

# WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA INSIGHT: 2022 UPDATE



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## ▼ Mogadishu, Somalia, 2013.

Safe disposal of captured munitions by AMISOM contingents.

Credit: © UN Photo/Tobin Jones



## SUMMARY

Ineffective through-life management of weapons and ammunition contributes to diversion and illicit proliferation and thus facilitates, exacerbates, and accelerates armed conflict, armed violence, including gender-based violence, and instability. This impedes social and economic development. Weapons and ammunition management (WAM) is the oversight, accountability, and governance of conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle. UNIDIR has identified 10 key functional areas for WAM, including a national coordination mechanism and a national legal and regulatory framework, as well as control measures to be taken for transfer controls, stockpile management, marking, record-keeping, dealing with illicit arms and ammunition, and disposal.

This is the first annual update by UNIDIR to recognize the progress made by 9 African states to strengthen their WAM policy and practice after undertaking a WAM baseline assessment using UNIDIR's methodology. The report presents national examples of progress in addressing gaps and deficiencies in the 10 key functional areas for WAM.

**The report highlights some of the continuing challenges to achieve progress in WAM at the national level in Africa, including:**

- Resource constraints (e.g. strategic advisory, technical, financial, operational etc)
- Poor sensitization or inadequate knowledge on the importance of WAM among high-level political stakeholders
- Unstable security and political situations
- Coordination challenges at the regional and subregional levels

**The report also summarizes key lessons learned for achieving progress to strengthen WAM in Africa, including the importance of:**

- An institutionalized, well-resourced, and strategically placed robust national coordination mechanism with an adequate mandate
- Strong political will of national WAM stakeholders and high-level political actors
- Sustained international assistance and cooperation to facilitate capacity building and exchanges of good practice
- Effective coordination and partnerships among WAM stakeholders
- An inclusive, consultative, and participatory approach to WAM

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## NOTES

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AMAT</b>	Ammunition Management Advisory Team
<b>AMISON</b>	African Union Mission in Somalia
<b>BICC</b>	Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies
<b>CAR*</b>	Conflict Armament Research
<b>CNCCAI</b>	National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites, Niger)
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>FGS</b>	Federal Government of Somalia
<b>GNACSA</b>	Ghana National Commission on Small Arms
<b>JLU</b>	Joint Logistics Unit
<b>JVT</b>	Joint Verification Team (Somalia)
<b>LiNCSA</b>	Liberian National Commission on Small Arms
<b>MINUSCA</b>	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic
<b>MONUSCO</b>	United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>MOSAIC</b>	Modular Small Arms Control Implementation Compendium
<b>NATCOM</b>	National Commission for the fight against the illicit proliferation and circulation of light weapons (ECOWAS)
<b>NCCSALW</b>	National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Nigeria)
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>RECSA</b>	Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States
<b>SACU</b>	Small arms control units (Liberia)
<b>SALW</b>	Small arms and light weapons
<b>SLANSA</b>	Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms
<b>SLeNCSA</b>	Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms
<b>SOP</b>	Standard operating procedure
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNMAS</b>	United Nations Mine Action Service
<b>UNOCI</b>	United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire
<b>UNODA</b>	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNREC</b>	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa
<b>UNSCAR</b>	United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation
<b>UNSOM</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
<b>WAM</b>	Weapons and ammunition management

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# 1. INTRODUCTION



▲ Explosive Ordnance Disposal Officers preparing the disposal of mortar rounds.

It is estimated that armed violence claims over half a million lives each year and costs hundreds of billions of dollars.<sup>1</sup> The illicit proliferation and misuse of conventional arms and ammunition play critical roles in prolonging conflict and contributing to the insecurity of regions also affected by climate change, inter-communal violence, migration, poverty, exclusion, terrorism and transnational organized crime. States and regions that are affected by high levels of armed violence struggle to establish and implement adequate national controls to secure and regulate state- and civilian-owned conventional arms and ammunition. Such controls are necessary to prevent the diversion and illicit proliferation of these arms, prevent and mitigate unplanned explosions of ammunition, and address the misuse of such materiel. At the same time, ineffective through-life management of weapons and ammunition contributes to diversion and illicit proliferation and thus facilitates, exacerbates, and accelerates armed conflict, armed violence and instability, which in turn impede social and economic development. Identifying effective measures to tackle these threats to international peace and human security should therefore be among the highest priorities on the international security and development agendas. This first annual update by UNIDIR on progress made by states in strengthening their weapons and ammunition management (WAM) is a modest contribution to such efforts.

WAM is the oversight, accountability and governance of conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle, from production through to use in the case of

ammunition and to final disposal in the cases of weapons and ammunition designated as surplus, obsolete or unsafe. Box 1 provides an overview of the functional areas of WAM, which covers all conventional weapons, related systems and their ammunition, not only small arms and light weapons (SALW). When national authorities have a robust national WAM policy and regulatory framework with sufficient capacities to exercise governance, oversight, management and control over the full life cycle of conventional arms and ammunition within their national territory, it can significantly enhance national, regional and international efforts to prevent armed conflict and reduce armed violence, including gender-based violence. Effective WAM policy and practice helps to create a safe and secure environment conducive to sustainable development.

Since 2015, UNIDIR's Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme has supported 12 African states to conduct national WAM baseline assessments.<sup>2</sup> These WAM baseline assessments are organized under the ownership and lead of the host Governments. Each baseline assessment consists of a national consultative process that facilitates dialogue and decision-making among all relevant national security stakeholders on WAM and related security issues. These national processes have been guided by UNIDIR's national WAM baseline assessment methodology and supported by relevant regional and subregional organizations (particularly, the African Union and the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS), United Nations entities (including peace operations,

1 G. Hideg and A. Alvazzi del Frate, *Still Not There: Global Violent Deaths Scenarios, 2019–30*, Small Arms Survey, February 2021, <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-SANA-BP-GVD-scenarios.pdf>; Institute for Economics and Peace, *Economic Value of Peace 2021: Measuring the Global Economic Impact of Violence and Conflict*, January 2021, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EVP-2021-web-1.pdf>.

