/or training support aimed at developing and modernizing the countries' civil aviation infrastructure. This could also form part of the advice and assistance provided in the framework of the EU SSR mission to DRC.

ENCOURAGING A STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

Ensuring a role for civil society

Whereas the important role of civil society in SALW action is repeatedly recognized, civil society remains rudimentary in the GLR. They lack information about progress in implementing regional and international commitments necessary to hold their governments accountable.

Contributions aimed at strengthening the accountability function of civil society in monitoring national institutions are urgently needed. Close consultations with civil society are also crucial to ensure that programmes reflect real needs on the ground. The EU could consider supporting projects designed to build civil society capacity as well as improve coordination between NGOs and other stakeholders and the relevant SALW-related institutions (NFPs, Regional SALW secretariat) and DDR/SSR related institutions at the national and international levels. An example here is the “Civil Society Dialogue Forum on SALW” (see section on Regional action).

Women, children and youth

Any serious attempt to identify peace-building projects in the GLR will need to reconsider the role of so-called vulnerable groups. To date, however, little attention has been paid to the gender aspect of either SALW or DDR. Limited headway was made in DRC in March 2005 with the organization of a workshop on “Gender and DDR”.¹²³ Projects designed to empower these groups and assist in their transition from victims to stakeholders should be envisaged.¹²⁴ Household surveys (mentioned above) should include a specific focus on the impact of SALW on women, youth, and children.

Notes

- ¹ Recently, a number of important bilateral initiatives have been taken by the states of the subregion to improve cooperation in addressing common security concerns. These are encouraging developments that must be reinforced.
- ² While the SALW problem in the subregion extends beyond the four countries studied here, space and time constraints prevent us from discussing all of them in depth.
- ³ All four countries have in fact known few periods of relative peace since gaining independence in the early 1960s.
- ⁴ Human Rights Watch, “To Protect the People: The Government-Sponsored Self Defence Program in Burundi”, 2001; Charles Nasibu Bilali, “Qui arme les mai-mai? Enquête sur une situation originale”, GRIP Report 2004/05, <http://www.grip.org/pub/rapports/rg04-5_mai.pdf>.
- ⁵ See, for instance, the thorough report by Paul Eavis, “SALW in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region: Challenges and Ways Forward”, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2002, pp. 251–261.
- ⁶ William Hartung, “The New Business of War: Small Arms and the Proliferation of Conflict”, *Ethics and International Affairs*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2001, p. 82.
- ⁷ Amnesty International, “Democratic Republic of Congo: Arming the East”, AI Report, 2005.
- ⁸ William Benson, “Undermining Development: The European Arms Trade with the Horn of Africa and Central Africa”, <http://www.iansa.org/documents/development/undermining_development.htm>; and Amnesty International, “Democratic Republic of Congo: Arming the East”, AI Report, 2005.
- ⁹ Security Council, *Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, UN document S/2004/551, 15 July 2004; Security Council, *Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, UN document S/2005/30, 25 January 2005.
- ¹⁰ Amnesty International and Oxfam, *Shattered Lives—The Case for Tough International Arms Control*, 2003, p. 62.
- ¹¹ United Nations, *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*, UN document A/CONF.192/15, 9–20 July 2001.
- ¹² Of the four countries included in this study, those that have signed, ratified or are addressed by a given measure are signalled by the first letter, that is, B = Burundi, D=DRC, R=Rwanda, U=Uganda.
- ¹³ Organization of African Unity, *Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, Ministerial Conference on

