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# KONTEXT

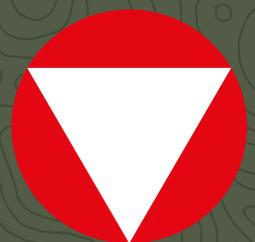


KRISEN | KRIEGE | KONFLIKTE

## Across Borders - Success Stories from East Africa



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In cooperation with:



Photo by MoD Austria/HBF

Dear readers,

At the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management (IFK) of the Austrian National Defence Academy (LVAK), experts deal with regions affected by conflicts and cross-sectional issues. Their research findings and analyses are also incorporated into security policy advice processes and the development of strategic documents. The range of tasks also includes awareness raising and knowledge transfer to the public.

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For more than a decade, Austria has been committed to improving the Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) of weapons and ammunition on the strategic and operational levels. Among those concrete projects, there is one with the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) in East Africa, which is coming to an end in 2025, and a follow-up project will be initiated. The latter will be based on the experiences made during the RECSA project. To make them visible and showcase the benefits to all the stakeholders involved, this research project was initiated. I am very pleased that the accompanying research was carried out in close cooperation with the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (bicc), a long-standing partner in the project.

In this publication, we would like to present success stories of the regional PSSM Train-the-Trainer (TtT) process and the cooperation work with the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), the leading project partner in East Africa. These insights should give you a better understanding of the challenges and the added value of the project.

DR. ANTON DENG, COLONEL  
DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR PEACE SUPPORT  
& CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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BY COLONEL HANS LAMPALZER & ANDREA GRUBER

# Leading the Way, inspiring Others

## Showcasing Success Stories of a long-standing Partnership in East Africa

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Photo by MoD Austria/HBF

**Colonel Hans Lampalzer has been responsible for the methodological and didactic design of the project's Train-the-Trainer programme since 2022.**

**From 2019 to 2024, he worked at the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management. In October 2024 he was appointed Head of the Centre for International Stabilisation Measures, Verification and Arms Control.**

**“W**hen mother cow is chewing grass, its young ones watch its mouth.” This widespread African proverb by the famous Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe emphasises that young people learn by observing and following the example of their elders. To showcase positive examples and success stories of a long-standing partnership in East Africa which are worth to be followed is the main purpose of this publication. Thirteen years have passed since the Austrian Armed Forces decided to engage in operations in East Africa in 2012. At that time, it was not foreseeable that Austria would remain in the region for so long and even take the project lead.

The global security situation has changed massively since then. Confrontation and geopolitical tensions have come to the fore, particularly since the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The scope for cooperation and multilateral action has diminished. Austria's security strategy from 2024 reflects these changed realities, although it is clear that complex security policy problems can only be solved through international cooperation. One of these global challenges is the illegal proliferation of weapons and ammunition. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) claim more victims worldwide than any other type of weapons and have a negative impact on the social and economic development of states. They often fuel conflicts and destabilise the affected society.

In 2005, the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) was established as a regional intergovernmental organization in East



Photo by MoD Austria/HBF

**Andrea Gruber is Head of Department in the Military Policy Division of the Austrian Ministry of Defence. Among others, she participated as an expert in the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Ammunition and represented the MoD in the Austrian delegation to the Open-ended Working Group on Ammunition to negotiate a new global framework document on ammunition.**

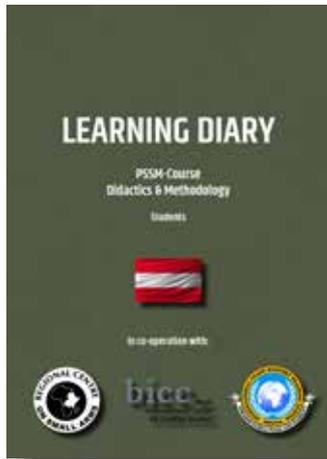


Photo by MoD Austria/Gstrein



**Honouring outstanding engagements by awarding "PSSM Implementation Lions".**

Africa. Its primary objective is to prevent excessive accumulation of SALW, to promote information sharing, cooperation, accountability, law enforcement, control and management of SALW held by governments and civilians as laid down in the Nairobi Protocol of 2004. 10 of the 15 Member States are among the top 25 on the so-called index of fragile states. The RECSA region comprises around 530 million people, which is around 70 million more than in the European Union. Its secretariat is located in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, which also hosts the United Nations.

Austria's multilateral engagement in the field of small arms and light weapons is twofold: On the one hand, diplomatic and military policy activities strongly support the further development of international regulations and technical standards in various political frameworks. On the other hand, the proposals made are implemented by experts from the Ministry of Defence in close cooperation with international partners in various regions in line with the Austrian security strategy. Partnering with RECSA has allowed so far to train nearly 500 participants from 23 countries. To create a sustainable project, Austria's engagement has been based on a Train-the-Trainer (TtT) programme. This vision has supported RECSA's strategy in capacity building and training to effectively combat the illicit proliferation of SALW in the region.

The responsibility for weapons and ammunition management lies with the Member States of RECSA. It is their experts from the military, police, border guards and wildlife service who are committed to make the region a safe place to live and support implementing RECSA's vision. We are proud to witness their great engagement and expertise. Let us bring some of them to the forefront and motivate others to follow their examples!

**To ensure sustainability, Austria's engagement has been based on a Train-the-Trainer (TtT) programme.**



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

BY COLONEL THOMAS KRAINZ,  
PROJECT LEADER MULTINATIONAL SMALL ARMS  
AND AMMUNITION GROUP (MSAG) AUSTRIA



# Navigating Success



Photo by MoD Austria/HBF

**Colonel Thomas Krainz is a graduate of the Higher Technical College for Weapons Technology in Ferlach/Austria. He has been working on the project in Kenya since 2013 and has been responsible for its management since 2019. He leads the Arms Control Section in the Centre for International Stabilisation Measures, Verification and Arms Control.**

## Milestones and Lessons Learned

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**In** 2012 a multinational team consisting of the USA, Germany, Austria, Canada and Sweden, under the umbrella of the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG), conducted the first Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) seminar at the International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC) in Nairobi. The aim was to enhance the awareness and deepen the knowledge in the field of Small Arms, Light

Weapons & Conventional Ammunition (SALW&CA) in the East African Region. After the first two seminars it became clear that only training students will not be sustainable and will not encourage regional ownership.

### **First milestone: Establishing a Train-the-Trainer (TtT) programme**

In 2013, and based on these findings, it was decided within MSAG to start

a TtT programme that would enable the participating East African countries to have national trainers who can train their own students in their environment. The knowledge was to be transferred step by step by means of a multiplier system. In order to start this initiative, it was important to have a regional partner, which proved challenging to find. Two options emerged: On the one hand, there was the East African Standby Force Coordination Mechanism (EASFCOM) and, on the other, the Regional Center on Small Arms (RECSA) as potential partners. EASFCOM was initially interested while RECSA was at that time focusing mainly on SALW marking and tracing programmes. After many consultations, it became clear that RECSA was ready to start training trainers and creating a RECSA regional trainer pool.

### **Transfer of knowledge by means of a multiplier system.**



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

**The facilities of the HPSS provide excellent opportunities for practical exercises.**

In December 2013, a multinational team consisting of Germany (lead), Austria, Canada and Sweden once again held a seminar and started the initial selection of potential instructor candidates (ICs). The first training course began in April 2014. In addition to the core team, France and the UK joined the programme with instructors and Denmark supported the programme with financial means. The first TtT concept involved completing three courses to become a PSSM trainer. In October 2015, the time had come: the first group of PSSM trainers had completed all courses.

