

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEXAS/ OSGOOD CENTER
LONE STAR / TEXAS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2024

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIRST COMMITTEE
DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY COMMITTEE (DISEC)**

**Background Guide
November 2024**

What is the role of the General Assembly, First Committee?

The First Committee of the General Assembly addresses all matters related **to disarmament and international security**. The General Assembly has existed since the creation of the United Nations. It is one of the six main organs of the UN system established by the Charter of the United Nations in 1945.

Addressing nuclear disarmament since 1970 when the 1968 *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* was ratified, the First Committee has played a very important role in the maintenance of international peace and security as a forum for international debates, as a space for the generation of ideas, and as a nucleus of new concepts and practices. Given its universal membership, the General Assembly is certainly a unique forum for discussion within the UN.

You can learn more about the role of the General Assembly in the global disarmament agenda: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/general-assembly/> and you can read about the disarmament and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/>

Governance, Structure, and Membership

As outlined in the Charter, **the General Assembly is comprised of all 193 UN Member States**. However, Observer status can also be granted to intergovernmental organizations such as the African Union and states without full UN membership: currently the Holy See and the State of Palestine are the only two non-Member States with permanent Observer status. In the General Assembly, each Member State has one equal vote. **CHECK:** <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/non-member-states>



Source: <https://www.un.org/pga/72/2017/10/02/first-committee/>

Since its 44th session in 1989, the General Assembly is considered in session the entire year, but the most important time is the General Debate, which takes place from mid-September to the end of December and is called the “main part of the General Assembly.” For the remainder of the year, called the “resumed part of the General Assembly”, working group meetings take place and thematic debates are held. Decisions on important matters such as the maintenance of international peace and security, the admission, suspension, and expulsion of members, and all budgetary questions require a two-thirds majority. **For all other matters, votes in the General Assembly require a simple majority and the majority of resolutions are adopted without a vote, illustrating the consensus-based nature of the General Assembly.**

The First Committee receives substantive and organizational support from three important entities: the General Committee, the **United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)**, and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. The General Committee is comprised of the President of the General Assembly and the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, as well as the Chairpersons of all the six General Assembly Main Committees; all positions are elected every session on a non-renewable basis. The General Committee’s main duty, besides making recommendations on organizational issues, is to determine the agenda of the General Assembly Plenary and its six Main Committees. After receiving a preliminary list of agenda items from the UN Secretariat, the General Committee allocates the different items to each Main Committee. The First Committee then votes upon its own agenda based on the allocated agenda items. Within the UN Secretariat, UNODA provides “objective, impartial and up-to-date” information and promotes the implementation of practical measures on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, disarmament in the field of conventional weapons, and the general strengthening of mechanisms and frameworks bolstering disarmament. It further encourages norm setting at the General Assembly, **Conference on Disarmament (CD)**, and **United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC)**. Additionally, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management also provides valuable technical secretariat support and acts as the intersection between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.



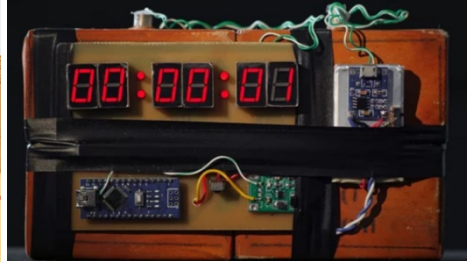
Armed personnel getting trained to find explosive devices before they can cause casualties.
Photo: UNMAS Mali/Marc Kouadio/Imre Gelencser

The First Committee works in close cooperation with the UNDC and the CD. The CD has a crucial role in addressing issues of disarmament and has been central to negotiations of international agreements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Unlike the CD, the UNDC is a subsidiary organ of the First Committee and is composed of all 193 Member States. Primarily suggesting recommendations to the General Assembly, it has been important in the formulation of principles and guidelines that have subsequently been endorsed by the committee in its own reports. Both bodies report either annually or more frequently to the First Committee. Additionally, as a crucial partner with the UN system, civil society organizations have an important relationship with the General Assembly and are often invited to speak at the General Assembly.

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate of the General Assembly is set in Chapter IV of the Charter of the United Nations; Article 11 requires the General Assembly to address questions of international peace and security, particularly disarmament. This mandate has evolved over time and the growing range of issues facing the international community ultimately gave the First Committee **its focus on disarmament and international security**. The question of disarmament is organized into seven clusters: nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), disarmament aspects in outer space, conventional weapons, regional disarmament and security, the disarmament machinery, and other disarmament measures and security. The mandate of the General Assembly allows it to be a conduit for ideas that can become the **driver of new policies** and **shared norms** through discussion and debate. This can be regarded as one of the main differences between the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Security Council is more concerned with concrete threats to security including ongoing conflicts, **whereas the General Assembly aims to create peace by forming habits and means of cooperation. It is important to note, however, that the General Assembly considers matters of international security only when the issue is not under the consideration of the Security Council.**

The General Assembly and its six Main Committees are the center of the UN System and represent its main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organs; their outcomes thus define new norms that can become treaties or conventions among UN Member States. The General Assembly is tasked with initiating studies and making recommendations to promote international cooperation in the political field; encouraging the development of international law; promoting the implementation of cultural, social, and human rights; and promoting fundamental freedoms free from discrimination. The body “receives and considers reports” issued by “the other principal organs established under the Charter as well as reports issued by its own subsidiary bodies.” The General Assembly Plenary receives recommendations from the six Main Committees. Once the recommendations are sent to the Plenary Committee, the Plenary then votes on whether to adopt the resolutions as presented. **Although decisions reached by the General Assembly are non-binding, they are often adopted as customary international law and serve as key international policy norms. Additionally, the General Assembly can request the Secretary-General or other UN organs to issue a report to one of the Main Committees on a specified question such as the implementation of recommendations made by the General Assembly.** The First Committee can introduce resolutions that initiate new negotiations on arms control and disarmament. These, in turn, can lead to the creation and funding of agencies or meetings as well as ad hoc committees or working groups that consider a particular question with the purpose of reporting to the General Assembly. The General Assembly Plenary must also adopt resolutions adopted in the First Committee before they are put into effect. Though these resolutions are non-binding, consensus reached in the First Committee often leads to more concrete initiatives at the UN.



What is an Improvised Explosive Device (IED)?

