

# disarmament forum

## The complex dynamics of small arms in West Africa no. 4, 2008

The dynamics of small arms and light weapons traffic, circulation and use in West Africa are complex, and result in a tangled web of regional insecurity, violence, illicit acts, and criminal networks. Unraveling this web requires human and financial resources, strong organizations and governments, and engaged civil society actors. Woven together to combat the small arms problem, these elements offer both optimism and concrete security benefits at both the human and regional security levels. Civil society, regional organizations, and agreements such as the ECOWAS Convention and the Millennium Development Goals are interlinked, their efforts synergistic, and together result in a stronger and more secure region.

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* examines small arms in West Africa, and looks at some of the activities being undertaken to combat the problem, from regional initiatives to civil society projects, from technical and legal fixes, to building on the link between disarmament and development.

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