During this process, we also learned our first lesson: the TtT training cycle had to be streamlined. At RECSA's request, the training was redesigned and standardized. The new concept, which is still valid today, provides for a three-week course in

autumn that includes methodological and didactic training at the beginning and the initial training of new students under the supervision of MSAG trainers. The second course in spring lasts two weeks to deepen and practice the acquired trainer skills further. With this reorganization, we were able to graduate PSSM trainers within a year.

Another challenge was to ensure only the most qualified students can become trainer candidates to avoid sending the 'wrong' people to further training. Here, we learned our second lesson: a selection process had to be initiated. We developed a transparent selection process that includes basic criteria such as age, position and skills related to SALW & CA. In addition, personal commitment and interaction during the course, social behaviour and conduct were included. A final test

at the end of the course was designed to complement this.

### **Second milestone: Training of local Senior Instructors**

At this point, the training of instructors was still in the hands of the MSAG military experts. In order to strengthen sustainability and regional ownership, we came to the conclusion that we should also train Senior Instructors (SI) from the region and develop a special training course for them. They were selected from the pool of instructors and were trained in methodology and didactics in particular. Specialists from the Austrian military academies developed a tailor-made programme for this purpose. From this point on, the SIs trained ►

the new ICs. With this, the role of the MSAG representatives was to act as mentors.

**Third milestone:  
handover of responsibility  
to RECSA**

In March 2019, MSAG handed over the responsibility for the regional training process to RECSA, as all the requirements for regional ownership had been met. However, one question remained: Who will train the future senior instructors? With the handover, all other MSAG nations had left the programme. At the request of RECSA, MSAG Austria decided to remain in the programme and develop a new type of Senior Instructor training with the aim that Senior Instructors could train new batches of Senior Instructors independently.

**Fourth milestone:  
development of an  
autonomous training circle**

The master plan, which outlines all training cycles and TtT phases, had to be adapted as a result of the pandemic. A final



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

**PSSM Instructor and Senior Instructor badges.**

training package for senior instructors was also developed during that time. The last seminar supported by MSAG Austria will take place in March 2025. As a result of this system, 489 students, 19 senior instructors and 52 instructors will have completed their training by March 2024. RECSA is thus able to train all types of personnel in regional autonomy.

**A look into the future**

The great success of the programme is now also known at the level of the African Union and other regional organizations. As a result, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) entered into negotiations with RECSA, MSAG Austria and the Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies (bicc) to implement the same programme for the Central African region. After initial consultations, it became clear that RECSA should support ECCAS in organizing this project based on its experience from its own regional training process. Austria and bicc have agreed to finance and support the TtT training process for ECCAS. The training will be conducted in the excellent environment of the International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC) in Nairobi.

It has been a long journey, but I am very happy and proud of what we have achieved. I would like to thank all our international partners for their cooperation and especially my team for the efforts we have made to bring a long and exciting journey to a successful conclusion.

**Closing Ceremony of the Regional PSSM Course in October 2024.**



Photo by HFSS

# Growing together

## Bicc's Journey to becoming a long-term implementing Partner



Photo by Beeck

Christine Beeck holds a Master's Degree in International Conflict Analysis of the University of Kent at Canterbury (UK) and 15+ years' experience of working in the field of Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) in a number of different positions and has worked in small and medium-sized teams in Germany, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and the UK.

**B**onn International Centre for Conflict Studies (bicc) is an independent international research institute dedicated to research and policy advice on the conditions, dynamics and consequences of violent conflicts to contribute to a more peaceful world.

Its multidisciplinary approach covers the topics of:

- building peace and social cohesion,
- militarisation and arms control,
- agents and patterns of security and war,
- violent environments and infrastructures,
- migration and forced displacement.

bicc was founded in 1994 with the support of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia and is a member of the Johannes-Rau-Research Community.

bicc has been cooperating with and providing support to its regional partners on the African continent, including the AU Commission, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), for more than a decade. During this time, bicc has supported regional initiatives, including the African Union Silencing the Guns Programme of Action (StG PoA) process, the RECSA regional PSSM Train-the-Trainer (TtT) process and cross-border initiatives, as well



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

**In order to apply what has been taught, students undertake a number of practical exercises, e.g. on risk management.**

as the ECOWAS regional PSSM TtT process. bicc aims to support the entire life cycle of weapons and ammunition by enhancing PSSM practices, supporting the implementation of national and regional PSSM trainings with a strong focus on regional ownership and sustainability, supporting legal harmonisation, as well as marking, recordkeeping, tracing and destruction initiatives.

bicc's engagement in the East African regional PSSM TtT process in Kenya started in 2012, with bicc using the opening of each PSSM course to introduce itself, and highlight its role, regional partners and activities in the region. In addition to these presentations, a handful of bicc staff members working in the field of small arms control also attended the training course as observers or students until 2016.

With the secondment of a bicc Advisor to RECSA in 2016, bicc’s role changed and the institute became one of the four implementing partners. Stakeholders contributing to the regional PSSM training are the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG), RECSA (Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States), bicc and the International Peace Support Training School (IPSTC) in Nairobi/ Kenya. Each partner brings a unique skill set that complements that of the others.

The seconded advisor allowed for continuity despite personnel changes within the regional partner organization and served as connecting piece between IPSTC, RECSA and MSAG. This proved crucial for the successful implementation of the training courses, especially in the first years. Since October 2018, a dedicated female staff member based in Bonn has been supporting the training process, taking over from the seconded advisor whose assignment ended in January 2023. Sending the same female staff member allowed for continuing continuity and the trusted relationship that had been built among all involved stakeholders. Additionally, it also sends a strong message within the very male-dominated field of PSSM.

Any long-term engagement creates opportunities that can be seized and would otherwise not have been there. A number of discussions were held between representatives of bicc and MSAG Austria in Nairobi which resulted in the development of a new training module on “Cross-cutting issues with a special focus on the

RECSA region”, including a dedicated section on “Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) and Gender. Understanding the importance of including gender considerations into WAM”. The gender component of the new training module aims to sensitise course participants to the importance of mainstreaming gender into a technical field such as PSSM and highlights its place within WAM. The new training module has been part of the official MSAG training module package for East Africa since October 2023. This training module is unique not only as it was drawn up jointly by a military and civilian partner (Dr. Hans Lampalzer and I) with regional PSSM Senior Instructors and Instructors feeding into the process with examples from their own organizations. The examples and input from the regional instructors also ensure a more context-specific application of the topic.

In addition, I have been drawing up an accompanying study or overview of a decade of capacity-building through the East African TtT training process including lessons learned and incorporating personal experiences of some of the regional trainers that have undergone the TtT process, which will be available from June 2025.



Photo by Kur

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**A new batch of proud PSSM Instructors and Senior Instructors in March 2024.**



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

BY ERIC KAYIRANGA, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS/WEAPONS  
AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT SENIOR ADVISOR

# Ingredients to Success

## Why Regional Ownership and Buy-In is key for a regional Process

**T**he ongoing or unresolved armed conflicts, acts of terrorism, cattle rustling, poaching, and other cross-border crimes are largely fuelled by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. Indeed, SALW have become the weapons of choice of many terrorist groups partly because they are cheap and easy to access, transfer, conceal, coupled with weak arms transfer controls, unresolved border issues, and weak law enforcement

capacities among others. Some of the RECSA Member States have been identified as high potential destinations and source or transit routes for the illicit trade and trafficking in SALW and explosive materials. It is against this background that RECSA Member States developed a regional mechanism to deal with the problem of illicit proliferation of SALW.

