

Experts call for action on small arms proliferation ahead of New York summit

UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and all Its Aspects (the PoA) Second Review Conference New York, 27 Aug – 7 Sep

Friday 24 August, 2012: Experts are calling for increased international support to help stem the supply of weapons to illicit markets ahead of a crucial summit meeting next week.

MAG (the Mines Advisory Group) and BICC (Bonn International Center for Conversion) will appeal to delegates for stronger political and financial commitment to the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and all Its Aspects (the PoA) at its Second Review Conference in New York.

The PoA is a global mechanism combating the life-threatening problem of [small arms and light weapons](#) (SALW) proliferation, identified by the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs as “the weapons of choice in civil wars and for terrorism, organised crime and gang warfare”.

The two organisations, whose aims include improving the security of Government stockpiles to reduce the diversion of weapons to the illicit market, are calling the next few weeks ‘a critical moment for disarmament issues’ after July’s Arms Trade Treaty negotiations failed to culminate in an agreement.

MAG’s Chris Loughran says that increased commitment to the PoA, and focus on its implementation, is now more important than ever.

“Although the outcome of the ATT diplomatic conference was disappointing, we praise the efforts of States and civil society colleagues and hope that dialogue towards a strong treaty continues.

“However, maintaining political will to address SALW proliferation is crucial. The international community now has the opportunity to strengthen an existing instrument – the PoA.

“We see daily the negative effects that illegal SALW and their ammunition have on the safety and security of communities and how their illicit spread presents a significant barrier to conflict recovery, human security and the development of more transparent and accountable state security institutions.

“Yet, in countries such as Burundi, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, we have seen how, with time and expert technical assistance, initial weapons destruction projects can develop into more comprehensive strategies.”

“BICC has been providing assistance to South Sudan for over a year now”, adds Marius Kahl, Technical Advisor at the Bureau for Community Security & Small Arms Control (BCSSAC).

“In cases like this, where a country is recovering from conflict, where technical capacity is low and security sector officials don’t necessarily know how to achieve the desired results, programmes need to have a foundation in the needs assessments and incremental assistance plans that many donors are not willing to fund.”

BICC’s Wolf-Christian Paes agrees that financial commitment for long-term programming is crucial for projects to be truly sustainable.

“We have seen first-hand how this work can have tangible results. But it needs to take place against a medium to long-term timeline.

“MAG and BICC are united in calling on States to increase financial assistance commitments. Identifying needs through reporting mechanisms, assessments to inform planning and policy are all crucial in determining lasting solutions.

“Long-term financial commitment from donors means the difference between a cure and a sticking plaster.”

*Together with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, MAG will be hosting a side event at the UN PoA Second Review Conference. Practical implementation lessons: Armoury and stockpile assessment in Africa will take place on **Wednesday 5 September**, in Conference Room 1, United Nations, New York.*

*BICC will also be hosting Preventing diversion of arms and ammunition: Approaches in Sudan and South Sudan with the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN. The presentation will take place on **Tuesday 28 August** at the German House, New York.*

For more information on **MAG**’s work, or to request an interview, please contact Clare Hargreaves, Media and Communications Officer, in the UK on + (0) 161 238 5445 or email clare.hargreaves@maginternational.org.

Alternatively, please visit the website: www.maginternational.org

For further information on **BICC**’s work, or to request an interview, please contact Susanne Heinke, Head of PR, in Germany on +49 228 9119644 or email pr@bicc.de

Alternatively, please visit the website: www.bicc.de/

Notes for Editors:

About MAG

[MAG \(Mines Advisory Group\)](#) is an international NGO working to provide relief of suffering and distress wherever armed violence and remnants of conflict restrict the lives and development of a country and its people.

Best known as a world leader in landmine/ UXO clearance and more widely Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA), MAG has been delivering ammunition and arms management projects, in collaboration with State authorities, for over five years.

MAG is co-laureate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

About BICC

As an independent, non-profit organisation, [BICC](#) (Internationales Konversionszentrum Bonn – Bonn International Center for Conversion) deals with a wide range of global topics in the field of peace and conflict research.

The promotion of peace and development is the most important precondition for security and the transformation of conflicts. BICC takes a comprehensive view of ‘conversion’ as the reduction and transformation of military stockpiles, capacities and processes. This perception of conversion comprises an understanding of peace and security, which goes far beyond the narrow focus that national states place on military security.

Arms Trade Treaty: For further information, please visit www.un.org/disarmament/ATT/

UNPoA: For further information, visit www.poa-iss.org

UEMS (Unplanned Explosions at Munitions Sites): For further information on UEMS, visit the Small Arms Survey website www.smallarmssurvey.org/.