2 See calendar of UNIDIR's WAM Baseline Assessments in Africa on page 8. This progress report does not include information on Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo or Togo.

special political missions and country teams, and specialized agencies and departments), and specialized non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The key findings, recommendations and options for WAM enhancement identified during the baseline assessments inform the development of a national WAM road map that clearly identifies priority areas to be addressed in order to have a comprehensive national WAM framework.<sup>3</sup>

Section 2 of this report provides some examples of progress made by nine of the African states that have undertaken a WAM baseline assessment. It is structured around the

10 key WAM functional areas (see box 1), but also presents additional thematic areas highlighted by several states as being nationally important. Section 3 summarizes key challenges and lessons learned in achieving progress to strengthen WAM in Africa. The information presented in sections 2 and 3 was gathered during structured interviews conducted by UNIDIR with national WAM focal points throughout 2021 and in the first and second phases of the Regional Lessons Learned Seminar co-organized by UNIDIR and the African Union, in December 2020 and July 2021.<sup>4</sup>

## BOX 1.

### THE 10 KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT

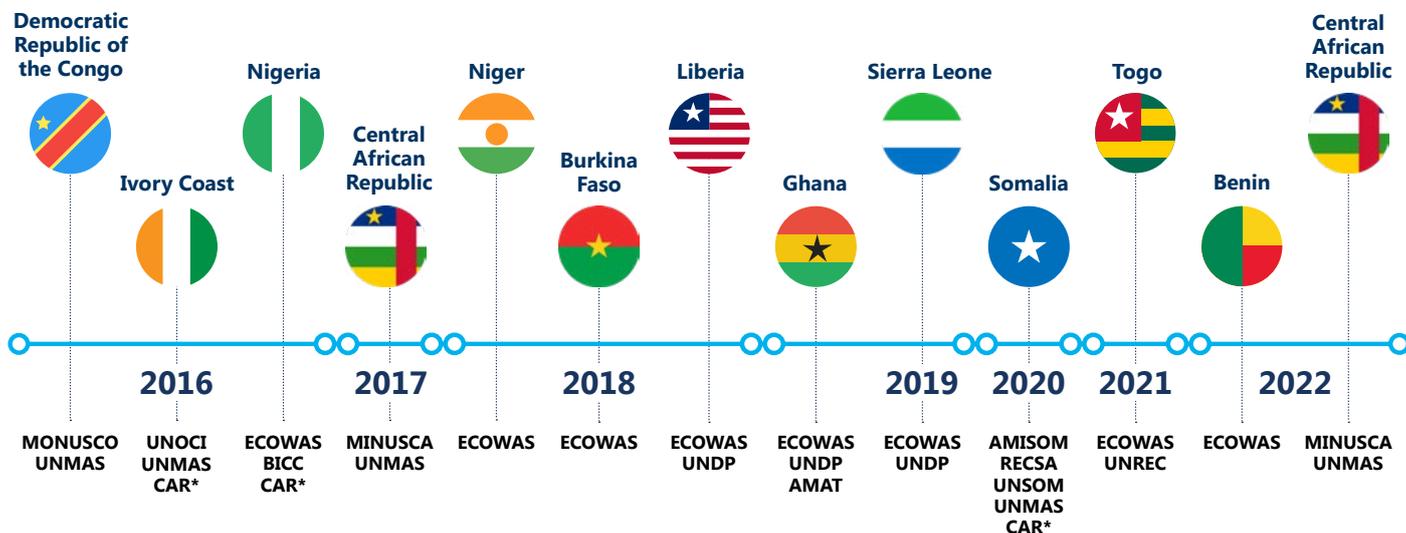
1. A **national coordination mechanism** on WAM ensures that all relevant parts of the Government work together with national, regional and international partners to conceive, direct, monitor and evaluate safe, secure and accountable WAM policies and practices.
2. The **legal and regulatory framework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

3 For further details on the key findings and options for WAM enhancement identified in each of the baseline assessments see UNIDIR WAM Country Insight Series, UNIDIR, November 2020, <https://unidir.org/projects/supporting-policies-and-frameworks-weapon-and-ammunition-management?page=3,0,0>.

4 The data-collection period means that this progress report only provides examples of progress up to the end of December 2021.

## 2. PROGRESS IN ENHANCING WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

### CALENDAR OF WAM BASELINE ASSESSMENTS IN AFRICA



This section provides a series of snapshots of national efforts to strengthen key WAM functional areas in order to promote awareness of effective practices for addressing particular gaps in national WAM frameworks. At least one example for each WAM functional area is provided for a state that has conducted a national WAM baseline assessment and has made progress on a recommended course of action to improve its national WAM policies and practices. The one exception is the two functional areas of “profiling and tracing” and “processing of illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition”, which are combined below. In addition, this section also demonstrates how gender considerations are incorporated into national efforts to enhance WAM (see box 2) and considers measures for addressing craft production of small arms (see box 3).

The information contained in this section should be useful for other states seeking to strengthen their national WAM frameworks and should support the efforts of donors and international assistance providers in the field of WAM.

### 2.1. NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Establishing and implementing effective WAM policies and practices requires cooperation and coordination among a wide range of actors at different levels.<sup>5</sup> Relevant international conventional arms control instruments and guidelines therefore recommend that states establish or designate a government entity to provide overall policy direction and coordination for national WAM-related efforts.<sup>6</sup> For example, Article 24 of the 2006 ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials recalls an earlier commitment requiring ECOWAS member states to establish a national commission for the fight against the illicit proliferation and circulation of light weapons (NATCOM).

During **Nigeria’s** baseline assessment in November 2016, it was noted that at the time it was the only state party to the ECOWAS SALW Convention that had yet to fulfil the obligation to establish a NATCOM.<sup>7</sup> An important recommendation in Nigeria’s WAM road map was therefore the establishment of a formal national coordination body.<sup>8</sup>

5 H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/reference-methodology-national-weapons-and-ammunition-management-baseline-assessments>, pp. 44–45.

6 See, for example, United Nations, Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, A/CONF.192/15, 20 July 2001, [http://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15\(SUPP\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15(SUPP)), section II.4; and MOSAIC, “3.40: National Coordinating Mechanisms on Small Arms and Light Weapons Control”, 2014, <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOSA-IC-03.40-2014EV1.0.pdf>.

7 At the time, WAM activities were coordinated by the Presidential Committee on SALW (PRESCOM). Its work was often limited by its committee status.

8 See Option for Enhancement 6 in M. Lewis and H. Shiotani, “Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Nigeria”, UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-nigeria>.



▲ Abuja, Nigeria, 2021.

Multi-stakeholder workshop organized by NCCSALW. Credit: © NCCSALW

On 3 May 2021, Nigeria inaugurated its National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) to provide policy guidance, research and monitoring of all aspects of SALW control in Nigeria.<sup>9</sup> During 2021, the legislative process to transform the status of the NCCSALW from a centre to a commission began, to ensure its sustainability and facilitate its operations. Since its inauguration, the NCCSALW has embarked on sensitization and advocacy activities with national security agencies, political leaders, civil society organizations and international partners.<sup>10</sup>

Several states in West Africa have indicated that they are in the process of establishing, or have established, sub-national units or bodies for strengthening SALW control. For example, the NCCSALW plans to expand its operational units and its visibility through the establishment of zonal offices in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> Both Liberia's and Ghana's national WAM road maps recommended the decentralization of SALW control responsibilities.<sup>12</sup>

Following the adoption by **Liberia** of the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act in 2016,<sup>13</sup> the Liberian National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA) and security agencies initiated the establishment of small arms control units

(SACUs) in various security agencies. LiNCSA secured buy-in from the heads of relevant security agencies, supported the training of personnel and provided logistical support for the units.<sup>14</sup> SACUs have been established in the Liberian National Police and in the Liberian Immigration Unit, both coordinating closely with LiNCSA on marking newly procured weapons, recording and sharing information on arms recovered from crime scenes, and tracing arms lost during operations.