The United Nations UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) defines an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) as **“a device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy, incapacitate, harass, or distract. It may incorporate military stores but is normally devised from nonmilitary components.”** You will probably need additional **vocabulary** to create plans and to propose solutions to manage IEDs effectively. **CHECK:** https://www.unmas.org/sites/default/files/unmas_ied_lexicon_0.pdf

Those who manufacture IEDs continuously alter the characteristics, the functioning, or the delivery method of the device. IEDs generally consist of a switch, power source, initiator, container, and explosives. All IEDs can be classified as either timed, command, and victim operated. **There are, by definition, no manufacturing standards for IED construction although trends may appear and there may be attempts to achieve commonality between IED components.** The safe conduct of IED disposal, therefore, relies upon appropriately trained and qualified Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) operators having a thorough knowledge in this area and of the increasing complexity of these devices. **IEDs are among the world’s oldest types of weapons.**

The use of IEDs as a weapon of choice by non-state armed groups is a clear trend over the last decades. IED attacks do not target only armed forces, security forces or parties engaged in conflict but also civilians, government and local officials, and members of humanitarian organizations. IED attacks take a toll both in terms of human casualties and psychological impact as well as cause materiel damage to vehicles, infrastructure, resources, and supplies. IEDs are often indiscriminate killers hampering reconstruction efforts, stabilization tasks and the delivery of the humanitarian aid in conflict and post conflict environments. The clearance of IEDs, along with explosive remnants of war (ERW), which can be used as explosive precursor materiel to manufacture IEDs, are essential prerequisite for the safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance and the return of life to normal in a post conflict environment. **CHECK:** <https://aoav.org.uk/category/ied-key-reports/ieds-and-suicide-bombings/material-harm/>



Which country is the most IED-contaminated country?



South Korea



Somalia



Afghanistan



India

TAKE A QUIZ: <https://take.quiz-maker.com/QHAV22A>

CHECK pages 33-35 to get some additional examples:
https://unmas.org/sites/default/files/handbook_english.pdf

CHECK the views of diverse countries regarding the threat of IED's:
<https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/ieds/>

Views of Member States pursuant to General Assembly resolution “Countering the Threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices”

► 2024

► 2020

► 2018

► 2016

What have been the recent developments in countering IEDs?



In its resolution 77/64, entitled **Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices**, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-ninth session on the implementation of that resolution, acknowledging and considering existing efforts, both inside and outside the United Nations, and seeking the views of Member States. A report was submitted because of that request. The report contained an overview of significant trends and developments since the previous report (A/75/175) which was issued in 2020. It addresses efforts of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations, including the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the World Customs Organization (WCO), related to countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. **CHECK:** <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3997945?ln=es>

Significant trends and developments in humanitarian impact of improvised explosive devices

Improvised explosive devices are a direct threat to civilians, humanitarian actors and security forces around the world. Since the previous report, such devices continued to kill and maim civilians; inhibit safe movement, access to services and delivery of humanitarian assistance;

endanger United Nations mission personnel, threatening effective mandate delivery; hinder economic activity; and hamper the rehabilitation of public infrastructure.



In July 2023, the Secretary-General issued a policy brief on [A New Agenda for Peace](#) following extensive consultations with States, international and regional organizations, and civil society. In the New Agenda for Peace, he called upon States to take action to reduce the human cost of weapons, including through measures to stop the use by terrorist and other non-State armed groups of improvised explosive devices. The Secretary-General also called upon States to implement the [Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas](#), adopted in 2022, and to establish mechanisms to mitigate and investigate harm to civilians and ensure accountability of perpetrators. The Political Declaration was aimed at strengthening compliance with and improving the implementation of international humanitarian law. It contains several commitments by States and practical measures, including the commitment to implement, review, develop or improve national policy and practice with regard to the protection of civilians during armed conflict involving the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; the commitment to restrict or refrain from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and measures to ensure that armed forces, in their policies and practices, take into account the direct and indirect effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The use of improvised explosive devices in urban settings and against civilian infrastructure has caused significant suffering among civilians globally. Data provided by United Nations programs from 25 countries and territories identified 3,237 casualties (1,304 killed and 1,933 injured) from improvised explosive devices in 2023 alone. In addition, 684 casualties (134 killed and 550 injured) were caused by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature. **In 2023, civilians remained the most affected, constituting 68 per cent of all casualties from improvised explosive devices.** Overall, in 2023, such devices accounted for 48 per cent of all casualties caused by explosive ordnance in 25 countries, which reflects an increase from 40 per cent in 2022. The highest number of casualties in regions with active United Nations mine action operations was reported in Somalia, followed by Mali and Burkina Faso.



In Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and elsewhere, civilians were indiscriminately killed and injured by improvised explosive devices placed on major roads. In the Central Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions, non-State armed groups reportedly employed improvised explosive devices as a tactic against national security forces, using the devices to cut off access and expand territorial control while also hampering humanitarian access and responses. In Burkina Faso, for example, road access to major urban centers has sharply diminished in recent years due to improvised explosive devices, requiring some humanitarian actors to establish air bridges (A/78/259).

The use of improvised explosive devices by non-State armed groups and organized criminal entities is a growing threat to refugees, internally displaced persons, and host populations, in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions, where the presence of such devices contributes to reduced humanitarian access.

Attacks using improvised explosive devices have significant gendered impacts, including distinct health effects and material harm for women and girls. Although men account for most direct casualties of attacks using the devices, there are often unique vulnerabilities facing women and girls. For example, attacks using improvised explosive devices in markets can disproportionately affect women in contexts where they have the primary responsibility for buying food and

household goods. They are also affected by the long-term consequences of improvised explosive device attacks, including physical and psychological trauma, displacement, and disruption of social and economic networks. In addition, gender norms can limit their access to health services, assistance, and recovery resources, exacerbating the challenges they face in the aftermath of an attack involving an improvised explosive device.

The use of improvised explosive devices has exacerbated the scale of grave violations committed against children. The Secretary-General has reported a steady increase in the killing and maiming of children and in attacks on schools and hospitals, in part as a result of the increased use of explosive weapons. The use of explosive ordnance, including improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and landmines, represented some 26 per cent of the methods used in the killing and maiming of children (A/77/895-S/2023/363). **Between 2020 and 2023, as verified by the United Nations, at least 2,811 children (67 per cent boys and 33 per cent girls among cases where the gender of the child was known) 7 lost their lives or were seriously injured as a result of the use of improvised explosive devices.** Attacks using such devices accounted for approximately 8 per cent of all verified incidents of killing and maiming of children and for approximately 14 per cent of children killed or maimed by explosive weapons between 2020 and 2023.