In the year 2000, ten member states in the Great Lakes region met in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss the problem of illicit proliferation of

**The MC200 Couth marking machine during the weapons marking demonstration session with participants during a practical marking session in Burundi.**



Photo by RECSA



Photo by Kayiranga

**Eric Kayiranga holds a Master's Degree in conflict prevention and peace building and is a graduate of the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA). At RECSA he leads the SALW Control and Management practice (WAM/PSSM) and coordinates the AU-UNODA Amnesty Month Project on behalf of RECSA, the implementing partner.**

small arms and its devastating effects. At the end of the conference, a political declaration commonly known as the *Nairobi Declaration on the problem of illicit proliferation of SALW in the Great Lakes Region* was signed on 15 March 2000. The declaration put in place a regional framework for tackling the illicit proliferation of small arms. In order to facilitate and institutionalize the intent of signatory states of the Nairobi Declaration, a legally binding instrument, the *Nairobi Protocol on the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States* was signed on 21 April 2004.

The Nairobi Protocol puts in place measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of, trafficking in, possession and use of SALW in the sub-region including mechanisms for information sharing among Member States. To date RECSA is comprised of 15 Member States namely: Republic of Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Republic of Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, State of Eritrea, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of Seychelles, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Sudan, Republic of the Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Uganda.

Unlike other regional SALW protocols, the Nairobi Protocol has an institutional framework to support its coordination and implementation. Accordingly, the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) was established in June 2005 by the agreement as an inter-governmental diplomatic organization with a mandate of building the capacity of Member States and to coordinate the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol.

As the issue of illicit proliferation of SALW continues to become more complex, RECSA is committed to continue working with various like-minded partners to refine our SALW interventions through support to Member States to improve weapons and ammunition management to reduce diversion and improving both the operational performance of the RECSA Secretariat as well as the National Institutions for SALW Management and Control.



Meeting the new RECSA Executive Secretary in Nairobi in October 2024.

Photo by RECSA

For the successful implementation of the regional PSSM courses, RECSA's role has included the invitation process and the coordination with its Member States to ensure the most suitable participants attend the training after fulfilling the set criteria such as the age, prior experience in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and arms management, language, availability for future trainings, the rank between Second Lieutenant to Major or equivalent.

Despite all the set criteria for participation in the regional PSSM training, RECSA has experienced challenges with some Member States sending participants who do not fulfil all those criteria which has had an impact on the selection and the certification of a good number of qualified PSSM instructors.

RECSA will continue to implement its mandate of supporting its Member States with focus on capacity building of the law enforcement agencies and the military with training on PSSM, arms marking and record keeping, destruction of obsolete weapons and

provision of arms marking equipment and safe storage facilities such as armouries.

With its Member States' support, the commitment of the RECSA Secretariat and the National Focal Points and all our key partners in the organization of the regional PSSM Trainings, we can find sustainable solutions to the problem of the illicit proliferation of SALW in the Great Lakes Region and beyond and impactfully contribute to sustainable regional peace and security.

**RECSA support to a Member State included the provision of containerized armouries.**



Photo by RECSA

BY CHIEF INSPECTOR POLICE JAMES MUKUA NDICHU, BORDER POLICE KENYA

# Strengthening Security

## The Critical Role of Physical Security and Stockpile Management

**A** thousand-mile journey begins with a single step, and my journey into the noble work of arms management was no exception. Taking command of the arm store was both an immense privilege and a daunting challenge. The first hurdle was establishing a functional system that included acquiring a computer and a dedicated data entry clerk. This laid the foundation for the painstaking tasks of conducting a physical examination of all small and light weapons and accurate entry of firearm body numbers, issuance dates, and status into our records.

I must say that it was a great honour to be selected for training in Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM). It goes without saying that our mandate of controlling border regions and preventing the proliferation of illicit arms and ammunition is critical. The unchecked spread of illegal arms within Kenya, along with increasing cattle rustling, has fuelled crime and enabled terrorism. These activities have caused unspeakable destruction, undermined sustainable development, and jeopardized the safety of communities and security personnel alike.



Photo by Ndichu

**Chief Inspector Police James Mukua Ndichu was appointed as Administration Police Commander in August 2024.**

**Preceding this appointment, he was, among others, Deputy Logistics Officer in the Border Police Transport Bureau.**

**For his merits in implementing PSSM in the region, he was awarded with the PSSM Implementation Lion in 2024.**

Against this backdrop, and after serving in conflict-prone areas along the Kenya-South Sudan, Kenya-Somalia, and Kenya-Ethiopia borders, I was nominated in 2018 to attend the regional PSSM Train-the-Trainer training course. This opportunity was timely, as I had just been deployed to the Office of the Border Police Unit in Charge of Arms and Ammunition Management. The challenges along the borders were immense at that time, and my role required the necessary skills and knowledge to secure and manage national stockpiles effectively – a fundamental step in curbing the proliferation of illicit small arms.



The week-long PSSM training course was invaluable, significantly boosting my confidence in managing Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The training provided practical strategies, often requiring minimal resources or high-level approvals, which enabled me to implement effective management systems. These initiatives not only impressed my superiors but also greatly enhanced the efficiency and security of the department. The course ingrained in me a deep understanding of SALW stockpile management, which led to the establishment of robust systems and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These SOPs encompassed the entire life-cycle of arms and ammunition management, from requisition to transport, transfer, storage, and eventual disposal. The goal was clear: to ensure accountability and prevent the diversion or theft of weapons and ammunition.

Our efforts did not go unnoticed. The effective management of SALW within our unit attracted further funding and

support from organizations like the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) and the Deputy Inspector General's office. This support facilitated the implementation of advanced security measures, including the installation of CCTV cameras, improved lighting, weapon racks, refurbished workshops, containerized armouries, and perimeter fencing – all of which required stringent authorization and significant financial investment. One of the key milestones in our management of SALW was the introduction of a comprehensive marking and tracing system, made possible by the donation of two dot pen marking machines. This enabled the 100% marking of all SALW under our jurisdiction.

Further, the digitalization of the SALW record-keeping system revolutionized

our data management, creating a centralized and easily accessible repository. This digital system supported the development of clear standards for staff roles and responsibilities, ensuring a disciplined



Photo by Ndichu

**The regional PSSM training also provided practical strategies, often requiring minimal resources, e.g. on how to improve security measures.**



Photo by Ndichu

Photo by Ndichu



**The improved management of SALW within our Unit attracted further funding and support, including weapons racks.**

and capable team at the core of our operations. We established a separation of duties – those who authorized issuance were not the same individuals who issued the weapons, and a different team member

was responsible for system updates, supervision, and auditing. This separation of duties was crucial in preventing misconduct, corruption, and errors within the SALW management process.

In addition, energy-efficient fluorescent lighting was installed in hallways and weapon storage cells to improve visibility and safety. Perimeter floodlights and checkpoint lighting were added to deter criminal activity, while security cameras were strategically placed to prevent theft, diversion, and vandalism, and to provide crucial evidence for investigations.

The risks associated with SALW and munitions storage – including improper ammunition storage, environmental factors, and inadequate resource prioritization – were significantly mitigated through these measures. The PSSM interventions applied in the Border Police Unit, supported by training in munitions awareness, logistics, and international standards such as MOSAIC and IATG, laid the groundwork for a robust and secure stockpile management system. These trainings have equipped our Unit to handle the challenges of SALW management with a level of professionalism and efficiency that is critical to ensuring the security and safety of our nation.

**Improving security measures step by step.**



BY MAJOR EVANS OTIENO WANJALA,  
HUMANITARIAN PEACE SUPPORT SCHOOL (HPSS),  
KENYAN DEFENCE FORCES

# Training for Global Peace



## IPSTC's Role in Training, Research and Education

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In an era marked by complex global security challenges, the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) in Kenya stands as a beacon of hope and progress. IPSTC plays a crucial role in the conduct of training, education and research geared towards building the capacity of military personnel, civil police, and civilians to effectively respond to emergencies in Peace Support Operation (PSO) environments. Among its many areas of expertise, the IPSTC's contribution to Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) training deserves special attention.