- the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, 30 November–1 December 2000, Bamako, Mali.
- ¹⁴ The two NGOs were Project Ploughshares (Canada) and the Africa Peace Forum (APFO, Kenya).
- ¹⁵ Lynne Griffiths-Fulton, “Small Arms in the Horn and Great Lakes”, *Ploughshares Monitor*, 2004.
- ¹⁶ The Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, 21 April 2004. Full text available at <<http://www.saferfrica.org/DocumentsCentre/NAIROBI-Protocol.asp>>.
- ¹⁷ IANSA, “Focus on Small Arms in Africa”, IANSA Report no. 6, <<http://www.iansa.org/documents/2003/focus6.pdf>>, pp. 7–8.
- ¹⁸ Protocol Relating to the Establishment of a Mutual Security Pact in Central Africa (COPAX), 24 February 2000.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, art. 23–26.
- ²⁰ Under the auspices of the UNDP Small Arms Reduction Programme for the Great Lakes.
- ²¹ United Nations Development Programme and European Parliamentarians for Africa, “A Parliamentarians’ Handbook on the Small Arms Issue. Small Arms and Light Weapons Cause Death and Hinder Development—What Can Parliamentarians Do to Curb This Scourge?”, 2004, <<http://www.grip.org/bdg/pdf/g4193.pdf>>.
- ²² The only forum in which representatives of Burundi, DRC and Rwanda met regularly to discuss peace and security in the subregion (including arms control and disarmament) was the UN Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, established in May 1992.
- ²³ The Declaration includes three articles on SALW: (22) “Promote common policies to curb the illegal proliferation, circulation and use of SALW, as well as anti-personnel mines and ... harmonize and facilitate the implementation of existing agreements and mechanisms”; (24) “Prevent any direct or indirect support, delivery of arms or any other form of assistance to armed groups operating in the region...”; and (34) “Establish regional self-evaluation and monitoring mechanisms and bodies on ... adherence to international conventions on human rights and on criminal practices such as illegal trafficking of SALW and on the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes Region.” Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. The full text is available on the website of the *Réseau Documentaire International sur la Région des Grands Lacs Africains*, <<http://www.grandlacs.net/>>.
- ²⁴ Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, “Addressing Small Arms Proliferation in the Great Lakes Region”, United Nations Development Programme, 2003; UNDP Kenya, *UNDP Small Arms Reduction Programme for the Great Lakes Region. Final Report 2002–2005*, 2005.
- ²⁵ “Plan d’Action Parlementaire de Bujumbura sur l’Harmonisation des Législations sur les Armes Légères et de Petit Calibre”, Bujumbura, 30 March 2005.
- ²⁶ African Union, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in the East of The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Relations between DRC and Rwanda*, document PSC/AHG/3 (XXIII), 10 January 2005.
- ²⁷ Further details are provided in the case study on Uganda, below.
- ²⁸ The United Nations Mission to Burundi (ONUB) took over from the African Union-led Mission in Burundi (AMIB) in June 2004.
- ²⁹ The disarmament-related components of the UN Mission to DRC (MONUC) mandated include: “support operations to disarm foreign combatants led by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; to contribute to the disarmament portion of the national programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of Congolese combatants and their dependants, in monitoring the process and providing as appropriate security in some sensitive locations”, and to provide the transitional government and authorities with assistance in security sector reform.
- ³⁰ “Text of Communiqué on talks between DR Congo, Angola, Congo, Gabon Presidents”, 16 July 2005, <<http://www.iss.org.za/AF/profiles/DRCongo/eccascommjul05.pdf>>.
- ³¹ Council of the European Union, *Common Position of 14 May 2001 Concerning Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa*, EU document 2001/374/CFSP, 14 May 2001, para. 6.
- ³² Council of the European Union, *Joint Action of 17 December 1998 Adopted by the Council on the Basis of Article J.3 of the Treaty on European Union on the European Union's Contribution to*

- Combating the Destabilising Accumulation and Spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons, EU document 1999/34/CFSP, 17 December 1998.
- 33 IANSA, "Implementing the Programme of Action, 2003", <<http://www.iansa.org/documents/report/colour/progress3.pdf>>, p. 169.
- 34 From the Irish EU Presidency web site press section, General Affairs and External Relations Council, "Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dermot Ahern, TD – Part III", 18 November 2004. <http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/Press_Releases/20041118/1632.htm>.
- 35 Natalie Pauwels, "EUPOL Kinshasa: testing EU commitment to Africa", *European Security Review*, no. 25, 2005.
- 36 Council Joint Action 2005/355/CFSP of 2 May 2005 on the European Union mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/tender/gestion/cont_typ/alter_index_en.htm>
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ACRONYMS

AC	Amnesty Commission
ACORD	Research Agency for Cooperation and Development
AU	African Union
AVREO	Volunteer Association for the Recuperation of War-orphaned, Abandoned, Malnourished and Displaced Children
AWEPA	European Parliamentarians for Africa
CAP	<i>Compagnie des Apôtres pour la Paix</i>
COPAX	Peace and Security Council for Central Africa
CPP	Congolese Physicians for Peace
DDR	disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRRP	demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration programme
EC	European Commission
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EDF	European Development Fund
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
FOMAC	multilateral military force for Central Africa
GLR	Great Lakes subregion
GREN	<i>Groupe de Réflexion et d'Echanges sur la Paix et la Non-Violence</i>
GTZ	Technical Cooperation Agency
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
IPDs	internally displaced persons
JVM	Joint Verification Mechanisms
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
NAP	National Action Plan
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	non-governmental organization
PoA	United Nations' Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects
RDRP	Rwandan national DDR programme
RECAAL	<i>Réseau congolais d'action sur les armes légères</i>
SALW	small arms and light weapons
SARP	Small Arms Reduction Programme
SRIC	Security Research and Information Centre
SSR	security sector reform
TJC	Tripartite Joint Commission
UANSAs	Uganda Action Network on Small Arms
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research