



Practical Disarmament Initiative: Stockpile Management & Diversion Prevention

Workshop Outcome Summary
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MAG, Suite 3A, South Central, 11 Peter Street, Manchester M2 5QR, UK
Contact: Chris Loughran, Director of Policy (chris.loughran@maginternational.org)

This document summarises key themes of a workshop undertaken as part of an initiative supported by the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). Every effort has been made to capture and fairly represent input; however, comments and views have not been attributed to participants. Comments and views expressed in the report are the sole responsibility of the participants and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of MAG or UNSCAR. If this report or extracts from it are used, MAG and support from UNSCAR should be credited, along with the publication date.



Introduction

MAG convened a two-day workshop in Dakar, Senegal in February 2015, focussing on stockpile management and diversion in the Sahel and West Africa. The meeting was part of the Practical Disarmament Initiative, a project led by MAG with funding from the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR).

It was attended by 16 participants from states in West Africa, ECOWAS, UNMAS, UNREC, research and civil society organisations and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing stockpile management assistance in the region.

The meeting had three aims:

- To present, review and consider practical implications of a desktop study by Small Arms Survey¹ on the scope and provisions of stockpile management and diversion within the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA), the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and four sub-regional instruments.
- To identify opportunities for enhancing practical effort to improve stockpile management and prevent diversion, including through greater regional and international cooperation and assistance.
- To enhance regional dialogue and cooperation on stockpile management and diversion prevention.

The meeting was divided into three sections: a presentation of the desktop study by Small Arms Survey, followed by discussion; presentations by participants; and group discussions to identify and agree key themes and practical steps for improving stockpile management practice and assistance.

This report summarises the key elements of the desktop study and their discussion at the workshop. It then draws out four main themes, focussing on approaches and actions that could enhance stockpile management. On the basis of these, it then provides conclusions and makes recommendations for improved policy and practice in stockpile management and diversion prevention.

The workshop focussed on stockpile management practice in general, as well as in the context and analysis of various international and sub-regional instruments. Small arms, light weapons, parts and components, small arms ammunition and other ammunition were all therefore discussed.

This initiative aimed to identify synergies between various international and sub-regional instruments, as well as opportunities to enhance their practical implementation. It considers instruments in their existing form and does not make recommendations for amendments to their scope.



Summary, presentation and discussion of the desktop study

As part of the Practical Disarmament Initiative, a briefing note (desktop study) was developed by Small Arms Survey.

English and French versions were circulated to participants prior to its presentation in Dakar and a senior researcher from Small Arms Survey summarised its key findings at the workshop, as a basis for discussion. The brief and presentation by Small Arms Survey were received warmly and welcomed by all participants.

The study summarises definitions and understanding of stockpile management and diversion and considers relevant provisions within the following international and sub-regional instruments:

- The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA).
- The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI).
- The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
- The ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials (ECOWAS Convention).
- 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 (Nairobi Protocol).

- The Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, Parts and Components that Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair or Assembly (Kinshasa Convention).
- The Khartoum Declaration on the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons across the Neighbouring Countries of Western Sudan (Khartoum Declaration, not yet entered into force).

The study outlines various definitions or descriptions for stockpile management, based on standards, norms and international instruments. In general terms, all focus is on procedures and activities that ensure the safe, secure and accountable storage, handling and transportation of weapons and ammunition.

The principal elements of stockpile management within the instruments and good practice guidelines include: appropriate locations for stockpiles; physical security measures; control of access to stocks, inventory management and accounting control; staff training; secure transportation of small arms and light weapons; procedures and sanctions in the event of theft or loss, and the determination and disposal of surplus.

One of the central aims of all the instruments under consideration is the prevention of diversion, considered as entry to the illicit market, unauthorised use or by unauthorised users, or re-export without the consent of the original exporting state.

The UNPoA and all four sub-regional instruments outline numerous measures aimed at preventing diversion, though they do not specifically label them in this way. These include surplus identification and stockpile management, destruction of surplus weapons and provision of assistance.

