



BONN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONVERSION

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# Small Arms Control and Disposal: Research, Consultancy & Support



# BICC's Work on Small Arms: An Overview

**R**ecycled from earlier conflicts or newly imported, small arms are tools of power and violence which can cause social strife to turn into far more destructive conflict. Most of the work of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) is connected to small arms in some way or other, but BICC also carries out projects which relate directly to small arms. These first two pages give an overview of the different dimensions of BICC's work in this area.

**Research.** BICC studies all aspects of proliferation, collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons. With financial assistance from the US Institute for Peace and from the Ford Foundation, for example, BICC recently produced *Managing the Remnants of War*. This book provides an overview of arms collection and destruction programs.



*Flame of Peace: A bonfire of small arms in Mali.* Robert Poulton

*Attitudes to guns, and how they link to other aspects of society, are important to understand. When asked why he was interested in guns, a young man in Sierra Leone replied: "Because when I carry a weapon, I am treated like a man. When I go into my village unarmed, people treat me like a nobody." Asked whether anything else would have the same effect, he replied that a mobile phone would lend him similar status.*

**Capacity-building.** Building local capacity to control, collect and destroy guns is essential to solving the small arms problem. BICC helps to empower people in regions affected by small arms and light weapons through two of its projects: while BICC's Help Desk for Practical Disarmament supports local initiatives by providing practical advice, its SALIGAD project supports research and the development of local solutions to small arms problems in the Horn of Africa, working with non-governmental organizations and different levels of government. Both projects are described in greater detail in the following pages.

**Consultancy.** Drawing on a network of experts within and outside BICC, the Center offers policy guidance on small arms issues. It has provided its non-profit consultancy services to a wide range of clients in many parts of the world, including the United Nations, the European Union, national governments, development agencies, and non-governmental organizations. In a recent project for German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), BICC produced three policy studies relevant to small arms issues, including one on small arms and development.

**Project Management and Evaluation.** BICC manages and evaluates projects in the fields of demobilization and disarmament. Recent partners include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Brot für die Welt, a major German development agency.



*SALIGAD researcher Sabala Kizito holding a gun smuggled to Kenya from Ethiopia. Christina Yeung (BICC)*

**Forum for Debate.** While BICC is neither a funding nor an advocacy organization, it provides support to individuals and organizations lobbying for disarmament. In cooperation with other NGOs, BICC hosts workshops and conferences, bringing together policymakers, researchers and non-governmental organizations from all parts of the world for discussions on issues related to arms control and disarmament.

**Information.** BICC provides information on small arms issues to specialists and the public. The Center publishes books, reports and conference papers and maintains a research library. A publicly accessible database stores media reports on transfers of surplus weapons and is available at [www.disarmament.de](http://www.disarmament.de).

*When people are offered a reward for giving up weapons, it can cause problems. It may stimulate gun sales and anger those who have nothing to surrender. Besnik Alibali takes a different approach. Once an explosives specialist in the Albanian army, Alibali now runs a weapons collection program in the port of Dürres. He tells people: "If you have weapons, you have a problem, my friends. Your children may get hurt. The police may come to arrest you. Just tell me, and I will come to take the weaponry away. Safely and discreetly. And you will have one thing less to worry about."*

## **Contents**

- **BICC's Work on Small Arms: An Overview**
- **The Help Desk for Practical Disarmament**
- **The SALIGAD Project: Small Arms in the Horn of Africa**
- **Small Arms in Northern Ireland**
- **Demobilization, Rehabilitation—and Small Arms**



# The Help Desk for Practical Disarmament

**A**round the world, in societies torn by war or plagued by violent crime, people are trying to remove the tools of violence from society. They are making progress, suffering setbacks, learning from both, and building a body of experience. In 2000, BICC established a small unit to be of assistance to them.