As a PSSM Instructor, I wish to reiterate that PSSM remains a critical component of contemporary peacekeeping and security operations. PSSM encompasses the practices and procedures designed to safeguard weapons, conventional ammunition, and

explosives from theft, loss, accidents, and unauthorized use. In this context, the IPSTC-Kenya has positioned itself as a regional hub in offering a platform in PSSM training since its inception. This training initiative is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement effective PSSM practices in challenging operational environments.

One of the key strengths of the IPSTC's approach to PSSM training lies in its existing training facilities where practical, hands-on learning takes place. This approach ensures that trainees are well-prepared to face real-world challenges they may encounter in their day-to-day activities or peacekeeping duties.

The MSAG PSSM training modules utilized during the regional PSSM training for the RECSA region at IPSTC under the aegis of the government of Austria cover a wide range of PSSM topics, including ammunition basics, arms security, risk assessment, inventory management, storage facility security, and transportation safety among others. Consequently, students learn about international best practices and standards, such as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) which are key in the application when it comes to national stockpile management.

Moreover, the IPSTC's contributions towards this regional PSSM training programme are linked to the following merits:

- i. The centre has the resources, both material and structural, needed to host the training.
- ii. HPSS, which hosts the training, is located close to Jomo Kenyatta

**A static display of grenades, landmines, ammunition and IED's forms one session of the regional PSSM course.**



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

International Airport, hence easily accessible and ideal in terms of logistics support.

- iii. The training facilities such as ammunitions bunkers and arms storage are readily available during training.
- iv. Infrastructure can fully support the concurrent courses for instance Senior Instructor Candidates, Instructor Candidate and basic PSSM trainings.

The role and impact of the regional PSSM training held at IPSTC extends far beyond the confines of the classroom. As a graduate and instructor of this programme, I can state this as an ambassador of best practices in weapons and ammunition management. I have played pivotal roles in implementing improved PSSM measures, conducting risk assessments, and training colleagues.

action and disarmament (SALW, EOD/conventional munition disposal and humanitarian demining training), improvised explosive threat mitigation programmes and research activities, among others. In this regard, bringing together participants from various countries and sectors, the centre facilitates the sharing of experiences and lessons learned. This cross-pollination of ideas leads to innovative approaches to common challenges and fosters regional cooperation in addressing security threats.

As the global security landscape continues to evolve, the role of institutions like the IPSTC-Kenya in PSSM training becomes increasingly vital. The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), coupled with the emergence of new technologies and threats, demands a proactive and adaptive approach to weapons and conventional ammunition management. IPSTC rises to this challenge by remaining steadfast in offering platforms where such programmes can be conducted to meet the growing demand for PSSM expertise.

In conclusion, the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya plays an indispensable role in advancing Physical Security and Stockpile Management practices across the region and beyond. Through its comprehensive training programmes, practical approach, and commitment to international standards, the IPSTC is making significant contributions to peace and security efforts. The impact of the IPSTC's in support to PSSM training will continue to ripple outward, fostering a safer and more secure world for all.



Photo by Wanjala

**Major Evans Otieno Wanjala is a Senior Instructor at the Mine Action and Disarmament Wing at the Humanitarian Peace Support School/ International Peace Support Training Centre in Nairobi/Kenya. He successfully qualified as a PSSM Instructor in 2024.**



**The infrastructure at the HPSS is suitable for a number of diverse courses.**

Furthermore, the IPSTC serves as a hub of excellence for knowledge exchange and collaboration not only in the field of PSSM trainings but also offers other comprehensive programmes. These include: conflict prevention, conflict management, post conflict recovery, UN/AU pre-deployment programmes, mine

**Bringing together participants from various countries, HPSS facilitates the sharing of experiences and lessons learned. Final practical exercise, group 2 discussing "inner security" in October 2023.**