There was strong agreement among participants that stockpile management is a key diversion prevention measure, given that it is designed to prevent weapons and ammunition from being diverted from unsecured and poorly managed stockpiles and falling into the hands of unauthorised users or end users.

Various examples were given of the regional destabilising effect of unsecured weapons and munitions from former Libyan stockpiles. Diverted arms seized by armed groups in one country had been used by the groups to take control of a number of towns, including the seizure of state-held arms within them.

In this respect, use of diverted weapons had caused further diversion and contributed to instability and insecurity. There was general agreement that diversion prevention and stockpile management are integrally linked.

The study notes how all four of the sub-regional instruments require states parties to manage stockpiles of ammunition, as well as small arms and light weapons. They do not, however, differentiate between the management of small arms and light weapons and the management of ammunition. Some of the specific procedures and guidelines applicable to the management of ammunition are not therefore reflected.

While participants agreed that stockpile management was a vital component in preventing diversion of both weapons and ammunition, all were of the view that the management of ammunition stockpiles requires specific distinct procedures, technical expertise

and competence.

In general, the study identifies a significant overlap and few inconsistencies or contradictions in the nature of stockpile management measures required or recommended by the UNPoA, ECOWAS Convention and Kinshasa Convention.

The Nairobi Protocol and Khartoum Declaration, however, contain narrower stockpile management provisions. Stockpile management is included within the ATT as one of the areas under which a state party may seek international assistance; however, the stockpile management measures that should be adopted are not detailed or prescribed.

Despite there being significant detail within instruments and also overlap between the UNPoA and various sub-regional instruments, requirements are not to a detail that prescribes how measures should be implemented at the national level. The need for practical standards and guidelines to bridge the 'gap' between national commitments and stockpile management practice was a key theme for discussion and is covered further in the following section of this report.

The study highlighted one instance of significant inconsistency between the UNPoA and various sub-regional instruments. This concerns 'surplus' and what states are encouraged or required to do with identified surplus under the various instruments to which they are party. The UNPoA expresses a preference for destruction as opposed to other means (for example, re-transfer).

The Nairobi Protocol and ECOWAS Convention do not express a preference, but include destruction as an option. The Nairobi Protocol leaves the option of 'responsible disposal' by means other than destruction, but nevertheless makes specific reference to preventing arms from entering the illicit market or conflict.

The Kinshasa Declaration contains the strongest provision, requiring states to 'systematically destroy' surplus stocks and giving no further option for disposal. Participants attached significance to this issue and many expressed the strong views that disposal of surplus

weapons should involve their destruction and not leave open the option of re-transfer. Many participants agreed that this should be considered good practice.

The issue of disposal gave rise to a rich discussion over what should be considered 'surplus'. Several participants noted that, in military terms, surplus was considered arms deemed in excess of strategic military need.

While there was agreement that responsibility for determining surplus was at a state's discretion, most participants put forward the view that surplus should also cover weapons and ammunition that are obsolete and/or which cannot be stored safely and securely. There was agreement that such surplus, once identified, should therefore be safely and accountably destroyed. Various participants recognised that surplus is often considered a financial asset and is sold, exported or stolen instead of being destroyed automatically, but also noted that could lead to further diversion.

Finally, the study considered diversion within the various instruments in the context of export or transfer. Although it does not explicitly label stockpile management as a diversion prevention measure, the UNPoA makes specific provision to take into account, as part of export authorisation, the risk of diversion to the illicit market. There is no explicit obligation within the Nairobi Protocol to assess the risk of diversion prior to authorising transfer. The ECOWAS Convention and Kinshasa Declaration do not, however, permit export or transfer if there is a risk of diversion.

In the case of international transfers under the ATT, there are links between stockpile management and diversion but they are not explicitly stated. Article 11 of the ATT requires states to take measures to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons and obliges them to assess the risk of arms being diverted when deciding whether or not to authorise an export. The exporting state must also take steps to consider whether there are measures that could be taken to reduce any risk of diversion. It should be noted that stockpile management is included as a potential area for international cooperation and assistance.