In **Ghana**, the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms (GNACSA) recognized the need to decentralize its operations and increase its visibility across the country.<sup>15</sup> Following the July 2019 baseline assessment, the Minister of the Interior authorized and opened relevant communication channels for GNACSA to liaise with the regional heads in Ghana to support decentralization. By the end of 2020, national funding had been provided to enable GNACSA to expand its operations and establish offices in 6 of the 16 regions in Ghana and it had recruited and trained additional officers.<sup>16</sup> This progress was facilitated by increased awareness on WAM issues following the baseline assessment, which led to political buy-in from the national authorities. It has increased GNACSA's visibility and outreach across the country, resulting in a more efficient response to SALW threats faced outside the capital.

9 P.M. Tanimu, "Buhari Approves NCCSALW for the Restructuring of Nigeria's Security", Newsrand, 3 May 2021, <https://newsrand.com/2021/05/03/buhari-approves-nccsalw-for-the-restructuring-of-nigerias-security>.

10 PRNigeria, "Centre for Arms Control Partners Security Agencies", 20 August 2021, <https://prnigeria.com/2021/08/20/centre-arms-control-partners-security-agencies>.

11 Vanguard, "NCCSALW to Establish Zonal Headquarters in Enugu", 22 February 2022, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/nccsalw-to-establish-zonal-headquarters-in-enugu>.

12 See Option for Enhancement 9 in F. Seethala and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Liberia", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-liberia>; and Options for Enhancement 17 and 19 in S. de Tessières and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Ghana", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-ghana>.

13 J. Abban, "Liberia Passes Domestic Guns Control Law", AllAfrica, 18 May 2016, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201605181277.html>.

14 J. Konton, "Ecowas-EU Small Arms Project, Managed and Coordinated by UNDP and GIZ to Commence in Liberia Early March 2020", KMTV News, 22 February 2020, <https://kmtvliberia.com/ecowas-eu-small-arms-project-managed-and-coordinated-by-undp-and-giz-to-commence-in-liberia-early-march-2020>.

15 Options for Enhancement 17 and 19 in S. de Tessières and H. Shiotani, Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Ghana, UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-ghana>.

16 This progress story was shared by a representative of GNACSA during the first phase of the UNIDIR-African Union Regional WAM Lessons Learned Seminar in December 2020. Ibid.

## BOX 2.

## GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT

Integrating gender policies and mainstreaming gender considerations and practices into WAM, alongside strengthening women's meaningful participation and decision-making in WAM functional areas, strengthens the oversight, accountability and governance of conventional arms and ammunition.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore important to take a gender-sensitive approach to the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of a national WAM baseline assessment.

Several states that have completed WAM baseline assessments have taken steps to enhance their gender mainstreaming policies in the field of WAM. For example, to ensure gender considerations and meaningful participation of women in WAM in the **Niger**, the governmental decree that established the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (CNCCAI) provides for the inclusion of representatives from women's NGOs on the Technical Inter-Ministerial Committee, which serves as a consultative body to support the implementation of the NATCOM's policies and programmes.<sup>18</sup> Niger's 2019 National WAM Action Plan also promotes the inclusion of women at the highest decision-making

level of the NATCOM, further ensuring gender considerations in all WAM programming and activities.

**Liberia** also prioritizes gender considerations in LiNCSA's programming and activities. With the support of the Liberian Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce and international partners, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women, Liberia's NATCOM developed and implemented a gender strategy for 2019–2021.<sup>19</sup> This strategy presents several strategic, technical, and operational elements of WAM activities where gender considerations must be integrated. Further, LiNCSA has established a gender section that enforces the gender strategy, ensuring increased participation of women in all activities.<sup>20</sup> LiNCSA has also advocated for a mandatory provision in the proposed new NATCOM Act, that stipulates that at least one of the three presidential appointees to LiNCSA must be a woman.<sup>21</sup> This progress has enhanced women's involvement in WAM and the participation and the recruitment of women into senior managerial roles within the Liberian NATCOM.



▼  
**Niger.** Workshop organized by CNCCAI on women's participation in SALW control.  
**Credit:** © CNCCAI

- 17 H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/reference-methodology-national-weapons-and-ammunition-management-baseline-assessments>, p. 9; and H. Salama and E. Bjertén-Günther, Women Managing Weapons: Perspectives for Increasing Women's Participation in Weapons and Ammunition Management, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/women-managing-weapons>, pp. 43–44.
- 18 See Article 13 of the Decree on the Creation of a National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons, 2014, [https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl-nat.nsf/implementingLaws.xsp?documentId=D0EBE96B0CCF813DC125812C004F5B65&action=open-Document&xp\\_countrySelected=NE&xp\\_topicSelected=GVAL-992BUP&from=state](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl-nat.nsf/implementingLaws.xsp?documentId=D0EBE96B0CCF813DC125812C004F5B65&action=open-Document&xp_countrySelected=NE&xp_topicSelected=GVAL-992BUP&from=state).
- 19 J. Konton, "To Ensure Inclusiveness in the Sector, LiNCSA Embarks on a Comprehensive Gender Mainstreaming Strategy", KMTV News, 16 September 2019, <https://kmtvliberia.com/to-ensure-inclusiveness-in-the-sector-lincsa-embarks-on-a-comprehensive-gender-mainstreaming-strategy>.
- 20 See Section 8 on Gender Mainstreaming in the Annual Report of the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms 2018, [http://lincsa.gov.lr/pg\\_img/LiNCSA 2018 Annual Report.pdf](http://lincsa.gov.lr/pg_img/LiNCSA%202018%20Annual%20Report.pdf).
- 21 See Chapter V, Section 1k of the 2012 Act to Establish the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, [http://lincsa.gov.lr/pg\\_img/The Acts Establishing LiNCSA.pdf](http://lincsa.gov.lr/pg_img/The%20Acts%20Establishing%20LiNCSA.pdf)

## 2.2. NATIONAL LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

National legal and regulatory frameworks implement relevant international and regional instruments to which a state is a party or a participant. These thus ensure that multi-lateral obligations and commitments are domesticated and codified to enable the operationalization of WAM by the relevant national authorities.<sup>22</sup> A key element of a national WAM baseline assessment is a comprehensive review of national legislation, regulations, and administrative procedures, ensuring that effective measures are in place to address national and regional conventional arms challenges and to comply with international obligations.



