

Making Room for Improvement

Gender Dimensions of the Life-cycle Management of Ammunition



United Nations

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by Emile LeBrun



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Note

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Contents

Overview	1
Key findings	2
Introduction	4
Normative frameworks	7
The case for gender-mainstreaming life-cycle management of ammunition	11
Gender mainstreaming life-cycle management of ammunition	15
Conclusions	19
Abbreviations and acronyms	20
References	21
Annex	25

Overview

Since 2008, when a UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) first convened to assess the potential threats posed by surplus conventional ammunition stockpiles, high-level policy in this area has gradually moved towards a holistic approach that seeks to address threats at all phases of the ammunition life cycle. The life-cycle management of ammunition (LCMA)¹—also called the “through life management” or “whole life management” of ammunition—is a comprehensive system for addressing the safety and security risks posed by conventional ammunition from its production through to its disposal or demilitarization. The objectives of the LCMA approach are to identify and mitigate the risks of diversion and unplanned ammunition-related events such as detonations, explosions, or fires (hereafter referred to as “explosion events”) at all points in the ammunition life cycle.

The move towards a comprehensive approach to the risks posed by conventional ammunition mirrors similar recent efforts to reduce risks associated with small arms and light weapons and land mines. As the international arms control agenda as a whole has become more aligned with that of sustainable development and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, two important synergies have emerged. The first is a focus on disaggregating, assessing, and addressing the various ways in which arms

and ammunition impact different stakeholder groups through tools such as gender analysis and the sex disaggregation of data on arms and ammunition. The second is the need to gender mainstream relevant policies and procedures—that is, to institutionalize gender equality in all work processes and structures. The rationale for these approaches is that they will lead to control efforts that are more equitable for those who do the work and more effective and sustainable for beneficiaries. The UN Secretary-General first drew attention to the importance of these considerations in his Agenda for Disarmament (UNODA, 2018, p. 39), and subsequently in his 2019 report on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNSC, 2019). The 2019 GGE on surplus ammunition stockpiles responded to this call by including the “gender mainstreaming of policy and practice” as a thematic focus of its work in 2020 (GGE, 2019, p. 9).

How should gender considerations be conceptualized and addressed in the context of LCMA? This Briefing Paper describes the normative basis for gender mainstreaming LCMA, provides indications of the gender dimensions of ammunition² throughout the management of its life cycle, and outlines a framework for promoting further work in this area. It also identifies research questions whose elaboration would advance gender mainstreaming efforts.

¹ See Carapic et al. (2018) for a comprehensive overview of LCMA principles and elements.

² In this paper the term “ammunition” includes its energetic component parts, such as the fuse, warhead, rocket motor, primer, propellants, and pyrotechnic and explosive materials, as well as similar items that constitute risks to life and property.

Key findings

- ▶ The conventional ammunition management sector is heavily male dominated and not yet familiar with gender concepts and tools. In this context, priority areas for gender mainstreaming include training those working in the sector on gender analysis and increasing the meaningful participation of women in this area at all levels of LCMA.
- ▶ If effectively and fully implemented, mainstreaming gender in LCMA policy and practice can be expected to increase their effectiveness and sustainability and support gender equality by improving the gender balance of LCMA work and responding to the gendered dimensions of ammunition diversion and explosion events.
- ▶ Fully mainstreaming gender implies conducting gender analyses at each stage of LCMA, from planning and procurement through to disposal. This requires gender to be incorporated as an integral feature of national ownership of LCMA, and incorporated into all phases in the process.
- ▶ The gender dimensions of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) are currently only implicit, but should be made more explicit, for example, in the areas of risk assessments and evaluations. The need to anticipate and address bias by engaging in wide consultations with stakeholders, for example, which is already enshrined in the IATG, forms a firm basis of moving towards a comprehensive approach to gender and other markers in ammunition management.
- ▶ To measure progress towards increasing women's participation in LCMA, national authorities need to supply better baseline information. Increased transparency is needed about the recruitment and promotion of men and women to relevant security sector roles, as well as about the specific roles that both sexes play in ammunition-related programmes, processes, and elements.
- ▶ The gendered impacts of unplanned explosion events are not well understood and require further study, including through more precise sex- and age-disaggregated data and qualitative research. Insights into men's and women's involvement in ammunition diversion and its prevention are also needed, as well as further information on the security, humanitarian, human rights, and development impacts of ammunition diversion.

This Briefing Paper is based on key informant interviews with more than 20 ammunition technical personnel, trainers, and gender experts in government, armed forces, and non-government research and policy-supporting organizations, as well as UN entities. The first section introduces LCMA and key gender-related concepts and definitions. The second section describes the normative framework for conventional weapons and ammunition management and the relevance of other normative frameworks—such as those addressing sustainable development and women, peace, and security—for the gender

mainstreaming of ammunition management policy and practice. The third section highlights the expected benefits of gender mainstreaming of ammunition management practices. The fourth section provides initial entry points for gender mainstreaming in LCMA, suggesting focus areas for further study and eventual action at each stage. The Briefing Paper ends with reflections on further directions for this work.