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

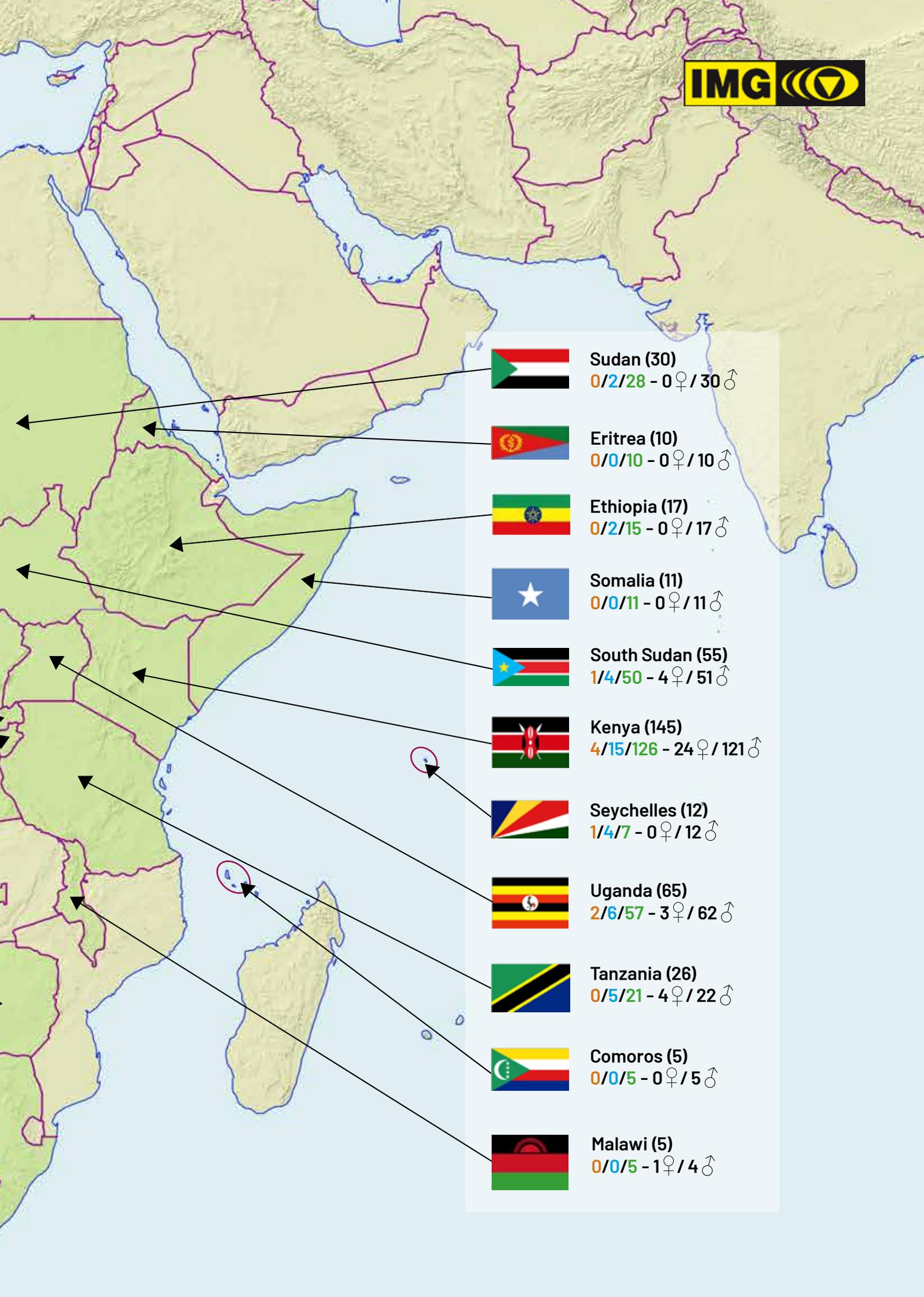
# 24 Countries (493 participants)\*

\*19 African and 5 other Countries incl. IOs/NGOs

13 Senior Instructors / 42 Instructors / 438 Students

40 ♀ / 453 ♂





**Sudan (30)**  
0/2/28 - 0 ♀ / 30 ♂



**Eritrea (10)**  
0/0/10 - 0 ♀ / 10 ♂



**Ethiopia (17)**  
0/2/15 - 0 ♀ / 17 ♂



**Somalia (11)**  
0/0/11 - 0 ♀ / 11 ♂



**South Sudan (55)**  
1/4/50 - 4 ♀ / 51 ♂



**Kenya (145)**  
4/15/126 - 24 ♀ / 121 ♂



**Seychelles (12)**  
1/4/7 - 0 ♀ / 12 ♂



**Uganda (65)**  
2/6/57 - 3 ♀ / 62 ♂



**Tanzania (26)**  
0/5/21 - 4 ♀ / 22 ♂



**Comoros (5)**  
0/0/5 - 0 ♀ / 5 ♂



**Malawi (5)**  
0/0/5 - 1 ♀ / 4 ♂

# “At the Forefront of regional Peace and Security Efforts”

Interview with Jean-Pierre Betindji,  
Executive Secretary RECSA

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**D**ear Executive Secretary, as you have only recently been entrusted with this position, could you please tell us what your motivation was to lead RECSA in the coming years?

*My motivation to lead the RECSA Secretariat stems from the urgent need to address the devastating impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in our region. The statistics are alarming - armed conflicts are at record highs and firearms are responsible for nearly half of violent deaths, both in conflict and non-conflict settings.*

*I am driven by a deep commitment to transforming this reality. My motivation goes beyond mere administrative duties. It is about creating tangible change - preventing violence, protecting communities, and promoting sustainable peace and development across our region.*

*My motivation is fuelled by the potential to empower our member states and to contribute to the African Union’s “Silencing the Guns” initiative. By strengthening our institutional capabilities, mobilizing resources, and fostering unity among stakeholders, we can work towards a future where small arms no longer threaten the safety and potential of our people.*

*Each day, I am inspired by the opportunity to lead the RECSA Secretariat - an organization that stands at the forefront of regional peace and security efforts, committed to creating meaningful, lasting change.*

Validation Workshop of the Regional Action Plan on Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration contexts in the RECSA region, 18 November 2024, Nairobi, Kenya.



**Could you please tell us about your goals and future initiatives for this important regional organisation?**

As the 4<sup>th</sup> RECSA Executive Secretary, my key goals and initiatives to advance RECSA's mission of addressing Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation include the following areas: Collaboration and Partnerships, Capacity Building, Advocacy and Awareness, Research and Data, Gender Mainstreaming, Conflict Prevention and Resource Mobilization.

I aim to strengthen our network by deepening cooperation with Member States, international organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders. By leveraging collective resources and expertise, we can more effectively tackle the complex issues surrounding small arms proliferation. Additionally, a critical focus will be investing in our member states' capabilities through targeted training, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing opportunities. This will enhance their ability to manage and control small arms effectively.

During my tenure in office, I intend to intensify efforts to raise



Photo by RECSA

**Jean Pierre Betindji was appointed as the Executive Secretary of the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) in April 2024.**

**He hails from the Central African Republic and holds advanced degrees in political and anthropological philosophy, with additional specialization in conflict management from Oxford University in the UK.**

**Among different coordination and leadership positions in various structures and programs, Mr. Betindji served from 2019 to 2023 as the National Rapporteur for the UN Sanctions Monitoring Committee on the Central African Republic, overseeing the embargo on conventional arms and related materials.**

**He also held the position of Executive Secretary of the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (COMNATALPC) and was the RECSA National Focal Point during the same period.**

awareness about the devastating impact of illicit small arms, targeting senior government officials and the broader public to garner more support for disarmament as well as other small arms control initiatives. Another goal will be to improve our research capabilities and data collection methods will be crucial to inform evidence-based policy-making and strategic interventions.

The Secretariat will also prioritize inclusive approaches that ensure the voices of women, men, girls, boys, and marginalized groups are heard in our small arms proliferation prevention efforts. Additionally, it recognizes the critical role small arms play in fuelling conflicts. To this end, the Secretariat will enhance and support the Member States capability to effectively implement the Nairobi Protocol on the Prevention, Control and Reduction of SALW in the Great Lakes region, Horn of Africa and Bordering States.

Last, but not least, I will actively seek funding opportunities and partnerships to ensure the sustainability of small arms and light weapons control and management initiatives. ▶

Photo by RECSA



**According to your current assessment, what are the greatest challenges in realising RECSA’s vision of ‘a secure sub-region in a peaceful continent without arms proliferation’?**

*Realizing RECSA’s vision of “a secure sub-region in a peaceful continent without arms proliferation” involves addressing persistent challenges, such as the proliferation of illicit small arms, a limited adoption of record-keeping technology, insecurity and political instability, resource constraints, socioeconomic and cultural factors, and emerging threats, such as technological advancements, including 3D-printed firearms, that pose new challenges to traditional arms control measures, requiring updated approaches and legislation.*

*The widespread availability of small arms fuels conflicts and crime. Ongoing conflicts, porous borders, and weak governance in parts of the region complicate efforts to control the movement and misuse of small arms, perpetuating cycles of violence. Tracing these weapons remains difficult, especially in areas with weak enforcement of marking and tracing protocols. While arms marking has gained traction, the adoption of electronic record-keeping systems, such as the RECSA Software Tracing System (RSTS), has*

*been slower. Concerns about data security and mistrust in technology hinder broader use.*

*The demand for small arms is driven by issues such as unemployment, social tensions, and traditional reliance on arms for security in some communities. Addressing these root causes is critical but complex.*

*Effective arms control initiatives require sustained funding and technical support. Many Member States rely on external assistance, making the programs vulnerable to shifts in donor priorities.*

*To realize RECSA’s vision, concerted efforts are needed to enhance political will, improve economic conditions, build technical capacity, effectively implement existing protocols, address security challenges, combat organized crime, and incorporate gender perspectives into arms control strategies. These challenges require collaborative approaches among Member States and support from international partners to foster a secure environment free from arms proliferation.*

**Dear Executive Secretary, thank you for sharing your thoughts with us.**

**“To realize RECSA’s vision, concerted efforts are needed to enhance political will, improve economic conditions, build technical capacity, effectively implement existing protocols, address security challenges, combat organized crime, and incorporate gender perspectives into arms control strategies.”**

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Photo by RECSA

BY MAJOR KUOL GABRIEL NYOK KUR,  
SOUTH SUDAN NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE

# “Silencing the Guns in Africa”

## Putting the Vision into Action



Photo by Kur

**Major Kuol Gabriel Nyok Kur is Office Manager at the South Sudan National Police Service. He holds a Master’s Degree in Security Sector Management from Cranfield University (UK). He was certified as a PSSM Senior Instructor in 2023. For his outstanding work in implementing PSSM in the field he was awarded the Implementation Lion in 2023.**

**In** the journey of life, there are pivotal moments that test our resolve, shape our character, and define our destinies. My journey through the regional Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) training at the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) in Nairobi, Kenya, was one such defining experience. This training, organized by the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), was more than just a professional development opportunity; it was a crucial step in the larger battle against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa, and neighbouring states. As someone deeply committed to peace and security, this PSSM training was an

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**Debriefing at the end of each day represents an important part of the training process for becoming instructors.**



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the broader mission of silencing the guns in Africa, in line with the African Union's (AU) Silencing the Guns Initiative (SGI). This initiative aims to end all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, violent conflicts, and genocide in Africa by 2030.

