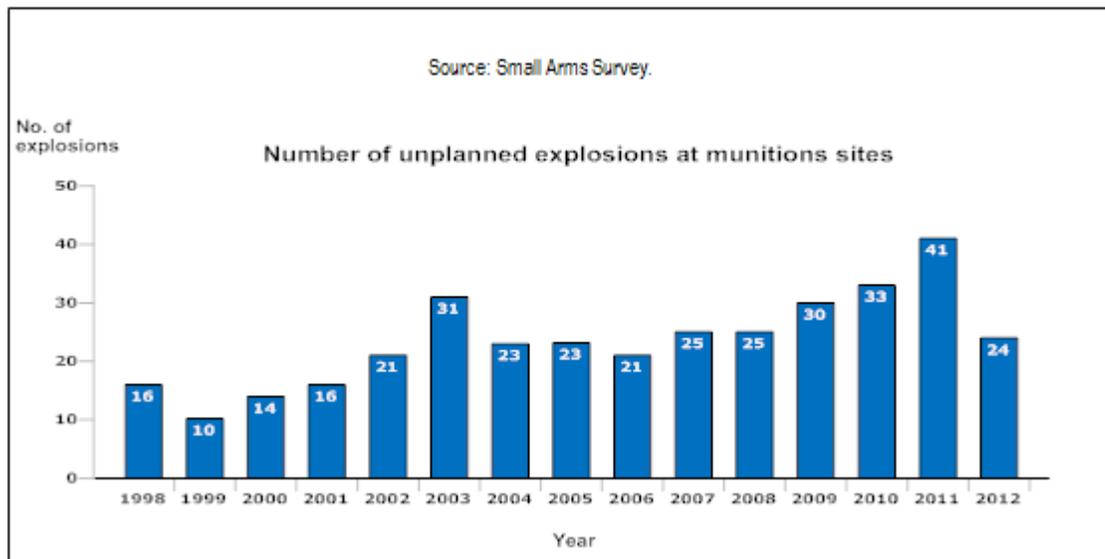


FACT SHEET

SECURE AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT THROUGH UN SAFERGUARD

In over 60 countries during the last decade, poorly-stored ammunition stockpiles have inadvertently exploded. Thousands of people have died, and the livelihoods of entire communities were disrupted. Unsecured or poorly-monitored national ammunition stockpiles also lead to massive diversion into illicit markets. Diverted conventional ammunition is increasingly used to assemble improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Improving the whole-life management of conventional ammunition stockpiles requires action at national and regional levels. The United Nations Security Council has recommended that stockpile security and the management of arms and ammunition be promoted “as an urgent priority.” And the General Assembly has requested the United Nations to develop guidelines for adequate ammunition management. In response, the UN SaferGuard Programme has been established. It oversees the dissemination of International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG): detailed standards for voluntary use by countries that wish to improve the safety and security of their ammunition storage sites.



This work – mandated by the General Assembly – was carried out by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs in close cooperation with the UN Mine Action Service. The best ammunition expertise available was engaged, and the guidelines have been vetted by a technical review panel consisting of experts from all over the world.

In 2011, the General Assembly welcomed the completion of the IATG as well as the establishment of the UN SaferGuard programme for ammunition stockpile management.

International Ammunition Technical Guidelines

These guidelines assist national authorities, industry and others to enhance the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles – thus reducing the dual risks of explosions and diversion. Three levels of ascending comprehensiveness are offered. The basic level presents the most expedient ways to apply the essential principles of safe and secure whole-life ammunition management. Subsequent levels detail progressive measures that can be taken so that the highest standards are attained.

The IATG are being implemented by United Nations partners in an increasing number of countries, including Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan.

Fact

Ammunition replenishment patterns are highly distinct from arms trade patterns. Small arms are habitually recycled from conflict to conflict and typically have lifespans of multiple decades; their value however relies on the continuous fresh supply of ammunition. That is why ammunition controls deserve special attention.



Devastation from a 2012 ammunition depot explosion in Brazzaville, Congo. 200 people were killed, 2000 injured. Source: Erwan Morand.

Training and tools

The UN SaferGuard programme oversees the implementation of the IATG, providing implementation software, training programmes and quick responses to requests for assistance in securing ammunition stockpiles.

Training courses, tailored to specific needs and situations, include:

- Military ammunition stockpile management;
- Small unit ammunition stockpile management for law enforcement officials;
- Ammunition management in field operations;
- Accounting and tracing of ammunition.



www.un.org/disarmament
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