FACT SHEET

SAFE AND SECURE AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE UN SAFERGUARD PROGRAMME

In more than 100 countries, over the past five decades, poorly-managed ammunition stockpiles have resulted in explosions, often bringing about humanitarian disasters.¹ Thousands of people have been killed, injured and displaced, and the livelihoods of entire communities have been disrupted.

In addition to the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences, unsecured or poorly managed ammunition stockpiles fuel insecurity. Massive diversion of ammunition to illicit markets has been a catalyst for armed conflict, organized crime and terrorism. Moreover, diverted ammunition is increasingly used to assemble improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Taken together, these consequences demonstrate the very serious safety and security challenges posed by inadequately-managed stockpiles.

In response to these concerns, the Security Council recommended that stockpile security and the management of arms and ammunition be promoted “as an urgent priority (S/RES/1952 (2010)).” The General Assembly requested the United Nations to develop guidelines for adequate ammunition management to ensure that the United Nations consistently delivers high-quality advice and support (A/RES/63/61). In response, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) were developed in 2011 and the UN SaferGuard Programme was established as the corresponding knowledge management platform.

The UN SaferGuard Programme, managed by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), oversees the dissemination of the IATG: practical guidance on the safe and secure management of ammunition.

International Ammunition Technical Guidelines

The IATG are publicly available to assist national authorities – including armed forces, police officers and border control officials – as well as industry, private security companies and operational non-governmental organizations to enhance the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles. The aim of the IATG is a reduction of the dual risks of unplanned explosions and illicit diversion.

¹ See: Small Arms Survey: Unplanned explosions at Munitions Sites.
The IATG are voluntary, practical guidelines for use by interested States and other relevant stakeholders to inform the development of national standing operating procedures.

The IATG consist of 12 volumes that provide practical guidance for a ‘through-life’ approach to ammunition management. The IATG can be applied at basic, intermediate, or advanced levels, making the IATG relevant for all situations. These increasingly complex steps are called risk reduction process levels (RRPLs) and take into consideration capacity and resources available.

The UN SaferGuard Programme serves as the custodian for the IATG – ensuring their highest technical quality. The IATG are updated, at a minimum, every five years to reflect evolving ammunition stockpile management norms and practices, and to incorporate changes due to changing international regulations and requirements. This review is undertaken by the UN SaferGuard Technical Review Board, composed of national technical experts, with the support of the UN SaferGuard Strategic Coordination Group, composed of operational organizations applying the IATG in practice. The IATG are available in multiple languages. The latest version of each IATG module can be found at www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition. The next version will be published in 2021.

**IATG implementation support toolkit and guides**

Key IATG implementation support tools – ranging from a risk reduction checklist to a quantity distance map– are available for immediate use by ammunition experts to improve ammunition safety at www.un.org/disarmament/un-saferguard.

To assist authorities in utilizing the IATG and in developing national standards and procedures, the UN SaferGuard Programme has also published three practical IATG support guides – “Critical Path Guide to the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines”, “A Guide to Developing National Standards for Ammunition Management” and “Utilizing the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines in Conflict-Affected and Low-Capacity Environments”.

**Assistance**

In line with the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, specifically action 22 on securing excessive and poorly maintained stockpiles, the Ammunition Management Advisory Team (AMAT) provides technical expert assistance to interested States and partners in accordance with the IATG, including under the UN SaferGuard Quick-Response Mechanism. AMAT seeks to enhance State and regional action on safe and secure management of ammunition and to facilitate effective and sustainable international cooperation and assistance. AMAT is based in Geneva and was established as a joint initiative of UNODA and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition
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3 See amat.gichd.org.