Mitigation measures in the ATT could include improvements in stockpile management, if that is from where a risk of diversion arises. Similarly, states are obliged to take 'appropriate measures' to address if they detect that diversion has occurred. Again, this could involve improvements to stockpile management if poor stockpile management was the cause of diversion, although the ATT does not prescribe any details of practical measures that this could take.

There are therefore close synergies between stockpile management in the context of preventing diversion within the ATT and diversion prevention measures contained within the UNPoA and sub-regional instruments considered as part of this initiative.



Key meeting themes and discussion points

1. The need to match international instruments, frameworks and guidelines to stockpile management practice, particularly contexts affected by conflict and fragility.

Participants agreed that international instruments and frameworks offered a strong basis for addressing diversion and improving stockpile management practice. It was noted that significant efforts had been made to harmonise legislation and approaches at the sub-regional level, particularly within the ECOWAS region, but that further work remains.

Similarly, participants felt that the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and also elements of the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) present a strong international guiding framework to inform the voluntary development of standards at the national level. A recurring theme nevertheless centred on the need to ensure that the application of guidelines at the national level takes into account context, structures and challenges.

In addition to inadequate funding and human capacity, ongoing fragility and conflict, low levels of infrastructure and material, and lack of control over some borders were all identified as challenges. Significant importance was attached to ensuring that these factors are taken into consideration when applying international guidelines at the national level.

Plans, guidelines, standards and training should therefore take into account specific context and dynamics. It was noted by various participants that IATG's design includes an incremental approach for this reason.

The nature of fragile and post-conflict settings was considered in relation to marking and record keeping. Significant effort had been placed on provision of marking machines and training in their use. It was recognised that marking was relevant to tracing, but also noted that effective marking requires stockpile management and inventory management systems to already be in place. It was felt that the relationship between marking, record keeping, and tracing was clear and understood at the international instrument level, but that this does not reflect the reality of many states affected by conflict and fragility.

There is scope for greater understanding of marking and record keeping as integral parts of stockpile management and diversion prevention. The success of marking programmes will depend on the extent to which they are integrated into broader small arms assistance and the level of political support to a coordinated national approach.

2. Identifying and matching stockpile management needs with resources at the national, regional and international levels.

There was broad agreement that the funding,

cooperation and assistance for stockpile management of weapons and munitions has increased in recent years. Participants welcomed the assistance provided on a regional level by UNMAS, UNREC and ECOWAS, and also by MAG and other international NGOs. The support provided by UNMAS as part of peacekeeping missions was also noted. In one country, a national authority had established an effective division of labour between UNMAS working as part of a peacekeeping mission in areas of ongoing fragility, and support in stable areas by other organisations.

There was nevertheless strong agreement that the need for stockpile management assistance far outstrips current levels of cooperation and assistance, and that lack of funding is still one of the largest obstacles to improving stockpile management and diversion prevention. The scale of surplus arms, low levels of security and stockpile management practice and the high risk of diversion due to ongoing instability and conflict were all cited as factors creating a need for greater cooperation and assistance at the sub-regional, regional and international levels.

The presence of large ammunition depots in urban areas was specifically highlighted as a significant requirement that was not being adequately addressed. Concern centred on the risk of unplanned explosions and the urgent need to move depots out of urban areas as a generic preventative measure. Civilian encroachment into areas near military ammunition storage facilities was also raised as an issue that should be addressed at the national level to reduce risk to civilians. In some cases, this is due to land title issues and a lack of control by the military over land ownership in areas around depots.

There was strong acknowledgment of the role that assessment missions play in effectively identifying needs and supporting proactive planning. This had moved assistance forward from an approach based on isolated projects, but further improvements in coordinated planning are necessary. Significant importance was attached to the inclusion of stockpile management within national action plans. While the need for financial and expert technical assistance was raised consistently, there was

strong agreement that it should support and reinforce national ownership and oversight.