▲ Bangui, CAR, 2019.

Workshop organized by NatCom-ALPC and partners. Credit: © NatCom-ALPC

The September 2017 WAM baseline assessment for the **Central African Republic (CAR)** concluded that the national legal framework, composed of a 1964 law and implementing regulations, was outdated, insufficiently detailed (e.g. on definitions, the distinction between state-owned arms and civilian weapon possession, and the activities covered), and inadequate to address national security and WAM challenges, including the implementation of the United Nations arms embargo.<sup>23</sup> The WAM road map recommended a review of the national legal framework governing state-owned and civilian-owned conventional arms to ensure compliance with international and regional agreements.<sup>24</sup> Drawing on the key findings and recommendations of the baseline assessment, the Government of CAR established a committee to draft a new national arms and ammunition legislation, support-

ed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).<sup>25</sup> The draft legislation was first adopted by the Council of Ministers in February 2020, before the draft law (bill) was adopted by the National Assembly in July 2020, and finally promulgated by the Presidency in August 2020.<sup>26</sup> The review, drafting, and adoption of the new legal framework was facilitated by the political will of the national authorities and support from international partners including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and UNODC.<sup>27</sup> The new legislation is comprehensive and harmonized with the Kinshasa Convention, the Firearms Protocol, and the Arms Trade Treaty.

## 2.3. TRANSFER CONTROLS

Existing international, regional, and subregional conventional arms control instruments and guidelines require states to establish and maintain national transfer control systems. National laws, regulations and administrative procedures must thus be in place to regulate international arms transfers, preventing the diversion of arms and ammunition or their delivery to end users that are subject to United Nations arms embargoes or who could use them to contravene international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as conventions relating to terrorism and organized crime.<sup>28</sup>

**Somalia's** 2014 WAM baseline assessment provided several recommendations for strengthening national transfer controls to comply with the partial suspension of the United Nations arms embargo. This suspension was in support of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in complying with the Security Council's provisions on WAM. One of the options for enhancing Somalia's transfer control system was to engage national institutions and international partners in the transfer control procedures. This would sensitize them to, and ensure adherence with, the centralized system and the need for notifications of deliveries to be timely and detailed.<sup>29</sup> This recommendation

22 H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/reference-methodology-national-weapons-and-ammunition-management-baseline-assessments>, pp. 46–48.

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

24 See Option for Enhancement 1 in Ibid.

25 SIPRI, Mapping ATT-Relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities database, <https://att-assistance.org/index.php/activity/unodc-official-submission-central-african-republics-draft-law-general-regime-conventional>.

26 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Central Africa Republic adopts new Law on the general regime of conventional arms developed with support from UNODC", n.d., <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/news/2020/Jan/central-africa-republic-adopts-new-law-on-the-general-regime-of-conventional-arms-developed-with-support-from-unodc.html>.

27 SIPRI, Mapping ATT-Relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities database, <https://att-assistance.org/activity/unodc-legislative-workshop-central-african-republic-develop-comprehensive-law-arms>.

28 See, for example, Articles 6 and 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty and United Nations, Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, A/CONF.192/15, 20 July 2001, [http://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15\(SUPP\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15(SUPP)), section II.11–15. For more information see H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/reference-methodology-national-weapons-and-ammunition-management-baseline-assessments>, pp. 48–51.

29 H. Giezendanner et al., "Weapons and Ammunition Country Insight: Somalia", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Somalia-WAM-Country-Insight.pdf>.

was made around the same time as the Security Council called for the establishment of a Joint Verification Team (JVT) to physically verify weapons and ammunition supplied for the Somali Security Forces.<sup>30</sup> The JVT, established by the FGS in 2015, operates under the authority of the FGS's Office of National Security and is composed of up to four FGS officials with relevant expertise in WAM, and up to four international experts from Conflict Armament Research, an NGO.<sup>31</sup> The JVT provides oversight of import controls and ensure timely notifications to the Security Council Sanctions Committee.<sup>32</sup> In March 2016, the JVT compiled a list of all weapons and ammunition that the FGS had imported since the partial suspension of the arms embargo in 2013 and the Office of National Security submitted this information to the Sanctions Committee in April 2016.<sup>33</sup> The establishment of the JVT has enabled the FGS to increase its accountability for its imports and to report in compliance with Security Council requirements. This progress was achieved based on the political will of the FGS and the support of international partners.

## 2.4. STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT

An effective national stockpile management system ensures that conventional arms and ammunition are safely and securely stored and meet national security requirements, with surplus or obsolete and unsafe weapons and ammunition designated for disposal.<sup>34</sup> In order to have such a situation, accurate records and regular inspections and a monitoring system are key.

Prior to Liberia's WAM baseline assessment in April 2018, there was neither a systematic plan nor standard operating procedure (SOP) for inspecting and assessing Liberia's armouries.<sup>35</sup> The WAM road map recommended that Liberian authorities conduct a nationwide assessment of all storage sites to inform decisions to upgrade or relocate armouries.<sup>36</sup> With support from international partners, LiNCSA developed a three-year plan for an inter-agency assessment of all weapons and ammunition storage sites in Liberia to be implemented during 2020–2022.<sup>37</sup> As a first step in this process, LiNCSA brought

together an international expert and technical experts from the NATCOM, the Liberian Army, the Liberian National Police and the Liberian Immigration Service to develop an armoury-inspection SOP based on the Modular Small-Arms-Control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) and other applicable international standards. The SOP is being used in the conduct of the thorough assessments of Liberia's armouries. The inspections revealed information on the condition of the armouries and their stockpile-management practices and the level of compliance with international standards. This also helped to identify conventional arms that need to be destroyed.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.5. MARKING

International and regional small arms control instruments and guidelines recommend the marking of conventional arms, especially SALW, with unique identifying marks. These markings aid inventory management, deter security force personnel from diverting weapons and ammunition, and facilitate the tracing of illicit weapons.<sup>39</sup> The same benefits also apply to the marking of ammunition; although it is also recommended to mark ammunition using the United Nations Explosive Hazard Classification system and codes to ensure safety.<sup>40</sup> The marking of all state-owned SALW and civilian-owned small arms is a key recommendation for all states that have conducted a WAM baseline assessment and have unmarked weapons and ammunition in their national stockpiles.