Men, women, and children engage in the trafficking of components and in the manufacture and use of improvised explosive devices for various reasons, including a desire to support an ideology, financial reasons, coercion, or a desire to protect themselves or their families. Research indicates that the decision to affiliate with non-State armed groups is often made along a continuum of coercion, especially in the case of women and children, who may experience social and family pressures. The recruitment and use of children by non-State armed groups to act as carriers of person-borne improvised explosive devices or to manufacture, transport or plant devices, remained of serious concern, in particular in Afghanistan until August 2021 and in the Lake Chad basin region. In Afghanistan, children, especially boys, were used by the Taliban to carry out attacks involving person-borne improvised explosive devices and to manufacture and transport such devices. In 2021, the United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 58 boys in Afghanistan, some as young as 12, for combat purposes, including participation in attack squads that used person-borne improvised explosive devices, as well as for the manufacturing and transporting of improvised explosive devices. In the Lake Chad basin region, children were recruited by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups to carry improvised explosive devices. In August 2020, a 15-year-old boy and a 16-year-old girl were killed by the improvised explosive devices they were carrying, and another three children were killed and eight injured as a result of the detonation.

Developments and trends in manufacture, design, and deployment

The nature of the threat posed by improvised explosive devices has continued to evolve since the previous report, with widening implications. Non-State armed actors increasingly use such devices, which are inexpensive to fabricate and simple to produce using explosive material from unsecured ammunition or easily available precursors that have legitimate dual uses, such as chemicals commonly used for agricultural purposes or material used in commercial mining. The design, size and methods of emplacement vary, and tactics continuously evolve to circumvent countermeasures to locate and defuse these devices (A/78/259).

The production and use of improvised anti-personnel mines continued to be widespread, causing the highest number of casualties of any type of mine or explosive remnant of war for the seventh consecutive year in 2022.

In the Middle East, the threat posed by improvised explosive devices remained serious, with various groups operating in the region employing increasingly similar types of devices and tactics, techniques, and procedures. Recent field research in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic by a non-governmental organization indicates that Da'esh produces improvised explosive devices using legacy stockpiles of detonating cord or detonators that were accumulated during the peak of its territorial control in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as by exploiting new, local sources of materiel.

Increasing use of improvised explosive devices in parts of Africa has been reported by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities (S/2024/92). In Somalia, the first quarter of 2023 saw the highest number of improvised explosive device incidents compared with any other quarter since 2017 due to the intensified use of such devices by Al-Shabaab (S/2023/443). Al-Shabaab continued to use person-borne and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices as its main weapons. Devices were produced with home-made explosives using nitric acid, sulfuric acid, and charcoal, as well as military-grade high explosive harvested from unexploded ordnance or diverted larger calibre ammunition (S/2023/724).

There is evidence of increasing sophistication in the manufacturing of improvised explosive devices, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2024/92). In Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, the threat posed by such devices has reportedly shifted from victim-operated devices to predominantly radio-controlled ones. In field research, a variety of radio-controlled improvised explosive devices has been documented across the region; notably, the same type of remote control units are being used in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, which may suggest that technical information is being shared transnationally between groups in the region.

In border areas between the coastal States of West Africa and the countries of the Central Sahel, the use of improvised explosive devices is one of the most recurrent modus operandi in attacks committed by terrorist groups. Overall, the number of reported attacks involving improvised explosives in the region has tripled over the past five years. Terrorist groups and improvised explosive device networks operating in the region took advantage of porous borders and the dense forests between Sahelian and coastal countries to facilitate cross-border movements, find shelter and prepare terrorist attacks targeting defense and security forces, border posts and civilians.

The widespread use of commercial explosives within various civilian sectors is of particular concern. Insecure or poorly managed stocks of commercial explosives pose a significant risk to regional security, and industry engagement is required to secure such stockpiles throughout their life cycle. In West Africa, significant stocks of commercial explosives from local mining industries, either during transfer or transport or from storage after delivery, have been identified. While the use of such materials in improvised explosive devices remained relatively limited, there is a notable potential for these explosive stocks to be targeted for terrorist or criminal exploitation. Although these materials, once diverted, are primarily used for illegal mining, there is evidence of their use by terrorist groups.

Tactics, techniques, and procedures for the deployment of improvised explosive devices are evolving alongside technological advancements. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the proliferation and use of inexpensive, primarily small uncrewed aerial vehicles by non-State armed groups to deliver improvised explosive devices. This method increases the ability of attackers to deploy such weapons to specific, vulnerable, and inaccessible locations, at speed and with accuracy, and expands their potential reach, allowing them to bypass traditional security measures. For instance, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team reported that Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula had undertaken multiple operations using weaponized uncrewed aerial vehicles (S/2023/549). While there is limited evidence to date to suggest that non-State armed groups operating in Africa have successfully modified these systems to include improvised explosives for use in offensive strike operations, there are increasing indications that some groups are developing such capabilities. In response to these developments, in December 2023, the CounterTerrorism Committee adopted the non-binding guiding principles on threats posed by the use of unmanned aircraft systems for terrorist purposes, known as the Abu Dhabi Guiding Principles (S/2023/1035).

The Internet, in particular encrypted messaging applications and dark web platforms, continued to be used to facilitate the sharing of knowledge for the manufacturing of improvised explosive devices and the coordination of attacks across borders. This global network of information exchange has enabled non-State armed groups to construct more sophisticated improvised explosive devices and to execute high-impact attacks without extensive resources. Both the number of groups that have the capacity to use improvised explosive devices and the sophistication of those devices are expected to increase in the coming years as a result of this international knowledge transfer.

Developments in relevant international forums

Improvised explosive devices that explode due to presence, proximity or contact of a person are, by definition, antipersonnel mines and are prohibited by the **Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**. The States parties to the Convention remained seized on the matter of victim-activated improvised explosive devices. In 2023, the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention welcomed the paper entitled “Anti-personnel mine of an improvised nature and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention” (APLC/MSP.21/2023/5), submitted by the President of the Meeting, and took note of the recommendations contained therein, including those on the need to raise awareness of the obligations of States parties to address the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature within the framework of the Convention. According to the latest information from the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, at least 24 States parties are believed or known to have contamination arising from improvised mines.



The humanitarian impact of improvised explosive devices continued to be addressed under the framework of the [Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons \(CCW\)](#). In 2021, at the twenty-third Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II to the Convention, the High Contracting Parties adopted the [Declaration on Improvised Explosive Devices](#) (see CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/6, annex V). In that Declaration, the High Contracting Parties expressed their profound concern at the indiscriminate use and effects of improvised explosive devices and at the increasing global impact of attacks involving improvised explosive devices worldwide, in particular through the perpetration of terrorist acts. They also recognized that addressing the threat posed by improvised explosive devices required action in relevant forums, at appropriate levels and by multiple stakeholders, including through Amended Protocol II, and that such action should take into account the humanitarian, political and socioeconomic and security impacts of improvised explosive devices.