Introduction

The life-cycle management of ammunition (LCMA)—“a comprehensive set of integrated processes and activities that ensure sustainable and cost-effective management of ammunition, delivering a safe and secure stockpile that meets national strategic and operational needs” (Carapic et al., 2018, p. 19)—sits at the confluence of international efforts to reduce the humanitarian and development impacts of conventional arms and ammunition. As a result of global normative and policy developments in the fields of sustainable development; women, peace, and security; and conventional arms control, these efforts are moving collectively and decisively towards gender mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective—which can be defined as a set of specific, strategic approaches and technical and institutional processes adopted to achieve the goal of gender equality (UN Women Training Centre, 2017)—is increasingly seen as urgent because of the recognition that women, men, girls, and boys have different needs, opportunities, and access with regard to their security, and that a one-size-fits-all approach to their security does not take this diversity into account. The motivation for gender mainstreaming is therefore to make practices such as LCMA more effective and sustainable by better assessing and responding to the different needs of the various stakeholders and avoiding bias and existing gender inequalities. At the same time, gender mainstreaming serves the independent

goal of gender equality as a human right and as a key requisite for mitigating the underlying drivers of armed violence and weapons and ammunition proliferation.

Compared to some other arms control processes in the security sector—such as mine action and small arms controls—LCMA has lagged behind in considering the gender dimensions of its work. Experts have suggested that this is because of ammunition management’s narrow and often “technical”, male-dominated focus,³ but gender is just as relevant to ammunition management as it is to small arms controls: both ammunition and small arms enable gendered armed violence, and their management and control have historically suffered from a lack of diversity in the perspectives on which policies to address them are based.

LCMA is a framework for establishing and maintaining practices to manage the dual risks of unplanned explosion events and the diversion of materiel. In LCMA these risks call for both *safety* and *security* measures. Risks vary by operation as well as function, quantity, and type and calibre of ammunition—for example, larger calibre materiel may require different measures than small arms ammunition.

The worldwide scale and scope of conventional ammunition diversion are considered immense. But the patterns of diversion throughout the

³ Author interviews with key informants in the fields of ammunition management and gender, May–June 2020.

LCMA phases, as well as the geographical distributions, underlying dynamics, and contributing factors, remain important areas for further research and analysis. Importantly, while the picture of the humanitarian, human rights, and development impacts of the misuse of diverted ammunition are coming more clearly into focus (UNHRC, 2020; UNIDIR, 2020), these, too, require further unpacking—including in terms of their gender dimensions (see Box 2). In the meantime the security components of LCMA practices have to proceed on the assumption that any ammunition diverted to unauthorized parties has potentially grave consequences.⁴

Refined and detailed safety measures are also required for ammunition due to its explosive components, which become unstable over time and in differing atmospheric conditions. The Small Arms Survey has documented at least 623 unplanned explosions at munitions sites (UEMS) between 1979 and 2019, with some 29,932 resulting deaths and injuries combined.⁵ Efforts to reduce the likelihood and consequences of UEMS include the implementation of risk management systems (including mitigation), storage and handling controls, systems for the disposal of obsolete or surplus ammunition, and rules on quantity distances and net quantities of explosives that storage facilities are permitted to contain, among other measures. Many of these measures are addressed for the stockpile management phase of LCMA in the IATG (UNODA, n.d.).

The LCMA approach highlights how these safety and security risks must be considered not only in the stockpile management phase, but also in the planning, procurement, and disposal and demobilization phases of

the ammunition life cycle, as well as in the structural enabling conditions for effective oversight. This Briefing Paper argues that effectively addressing gender in the context of LCMA will therefore require the systematic consideration of gender at all of these stages. As described further below, this calls for the integration of gender analyses that are informed by sex-disaggregated data from the beginning of the LCMA process as an integral part of the national ownership of that process.

The international community is slowly recognizing the value of gender balance in ammunition management policy and practice, as well as the need to take into account the experiences of all those potentially impacted by diversion and explosion events. The UN General Assembly's call for "the need to encourage the full involvement of both women and girls in ammunition management policy and practice" (UNGA, 2019, Preamble, p. 1) must be taken to mean that the needs of women (and girls) should be equally addressed in the development of LCMA policies as those of men (and boys).⁶ The 2019 GGE on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus established "gender mainstreaming of policy and practice" as one of seven substantive issues for it to consider in 2020 (GGE, 2019, p. 9).

4 The GGE (2020) has developed a useful typology for ammunition diversion that should form the basis for further study of the specific diversion risks at each LCMA phase.

5 See Small Arms Survey (2020). The aggregate figures are considered to be an underestimate because of the reliance on open sources.

6 Rather than that girls (or boys) should be involved in ammunition management practices.

Box 1

Definitions⁷

In recent years the professional and public discourses on sex and gender have become significantly more refined. Nevertheless, the definitions of some key terms do not enjoy complete consensus.⁸ This paper relies primarily on definitions already widely accepted within the UN system.