**Research.** The Help Desk for Practical Disarmament studies weapons collection programs in Africa, the Americas, Europe and Australasia. Its book *Managing the Remnants of War* tries to identify elements of ‘best practice’ in post-war disarmament.

**Tools.** The Help Desk provides tools for hands-on work, such as its practical guide *Tackling Small Arms and Light Weapons*. This guide for collection and destruction, compiled together with the Program on Security and Development (SAND) in Monterey, California, is available in English, French, Spanish,

Portuguese and Russian at the web site of the Help Desk. Here visitors can also consult a database on surplus weapons and order publications such as David DeClerq’s *Destroying Small Arms and Light Weapons* (BICC Report 13).

**Training.** The Help Desk is involved in the development of a curriculum in small arms control for security sector personnel in West Africa. Its practical guide is used in the training of Canadian police officers.

**Consultancy.** Several kinds of organizations have sought the advice of the Help Desk, including the UN, the European Commission, the government of Norway and other states, the German development agency GTZ, and grassroots groups in Cambodia, Nigeria and Germany.



*A market in Yemen. Jörn Brömmelhörster (IMEP)*

**Program Evaluation.** The Help Desk led the international mission evaluating the Weapons in Exchange for Development Pilot Programme in Gramsh, Albania, a UNDP/UNOPS project. It is developing proposals for similar projects in Africa and Australasia.

**Finances.** While the Help Desk engages in paid assignments, it provides most of its services for free—but it needs financial support to be able to continue to do so. The Help Desk cannot finance disarmament projects itself but, if necessary, can join stakeholders in raising funds.

⇒ **Contacts.** You can reach the Help Desk for Practical Disarmament at [helpdesk@bicc.de](mailto:helpdesk@bicc.de) or Sami Faltas at [faltas@bicc.de](mailto:faltas@bicc.de), phone +49-228-91196-35. More information is also available at [www.disarmament.de](http://www.disarmament.de).



*Moving to peace in Cambodia.* Natalie Pauwels (BICC)



*Weapons collected in Albania.* Sami Faltas (BICC)



# The SALIGAD Project: Small Arms in the Horn of Africa



IGAD (Inter Governmental Authority for Development) member states

**A**pproach. Without understanding why people want arms, it is difficult to know how to address the problem. This is the starting point of BICC's SALIGAD project. In the midst of conflict and failing social and political structures, people in the Horn of Africa are turning to small arms for protection. SALIGAD supports indigenous capacity to analyze the demand side of the small arms equation in the Horn. Such analysis assists in the development of relevant policies and options for controlling and managing small arms—options within the reach of the people suffering from the violence. SALIGAD's work is complementary to initiatives to control supply and restrict access to small arms and light weapons.

*“As far as we are concerned, controlling small arms would be a minor issue, if we were given the means to do it. There are many among us who are as well versed in the issues as an Oxford graduate. We are experts on how to deal with small arms within the community. I have personally and single-handedly convinced a number of ‘bandits’ in our district to surrender their arms. But if they cannot re-stock their lost animals, if they cannot maintain their families, they will go back to banditry.”*

Ali Ethiopia, Chair of the Abdwak Clan,  
Nairobi conference, December 2000

**Partners.** SALIGAD is funded by the German government through the German Technical Cooperation agency (GTZ) and Brot für die Welt, a major German development agency. The project is led by BICC and implemented in cooperation with the International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa (IRG).