Article 18 of the ECOWAS SALW Convention requires the alphanumeric marking of all SALW with a unique serial number, manufacturer's identity, country and year of manufacture (classic marking) on an essential component of the weapon. Imported weapons must also be marked with the year and country of import (security marking). It also requires ammunition to be marked with the lot number, manufacturer identity, and country and year of manufacture. The issue of marking has therefore long been a priority for states parties to the ECOWAS Convention. WAM baseline assessments in West Africa have noted the good progress made on this issue.

30 Security Council, Statement by the President, S/PRST/2014/9, 22 May 2014, <https://undocs.org/en/S/PRST/2014/9>.

31 SIPRI, Mapping ATT-Relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities database, <https://att-assistance.org/activity/car-project-improvement-accountability-and-management-assets-somali-police>.

32 J. Leff and E. Mohammed, An Innovative Approach to United Nations Arms Embargoes, UNIDIR, 2020, <https://www.unidir.org/publication/innovative-approach-united-nations-arms-embargoes>.

33 H. Giezendanner et al., "Weapons and Ammunition Country Insight: Somalia", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Somalia-WAM-Country-Insight.pdf>.

34 See MOSAIC, "05.20: Stockpile Management: Weapons", 2012, <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOSAIC-05.20-2012EV1.0.pdf>. See also specific and relevant International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), <https://www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/guide-lines>; and H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/reference-methodology-national-weapons-and-ammunition-management-baseline-assessments>, pp. 52–58.

35 Following the conclusion of the civil war, ECOWAS and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) had on occasion conducted ad hoc assessments of Liberia's armouries.

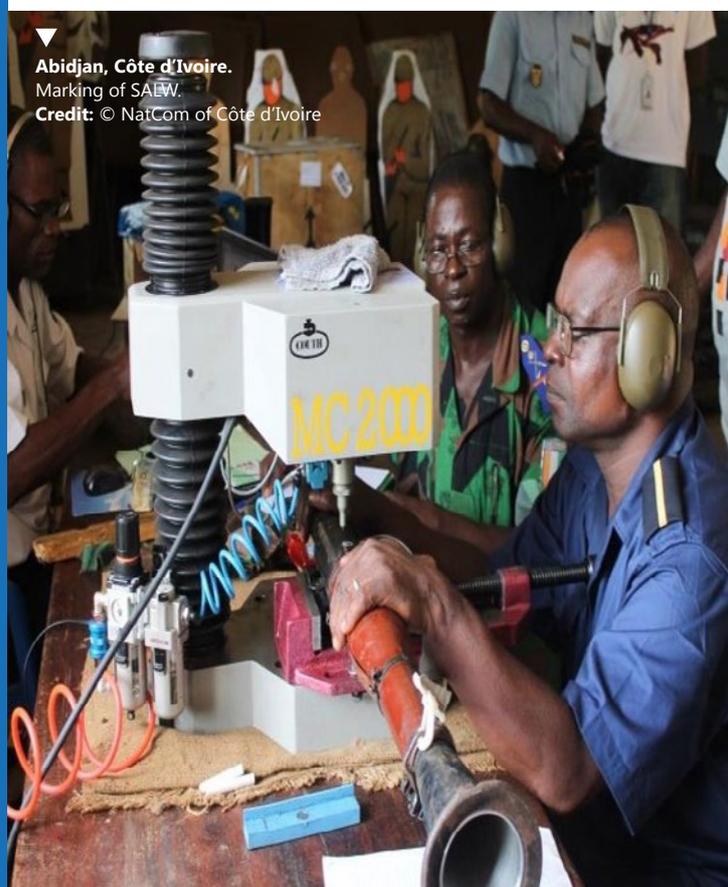
36 See Option for Enhancement 51 in F. Seethala and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Liberia", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-liberia>.

37 LiNCSA, "Another Boost for the Small Arms Commission", n.d., <https://lincsa.gov.lr/others.php?&7d5f44532cbfc489b8db9e12e44eb820=Mzky>.

38 This progress story was shared by LinCSA officials during an interview held on 18 May 2021.

39 See Article III of the International Tracing Instrument, [https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ITI\\_English.pdf](https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ITI_English.pdf).

40 See IATG, "01.50: UN Explosive Hazard Classification System and Codes", 2015, <http://data.unsafeguard.org/iatg/en/IATG-01.50-Explosive-hazard-classification-system-IATG-V.3.pdf>.



▼ Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.  
Marking of SALW.  
Credit: © NatCom of Côte d'Ivoire

For example, **Côte d'Ivoire** launched an extensive programme to mark SALW in 2011 and is considered an example of good practice in this area. Yet, the 2016 WAM baseline assessment indicated that weapons acquired after 2009 and those located in remote stockpiles had not been marked in accordance with ECOWAS SALW Convention requirements.<sup>41</sup> The WAM road map therefore recommended the marking of all state-owned weapons and a sensitization programme to promote marking of all civilian-owned firearms.<sup>42</sup> With support from international partners, including Japan through UNDP, Coginta and GIZ, Côte d'Ivoire's NATCOM acquired 11 marking machines, which enabled it to increase its marking activities significantly.<sup>43</sup> As of December 2020, more than 90 per cent of SALW held by the Ivorian Armed Forces, Police and Gendarmerie had been marked, while

80 per cent of those held by the Ministry of Waters and Forests and 70 per cent held by customs authorities had also been marked.<sup>44</sup> The NATCOM considers that the expansion of marking activities and record-keeping procedures has further facilitated tracing efforts in the country.<sup>45</sup>

A similarly high level of marking has been accomplished in **Ghana**. As with Côte d'Ivoire, there had been considerable progress in marking before the 2019 WAM baseline assessment, but the WAM road map recommended that additional marking machines were required to mark all state-owned SALW.<sup>46</sup> Thanks to the WAM baseline assessment and the sensitization efforts of GNACSA, the Government of Ghana authorized funds for the procurement of four additional marking machines and two vehicles to support marking activities across Ghana. As of December 2020, almost 80 per cent of Police Service SALW have been marked with support from UNSCAR.<sup>47</sup>

## 2.6. RECORD-KEEPING

Relevant international and regional instruments and standards recommend a centralized record-keeping system (i.e. a national register or registry), managed by a competent national authority, for all significant stages in the life cycle of conventional arms and ammunition.<sup>48</sup> For state-held weapons and ammunition, it is important that the national register contains records of the weapon and ammunition for all phases in its life cycle, including movements between centralized armouries and lower level units. An effective national accounting system enables national authorities to have an up-to-date inventory of the national stockpile.

At the time of the WAM baseline assessment in the **Central African Republic**, each security service maintained its own register of paper-based records for arms, including small arms and light weapons under its control and in its custody. While each ministry purportedly had centralized records for each security service, CAR did not have a

41 H. Giezendanner et al., "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Côte d'Ivoire", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-cote-divoire>.

