



# FACT SHEET EAST AFRICA

## Weapons and Ammunition Logistics in Eastern Africa – Austrian Activities in the RECSA Region

### PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) is an intergovernmental organisation comprised of fifteen eastern African states. RECSA is mandated to address the problem of the illegal proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the region, to promote capacity building in the member states and to coordinate and monitor various activities in the region. RECSA has its origins in the **politically binding Nairobi Declaration** of 2000 and the **legally binding Nairobi Protocol** of 2004 with the objective of preventing, controlling and reducing SALW in the region. RECSA was founded in 2005 by the states Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Following the accession of the Seychelles (2005), Somalia (2005), the Republic of Congo (2011) as well as the Central African Republic and South Sudan (both 2011), RECSA now has fifteen member states. Ten of fifteen members are currently listed among the top 25 in the index of fragile states. The problem of the illicit proliferation of SALW is a major driver of a variety of other related challenges: armed conflicts, organised crime, terrorism and the illegal exploitation of natural resources continue to be fed and escalate; the consequences for the civilian population and the environment are devastating.

### FACT BOX

**RECSA Mandate:** Control and reduction of illicit SALW as well as preventive measures, promotion of capacity building in the member states as well as coordination and monitoring of the various activities in the region. This is intended to contribute to sustainable development in the member states.

**Foundation:** 2005

**Geographic extension:** Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa and bordering states.

**Member states (15):** Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda

**Population of all member states:** 518 million (2022); EU (in comparison): 447 million (2022)

**Budget:** approx. 26 million USD (2018 - 2020)

**Seat of the Secretariat:** Nairobi (Kenya)

### BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The SALW topic has been a thematic focus of the training activities of the International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC) in Kenya for a long time. Until 2010, activities in this area were financed by Great Britain and the USA. In 2012, project management was handed over to Germany. Due to its regional focus and functioning infrastructure, it was assessed that the training programme on Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) of SALW and CA for Eastern African states at the IPSTC was to be continued in a structured and targeted manner. Besides Germany as project leader, Great Britain continued to participate by providing instructors and Denmark by providing annual budget funds; Austria has contributed instructors from the Federal Ministry of Defence/Austrian Armed Forces from the beginning and made financial contributions. In addition, the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), an institution from the field of applied research, as well as RECSA as the responsible regional organisation were involved in implementing the project. In 2019, Austria took over the project leadership, while Germany and Denmark withdrew from the project.



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**REFERENCES:** SAS, RECSA, own materials, Munzinger Online, Fragile State Index

**LAYOUT:** REF III/Medien, IFK, IMG; PHOTO: MoD

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## PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES AND OUTLOOK

**2012 to mid-2016:** general awareness raising on arms and ammunition stockpile security and training of regional instructors.

Between **2012 and 2018**, 300 students from sixteen Eastern African countries were trained on "Awareness Raising in Weapons and Ammunition Storage Safety and Security". Furthermore, despite all the challenges, it was possible to gradually establish a regional pool of eighteen instructors and six senior instructors.

**Mid-2016 to mid-2019:** continuation of the training of course participants and instructors from the weapons and ammunition sector; start of the training of senior instructors to enable the sustainable continuation of the training in regional responsibility.

In parallel to this, **since 2016 national courses have been held** by the trained instructors **under the responsibility of RECSA** in interested RECSA member states, taking into account political, ethnic and hierarchical sensitivities.

**From mid-2019** (until March 2025 at the latest), the focus will be on stabilising the regional senior instructor pool. Germany ended its participation in the project in March 2019 and handed over the responsibility for training activities to RECSA, which is now in charge of coordinating the training programme. An implementation strategy for the next five years (2019 - 2024) was already jointly developed by Germany, Austria and RECSA prior to the handover.

**In 2023**, a new module was integrated to address the cross-cutting issues of "Cross-Border Arms & Ammunition Control", "Gender" and "Natural Resource Management". Due to its great success, the project has now been declared a **model project** by the African Union and was "exported" to Western Africa by Germany. A **certification** of the training programme by the United Nations is currently being evaluated.

## METHODICAL APPROACH

- Multinational Trainer Teams (MTT)
- Application of the train-the-trainer approach with a sequence of one moderating, one mentoring and one monitoring phase each. In the moderating phase, students are trained by the MTT and trainer candidates are selected. In the next step, the candidates train new students under the guidance of the MTT (mentoring phase). At the follow-up course the candidates train new students independently and are assessed by the MTT (monitoring phase). At the end of this process, the candidates are certified as PSSM instructors. Meanwhile senior instructors took over the work of the MTT.
- The training of the senior instructors takes place in a parallel process. The train-the-trainer principle is also applied here. In the first phase, the candidates are trained by multinational instructors in methodology and didactics. In a second phase, they instruct the trainees under supervision, in the third phase they independently manage the training and are finally certified.
- The ultimate goal of the training until 2025 is to enable senior instructors to train both instructors and senior instructors on their own responsibility. This will provide all the tools for RECSA to be able to carry out the training on all levels independently.

## OBJECTIVES OF AUSTRIA AND IN PARTICULAR OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE/AUSTRIAN ARMED FORCES

This activity is currently the only regionally sustainable activity of the MoD/AAF in Eastern Africa, within an extremely fragile environment with major problems regarding the safety and security of weapons and ammunition storage, carried out in a country with a permanent diplomatic presence and an accredited defence attaché.



Group work based on a partial example

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE/AUSTRIAN ARMED FORCES

Project steering at the strategic level is carried out by the Military Policy Division, project implementation is taken care of by the Office for the Implementation of Arms Control & International Stabilisation Measures (IRIS), supported as required by experts from the Armed Forces Logistics School, the Armed Forces Ammunition Depots and the Armed Forces. With its expertise, the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management supports the dissemination of information to the public interested in security policy.

## CHALLENGES AND SENSITIVITIES

- The RECSA region as a whole is burdened with complex problems, with long-term conflict and post-conflict scenarios.
- The regional approach poses a variety of political, ethnic and hierarchical challenges, while at the same time making a broad impact and, in many cases, fulfilling the function of a platform for dialogue.
- There is a blatant lack of financial and human resources throughout the region.
- The project was scheduled to be completed by Germany in 2019 at the latest. With a number of only six regional senior instructors, the filling of the regional senior instructors pool was assessed as insufficient and hardly sustainable. Therefore, RECSA made a request for support to the donor countries involved in order to extend their cooperation. Austria agreed to continue its support until 2025 accordingly.

