

Ammunition Safety Management

ABOUT UNMAS AND AMMUNITION SAFETY MANAGEMENT



Inadequately managed conventional ammunition stockpiles threaten public safety and can pose a risk to both national and regional security.

The report of the Secretary General on Small Arms has documented the problems associated with poor ammunition management and recognized the role of UNMAS in the implementation of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG).

UNMAS has created a “Pool of Experts” of Ammunition Technical Officers with experience in storage, inspection, transportation and stockpile destruction of ammunition, as well as the development and administration of new storage facilities. This work is sometimes referred to as Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM).

UNMAS has a proven capacity to provide efficient, quick and safety-focussed solutions for countries interested in developing and implementing credible ammunition management practices, and for leading the emergency response to ammunition depot accidents.

CURRENT PROJECTS

UNMAS Ammunition Safety Management projects have been established, sometimes as an integral part of existing Mine Action programmes, in a number of countries:



INTERNATIONAL AMMUNITION TECHNICAL GUIDELINES (IATG)

The sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/66/42, which welcomed the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and encouraged States to implement these guidelines through national standards on a voluntary basis.

The IATG are part of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs project. The current version can be downloaded on the ODA website: <http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/Ammunition/IATG/>

A web-based software with risk assessment tools, training materials, technical calculators and licencing templates are available for the use by qualified ammunition technicians or ammunition technical officers as part of the UN SaferGuard project: <http://www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/>

CHALLENGES

The effects of unplanned ammunition storage accidents can have wide reaching consequences beyond the immediate death and injury inflicted. Poor control over ammunition stocks can lead to cross border exfiltration and the fuelling of conflict beyond a nation's boundaries. The number of reported unintended explosions of ammunition stockpiles happening around the world is on the rise. According to the Small Arms Survey, over 700 fatalities and more than 3,000 injuries have occurred from such explosions during the past two years alone. Much of the world's ammunition stockpile dates from the cold war period. Today, 20 years after the end of



the cold war, much of the ammunition produced in that period is approaching the end of its life and becoming unstable. Without positive intervention there will be more explosions. These events will result in large numbers of casualties, widespread destruction of infrastructure and the disruption of the livelihood of entire communities.

International support is addressing the havoc once caused by landmines around the world, but acquisition of funding for Ammunition Safety Management projects is sometimes more difficult than that for demining. The effectiveness of the PSSM projects in delivering increased security and preventing catastrophic events is undisputable and the costs involved are always far less than those associated with potential post-accident clearance.



Updated April 2013

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