42 See Options for Enhancement 16–19 in Ibid.

43 This progress story was shared by the national WAM focal point of Côte d'Ivoire during the first phase of the UNIDIR–African Union Regional WAM Lessons Learned Seminar in December 2020.

44 Y. Kouadio, "Côte d'Ivoire: Avant 2020, le président de la COMNAT-ALPC, Kouadio Yao: «Il urge de démarrer le marquage des armes des civils»" [Côte d'Ivoire: Before 2020, the president of COMNAT-ALPC, Kouadio Yao: "It is urgent to start marking civilian weapons"], KOACI, 10 September 2019, [https://www.koaci.com/index.php/article/2019/09/10/cote-divoire/politique/cote-divoire-avant-2020-le-president-de-la-comnat-alpc-kouadio-yao-il-urge-de-demarrer-le-marquage-des-armes-des-civils\\_134699.html](https://www.koaci.com/index.php/article/2019/09/10/cote-divoire/politique/cote-divoire-avant-2020-le-president-de-la-comnat-alpc-kouadio-yao-il-urge-de-demarrer-le-marquage-des-armes-des-civils_134699.html).

45 This progress story was shared by a representative of the NATCOM of Côte d'Ivoire during the first phase of the UNIDIR–African Union Regional Lessons Learned Seminar in December 2020.

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

47 An estimated 8,000 of Ghana's police weapons were marked with the support of UNDP as part of a project funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). SIPRI, Mapping ATT-Relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities database, <https://www.att-assistance.org/activity/nationwide-marking-and-record-keeping-all-ghana-police-service-weapons-phase-1>.

48 H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments, Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, pp. 61–4, 2021. See also MOSAIC, "05.30: Marking and Recordkeeping", 2022, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/MOSAIC-05.31-2012EV1.0.pdf>

centralized, national register bringing together these entity-specific registries. The WAM road map recommended the creation of electronic registries for every state security service and a centralized national registry, as well as the development of SOPs for entering and keeping records in this new electronic system.<sup>49</sup> CAR requested international assistance to implement these proposed actions and received a small arms tracing software and an electronic server from the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) in September 2020.<sup>50</sup> In January 2021, CAR's National Commission for the Fight Against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (COMNAT-ALPC) began to use the small arms tracing software to record information on its SALW stockpile, contributing to an improvement in the record-keeping system while work is ongoing towards making further progress in this functional area.<sup>51</sup> This new system also enabled an expansion in the types of record maintained, facilitating the recording and tracing of seized and recovered weapons.

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

The practice of identifying, profiling, and tracing illicit arms and ammunition is a key aspect of an effective WAM framework. This supports early-warning mechanisms by identifying demand for, and sources of, arms and ammunition in specific areas or among particular groups, thereby contributing to the prevention of armed violence and de-escalation of conflict.<sup>52</sup> Ideally, this process begins by examining information contained within national borders to determine the point of diversion, turning to the international level if the source of the arms and its point of diversion appear to be outside the national territory.

States also have to determine how to process the seized or recovered illicit arms and deal with illicit ammunition in support of judicial processes, and then consider responsible disposal.<sup>53</sup> This requires clear regulation and

the articulation of related national processes to ensure that weapons are marked, recorded, and stored in accordance with relevant national laws to prevent diversion and illicit proliferation.

The development and adoption of national approaches to profiling, tracing, and processing illicit conventional arms and the treatment of illicit ammunition are underdeveloped components of WAM in many African states affected by armed conflict and high levels of armed violence. The WAM road maps for Burkina Faso and Niger recommended measures to strengthen the profiling, tracing, and processing of illicit arms and the treatment of illicit ammunition.

In the case of **Niger**, it was noted that not all weapons and ammunition seized by Nigerien security forces were destroyed or stored separately from unit equipment. The Nigerien road map recommended the development of a mechanism for processing and tracing of captured weapons, including procedures for domestic tracing of seized arms and the sharing of the results of such investigations at the national level.<sup>54</sup> With support from Handicap International (HI) and Mines Advisory Group (MAG), three regional transit storehouses for processing recovered arms before destruction have been established in the east, west, and centre of Niger.<sup>55</sup> As a result of this measure, record-keeping and accountability in the processing of recovered weapons have improved.

**Burkina Faso's** 2018 WAM baseline assessment identified limited national awareness, capacity, practices, and procedures for managing and systematically processing illicit arms and treating illicit ammunition.<sup>56</sup> One of the key options for enhancing this WAM functional area was the development and adoption of a written national SOP for processing illicit arms and treating illicit ammunition. National authorities and experts at the operational level, as well as available international assistance providers, supported this recommendation.<sup>57</sup> The Government of Burkina Faso in partnership with Conflict Armament

49 See Option for Enhancement 22 in H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Central African Republic", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-central-african-republic>.

50 SIPRI, Mapping ATT-Relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities database, <https://att-assistance.org/index.php/activity/recsa-training-and-installation-salw-tracing-software-car>.

51 This progress story was shared by a representative from the CAR COMNAT-ALPC during an interview on 11 May 2021.

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

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

54 See Option for Enhancement 26 in S. de Tessières, S. Wilkin, and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Niger", UNIDIR, December 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-niger>.

55 SIPRI, Mapping ATT-Relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities database, <https://att-assistance.org/index.php/activity/rehabilitation-and-construction-armouries-niger>.

56 See *Towards a National Framework on Weapon and Ammunition Management in Burkina Faso*, UNIDIR, 2018, <https://unidir.org/publication/towards-national-framework-weapons-and-ammunition-management-federal-republic-nigeria>, p. 57.

57 Ibid.

Research and ECOWAS, with funding provided by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR), developed a national SOP for the management of recovered arms and ammunition, which was adopted by the Government via a ministerial decree in May 2019.<sup>58</sup> The SOP includes key provisions for a national tracing system to conduct domestic and, if necessary or required, international tracing requests, within the frameworks provided by the ECOWAS SALW Convention and the International Tracing Instrument.<sup>59</sup>

## 2.8. WEAPON COLLECTION

Weapon collection programmes seek to reduce the circulation of unwanted, illegal, or illicit weapons that might otherwise be used in armed conflict or armed violence.<sup>60</sup> A weapon collection programme is not a stand-alone activity but needs to be embedded in broader efforts to address the root causes of violence and conflict in order to make a durable contribution to build peace, security and sustainable development.<sup>61</sup>

While the **Central African Republic's** 2017 national WAM baseline assessment identified several international actors involved in activities to reduce community violence that had voluntary arms surrender and collection components, there was no government-coordinated weapon collection programme in CAR at this time. Following in-country research, the WAM road map recommended the development of a standardized, comprehensive, and inclusive collection programme.<sup>62</sup> With international support from the African Union, the Government of Japan, RECSA and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and WAM technical partners, CAR's NATCOM developed SOPs and technical guidelines for weapon collection. These were first tested during the African Union Amnesty Month in September 2020.<sup>63</sup> The collection activities revealed that the population was willing to surrender illegally possessed arms on condition that their security is guaranteed. Once validated, the SOPs will be reinforced by an implementing decree and will become a working tool for all forces authorized to carry out seizures, including the Ministry of Justice.