What are the key obligations?

By ratifying the CCW, States commit to the:

Prohibition of the use of any weapon of which the primary effect is to injure by **fragments** that are not detectable in the human body by X-rays;



Prohibition and regulation of the use and transfer of non-detectable anti-personnel **mines**, **booby-traps**, and other devices;

Prohibition of, in all circumstances, making civilians the object of attack by **incendiary weapons**;



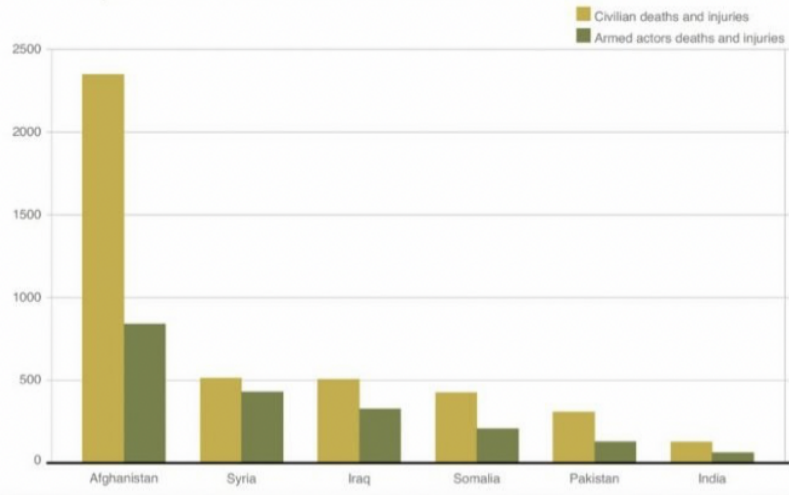
Prohibition of the use of **laser weapons** specifically designed to cause **permanent blindness** and the transfer of such weapons to any State or non-State entity;

Requirement of Parties to a conflict to take measures to reduce dangers posed by **explosive remnants of war**.



CHECK: <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CCW-brochure-print.pdf>

Top seven countries for civilian casualties of IEDs in 2021



The matter of improvised explosive devices has been addressed since 2009 under the framework of the **Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices** as Amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996). Since 2020, the meetings of the Group of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II have continued to facilitate the sharing of information on national situations and of general observations by the High Contracting Parties. The meetings also enable the High Contracting Parties to remain apprised of relevant developments in other forums addressing the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, with a view to ensuring complementarity of efforts.

The Security Council has considered the issue of improvised explosive devices on several occasions in recent years. During an open debate on mine action in April 2021, the Council adopted a statement by the President on strengthening mine action to address the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (S/PRST/2021/8). In May 2021, at a meeting on the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers, the Council adopted a statement by the President underscoring the importance of ensuring that all peacekeepers in the field are equipped, informed, and trained to mitigate the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (S/PRST/2021/11). The Council has also taken important steps to address terrorist use of improvised explosive devices through resolution 2370 (2017) and relevant subsequent resolutions, calling upon Member States to eliminate the supply of weapons, including improvised explosive device components, to those involved in terrorist acts

In 2022, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), under the Working Group on Border Management and Law Enforcement relating to Counter-Terrorism of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, compiled technical guidelines to facilitate the implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017) and related international standards and good practices on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. The guidelines support efforts by Member States to prevent and counter the

acquisition of weapons, including improvised explosive device components, by terrorists. With a view to promoting the use and application of the technical guidelines, regional workshops were held with 43 Member States in Europe, the Caribbean, East Africa, the Sahel, and the Maghreb.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 77/298 on the eighth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in June 2023, condemned the continued flow of weapons, including improvised explosive devices and their components, to and between terrorists and encouraged Member States to prevent and disrupt procurement networks. It also called upon Member States to find ways of intensifying the exchange of information regarding this matter and to enhance coordination and urged them to establish as criminal offences the illegal manufacture, possession, stockpiling and trade of components used to manufacture improvised explosives.

Other notable developments have occurred under the framework of the General Assembly. In line with the recommendation of the open-ended working group on conventional ammunition, which concluded its work in June 2023, the Assembly, in its resolution 78/47, adopted the **Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management** (see A/78/111, annex) in December 2023, calling upon all States to implement the Global Framework.

The issue of improvised explosive devices was also addressed under the framework of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, through which States condemned the use of improvised explosive devices directed against civilians or civilian objects and other violations of international humanitarian law, including by non-State armed groups.

What is the problem?



WATCH: <https://youtu.be/TGb4b3V8SjA>
https://av.voanews.com/Videoroot/Pangeavideo/2016/10/f/f3/f3212616-54cf-4af0-b7a1-49a7eba79c33_hq.mp4

CHECK: https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/202208_explosive_threat_overview_mali_en.pdf

What should you discuss?

1. What regional actions and mechanisms for cooperation and information-sharing should be promoted to counter the threat of IEDs?

Consider that given the transnational nature of the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, regional approaches that complement national-level strategies are required. For example, between 2021 and April 2024, at least six West African States assessed their national capability for countering improvised explosive devices using the UNIDIR model and tool. Those States identified gaps and challenges and defined priorities for addressing the threat posed by such devices, including through regional and international cooperation and assistance. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its member States have exchanged information on effective national measures and practices for addressing threats posed by improvised explosive devices, as well as for identifying opportunities for enhancing regional cooperation. At the end of 2023, ECOWAS initiated a regional process to develop a strategy to counter the proliferation and use of improvised explosive devices in the region. This ongoing process is nationally and regionally led, owned, and driven. UNIDIR, UNODC, other United Nations entities, Small Arms Survey and Mines Advisory Group provide research, technical assistance and support to ECOWAS and its member States in their efforts to develop and implement a regional strategy.

The West Africa Capacity-Building Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum held a meeting in June 2023 on countering terrorist improvised explosive device networks, which was followed by a second meeting in December 2023 on preventing terrorist groups from acquiring small arms and light weapons, associated ammunition and uncrewed aircraft systems. The recommendations from both meetings serve to unveil synergies in efforts to mitigate and respond to the threat of improvised explosive devices, small arms and light weapons and uncrewed aircraft systems. In the outcome documents of both meetings, mention is made of the need to develop adequate legal and institutional frameworks, strengthen domestic coordination and cross-border cooperation through focal points and coordination platforms, and establish effective tracing mechanisms in relation to improvised explosive devices, small arms and light weapons, and uncrewed aerial vehicles.