The PSSM training was renowned for its rigor and intensity, pushing participants to their physical and mental limits. The uncertainty of the path ahead was daunting, but I was driven by a sense of purpose and a deep commitment to the cause. As the training unfolded, a profound transformation began to take place within me. What

had initially seemed like a journey fraught with insurmountable challenges gradually revealed itself as a path rich with opportunities for growth, both personally and professionally. The obstacles that once loomed large began to shrink as I gained confidence in my abilities and clarity in my purpose.

The knowledge and skills I acquired opened doors to new opportunities that I had not previously imagined. After successfully completing the training and earning the coveted PSSM Instructor Insignia, I was, among others, entrusted with the responsibility of facilitating Weapon

Ammunition Management (WAM) training sessions, first in Juba, South Sudan, and later in Khartoum, Sudan. These assignments were not just professional milestones; they were opportunities to apply what I had learned in real-world contexts, to make a tangible impact on the ground. In these roles, I was able to share my expertise with others, training and mentoring national trainers and security officers in the effective management of weapons and ammunition. This work was not just about imparting technical knowledge; it was about empowering others to carry forward the mission of silencing the guns

**In South Sudan, where the legacy of conflict has left many communities heavily armed, disarmament campaigns can be challenging.**



in Africa. The sense of fulfilment that came from seeing my trainees succeed and knowing that I had played a part in their growth was immense. It reinforced my belief in the power of education, mentorship, and collaboration as tools for positive change.

In March 2023, I was certified as a PSSM Senior Instructor. One of the most significant opportunities that arose from this certification was the chance to participate in a benchmarking visit to the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, funded by the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP). This experience broadened my understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in addressing small arms proliferation, and it allowed me to learn from the successes and best practices of other countries in the region. One other notable example of regional collaboration was the Peace Building Fund (PBF) sponsored project on gender mainstreaming in the security sector. This project highlighted the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into our efforts to manage Small Arms and Light Weapons. By ensuring that women were actively involved in these initiatives, we were able to address the unique challenges they faced and empower them to play a leading role in community safety and security.

In South Sudan, where the legacy of conflict has left many communities heavily armed, disarmament campaigns are particularly challenging. However, by leveraging the relationships and trust built through regional collaboration, we were able to engage community leaders, civil society organizations, and local authorities in a dialogue about the dangers of small arms proliferation. The result was a remarkable response, with over 5,000 individuals voluntarily surrendering their weapons. This achievement was not just a victory for the campaign; it was a significant step forward in creating safer communities and reducing the risk of future conflicts.

As I reflect on these personal and professional triumphs, I am filled with a sense of pride and accomplishment. The journey has not been easy, but it has been incredibly rewarding. However, these achievements are not mine alone. They are the result of the collaborative efforts of many individuals and organizations who have supported me along the way. The mentors who guided me, the colleagues who worked alongside me, and the communities who trusted me have all played a crucial role in this journey. Together, we



Photo by MoD Austria/Lampalzer

**The work was not only about imparting technical knowledge; it was also about empowering others to carry forward the mission of Silencing the Guns in Africa.**

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have made significant strides in the fight against small arms proliferation, and together, we will continue to work towards a future where peace and security are the norm, not the exception. The success of this initiative depends, however, not only on the commitment of individuals like myself but also on the continued support of partners. The RECSA Member States are making significant strides, but we cannot do it alone. The success of these initiatives would not have been possible without the support and involvement of external partners. Organizations such as UNDP, UNMISS, and UNMAS played a crucial role in providing the resources, expertise, and logistical support needed to carry out these campaigns. Their contributions were invaluable, and it became clear that sustained support was essential to maintaining the momentum of these efforts. We need the ongoing support to continue the fight against small arms proliferation, to strengthen our institutions, and to build the capacity of our security forces.





Photo by MoD Austria/Lampaizer

BY EVELYNE MSOBI,  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE (ASP),  
TANZANIA POLICE FORCE

# Empowering Communities

Building Knowledge  
through Education



Photo by Msobi

**Assistant Superintendent  
of Police (ASP)**

**Evelyne Msobi**

is an Officer-in-charge  
of Criminal Investigation  
at the Tanzania Ministry  
of Home Affairs,  
Department of  
Police Force.

In 2022

she was awarded

“Best Female Police Officer  
of the Year”

in the Dar es Salaam area  
of responsibility.

She became a certified  
PSSM Instructor in 2024.

**M**y story started all the way back in the 1990s when I was a little girl living with my parents in Songwe Region which is found in the western part of Tanzania, East Africa. While I lived among the people in the community, I witnessed some traditional practices, including those related to gender, and even religious practices, which made me vow in my heart that if God helps me one day to get a special education, I will make sure that I can stand on the side of the oppressed and disadvantaged.

As I grew up, my compassion continued to grow within myself, and I made a conscious decision to continue my education diligently from elementary school to university. In 2016, I completed my Master's Degree in Laws to improve my level of education while serving in the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Police Force.

I have successfully participated in various in-service courses conducted locally and internationally by reputable institutions. I am currently concentrating on issues of criminal investigations (including murder, gender-based violence and other criminal cases), community policing, safety and security of my jurisdiction by means of cooperative efforts in information sharing with the aim of preventing and combating crimes. Furthermore, I am focusing on gender dynamics in prevention and countering terrorism and extreme violence, gender equality. Promotion of formal and entrepreneurial education to improve the living standards of women, disadvantaged and vulnerable youths in Tanzania form also part of my professional engagement.



**I learned how to plan and conduct lessons from a methodological and didactical point of view.**

In 2021, I started to deepen my knowledge on Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) by attending a regional course organized by the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) in Nairobi, Kenya. This course was an eye opener to various areas related to fighting crime and protecting the population.

This training improved my knowledge on reducing the risk of unplanned explosions by preventing the people to come too close to accidents. Such an explosion happened in Morogoro Region in Tanzania in 2019 when, after an accident, petroleum from a tank was stolen. This tragedy caused the deaths of 54 and 60 people were injured. After the training I began raising awareness within the community and the Police Force to avoid such

risks. As a trainer and PSSM instructor, I have managed to go extra miles and also mentor female police colleagues to take bold and keen-eyed action on stockpile management.

Another topic that caught my attention was the mentoring process for students who were selected as instructors. I learned about the importance of giving and receiving feedback and how to plan and conduct lessons from a methodological and didactical point of view.

The knowledge on Physical Security and Stockpile Management obtained from Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) in collaboration with Austria Armed Forces and Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (bicc) has been helpful in my daily work within the community.

BY SISAY TESSEMA ABEBE,  
DEPUTY COMMANDER, FEDERAL POLICE ETHIOPIA

# Marking the Path to a safer Region

## SALW Registration and Marking Practices in the Ethiopian Federal Police

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**E**thiopia, an ancient nation situated in Eastern Africa, has encountered a series of conflicts, armed confrontations, and extensive trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The prevalence of conflict within the country can be attributed to several factors, including the excessive inflow of weapons from neighbouring countries, a widespread culture of gun ownership among the populace, particularly in the northern region

and pastoralist areas, and inadequate management of arms and ammunition stockpiles, which has resulted in the diversion of SALW. A considerable quantity of weapons and ammunition remains within the possession of non-state actors and civilians in Ethiopia.