▲ **Bangui, CAR, 2021.** National ceremony to mark the destruction of collected illicit SALW.  
Credit: © NatCom of CAR

58 Intervention by national WAM focal point of Burkina Faso during phase 1 of the UNIDIR–African Union WAM Regional Lessons Learned Seminar in December 2020; and exchange by the author with Conflict Armament Research, July 2021.

59 "Arrête N°2019-009 PM/SG portant procédure opérationnelles standards pour la gestion des armes et munitions saisies, déposées ou trouvées au Burkina Faso" [Order no. 2019-009 PM/SG on standard operating procedures for the management of arms and ammunition seized, deposited or found in Burkina Faso], Journal Officiel du Burkina Faso, 2019.

60 H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, A Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments, UNIDIR, 2021, <https://unidir.org/publication/reference-methodology-national-weapons-and-ammunition-management-baseline-assessments>, pp. 71–75.

61 See MOSAIC, "05.40: Collection of Illicit and Unwanted Small Arms and Light Weapons", 2012, <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MOSAIC-05-40-2012EV1.1.pdf>.

62 See Options for Enhancement 34–36 in H. Giezendanner and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Central African Republic", UNIDIR, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-central-african-republic>.

63 Z. Musau, "Africa Amnesty Month: A Call to Surrender Illegal Guns this September", Africa Renewal, 29 August 2020, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-2020/africa-amnesty-month-why-you-should-surrender-illegal-gun-september>.



▲ **Bangui, CAR, 2021.** President Touadera lighting the fire for the destruction of the collected illicit SALW. **Credit:** © NatCom of CAR

## 2.9. DISPOSAL

The disposal of surplus, unwanted or obsolete conventional arms and ammunition is an essential component of a comprehensive WAM framework. While the United Nations recommends destruction as the preferred method of disposal for collected, recovered, or otherwise illicit or surplus weapons, ammunition and explosives, national practices for disposal vary.<sup>64</sup>

### BOX 3.

#### CRAFT PRODUCTION AND ARTISANAL WEAPONRY

**Craft production remains a significant WAM challenge in many West African countries.**<sup>67</sup>

**Sierra Leone's** national WAM baseline assessment identified craft production as a particularly acute problem, requiring urgent action. In 2019, SLeNCSA, in partnership with the Office of National Security and the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA), implemented a sensitization exercise and registration of local craft producers in the Kono district of Sierra Leone.<sup>68</sup> The process began with the sensitization of the paramount chiefs by the Office of National Security, paving the way for SLeNCSA to

During **Sierra Leone's** September 2019 WAM baseline assessment, it was noted that there was a high risk of an accidental explosion of the dangerous, unstable, and expired explosives stored at the Joint Logistics Unit (JLU) of the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces, located in the centre of Murray Town, Freetown. The WAM road map recommended the disposal of these explosives and the subsequent relocation of the JLU.<sup>65</sup> In July and December 2019, the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLeNCSA), in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, removed and detonated the expired ammunition.<sup>66</sup> This success was achieved through multi-stakeholder engagement and efforts of diverse actors during 2015–2018 including officials from the Sierra Leonean security agencies, NGOs and international assistance providers, as well as the sensitization of high-level government officials including top officials of the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Defence and Office of the President. The removal and destruction of the obsolete ammunition has improved stockpile-management practices and the safety of the people of Sierra Leone.

hold community-engagement meetings with the paramount chiefs on the importance of registering local craft producers. The meetings were followed by a dialogue between SLANSA and the local craft producers on the importance of registering their trade activities with SLeNCSA via the paramount chiefs. The local craft producers reportedly appreciated the approach taken, including the special provisions relating to craft production in the national Arms and Ammunition Act. The successful registration process was also facilitated by multi-stakeholder engagement on the strategic and operational levels.

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

65 See Option for Enhancement 45 in S. de Tessières and H. Shiotani, "Weapons and Ammunition Management Country Insight: Sierra Leone", UNIDIR, November 2020, <https://unidir.org/publication/weapons-and-ammunition-management-country-insight-sierra-leone>.

66 See Mines Advisory Group (MAG), "Partnership and Progress: Lessons in Effective Arms Control from Sierra Leone", 1 September 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/lessons-effective-arms-control-sierra-leone>.

67 N. Florquin, S. Lippott, and F. Wairagu, Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa, African Union and Small Arms Survey, January 2019, <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/weapons-compass-mapping-illicit-small-arms-flows-africa>, pp. 55–58

68 SLANSA, "Preparing both the Government and Craft weapon producing community for Firearm Registration in Kono District", 13 September 2019, <http://slansa.org/2019/09/13/preparing-both-the-government-and-craft-weapon-producing-community-for-firearm-registration-in-kono-district>.

### 3. LESSONS LEARNED TO STRENGTHEN WAM IN AFRICA



▲ Explosive Ordnance Disposal Officers preparing the disposal of mortar rounds.

Section 2 provides examples of progress made in different WAM functional areas by states that have successfully concluded a WAM baseline assessment. This section highlights some of the challenges that these states faced when trying to strengthen their WAM policies and practices, as well as challenges that continue to hamper such efforts. At the same time, the above “progress stories” provide lessons learned and insights into some of the key ingredients for overcoming challenges and putting in place systems and measures to provide for effective oversight, accountability and governance of conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle. The sharing of these experiences and lessons learned can hopefully support efforts by other states and interested parties to prevent illicit arms and ammunition contributing to armed conflict and armed violence, including gender-based violence. UNIDIR will continue to monitor progress in overcoming challenges to strengthen WAM policies and practices in order to create a safe and secure environment conducive to sustainable development.

