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, modular guidance on the safe and secure management of ammunition for the benefit of all interested stakeholders.


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International Ammunition Technical Guidelines

The UN SaferGuard Programme serves as the custodian for the IATG – ensuring their highest technical quality through regular updates. 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.

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 whole-of-life’ approach to ammunition management. These volumes are subdivided into 45 individual modules. Users of the IATG can opt for applying the guidelines’ basic, intermediate, or advanced levels, making the IATG relevant for all situations by taking into account the diversity in capacities and resources available. These increasingly thorough steps are called risk reduction process levels (RRPLs).

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. The IATG are available in multiple languages. The latest version of each guideline, can be found at www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition. The next version will be published in 2020.

IATG implementation support toolkit and guides

Key IATG implementation support tools – ranging from a risk reduction checklist to an explosive-limit license generator – are available for immediate use to improve ammunition safety at www.un.org/disarmament/un-saferguard.

UN SaferGuard has also made available implementation support guides to assist authorities in utilizing the IATG and translating them into national procedures.

Assistance

The UN SaferGuard Programme can identify technical expertise to provide assistance to requesting national authorities. Under the UN SaferGuard Quick-Response Mechanism, UNODA arranges for ammunition stockpile management assistance, including technical assessments, training for personnel, technical and policy support and/or clearance activities, in accordance with the IATG. Donors can contact UNODA to contribute. Affected countries and ammunition technical experts can also connect with UNODA for further information.

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