**Goals.** The project facilitates dialogue and builds capacity for peace in the IGAD countries. More specifically, it:

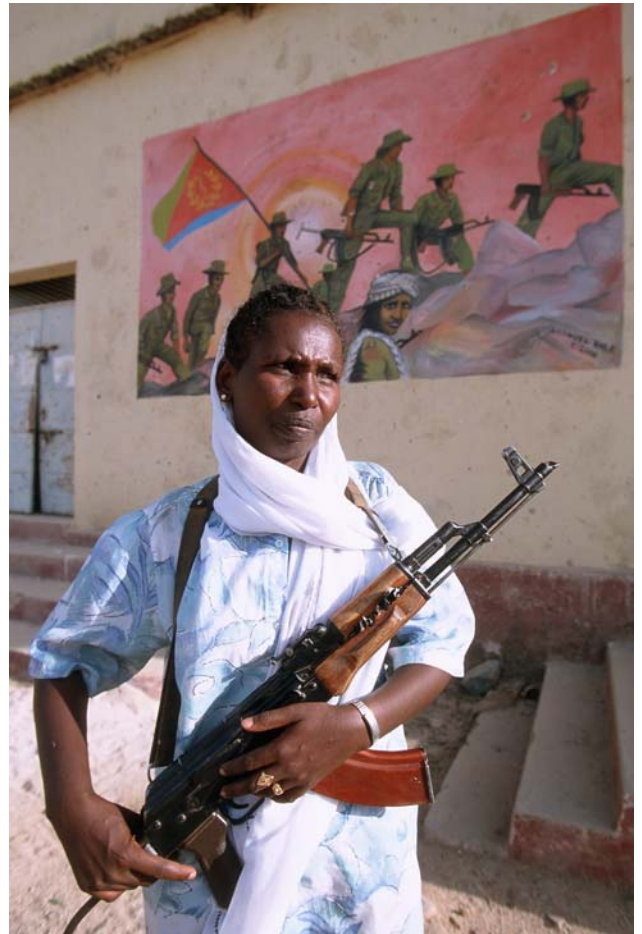
- Offers a forum for discussion among development workers, policy-makers and researchers
- Generates policy options at all levels
- Builds capacity by directly supporting researchers from the region.

## The Bamako Declaration

In late 2000, the Organization of African Unity met in Bamako, Mali to develop an African Common Position in preparation for the July 2001 United Nations Conference on small arms and light weapons. In the resulting Bamako Declaration, African States called for measures to foster a culture of peace, improve conflict management practices, harmonize legislation on small arms, and encourage development and stability.

**Activities.** SALIGAD's work takes place on three levels:

- **Field research and data collection by local researchers.** In Kenya, SALIGAD currently has three studies underway: one on indigenous arms control in the Kuria region; another on gun-related violence in Nairobi; and a third monitoring gun prices and demand in Garissa. Research in Somaliland focuses on the process of getting the guns off the street. In Ethiopia, a study in the regional state of Gambella is examining the trafficking of small arms in relation to a territorial conflict between the Anyuak and the Nuer. An exploratory study of small arms is underway in the Gashbarka region of Eritrea.
- **Dialogue among governments, NGOs and grassroots.** Together with IRG, BICC held a major conference in Addis Ababa in April 2001 involving government representatives, NGOs and researchers from the Horn, Europe and North America. Late in the previous year, BICC, Project Ploughshares, and the Quaker UN Office co-sponsored a conference in Nairobi on local initiatives to reduce demand for small arms. Such activities are meant to draw more attention to demand issues, which remain relatively neglected.



*A member of an Eritrean women's organization with her kalashnikov. Boness/epd-bild.*

- **Training and raising the awareness of community leaders.** In June 2000, together with the Pastoralists' Peace and Development Initiative and OXFAM, SALIGAD co-hosted a community workshop in Garissa, Kenya on the proliferation and effects of small arms in the area. Community leaders worked on developing ideas to limit proliferation in their areas.



**Contacts.** More information can be found at [www.saligad.org](http://www.saligad.org).

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Kiflemariam Gebrewold at [gebre@bicc.de](mailto:gebre@bicc.de).



# Small Arms in Northern Ireland

**S**tumbling blocks to peace. Tools of political bargaining; symbols of ‘macho’ power; a danger in the hands of dissidents; tools of violence, blackmail and organized crime—these are just a few of the roles small arms continue to play in Northern Ireland three years after the peace accord. The peace accord included commitments from all parties to disarm within a set period. But—reflecting a deeper division among the major parties—decommissioning of weapons became the major political stumbling block in the peace process.