The United Nations provided advice and technical support to the African Union for the development of its strategy for countering improvised explosive devices. The strategy is currently under review by the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security for validation and subsequent adoption by States members of the African Union. The strategy will be aimed at facilitating cooperation and coordination between the African Union, its member States, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, the United Nations, and other partners in developing and implementing counter-improvised explosive device initiatives to address the growing threat to States members of the African Union and to its peace support operations.

Since 2022, two South-East Asian States have conducted pilot tests of the UNIDIR model and tool. In July 2023, UNIDIR and specialized organizations brought together five South-East Asian states for a regional workshop, hosted by Thailand, to examine common threats and challenges, exchange effective national measures and practices, and identify concrete options and avenues for regional cooperation and information-sharing.

In February 2024, the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons convened a regional conference on addressing the humanitarian impact of improvised anti-personnel mines within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Bringing together representatives from more than 40 Member States and international and non-governmental organizations, the Conference provided a forum for exchanging information and good practices to address the threat arising from the use of improvised anti-personnel

mines by armed non-State actors in West Africa and the Sahel region, including the resulting new contamination. Security and control of ammunition and explosives

2. What actions are required to promote the security and control of ammunition and explosives?

Often, IEDs are produced with the energetic components of diverted conventional ammunition. **To prevent the diversion of conventional ammunition, Member States have established international arms control instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Global Framework for Through life Conventional Ammunition Management.** Remember that States have committed themselves to 15 objectives covering a range of aspects aimed at promoting the safety, security, and sustainability of through-life conventional ammunition management to address the risks associated with conventional ammunition at every stage of its life cycle. **Measures identified to reduce the risk of diversion include promoting transparency in supply chains, analyzing diversion risks prior to transfers, enhancing marking and record-keeping for tracing purposes, strengthening physical security of ammunition stockpiles, clearing unexploded or abandoned ordnances, disposing of obsolete or surplus stockpiles, and improving ammunition diversion investigations through data collection, cooperation and information-sharing.**

3. What mechanisms should be in place to control precursor components, materials, and chemicals to manufacture explosive devices?

Explosive precursors are chemical substances that can be used in the illicit manufacture of home-made explosives. The challenge of dual-use materials is that they have legitimate uses for State defense and security purposes, as well as for activities such as quarrying, mining, construction, borehole drilling, and land clearance. The extent of national legislation on the control and licensing of explosive precursor chemicals varies significantly across States.

Effective control of explosive precursors requires strengthened cooperation between the private sector and law enforcement authorities. Through assessments undertaken by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, good practices among Member States in this regard have been identified. In the western hemisphere and Asia, outreach programmes have been implemented with a view to educating industries on the identification of suspicious purchases of explosive precursors to prevent access to improvised explosive device components, and to linking relevant industries to law enforcement agencies, enabling them to respond to potential unlawful purchases.

The INTERPOL Chemical Risk Identification and Mitigation Project is aimed at developing the capacity of member countries to identify, reduce and mitigate the risk posed by weaponized chemicals and their explosive precursors. Through the project, INTERPOL works with and supports Governments, law enforcement, academia, the chemical industry, and partners in efforts **to develop a risk matrix of the most significant chemicals of concern** and agree on a process of chemical security countermeasures.

Through its Programme Global Shield, WCO has developed a comprehensive analysis of the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, the legitimate movement of explosive precursors and other materials commonly used to manufacture improvised explosive devices, and relevant customs seizures. Information is shared with members on a quarterly basis to enhance risk assessment by national customs authorities. Through its portfolio of 20 courses on countering terrorism, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, within the Office of Counter-Terrorism,

has enhanced the capacities of over 400 participants from nine Member States in preventing and responding to the threat of terrorist use of chemical materials and precursors.

4. What systems and actions should be considered in border control?

Improvised explosive device networks establish connections for the illicit movement of components, expertise, finances, and personnel, often operating across international borders and posing significant transnational security challenges. The cross-border movement of individuals with expertise in such devices could lead to the transfer of manufacturing and deployment skills, and increased collaboration between terrorist groups. Such networks may source or produce explosives and components in different States than the ones in which they intend to use them, highlighting their extensive reach. For instance, research in West Africa from 2019 to 2022 indicates Boko Haram's improvised explosive device networks span across Cameroon, Mali, and Nigeria, with Ghana and Guinea identified as sources of components and Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo as transit States. These networks also support the trafficking of explosives used in gold mining, which can finance armed groups. **Effective border controls are essential to disrupting these networks and are a critical component of preventive efforts to counter improvised explosive devices.**

Assessments undertaken by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate have identified a need to enhance the capacities of border and customs officials to detect, investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate cases of illicit manufacturing of, trafficking in and diversion of precursor chemicals commonly used for improvised explosive devices, including through support in tracing and analyzing seizure data.

Program Global Shield continued its multidisciplinary approach to enhancing the capacity of customs officers to identify and interdict the illegal movement of 13 most-used explosive precursor chemicals, one metal and other components implicated in the manufacturing of improvised explosive devices, and to report suspicious transactions to national law enforcement agencies. The Programme is aimed at bolstering capabilities in risk assessment, profiling, and detection within supply chains, in addition to facilitating joint enforcement operations and offering advanced data analytical products. Awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives have focused on activities in Africa, South-East Asia, the Americas, and the Caribbean, as well as South-Eastern Europe.

Transnational illicit flows of precursor materials, including their trafficking through the Internet, can be exploited by non-State armed groups and criminal groups to produce improvised explosive devices. To address these vulnerabilities, UNODC, in collaboration with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the International Organization for Migration and INTERPOL, launched the Integrated Border Stability Mechanism for West Africa in 2023 in Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire. The Mechanism supports West African States, donors and implementing organizations in strengthening border governance and security, including the countering of illicit trafficking in improvised explosive device components. In addition, UNODC provided visit, board, search and seizure training activities, including on countering vessel-borne improvised explosive devices, to law enforcement officials of maritime centers in Kenya, Maldives, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Yemen.