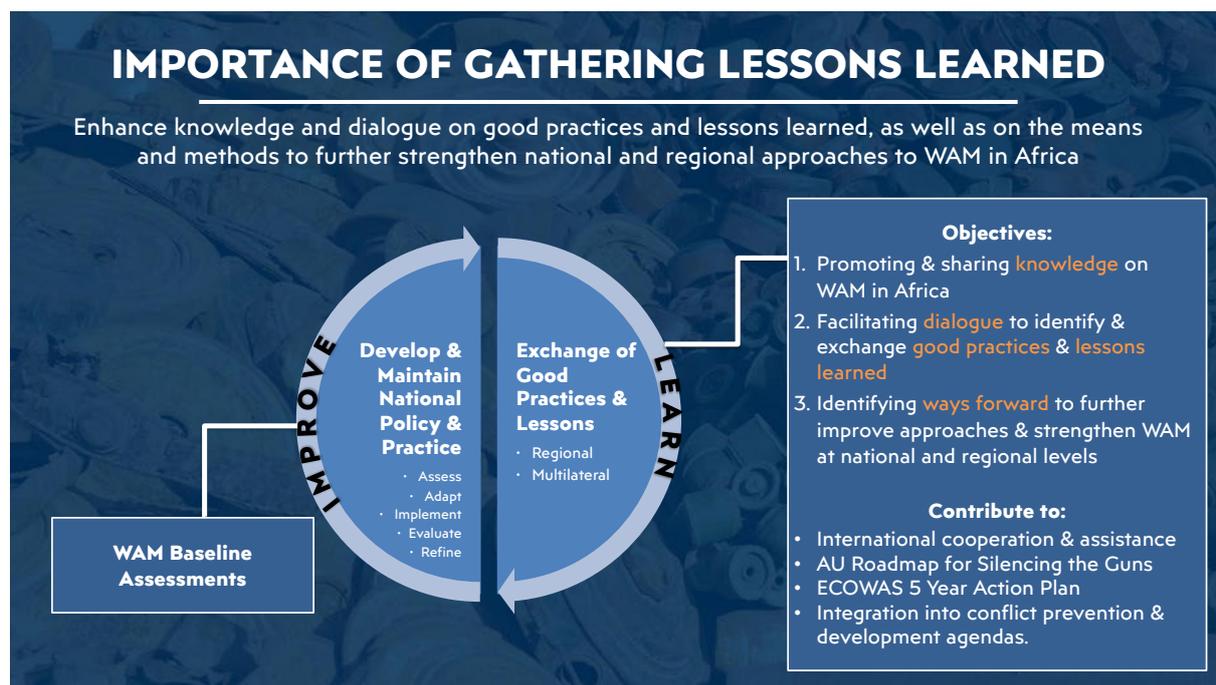
#### 3.1. WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING PROGRESS IN WAM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL?

While the examples in section 2 reveal considerable progress in different WAM functional areas, states that have conducted a WAM baseline assessment have also shared various strategic, technical, and operational challenges when seeking to implement activities to enhance WAM policy and practices. Some of the key challenges include the following.

- **Resource constraints** impede the expansion of infrastructure to facilitate progress, the acquisition of necessary equipment and the capacity building of personnel involved in the implementation of WAM activities. While national WAM road maps, strategies, and action plans can indicate concrete actions, the responsible national authorities often lack the required financial, logistical, and technical resources to implement the required activities.
- **Poor sensitization or inadequate knowledge on the importance of WAM among high-level political stakeholders** is a major barrier to governmental allocation of the required resources and to progress in implementing WAM activities in support of national governance and development priorities. A siloed approach to WAM in national bureaucracies further hampers progress in many areas, but most notably with regards to the review or adoption of effective national WAM legislation.
- **Unstable security and political situations** cause delays in critical and urgent WAM activities, or, in worst-case scenarios, the total collapse in national security and political institutions with oversight of or mandate in WAM. At a minimum, such instability manifests itself in frequent changes in national WAM focal points, hampering the planning and implementation of WAM enhancement options and activities, as well as efforts to secure international assistance and cooperation when required.

- **Coordination challenges at the regional and sub-regional levels** can be due to a lack of synergy between national WAM priorities and frameworks and regional or sub-regional WAM road maps and strategies. They may also be due to incoherent national approaches

to WAM in a region or subregion. Further, different national priorities and resource allocation can also hinder regional or subregional coordination and cooperation, even in cases where regional security challenges require a coordinated response to WAM.



### 3.2. WHICH FACTORS HAVE HELPED STATES TO MAKE PROGRESS?

Each state that has conducted a WAM baseline assessment has found its own national pathway to strengthen WAM. However, UNIDIR's research on national and regional approaches to WAM shows that it is possible to identify several key enabling factors that facilitated progress to implement priority actions elaborated in national WAM road maps. These include the following.

- An institutionalized, well-resourced, and strategically placed **robust national coordination mechanism** with an adequate mandate appears to be important for initiating, implementing, coordinating, and monitoring activities to improve WAM policy and practice. Additionally, national coordination entities that have strong partnerships and influence among high-level political actors and national security agencies can gain buy-in and enhance inter-agency coordination on national WAM priorities for the full life cycle of weapons and ammunition. The reporting role of national coordination entities in most states also facilitates the uptake of national WAM priorities by assistance-providing states and international partners.
- **Strong political will of national WAM stakeholders and high-level political actors** facilitates the prioritization of WAM among other national agendas. This enables decision-making and allocation of resources at the national level to strengthen WAM policies and practices. This is important to ensure that WAM is

embedded in the national security architecture and the broader development, peace, and security agendas.

- **International assistance and cooperation** have played an important role in many of the "progress stories" outlined above. In resource-constrained contexts where there are competing national priorities, international assistance – in the form of financial, technical, and logistical support to NATCOMs and national security agencies – facilitates capacity building for national WAM stakeholders and enables the exchange of good practices and lessons learned for improving WAM policies and practices.
- **Effective coordination and partnerships among WAM stakeholders** enable the identification, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of activities to improving national WAM policy and practice. Regular and transparent coordination prevents duplication in WAM activities and facilitates information sharing among actors on progress, existing gaps, priorities, and available resources. It also facilitates the leveraging of expertise and resources of different stakeholders across the different WAM functional areas to ensure a comprehensive approach to WAM.
- An **inclusive, consultative, and participatory approach to WAM** is a cornerstone of sustainable progress to strengthen WAM. Community-level engagement, gender considerations in WAM and civil society advocacy are key to ensuring meaningful, comprehensive, and sustainable progress in WAM at the national level.

# WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA INSIGHT: 2022 UPDATE

## LOOKING AHEAD

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

This publication presents a holistic approach to weapons and ammunition management with a special focus on progress made by 9 African states in improving their WAM frameworks and practices after undertaking a WAM baseline assessment with support from UNIDIR. This holistic approach to WAM contributes to achieving broader peace, security, and development goals including but not limited to conflict prevention, armed violence reduction, accountable security sector, protection of civilians, and advancing the Agenda 2030.

**UNIDIR encourages the Community of States, regional organisations and relevant international partners to consult its WAM Country Insight and Annual Update series as a useful reference to support the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation for future WAM projects.**



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