**Moving forward.** Moving beyond this impasse first of all meant addressing mindsets and building confidence. In summer 2000, the IRA made a unilateral gesture of agreeing to inspections of their arsenals. They announced a process to put their arms completely and verifiable beyond use. Since then,

attempts to find a compromise have tied decommissioning to the broader issue of security sector reform. Security sector reform includes downsizing state forces and security installations and, importantly, creating a new police force in Northern Ireland. A workable definition of and techniques for decommissioning have still to be found.

**BICC’s Project.** BICC is carrying out a two-year case study in cooperation with the Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity (INCORE), Northern Ireland. The project looks at how demilitarization can support peace and prevent further violence. Small arms are not the main focus, but are an important element of the study. Trying to find lessons that can be applied elsewhere, the project examines such issues as:

- The interdependent processes of disarmament and ‘normalizing’ security
- The role of the peace agreement in disarmament
- The role of external actors, such as the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD)
- How the availability of arms affects political or criminal violence
- The historical and cultural aspects of small arms in Ireland.



*Use of small arms in a sectarian political message.* Corinna Hauswedell (BICC)

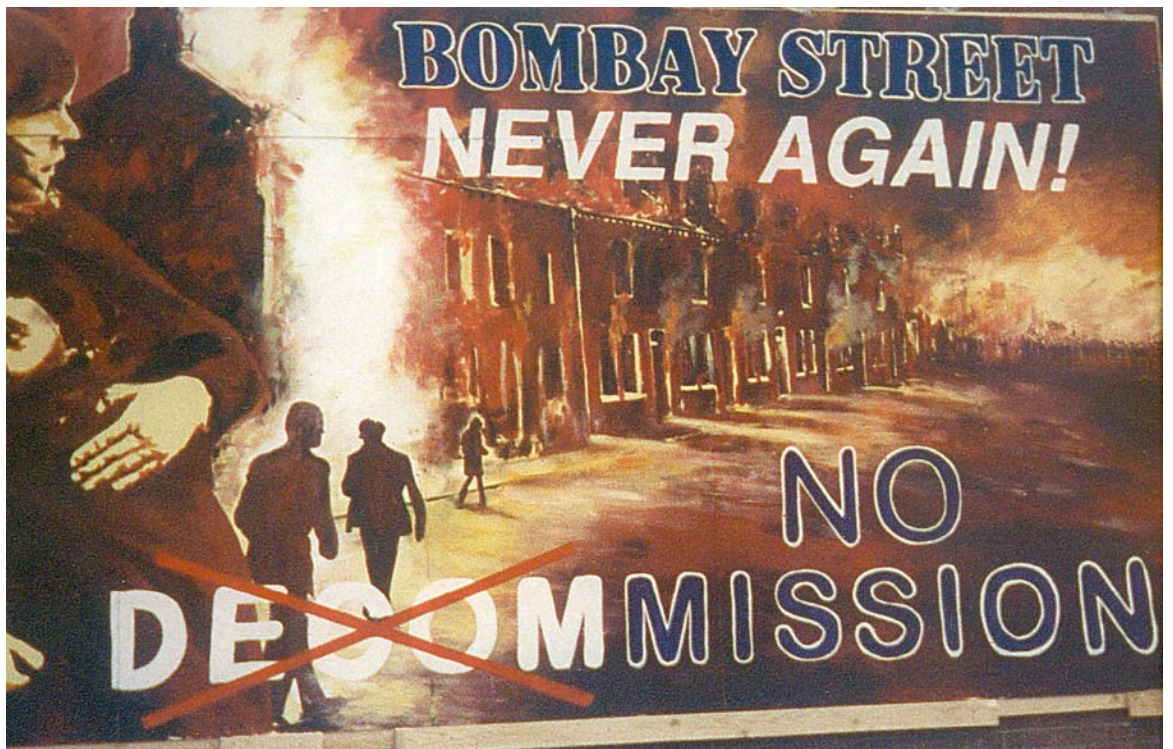


*“All participants accordingly reaffirm their commitment to the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations. They also confirm their intention to continue to work constructively and in good faith with the Independent Commission, and to use any influence they may have, to achieve the decommissioning of all paramilitary arms within two years following endorsement in referendums North and South of the agreement and in the context of the implementation of the overall settlement.”*