**The marking and registration of weapons are essential prerequisites for limiting the diversion and illicit proliferation of SALW.**



Photo by Abebe



Photo by Abebe

### Open burning of collected weapons in Ethiopia.

The diversion of weapons from police and military stockpiles is used mainly for illegal activities. Nowadays, the kidnapping of persons for ransom, killing, and abduction of civilians has become an agenda of the government, opposition political parties, and social media at large. Hence, based on the above brief synopsis, it is evident that the excessive proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to national security. The Ethiopian government has prioritized addressing the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. This commitment is evidenced by the enactment of the new Proclamation Number 1177/2021, reflecting the government's earnest attention and concern for these issues.

This act has also established an office for the control and administration of SALW under the supervision of the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission. The new structure – the Federal Police Firearms Registration and Administration Directorate – is mandated for the marking and registration of regional and Federal Police SALW and those firearms possessed by civilians. Marking and tracing activities of SALW require training, experience, and marking machines. To enhance the capacity of police officers in this field, the federal police engaged its officers in regional and international training focusing on Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM). The Regional Centre of Small Arms (RECSA) in Kenya organized such a training with the support of the Austrian Armed Forces and the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (bicc). The writer of this piece is one of the participants who became the first police instructor of PSSM. Thus, in the course of my journey to become an instructor, I have contributed significantly to the federal police commission by applying the knowledge acquired during the trainings. One of my achievements is in SALW marking and tracing.

The marking and registration of weapons are essential prerequisites for limiting the diversion and illicit proliferation of SALW. To develop a system that addresses diversion, a tracing element must be present through a registration and record-keeping function, making a weapon traceable through its entire life cycle. To achieve this goal, the following

Photo by Abebe



### Arranging a workshop on SALW marking and registration/record keeping and tracing software development in the Ethiopian Federal Police.

points are particularly important: the primary contribution of the regional PSSM course is awareness raising. High-ranking officers of the law enforcement agencies of the country were not conversant on firearms marking and tracing, as well as the necessity of a solid software to record and register SALW.

Hence, I arranged a two-week workshop on SALW marking and registration/record keeping and tracing software development. The participants of this training workshop were drawn from the Ethiopian Defence Force, National Intelligence, Wildlife Protection, Federal and Regional Police organizations, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This training created awareness among the top officials. As one result, the federal police have purchased two modern laser engraving marking machines and are about to start SALW marking and registration. Another result I achieved was the publication of an article in the notable Springer Journal. The title of my publication is *Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons Trafficking: Its Contributory Factors and Key Actors in Selected Areas of Ethiopia*. Additionally, based on the lessons gained from the training delivered, the federal police have destroyed outdated, sanitized, and old weapons through an open-air burning method at the Colfe training center in Addis Ababa.



Photo by Abebe

**Sisay Tessema Abebe has served the Ethiopian Federal Police since 2009. He is Head of the Research Department and lecturer in law at the Ethiopian Police University. In addition, he also is a regional trainer for Peace Support Operations for the East African Standby Force. He successfully qualified as a PSSM Instructor in 2024.**

BY MAJOR ERICK KIDOGO NG'OTIE,  
HUMANITARIAN PEACE SUPPORT SCHOOL,  
KENYA DEFENCE FORCE

# Building Strongholds for Peace

## Utilizing PSSM-Skills in the UN Mission to South Sudan

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Major Erick Kidogo Ng'otie is a certified PSSM Senior Instructor. He has served as an Ammunition Technical Expert in United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE), United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Staff Officer in UNMISS from 2022 to 2023.

Photo by Ng'otie



**Responsible PSSM practices within the mission area were a priority for the commanding staff.**

**T**he secure management of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Conventional Ammunition (CA) stockpiles is important to curb the illicit proliferation of small arms and Unplanned Explosions at Munition Sites (UEMS). The improper management of weapons and ammunition stockpiles poses grave dangers to the staff working in armories, the local population and also peace-keepers on their missions worldwide.

On 31 October 2022 I was deployed to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) as an Ammunition Technical Officer (ATO) in charge of stockpile management in the Sector "Unity" which is located in Bentiu, South Sudan, for a duration of one year. UNMISS has six sectors, and each sector has an ATO. To be selected as an ATO, one needs to have a background in Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM)/ Weapon and Ammunition Management (WAM), with no less than three years' experience.

The "Unity"- sector has a total of twenty-one Ammunition Storage Areas (ASA) located in an area prone to severe weather due to flooding from the Nile. Responsible PSSM practices within the mission area were a priority for the commanding staff and

have contributed significantly to the safety and management of weapons and ammunition stockpiles in Sector "Unity" in Bentiu and the entire South Sudan. This approach was both an eye opener as well as an opportunity for the entire deployed troops to learn on all levels from the best practices delivered by experts with the aim to reduce the risks of UEMS.

Incorporating international guidelines into PSSM practices has contributed immensely to the responsible storage of stockpiles keeping in mind maximum re-order and minimum stock levels at all times to ensure the numbers fall within the agreed on Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) requirement. Every weapon is allotted to an ammunition scale to ensure there is no surplus stock and that any unserviceable, expired shelf-life stock are disposed of at the earliest time possible.

It is the responsibility of the ATO to ensure a risk management mechanism has been put in place to minimize the risk of UEMS by carrying out frequent inspections in the storage areas, the drawing up of Periodic Weapon and Ammunition Self Inspection Reports (PWASIR) by the troop contributing countries in coordination with the Weapon and Ammunition Management Unit (WAMU), the Senior Ammunition Technical Officer (SATO) and the COE teams. In addition, periodic inspections are carried out to verify shelf life and surplus of both ammunition and weapons to ensure proper operability and safety.

The Forward Operation Bases (FOBs) are located in an area prone to flooding. Poor drainage and loose soil are causing the Sea Containers that are used for the storage of ammunition to sink resulting in an exposure to moisture. This terrain makes it difficult to locate a conducive place for the disposal of unserviceable ammunition, for example, when ammunition which arrived at the mission area about 18 years ago needed a stock turnover

Photo by Ngotie



#### Forward Operation Base (FOB).



**It is the responsibility of the ATO to ensure a risk management mechanism has been put in place to minimize the risk of UEMS by carrying out frequent inspections in the storage areas.**

by the troop contributing countries so that the risk management of unserviceable ammunition was reduced. Another challenge is that most of the ammunition lot numbers are written in Arabic adding another layer to the challenge during inspection and disposal. This can be very challenging in case the inspecting officer is not able to read the year of manufacture and expiry.

The regional PSSM training has given me the opportunity to provide technical advice on safety, security, proper storage and maintenance standards of ammunition and explosives held by countries in the Great Lakes region. A reference point was a heavily corroded UXO found in one of the member countries that could not be identified easily unless you possess expert knowledge in physical security and stockpile management on SALW and CA. Based on my training and experience, I was able to give technical advice to colleagues and storemen across the region. This is but one of the various ways in which the regional PSSM training has contributed to save lives and protect property.

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL EMMANUEL NIJIMBERE,  
BURUNDI NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCES

# Every Star counts

## Marking and Tracing in the Burundi National Defence Forces

**T**he Burundi National Defence Forces (BNDF) are a crucial partner of the Permanent National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CNAP) in Burundi. The role of the BNDF through the Ammunition (AMMO) Office is unrivalled because starting from the process of acquiring military equipment, it must carry out management control, train users and familiarize them with international, regional and sub-regional instruments and the national responsibilities that emanate from it.

It is in this context worth noting that three Senior Officers from the BNDF have successfully passed different levels of the regional PSSM training held at IPSTC in Nairobi/Kenya. Since March 2023 I have been a Senior Instructor (SI) myself and have undergone a multi-year Train-the-Trainer (TtT) programme. Together with my colleagues, we use the knowledge acquired to organize trainings at the national and regional levels. This allows all levels to gain basic skills to combat the illicit proliferation of SALW. The marking, record keeping and tracing of weapons are very



**In Burundi, the department I work for is responsible for weapons, ammunition and optical equipment. A star is the standard marking for weapons of the RECSA region.**



important areas for all armed forces. On a practical level, this enables the circulation of weapons to be traced and e.g. violations of arms embargoes or diversions to be detected. At the political level, these steps support the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol, as each RECSA Member State is committed to marking its small arms and light weapons.