Lack of profile around stockpile management needs was identified as an obstacle to matching needs with resources. There was a requirement for political awareness-raising around the importance of stockpile management as a diversion prevention measure at the national, sub-regional and international levels. Several participants noted that greater national political commitment could translate into budgetary allocation for stockpile management and demonstrate national ownership, but that international cooperation and assistance covering finance and expertise was still essential in the medium term.

There was also a significant opportunity to raise awareness of stockpile management at international fora, including in the UN Security Council and General Assembly. It was noted that there was significant potential for greater national, sub-regional and regional profile of the issues and needs, and that ECOWAS could play a valuable awareness-raising role.

3. National ownership as a fundamental principle and opportunities to enhance cooperation and accountability at the national, sub-regional and international levels.

The importance of national ownership and the state responsibility to address stockpile management and diversion prevention was a central discussion theme. Weak coordination or dialogue between different state stakeholders involved in stockpile management could present an obstacle to effective coordination and planning. The limited size and resources available to departments or coordination bodies overseeing stockpile management was also highlighted as a challenge.

Various participants emphasised the need for greater coherence at the national level and stressed the importance of having one national body with oversight of stockpile management. It was suggested that in some cases, national commissions could undertake this role, but national mandates and dynamics would need to be taken into careful consideration. The issue of trust was seen as vital for success, as was the

full participation of all relevant stakeholders. There was a strong feeling that legitimacy, empowerment and stakeholder buy-in at the national level are vital attributes for any coordination body. In many cases, this has been achieved by having national coordination bodies as part of the office of the President or Prime Minister.

Additional suggestions for improvement in national ownership and coordination focussed on the potential for greater coherence between stockpile management support and other areas of administrative reform. This could include greater coherence between stockpile management and other small arms and light weapons assistance, as well as interlinkage with security sector reform frameworks and plans.

Participants attached significant importance to achieving greater sub-regional coordination. The ECOWAS Convention contains provisions for a roadmap for stockpile management at the sub-regional level. It has been adopted, but has not yet been widely implemented by states. It was suggested that the roadmap had the potential to be used as a regional coordination and reference tool and possibly also for resource mobilisation. While there is the potential for increased cooperation, challenges exist when dealing with porous borders and regional instability. National reporting under international instruments was raised in the context of profile and accountability of stockpile management efforts. Needs as well as progress are often under-represented compared to other areas of effort, particularly relating to small arms and light weapons.

Various participants believed that there is scope for greater and more formal commitments between states at the sub-regional and international levels to address stockpile management. These had the potential to enhance partnership, accountability and transparency. Value was also attached to the role and involvement of civil society organisations in small arms and light weapons issues.

4. Measures to ensure sustainability and effectiveness in stockpile management practice and assistance.

Stockpile management assistance is increasingly

proactive and based on needs assessments and national planning. Sustainability of improvements in stockpile management assistance was seen as vital, and linked closely to issues of national systems and standards, ownership and coordination.

Establishing greater links between stockpile management and other forms of small arms assistance, particularly legislative reform and border control, was identified as an area that could contribute to sustainability. Similarly, there could be greater integration with elements of security sector reform.

Training, in addition to infrastructure support, was considered central to sustainability of stockpile management activities and long-term diversion prevention. This should include training of senior managers as well as small arms and ammunition storekeepers. A key risk to sustainability was loss of information but also knowledge and skills through the rotation of staff. Sustainable national capacity in stockpile management would depend on the ability to retain and develop skills and talent. Various participants noted the importance of motivating staff, developing loyalty and creating opportunities and incentives for stockpile management to be a viable career.

Further emphasis was put on the need to develop and embed standards, guidelines and training material at the national level, and for this to be appropriate to national context, systems and dynamics. Several participants stressed the value of national training centres as well as the option for cooperation on training and the development of generic materials at the sub-regional level. To be effective, materials should be in French as well as English. The forthcoming translation of the IATG into French, with UNREC oversight, was identified as an essential and positive development.