(from the Good Friday Agreement, April 1998)



**Contacts.** More information can be found at [www.bicc.de](http://www.bicc.de) or by contacting Corinna Hauswedell at [ch@bicc.de](mailto:ch@bicc.de).



*A mural in Belfast makes the point that decommissioning is linked to security concerns. From the Irish Mural Millennium Calendar, 2000*



# Demobilization, Rehabilitation—and Small Arms

## *Risks and opportunities*

Demobilization of soldiers is closely linked to the small arms issue. Former combatants return to communities where they may be seen as a threat and communities may not be able to offer them an adequate livelihood. Moreover, some ex-fighters may find it difficult to return to civilian life after having lived by the gun for many years. The demobilization process must plan for these risks. If not, the presence of ex-combatants may feed social tensions and attitudes which lead to the use of small arms.

Demobilization is also a point at which small arms can 'leak' into society. The best way of preventing this from happening differs from case to case. It depends very much on the reason for the demobilization—on whether it follows the defeat of one party, a peace agreement, or a decision to downsize an existing army.

In several post-war demobilization exercises in Africa and Central America in the 90s, large numbers of weapons—and ammunition—ended up in the hands of unauthorized people. Disarming soldiers and guerrilla fighters is especially difficult if many own several weapons: even if one weapon is turned in, others might be retained. Large stocks might go unreported if the parties are not sure that the peace will hold. Arms may also be seen as a source of future income.

In Europe, very large numbers of soldiers were demobilized during the 90s. However their weapons were not always safely stored or destroyed. Through legal or illegal channels, many have ended up in war zones.

However disarmament of former combatants is not always so difficult. In the case of demobilization in Uganda, for example, the weapons remained in the barracks when the soldiers moved to the demobilization centers. And in the Eritrean demobilization in the mid-90s, records of all weapons issued by the liberation forces were available, facilitating recall.

## **Demobilization in Kosovo**

In the first half of 2001, BICC conducted research on demilitarization and reintegration of former KLA combatants in Kosovo. Based on interviews with former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) rank and file, former KLA commanders, and officers from Kosovo Forces (KFOR), UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and international organizations active in Kosovo, the project seeks lessons for effective management of post-war demobilization. In this context, the study looks at weapons collection, attempts to transform the KLA into the Kosovo Police Service and Kosovo Protection Corps, and at the vocational training offered to paramilitaries. Comparing the Kosovo experience to post-Dayton Bosnia, the study is geared to developing guidelines for international organizations.

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*“Sudanese children interviewed in a camp for internally displaced people in 1997 thought that the AK-47 was a tool for security, power and recognition. They said that people were taken seriously if they were in an army and that they received respect for having been to the front. They told a story of one of their friends who had received military training under the SPLA. With a child’s curiosity, he decided to hold the trigger and look down the barrel to find out how it worked. As simply as that he shot himself.”*

Lomumba Eman, field researcher

### ***BICC’s demobilization work***

BICC has undertaken many projects analyzing and offering advice on post-war demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants. Most have been relevant to the control of small arms and light weapons.

Over the years, BICC has established cooperative ties with a large number of researchers and several local, regional and international organizations. While BICC’s primary focus in demobilization has been on Africa, BICC’s advice has also been sought on the design, implementation and evaluation of demobilization and reintegration programs in other regions as well. BICC has advised multilateral and bilateral development agencies on their operations and monitoring mechanisms for demobilization and reintegration.

