



Exercise: Using the ISACS-AT in context of conducting SALW surveys

ISACS Operational Module 05.10: Conducting small arms and light weapons surveys

SCENARIO – Context

Country O has recently come out of several years of conflict and armed violence, with widespread arms proliferation among non-state actors, whom obtained these weapons through direct contributions from foreign governments, leakage from government stocks, recovered from the battlefield, and cross-border transfers facilitated through the porous nature of its borders.

The UN Security Council, politically divided over the conflict in Country O, has not imposed an arms embargo on the country, but several Countries in the region have imposed targeted sanctions after the outbreak of the conflict. In order for these sanctions to be lifted, these sanction imposing States have made it clear that the Government of Country O needs to establish, improve and demonstrate its measures on weapons management.

Prior to the armed conflict, the State was both a manufacturer and an importer/exporter of small arms and light weapons. Security was provided predominantly by State agencies, such as Police Force, while there were numerous private security firms active in the country, mainly in the Capital and other urban areas. While the conflict saw the number of private security companies (PSCs) in the Country O decrease, the recent end to the conflict has seen a rise in the use of PSCs once again.

With the conflict ending eight months ago, there are initial estimates of between 1.9 and 2.1 million small arms and light weapons in Country O, with more than two-thirds of which are circulating outside of state-controlled stockpiles (estimates made by external research organization relying on open source information). These estimates are not considered a reliable source of data by the Government. The users types of these weapons are not very well documented, while there are several armed groups that are known to possess small arms and light weapons.

Following the conflict, to secure its territory and strengthen its security apparatus to protect its population, the newly established Government of Country O has expressed interest in manufacturing and importing/exporting arms and ammunition once again. Furthermore, the Government is currently interested in revising its law on civilian possession of small arms and light weapons, and has expressed interest in conducting a collection programme.

As described above, the Government has made SALW control a priority of its agenda. As a first step, it has ordered its National SALW Commission to plan a SALW survey in order to get a clearer picture on the distribution of SALW and provide a baseline for informed policy decisions and joint projects and activities carried out with international and national partners. The last baseline survey conducted on small arms control was 6 years ago, prior to the conflict.

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TASK for both teams

You are part of an independent, external consultant team that have been contracted by the National SALW Commission to carry out the baseline survey on small arms and light weapons. As a first step, the Commission has requested that you review the methodology of the data collected from the previous distribution survey conducted prior to the conflict, with the view to provide expert inputs on its design, and prepare a report to the Commission on the findings.

Specifically, the Commission is interested using the ISACS Module, 5.10 Conducting Small Arms Survey, Clause 9.6.2 as the basis to gather the following information from the review:

- 1) What data the previous surveyors covered well; and
- 2) What data they missed out on.

For data missing/not covered by the previous surveyors, you must:

- a) Explain the importance of collecting such data; and
- b) Propose how the Commission could collect such information through use of surveys.

As requested by the Commission, you must consult the ISACS to complete this task. The main responsibility of your task is to convince the Commission to conduct a comprehensive distribution survey. You will present the findings to the head of the Commission. Your presentation may be conducted verbally or through use of visuals. You may use the ISACS in hardcopy or the ISACS-AT to complete this task.

ASSUMPTION

Work with the information provided. All available information on SALW data collected in the previous distribution survey is presented below. If certain information is missing, consider that the relevant information has not been observed, presented or made available to you.

HELP TIP

Recall the steps to conducting an assessment:

1. Identify the information need that needs to be measured in the Module;
2. Using the ISACS-AT PDF, collect relevant data;
3. Analyze the results to inform the findings and report.

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COPY: Distribution assessment methodology on small arms and light weapons data collected by Agency (A) prior to the conflict

Overview

Data was collected from State agencies, as well as from military, police, customs and border guards. The names of these agencies – a total five – were recorded, but it was not possible to obtain data on the quantity and types of small arms in the possession of each State agency. Also, the survey collected overall number of personnel from each agency, but was unable to determine the number of personnel who had access to small arms within those agencies.

The survey collected data related to civilian ownership of small arms. Data was collected on the legislative and regulatory framework governing the access of civilians to small arms and light weapons, with types and categories of licences recorded of private individuals and private shooting clubs and ranges. The data collected on the number of licences in force was disaggregated by licence type. Limited data was collected on the number of applications for new licences each year, and this information was not disaggregated by licence type. Information related to the expiration of licenses was not collected. The survey collected data on quantity and types of small arms and light weapons legally held by civilians. Accurate data could not be obtained on small arms illicitly held by civilians.

Access to information on private security companies was restricted and no meaningful data were obtained from them.

Manufacture

General data collection was conducted for manufacture of small arms, light weapons, their parts, components and ammunition. Baseline data was collected on the legislative and regulatory framework governing domestic manufacture, including the types and categories of licences and authorizations required for manufacture. There were a total of seven authorized manufacturers and their production capacities were recorded. Information was also obtained on the quantities and type of small arms and ammunition manufactured legally.

The survey did not include data on the number of unauthorized manufacturers and their respective production capacity, including the quantities and types of weapons and ammunition manufactured illicitly. Clear explanation for exclusion of this data is not provided in this note.

Transfers

Data collection was not possible for information related to domestic and international transfers of small arms, including authorized brokers, due to restricted access to such information. It should be noted that the Government was not fully transparent and cooperative in sharing information regarding their regulatory frameworks dealing with licenses and authorizations on transfers.

Information on diversion

Information could not be collected on the quantities and types of small arms, light weapons and ammunition lost by or stolen from relevant stakeholders, including from State agencies, private security companies and private individuals. The surveyors noted here again that the Government was not entirely transparent with data related to diversion.

Collection and disposal

No information was collected on small arms, light weapons and ammunition that were relinquished by civilians or seized/confiscated by the State. No collection programme has been implemented so far in Country O. Information, however, was shared and collected on the State's practices on the means of disposal of weapons for unwanted weapons.

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