Several participants from states also emphasised the importance of quality assurance being an important and sustainable national function. This would depend on training and retention of managers as well as their legitimacy and effective coordination between different stakeholders involved in stockpile management at the national level.



Conclusions and recommendations

The meeting resulted in the following conclusions and recommendations for enhancing stockpile management and diversion prevention in the context of the UNPoA, ATT and the four sub-regional instruments detailed above.

- The diversion of weapons and munitions to the illicit market, particularly from state stocks, can affect security and stability at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. Sustainable stockpile management should be seen as a key measure to reduce the risk of diversion weapons and munitions from their intended end-use or user, or to the illicit market.
- The ATT makes specific reference to diversion prevention. While there is no explicit link between diversion prevention and stockpile management, providing international assistance in stockpile management is a concrete step to reduce the risk of diversion while also acting as a confidence building measure.
- The ATT does not specify what diversion prevention measures should be taken or what constitutes good practice in stockpile management. The UNPoA and other sub-regional instruments nevertheless contain areas and actions that can contribute to diversion prevention. These include stockpile management, marking and record-keeping and the identification and destruction of surplus. Taken as a whole, the ATT, UNPoA and sub-regional instruments constitute a strong body of complementary actions and activities.
- There is a significant body of good practice and global guiding frameworks, particularly the IATG. These can be used to inform the development of national standards and approaches to bridge the gap between international commitments and practical implementation. Challenges frequently arise from capacity, infrastructure and ongoing conflict or fragility. The development of national plans, standards and frameworks should take into account context, challenges and dynamics. The design of IATG is based on the need to meet national context and achieve incremental improvement.
- The need for international cooperation and assistance in stockpile management outstrips capacity to respond, particularly in the provision of technical expertise. As well as greater resource, there is a need for increased political profile of stockpile management as a diversion prevention measure at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels. ECOWAS could play an important role in further raising awareness of need and progress.
- Assistance in stockpile management has been provided by states, the United Nations and expert international organisations. Planning based on needs assessments has improved assistance. There is still scope to increase coordination and planning between organisations providing assistance, with UNREC

and ECOWAS playing key roles at the regional and sub-regional levels.

- The design and implementation of stockpile management and diversion prevention initiatives for ammunition should take into account the technical differences between the management of small arms and munitions.
- Consideration of what constitutes 'surplus' weapons and munitions should include items that are unserviceable and obsolete. Destruction should be the preferred method of disposal in order to prevent future diversion and/or unplanned explosions.
- National ownership is essential for effective and sustainable stockpile management, which in turn depends on political and senior buy-in. To have greatest impact, stockpile management should be included in national action plans, ensuring the participation of all relevant ministries and departments in their development and implementation. Stockpile management should be linked as far as possible to wider small arms programmes. There could also be benefit from exploring potential links to relevant elements of security sector reform.
- Significant importance should be attached to enhancing sustainability of stockpile management assistance. Measures to increase sustainability and effectiveness could include closer coordination with wider small arms and security sector reform assistance as well as greater political support and investment at the national level. Sustainability of training programmes will depend on the retention of trained personnel, including managers.
- There is greater scope for cooperation at the regional level, potentially including the development of regional operational approaches and training packages. ECOWAS and UNREC could play an important role in realising this in the Sahel and West Africa.
- Greater profile should be given at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels to the importance of addressing surplus ammunition and weapons and the role of stockpile management. This should include articulation of needs, awareness-raising

around the role that stockpile management can play as a diversion prevention measure, and demonstration that improving stockpile management is possible and achievable.

Notes:

¹ The Small Arms Survey is a global centre of excellence whose mandate is to generate evidence based, impartial, and policy-relevant knowledge on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. It is the principal international source of expertise, information, and analysis, and acts as a resource for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and civil society. It is located in Geneva, Switzerland, at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

www.smallarmssurvey.org

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