EXPLOSIVE VIOLENCE IN 2021



57%
CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

TOTAL REPORTED DEATHS & INJURIES: 19,473
TOTAL CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES: 11,102

1 = 300 Civilian casualties, 1 = 300 Armed Actor casualties



1%

INCREASE IN TOTAL CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES



10%

DECREASE IN AVERAGE NUMBER OF CIVILIAN DEATHS PER DAY

TARGETED AREAS

TARGETED AREAS

POPULATED AREAS

89% CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES IN POPULATED AREAS



1,430 ATTACKS IN POPULATED AREAS

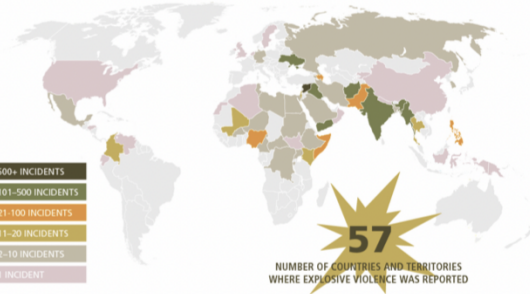
NON-POPULATED AREAS

10% CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES IN NON-POPULATED AREAS



1,059 ATTACKS IN NON-POPULATED AREAS

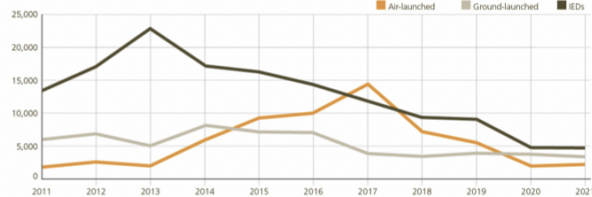
	TOTAL DEATHS & INJURIES	CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES	AVERAGE CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES PER ATTACK
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	2,563	93%	5
VILLAGE	1,858	81%	3
MARKETS	898	95%	19



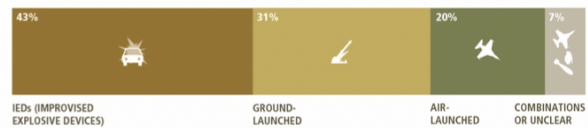
DEADLY WEAPONS

DEADLY WEAPONS

CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES BY AIR-LAUNCHED, GROUND-LAUNCHED AND IEDs, 2011 – 2021



CIVILIAN DEATHS & INJURIES BY WEAPON LAUNCH METHOD



DATA: AOAV, BASED ON ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA REPORTS

Worst explosive incidents of 2021 in terms of civilian harm

Incident	Location	Civilian casualties
Islamic State suicide bombing outside Kabul's international airport ¹⁰	Kabul, Afghanistan	334
Car bomb at a girls school in Kabul ¹¹	Kabul, Afghanistan	330
Airstrike at a market in Tigray ¹²	Tigray, Ethiopia	244
Prison riot involving explosive and other weapons in Guayaquil ¹³	Guayas, Ecuador	197
Islamic State suicide bombing at Shia mosque in Kunduz ¹⁴	Kunduz, Afghanistan	150
Islamic State suicide bombing at mosque in Kandahar ¹⁵	Kandahar, Afghanistan	146
Twin suicide bombings at market in Baghdad ¹⁶	Baghdad, Iraq	142
Suicide car bomb attack, Logar ¹⁷	Logar, Afghanistan	134
Airstrikes on a residential building in Gaza ¹⁸	Gaza City, Gaza	121
Islamic state suicide bombing at market on eve of religious festival in Baghdad ¹⁹	Baghdad, Iraq	95

CHECK: https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Explosive-Violence-Monitor-2021_v5.pdf



Save Lives!

CRUSH
the
Illicit Trade
in
**Small
Arms**

United Nations Conference
to Review Progress Made in the
Implementation of the
Programme of Action to Prevent,
Combat and Eradicate the
Illicit Trade in Small Arms and
Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
New York, 26 June – 7 July 2006

www.un.org/smallarms2006





Every day, civilians suffer the consequences of the **accumulation, diversion, illicit transfer, and misuse of arms**. Armed conflicts are increasingly fought in highly populated areas, so many of those killed and injured by arms are civilians. When social, commercial, infrastructural, cultural, educational, religious, and healthcare facilities are damaged, the effects have a long-term impact. Arms initiate, sustain, and exacerbate armed conflict and crime, and destabilize communities globally.

The term 'arms' covers the following:

Weapons, comprising **small arms and light weapons (SALW)** and the seven main categories of major conventional weapons found in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms:

- battle tanks,
- armoured combat vehicles,
- large-calibre artillery systems,
- combat aircraft and unmanned combat aerial vehicles,
- attack helicopters,
- warships and missiles,
- missile launchers;

Ammunition/Munitions; and

Parts and components of weapons and ammunition/munitions.

All States have obligations under international human rights law applicable to transfers of conventional arms. These obligations apply to any state with jurisdiction over a transfer of conventional arms, and cover the export, import, transit, trans-shipment, brokerage, and licensed production of conventional arms.

To create a more responsible trade in conventional arms and ammunition, decisions on transfer authorizations are based on international human rights obligations that are viewed primarily to prevent serious human rights violations. The decision-making process should occur within a 'preventative approach' framework, with the aim of preventing arms transfers where there is a risk that a particular group will use those arms for serious violations of human rights.

During the last meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly (Disarmament and International Security) in 2023 the statements were clear. There was a general opinion that the **“sobering impact of conventional weapons deserves ‘no less attention’ than weapons of mass destruction**. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons deserves no less attention than the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, the First Committee heard during the assembly as its thematic debate on conventional weapons continued. **CHECK THE STATEMENTS** of different countries: <https://press.un.org/en/2023/gadis3724.doc.htm>

Read the 2020 **STATEMENTS** of several Member States on the impact of conventional weapons:

Conventional Weapons — ‘Drenched in Innocent Blood’ — Inflict Untold Suffering, Enable Malicious Acts to Take Root Anywhere

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/conventional-weapons-drenched-innocent-blood-inflict-untold-suffering-enable-malicious-acts-take-root-anywhere>

CHECK THE reports and resolutions on the issue of small arms and light weapons:

<https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/>

Secretary-General's reports and related resolutions on the issue of small arms and light weapons

Security Council

Reports

2023 | [S/2023/823](#)
2021 | [S/2021/839](#)
2019 | [S/2019/1011](#)
2017 | [S/2017/1025](#)
2015 | [S/2015/289](#)
2013 | [S/2013/503](#)
2011 | [S/2011/255](#)

Resolutions

2021 | [S/RES/2616](#)
2019 | [S/RES/2457](#)
2017 | [S/RES/2370](#)
2015 | [S/RES/2220](#)
2013 | [S/RES/2117](#)

General Assembly

Reports

2024 | [A/79/77](#)
2023 | [A/78/126](#)
2022 | [A/77/77](#)
2021 | [A/76/284](#)
2020 | [A/75/78](#)
2019 | [A/74/187](#)
2018 | [A/73/168](#)
2017 | [A/72/122](#)