BICC also assists in capacity-building in this area. For example, it has worked for many years with the Group for Environmental Monitoring in Johannesburg to raise the level of discussion on disarmament and conversion issues in South African civil society.



*Guns collected in Albania, September 2000. Sami Faltas (BICC)*

A major BICC study assessed the broad impact of the demobilization and reintegration processes in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Mozambique. Jointly with the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, BICC has also coordinated a large, collaborative research project on the links between demilitarization and peace-building in Southern Africa. The results support efforts to control small arms.

⇒ **Contacts.** BICC’s demobilization studies can be accessed through [www.bicc.de](http://www.bicc.de) or by contacting Kees Kingma at [kingma@bicc.de](mailto:kingma@bicc.de).



# The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)

an independent non-profit organization dedicated  
to promoting the transfer of former military  
resources and assets to alternative civilian purposes

The transfer of resources from the military to the civilian sector represents both a social and an economic challenge, as well as offering an opportunity for the states concerned. The sustained process of disarmament during the decade following the end of the Cold War has made defense conversion an important issue in many countries today. This process has now slowed down considerably, but the problems faced by those affected are far from solved. BICC's main objective is to make use of the chances offered by disarmament, whilst at the same time helping to avoid—or lessen—the negative effects.

This issue concerns a number of areas: What can scientists and engineers who were formerly employed in weapons labs do today? What is the fate of the roughly eight million employees who lost their jobs in the defense factories? Why are so many defense companies faring better today than they did ten years ago? Will all demobilized soldiers or former combatants find a future in civilian society? What action must communities take when suddenly faced with the closure of a huge military base? How does one solve the problem of the ready availability of small arms and light weapons?

It is BICC's task to tackle these questions, to analyze them on the basis of scientific research, to convey the necessary information, and to give advice to those involved—in short, to **manage disarmament**.



**I**nternational think tank. BICC conducts research and makes policy recommendations. In-house and external experts contribute comparative analyses and background studies.

**P**roject management and consulting services. BICC provides practical support to public and private organizations. For instance, BICC staff advise local governments confronted with the difficult task of redeveloping former military installations. BICC also combines development assistance with practical conversion work by helping in the fields of demobilization, reintegration and peace-building.

**C**learinghouse. In its capacity as an independent organization, BICC supports and assists international organizations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, companies and the media, as well as individuals. It hereby mediates and facilitates the conversion process at all levels—local, national and global. BICC collects and disseminates data and information on conversion to practitioners in a wide range of fields and institutions. BICC strives to reach researchers and practitioners as well as parliamentarians, the media, and the general public by means of a variety of tools including its library, its extensive on-line documentation services and its internet service ([www.bicc.de](http://www.bicc.de)). Furthermore, the Center documents the course of disarmament and conversion in its annual *conversion surveys* and produces a variety of publications.

## *BICC's Program Areas— Investing in the Future*

### **Budgets**

Reduced military expenditures—  
A lasting peace dividend?



### **Know-how**

Reorientation of military research and development—  
—A potential largely untapped