In Burundi, the department I work for is responsible for weapons, ammunition and optical equipment. I have taken the lead in ensuring that all state weapons have a unique mark under the supervision of the CNAP in addition to the RECSA mark, a star, which is a standard for the RECSA region and easily identifies weapons deriving from the RECSA region. Based on my expertise and experience, I was appointed as the focal point for marking and tracing within the Ministry of National Defence and Veteran Affairs.

During the 2023-2024 financial year, so far 98% of the BDNF's handguns (pistols) have been marked, which was financed by the General Budget of the Burundian State. In its fight against the proliferation of illicit SALW, the BDNF is in the process of marking assault rifles. In the current financial year 2024-2025, the BDNF's light weapons marking rate stands at 20%, and training of marking machine users is being carried out in the field to familiarise firearms

administrators with modern management techniques to facilitate the traceability of firearms. In this context, it should be noted that the BDNF, as part of its obligations, keeps registers of marked weapons and must ultimately ensure the establishment of a central national firearms authority

responsible for all registers of small arms and light weapons. A database and a register of marked weapons have therefore been set up at the BDNF.

Without the regional PSSM training, this measure would not have been possible. The national and regional PSSM



Photo by Nijimbere

**Lieutenant Colonel Emmanuel Nijimbere has been the Head of the Armaments, Ammunition and Optical Equipment Office within the BDNF since 2019.**

**He is also the Focal Point of the National Commission responsible for Disarmament within the Ministry of National Defence and Veterans Affairs.**

**He was certified as a PSSM Senior Instructor in 2023.**

Photo by BICOM/BMNDVA



**Based on my expertise and experience, I was appointed as the focal point for marking and tracing within the Ministry of National Defence and Veteran Affairs.**

seminars provide an excellent basis for raising awareness of the problem and gaining a basic knowledge and experience from other countries. Overall, this helps to trace and identify illegal small arms and light weapons and ultimately contribute to preventing their proliferation.

The Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) is an important regional partner that has been supporting electronic recordkeeping through RECSA's own small arms traceability software (RSTS) since 2013. According to a RECSA report on the *Evaluation of the Progress in Arms Marking and Electronic Recordkeeping across all RECSA Member States* from March 2023, Burundi has not yet received the RECSA RSTS Software. Burundi therefore requested to be supplied with the software and training in its use.

An additional task of RECSA is to provide support for weapons marking equipment and capacity building. In May 2023 it donated two marking machines to the BDNF. The RECSA report mentioned above highlights that the status of trained personnel on marking training of personnel to undertake arms marking is critical. Burundi has benefited from this capacity building by RECSA over the years.

In conclusion, I would like to express to the initiators of this regional

PSSM project and the various partners who have directly or indirectly supported the regional PSSM training process, our deep gratitude for the various resources deployed and the diligent work they have done to create the right framework in the right place.

BY RYAN MUSSARD, LIEUTENANT II,  
SEYCHELLES DEFENCE FORCE

# Protecting Paradise

## The Importance of PSSM for the Seychelles

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Photo by Mussard

**Ryan Mussard,  
Lieutenant II,  
Seychelles Defence Force  
serves as an Aircraft  
Electrical Engineer  
in the Seychelles Air Force.  
Among other tasks,  
he is also responsible  
for an armoury.  
He successfully  
completed his training  
as a PSSM Instructor  
in 2024.**

**R**esponsible Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) of arms and ammunition is very important for all countries. Consequently, both large and small countries invest in the safety and security of their stockpiles. The safety and security standards applied should be the same everywhere, regardless of a nation's size. However, this is particularly important for small countries and island states like the Seychelles, where the impact of security breaches or mismanagement can be more severe.

The Seychelles has a land area of a little more than 466 sq. km with a very dense population on the main Island. Being a small nation with limited resources, the provision of adequate recommended safety distances as per UN standard and infrastructure for storage and accountability for example can be quite a challenge. The Seychelles Armed Forces try as much as possible to implement the safety standards as per our area of operations. Additionally, we face the challenge with private companies to apply these standards to their own stocks, such as in the areas of mining and quarries. An unplanned explosion is disastrous for a small country that lacks terrain,

as we witnessed on 7 December 2023, at a commercial rock quarry, where an unplanned explosion of a storehouse filled with explosives took place on the main island of Mahé. This incident caused massive damage to the surrounding area, affecting hundreds of families and businesses, and thereby also the national economy. Luckily, due to the nature in construction of houses on the Seychelles with houses having wooden roofs, there were only injuries but no deaths.

That is why for a small nation like the Seychelles minimizing the risk of unplanned explosions is vital and should be a national effort between all stakeholders to protect lives and property. That is why the regional PSSM training process initiated by the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG) is so important and crucial for small states like our one. We welcome such an initiative for learning and capacity building that will contribute to the overall safety and accountability of our military assets.

As a PSSM Instructor who recently received his PSSM trainer badge I also have my part to play in these efforts both in the military and private sector. We have worked tirelessly with the armorer of the Seychelles Defence Force (SDF), to

enhance accountability and labelling of the armouries along with safety features such as UN Hazard classification signs and fire symbols. What I learned as a participant during the basic course of one week was very enlightening and memorable. It was further an opportunity to network with colleagues from different countries and build on the established friendships. During my basic training course, we were a large group from different East African countries such as Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda and others, deriving from the police, military and wildlife service. To this date, I am still in contact with my classmates on both a personal and a professional level. We still have a sense of bonding and friendship that originates from the course.

When I was selected as an instructor candidate, I was proud being from the smallest nation in the course to be selected to become an instructor to impart knowledge to others. Along with the help of senior instructors, representatives from Bonn

International Centre for Conflict Studies (bicc) and the Austrian Armed Forces, I was moulded for the challenge ahead: to become a PSSM Instructor and receive my PSSM trainer badge upon successful completion of the Train-the-Trainer (TtT) component of the course.

Coming from a small island state and considering our military might and

our limited resources available, maintaining high standards in PSSM is crucial. Comprehensive training programmes, like the one in the RECSA-Region, that build on existing national expertise and aim to create a pool of regional PSSM trainers provide the necessary tools to achieving this aim and protecting our small paradise in the Indian Ocean.



**I was proud being from the smallest nation in the course to become a PSSM Instructor in 2024.**

Photo by HPSS

Photo by doris oberfrank-list/Adobe Stock

**On 7 December 2023, a blast at an explosives store and flooding due to heavy rain caused massive damage in Mahe.**



Photo by Mervyn Marie/AFP via Getty Images

# CONTENT

Thirteen years have passed since the Austrian Armed Forces decided to become engaged in East Africa under the umbrella of the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG). As a result of this, 438 students, 13 senior instructors and 42 instructors completed their training by October 2024.

This publication showcases their success stories and highlights examples of the strong, long-standing partnership in East Africa, which are worth to be followed.

# EDITORS



Photo by MoD Austria/HBF

## Colonel Hans Lampalzer

Colonel Hans Lampalzer has been responsible for the methodological and didactic design of the project's Train-the-Trainer programme since 2022. He holds a doctorate in intervention research. From 2019 to 2024, he worked at the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management, National Defence Academy. In October 2024 he was appointed Head of the Centre for International Stabilisation Measures, Verification and Arms Control.



Photo by Beeck

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