Resolutions

2023 | [A/RES/78/46](#)
2022 | [A/RES/77/71](#)
2021 | [A/RES/76/232](#)
2020 | [A/RES/75/241](#)
2019 | [A/RES/74/60](#)
2018 | [A/RES/73/69](#)
2017 | [A/RES/72/57](#)

There are several key documents adopted at the international and regional level in efforts to confront the illicit trade of SALW. The first of these documents was adopted in 2001, the **UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA SALW)**. The PoA SALW calls upon Member States to establish national, regional, and global measures in relation to SALW, their illicit trade, tracking, tracing, and stockpiling. The second international agreement on SALW, which succeeded the PoA SALW, is the **International Tracing Instrument (ITI)**, a politically binding instrument adopted by Member States in 2005. The Instrument was designed to reinforce the provisions established by the PoA SALW, with respect to marking, record-keeping, stockpile management, and tracing, as the PoA SALW identified the areas of particular importance to the international community, with an additional need to proactively define what classifies as an SALW. The **Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition** (2001), referred to as the Firearms Protocol, supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), which aims to fight against transnational organized crime and enhance international cooperation. The Protocol serves to establish a framework for Member States to regulate SALW, prevent illicit diversion, and facilitate the investigation and prosecution of SALW-related offenses without curbing legitimate transfers. The Protocol also stands as one of the only legally binding documents concerning the illicit trade of SALW at the international level.

The **Arms Trade Treaty (2013) (ATT)**, which entered into force in December 2014, calls for States parties to the treaty to commit to establish effective measures and strategies for a regulated international trade of conventional weapons. These obligations relate to regular reporting efforts, exports and imports, and maintenance of records. With respect to reporting, the ATT requires parties to provide an initial report to the ATT Secretariat of their efforts to implement the treaty and annual reports indicating any additional measures they may take in the future. Exports under the ATT

require Member States to assess risks of undermining international peace and security within the importing state and requires both exporting and importing parties to take measures to assure appropriate and relevant shipment reports are provided. Additionally, record keeping in the Treaty calls for maintenance of records centering on national law, regulation, export, and import of SALW.

CHECK: <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/>
<https://www.armscontrol.org/treaties>

CHECK the **SIPRI Arms Transfers Database** database: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>

The ATT is legally binding only if Member States choose to ratify, and according to UNODA only 89 Member States had ratified the document as of August 2017, as the Treaty has received mixed opinions from Heads of States regarding its control standards. Several regional tools have been brought to fruition to meet the needs of specific Member States, and attempt to create conditions to promote disarmament and reduce global tension. These instruments include but are not limited to, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (1997) and the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions (1999).

Global regulatory frameworks for trade and usage of conventional weapons are relatively recent and include:

	ATT (2013) Arms Trade Treaty		UN PoA (2001) Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects
	ITI (2005) International Tracing Instrument to enable states to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons		Firearms Protocol (2001) The UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition

More recently the First Committee on Disarmament and Security has adopted multiple resolutions and produced reports to address the risks of the accumulation of arms and to renew the efforts in the effective weapons and ammunition management.



Panelists introduce the newly elaborated Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management and reflect on regional approaches to address conventional ammunition.

In late 2023, States adopted a new multilateral instrument to national and regional efforts to strengthen WAM and enhance international cooperation and assistance – the **Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management**. States “expressed grave concern over the risks posed by diversion of conventional ammunition to unauthorized recipients” and “their trafficking into illicit markets”, which contributes to armed conflicts and violence, including gender-based violence, and threatens peace, security, stability, and sustainable development around the world. The global framework fills a gap, complements, and reinforces the existing international normative framework for the control and management of conventional arms including SALW. **It contains 15 political commitments to ensure safe, secure, and sustainable management of all types of conventional ammunition from their manufacture to use or final disposal.** This underscores a need for a strengthened international approach for **weapons and ammunition management (WAM)** that recognizes the interconnectedness of peace, security, and development, addresses the evolving nature of conflict and reducing the human cost of weapons. **CHECK:** <https://disarmament.unoda.org/update/unveiling-the-new-global-framework-for-through-life-conventional-ammunition-management/>

READ: Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/173/81/pdf/n2317381.pdf>
































CHECK: RESOLUTION 78/46. *The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects* <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/389/07/pdf/n2338907.pdf>

CHECK: *Report Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects Report of the Secretary-General (May 2022)*

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/417/28/pdf/n2141728.pdf>

CHECK: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/381/83/pdf/n2138183.pdf>

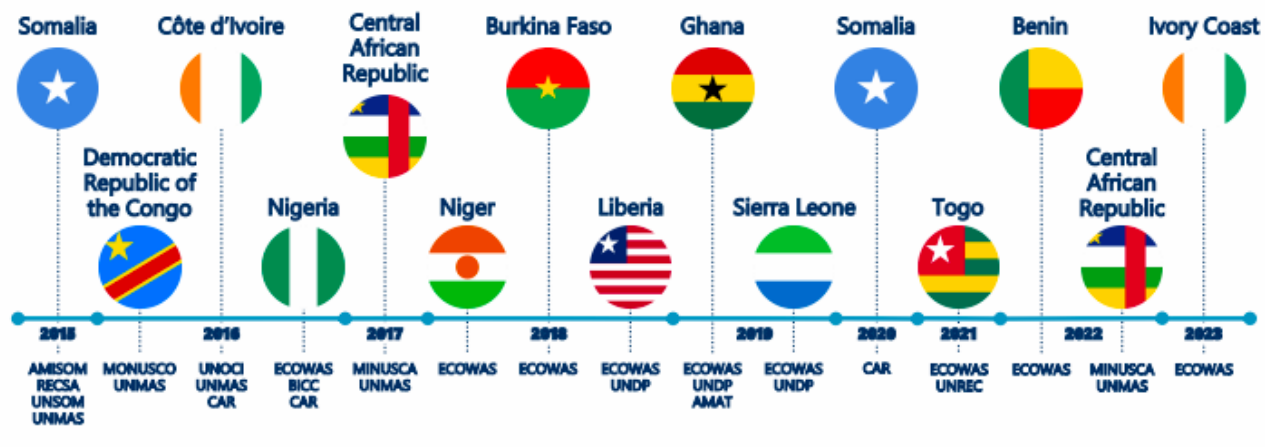
Figure 3. Persistent challenges in WAM functional areas

National coordination mechanism							
Legal and regulatory framework							
Transfer controls							
Stockpile management							
Marking							
Record-keeping							
Tracing of weapons and profiling of ammunition							
Processing of illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition							
Weapons collection							
Disposal							

WAM is the exercise of oversight, accountability and governance of conventional arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle, from production through to their use or the disposal of materiel designated as surplus, obsolete or unsafe. It covers conventional weapons, including SALW, and ammunition. Effective WAM can reduce the number of illicit weapons and the amount of illicit ammunition in circulation, prevent the diversion of state-owned materiel to unauthorized users, and mitigate the risks of unplanned explosions. It thereby contributes to the maintenance of peace as well as the achievement of socioeconomic and development goals. WAM is also a fundamental component of conflict prevention and of action to tackle armed violence, ensuring that states can exercise governance, oversight, management, and control over the full life cycle of weapons and ammunition within their national territory.

