



MAG SALW Global Update April 2008



Iraq - Housewife showing mortars located inside her house

MAG and SALW - As the scale of the Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW)¹ problem has become apparent across the world, MAG has been increasingly involved in addressing the threat posed by these items. The illicit proliferation of SALW prolongs conflicts, causes instability, undermines development, and is now well established as the leading threat to human security globally. MAG is currently undertaking SALW projects in Burundi, Congo (Republic of), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq and Sudan. In addition, MAG conducted an assessment to the Central African Republic during February 2008.

Burundi

MAG is working to reduce the SALW threat in Burundi through the destruction of Man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS) and other weapons, and through ensuring safe storage of weapons and ammunition currently stored at the logistics base in Bujumbura. **Small Arms Ammunition (SAA) destruction continued in April 2008 with a total of 47,971 items of SAA being destroyed** (22,500 through Forces de Defense Nationales and 25,471 through the Burundian National Police). 180 rifles were also destroyed in April. Further to the request from the Burundian National Police to provide technical assistance for an emergency response in securing ammunition seized and in listing weapons before demolition, MAG is examining the available options to facilitate this request. Currently, this is primarily focussed on sourcing additional funding to complement existing funding.

Iraq

MAG continues to work to reduce the widespread threat posed by SALW in many areas of Iraq. In April 2008 MAG was called to Shamsawa village in Sulimaniyah governorate to investigate dangerous SALW contamination left behind during the Iran-Iraq war. The MAG SALW Community Liaison team was deployed first to collect more information about the contamination. After that a **MAG SALW clearance team safely removed and destroyed 163 hazardous items which included mortars, projectiles, fuses and other types of unexploded ordnance (UXO)**. The task was successfully completed, directly benefiting 1,000 people and indirectly benefiting 1,500 people. The presence of MAG teams in the village raised the awareness of SALW contamination in the community, and since the completion of this task, the villagers have informed MAG about the suspected presence of other UXO being buried in the area. MAG SALW teams have started digging in the area to locate, and safely remove and destroy the additional hazardous items.

¹ MAG uses the term *Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)* to refer to all lethal conventional munitions that can be carried by an individual or a light vehicle, and that also do not require a substantial logistical and maintenance capability (SEESAC definition). This includes military-style automatic rifles, machine guns, man-portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and light mortars (PM/WRA definition) and their associated ammunition.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

MAG DRC launched a nationwide SALW programme in September 2006. In May 2007 MAG received written authorisation by the Ministry of Defence to destroy surplus military stocks in all Military Regions. Also in May 2007, a destruction centre was established by MAG at the Central Logistics Base in Kinshasa with funding from the United States Department of State. A MAG SALW mobile team deployed to the 2nd Military Region (Bas-Congo) in April 2008, **destroying a total of 6,116 items of ammunition** in stockpiles located in Matadi and Kitona. MAG's other SALW mobile team conducted a **stockpiles assessment mission** in Kolwezi, 6th Military Region (Katanga). In addition, **434 weapons were destroyed in Pweto by MAG's Mine Action teams**. Due to difficulties faced by the Military Regions in sending their weapons stocks to Kinshasa, destruction of weapons at the Central Logistics Base there has been temporarily suspended but will resume shortly. Thanks to funding from the Royal Government of the Netherlands, **MAG has opened a new base in Mbuji-Mayi to support SALW operations in the Kasai Occidental, Kasai Oriental and Maniema**. Training of new teams to work in this area started in April 2008 with operations to commence shortly.

Republic of Congo

Since November 2007 MAG has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Defence in the Republic of Congo, to provide technical support to the Forces Armées Congolaises (FAC) to safely destroy SALW in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire. In April 2008 MAG continued to provide technical support and training to members of the Forces Armées Congolaises (FAC) in the identification, registration and destruction of weapons and ammunition from storage depots. **A total of 36,692 items in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire were destroyed** by the operations team using burning and controlled demolition techniques. **Items destroyed included over 30,000 items of small arms ammunition, 994 electric detonators, 2,899 fuses, 298 artillery shells, 92 hand grenades and 59 rifle grenades.**

Sudan

MAG's SALW team has been operational in South Sudan since 2005. It currently operates out of MAG's base in Yei, Central Equatoria, but performs clearance activities in neighbouring Western Equatoria also, funded by MAG America and United States Department of State. Current team leader is MAG's Technical Field Manager (TFM) Jack Frost, who has been working with the team for over one year now. The team tends to go out for 2-3 weeks at a time fly-camping in different areas before returning to base to rest and refuel. Sudan provides challenging terrain and difficult conditions to work in, particularly during the rainy season when many areas and roads become impassable. In April 2008 the SALW team worked in Yei and Terekeka in Central Equatoria. **The team completed 32 spot tasks and destroyed 5 stockpiles.** The table below details the items removed and destroyed:

Summary Table	Number removed & destroyed
SAA (up to and including 20mm)	18,874
Munitions (up to and including 100mm)	1,020
Munitions (101mm +)	354
MANPADS	0
Light Weapons	0
Weapons (101mm +)	0
Total destroyed	20,248

By removing this threat MAG has made land available to the local populations for development and assisted in enabling safe return for the vulnerable populations returning to their homes in this part of Central Equatoria.

MAG would like to express our gratitude to the following current donors to our SALW projects around the globe:

- US Department of State, Political Military Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement
- Conflict Prevention Pool (UK Government)
- Royal Government of the Netherlands