### **Production**

Defense industry restructuring—  
Facing a changed environment



### **People**

Demobilization and reintegration—  
Opportunities for human development



### **Land**

Base closure and redevelopment—  
A challenge for communities



### **Arms**

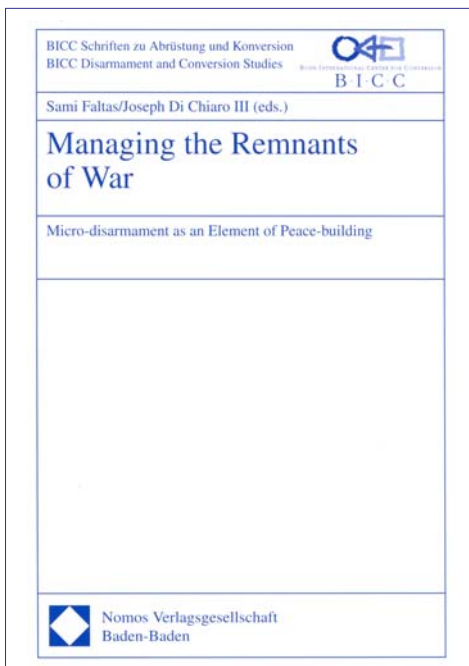
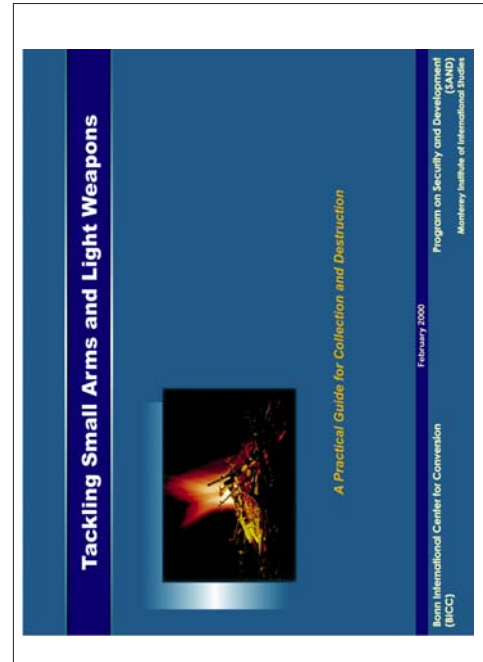
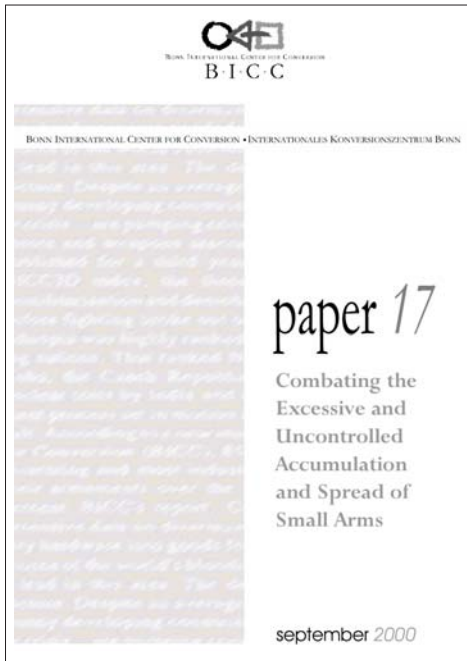
Surplus weapons—  
Dismantling the remnants of conflicts



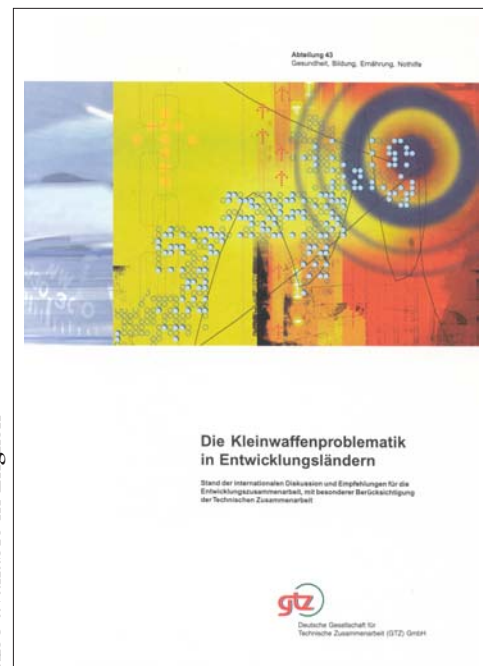


# BICC Publications on Small Arms and Light Weapons





Also available in English



Information on all publications (e.g. full text of *briefs* and *papers*, detailed list of contents, how to order and press information) can be obtained via BICC's Internet service at [www.bicc.de](http://www.bicc.de).

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