CHECK: <http://stgpeaceau.org/en/tools>

Figure 1. WAM in Africa: Baseline and Follow-up Assessments conducted during 2015–2023



Note on supporting organizations:

AMAT: Ammunition Management Advisory Team

AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia

BICC: Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies

CAR: Conflict Armament Research

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNOCI, UNSOM: UN peace operations

RECSA: Regional Centre on Small Arms

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

Box 1.1 Developing arms and ammunition baseline assessments

Research on arms and ammunition, regardless of the context in which it is applied, frequently benefits from identifying the types of weapons in use (whether legally or illegally) in a given location, along with the time period or context in which the weapons are acquired and used. The resulting 'baseline' is useful for detecting the appearance of new makes or models of weapons in a given region, or the influx of large numbers of weapon types or models already present in the region. Analysis of this kind often provides the basis for more detailed investigations, including tracing operations (see Box 1.2). In Syria in 2012, for example, the sudden appearance of distinctive Swiss-made hand grenades not known to be present in the country suggested the possible diversion of these items from a legitimate state-to-state export. An examination of the grenades' markings by specialists resulted in the identification of several items from the same lot, and inquiries directed to relevant states confirmed that the items were diverted from an authorized export to a regional government (ARES, 2016c).¹³ These weapons stood out against the other hand grenades common in the region; additional examples of the diversion of the same models were later documented in Libya and Turkey.

Baseline assessments can often be accurately produced through desk-based research. Useful sources of information include images and data on the markings, packaging, and shipping documents of arms and ammunition in the region in question, along with the various reports, databases, and notifications examined in Chapters 8 and 9. Fieldwork is an important supplement to these data sources and may be the only source of data in some cases. Nonetheless, fieldwork is most useful when supplemented by data drawn from other sources. Fieldwork takes many forms, which range from taking a photo of a fired cartridge case encountered during unrelated research to compiling detailed inventories of arms captured from rebel groups on the frontlines. More information on fieldwork is available in Chapter 7.

Source:

<https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/SAS-HB-06-Weapons-ID-Guide-Full.pdf>

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 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 trackability and tracing of weapons and ammunition.
- 6 An effective national **record-keeping** system comprehensively records all phases of the life cycle of arms and ammunition under the jurisdiction of the state (i.e. production, international transfer, national stockpile, recovery from the illicit sphere, and use or disposal). It aids national accounting, trackability and tracing of weapons and ammunition.

Taken together, effective marking and record-keeping systems constitute a national accounting system, which serves several purposes including accurate, timely inventorying of the national stockpile of conventional arms and ammunition.
- 7 **Profiling and tracing of weapons and ammunition** consists of the systematic examination of information related to illicit weapons and ammunition from their point of manufacture or most recent import, through the lines of supply, to the last legal titleholder in order to determine the place and time at which the item became illicit.
- 8 The **processing of illicit weapons and treatment of illicit ammunition** can support the domestic judicial process by providing information and evidence which can be used to convict traffickers and violence perpetrators, thereby helping to address impunity.
- 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/or 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.

What is the problem? What should you discuss?

The 2001 United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) and other associated Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) international commitments and measures are widely understood to encompass not only the weapons but also their ammunition. The problem is that unfortunately, progress in implementing the PoA in relation to ammunition remains insufficient and important. This is partly because it has too often been considered as a residual category. But control and reduction of ammunition raise their own distinct and challenging issues. This relative neglect is resulting in large numbers of avoidable deaths and injuries.

The problem is that accumulated arms and ammunitions pose risks for international security and peace. What are some of the problems? Here there are at least 3 big categories of problems:

1. **Risk of loss and diversion:** Many of the problems relating to ammunition stocks are essentially the same as for weapons stockpiles. Vast quantities of ammunition are legally held by armed forces, police, and other state bodies, and by authorized private organizations and individuals. However, **legal stocks are vulnerable to loss through capture, theft, corruption, or neglect.** They are by far the main source of ammunition obtained by criminals, bandits, armed opposition forces and terrorists. **Many official storage facilities are inadequately managed or secured. These problems are particularly acute for 'surplus' arms and ammunition since there is a tendency to devote inadequate resources for secure storage of 'redundant' goods.**
2. **Safety hazards:** The presence of stores of conventional ammunition and explosives is a hazard to communities that live and work in or near to them. Major explosions can and do occur due to factors such as fire, human error, lightning strikes, instability of propellants or explosives, or sabotage.
3. **Problems of safe disposal and destruction of ammunition:** Destruction and other safe disposal of excessive, surplus, insecure or unsafe ammunition stocks is a priority. Safe and effective disposal and destruction of ammunition is a much more challenging technical task than it is for most weapons, due to the presence of explosives, toxic materials, or propellants. Thus, disposal of SALW ammunition is a distinctive task area, closer to that of other conventional ammunition and explosives than to disposal of small arms and light weapons themselves

CHECK: <https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/SALW-Destruction-2/Biting-the-Bullet-EN.pdf>

ASK YOURSELF:

How can your country apply the principles of the **Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management** and the resolutions that address the effective management of arms and ammunitions?

How can your country work with other countries **to prevent the illicit trade of arms and ammunition?** What inventory management and accounting control procedures

should be reinforced or improved? What training of staff in effective stockpile management and security procedures is needed?

What additional tools are needed to solve the problems of illicit trafficking of SALW? What technologies are needed? What human resources should be available? What financial needs should be met? What technical tasks should be completed to effectively address the risks of accumulated arms and ammunitions?

What additional actions are needed to promote a safe and secure ammunition stockpile management in the world? **What countries and regions should be prioritized?**

What procedures for reporting, investigating, and recovering losses should be enforced?

What sanctions should be applied in the event of loss or theft of arms and ammunitions?

What **mechanisms** should be provided for countries to be prepared for **emergency situations connected to explosive detonations?**