Sex is the physical or biological classification as male or female assigned to a person at birth based on a combination of bodily characteristics such as chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitals (IASC, 2015, Annexe 2, p. 320). While the **sex disaggregation of data** is typically binary, some national statistical offices are recognizing non-binary categories such as intersex. It is important not to assume that men and women are homogeneous categories: their needs, experiences, vulnerabilities, and positions in social structures vary greatly depending on age, class, location, disability, and other markers.

Gender refers to socially constructed ideas about the attributes and opportunities associated with a person based on their assigned sex and in the context of social, political, economic, and cultural relationships.⁹ These constructed attributes, opportunities, and relationships are learned through socialization, vary across contexts, and can change over time.

Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls, and boys in certain situations or contexts. Gender analysis, which can be embedded in security, conflict, or context analyses, examines the relationships between women and men and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated into all context analyses, sector assessments, or situational analyses to ensure that interventions do not exacerbate gender-based injustices and inequalities and that, where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted.¹⁰

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making both women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UN Women Training Centre, 2017).

Gender norms are social rules that define what is desirable and possible for persons in a particular gender category in terms of social and economic roles, political power relations, sexual orientation, and a range of other behaviours. They establish ideals of what it means and entails to "be a man" (**masculinities**) or "be a woman" (**femininities**). Culturally dominant or traditional gender norms present certain types of masculinity and femininity as normative, while alternative masculinities, femininities, or gender identities make up a wide spectrum of **gender diversity**.

Gender responsiveness means ensuring that relevant programmes and projects take into account specific gender dynamics—including dominant social and cultural expectations and roles of people based on their gender identities—in a given society, time, and place.¹¹

This Briefing Paper also refers to "meaningful" and "full and effective" representation and participation for women and girls in LCMA planning and activities. **Meaningful participation** is achieved when women and men hold equal power positions, and have and make use of the same opportunities to contribute to processes and outcomes. If conducted from the outset of programming, gender analysis makes unequal representation and participation visible, and can help to improve the programming process and make it more inclusive (UNSC, 2018, para. 18). Meaningful participation moves past superficial efforts to "include women without genuinely extending them the opportunity to influence outcomes" (UNSC, 2018, para. 29).

7 Sources for definitions are provided below. This box relies heavily on Schöb and LeBrun (2019, pp. 20–25).

8 There are also common misapplications of the terms, even in high-level policy documents. The most common error is using the terms "sex" and "gender" interchangeably.

9 This definition draws on OSAGI (2001), UNICEF (2017), and UN Women Training Centre (2017).

10 UN Women Training Centre (2017) cites an undated training course jointly presented by the UN Children's Fund, the UN Population Fund, the UN Development Programme, and UN Women on "Gender Equality, UN Coherence and You". For useful examples of gender analysis in relevant practical contexts, see swisspeace (n.d.) and Conciliation Resources (2015).

11 Drawing on UN Women (2018, Annexe 1, p. 44, developed by Cate Buchanan and Jacqui True).

Normative frameworks

The gender mainstreaming of life-cycle management of ammunition (LCMA) has a firm basis in a number of international normative developments related to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda (UNSC, 2000), the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (UNGA, 2015) with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons control frameworks. This section reviews how these norms, taken collectively, call for related action to mainstream gender in ammunition management policy and practice.

Gender equality, security, and sustainable development

The **WPS Agenda** has evolved from the dual points of view of the effects of conflict and violence on women, men, girls, and boys, and the importance of the equal representation of voices in addressing these challenges. It is the WPS Agenda, therefore, that promotes the dual concerns of understanding the differentiated impacts of armed violence and conflict on different groups and the need for equal and meaningful representation in the bodies that have the power to develop responsive policies and practices. These represent two centres of gravity for all relevant work in gender mainstreaming arms- and ammunition-related practices. In 2019 the UN Secretary-General's report on Small Arms and Light Weapons called

for the focus on conventional weapons to be even further integrated into the WPS Agenda (UNSC, 2019, pp. 12–13).

The landmark UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) (UNSC, 2000), which forms the foundation of the WPS Agenda, calls for the increased participation of women at all levels of security-related decision making, and enhanced efforts to address the security of women and girls in conflict, among other targets.¹² Woven throughout the WPS Agenda as it has evolved through nine subsequent resolutions are a number of principles that are relevant to the field of LCMA policy and practice, including recognizing:

- ▶ the role of conventional arms in gender-based violence (GBV);
- ▶ the gendered or differentiated impacts of arms or arms regulations;
- ▶ the need for sex-disaggregated data; and
- ▶ the importance of women's participation and the need to increase their participation and achieve gender equality.¹³

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**, which was adopted in 1979 and has evolved over time

12 The WPS Agenda as a whole includes not only UNSCR 1325, but nine other subsequent resolutions, namely UNSCRs 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467, and 2493 (Peace Women, n.d.).

13 See Pytlak (2019) for further discussion of these principles for small arms (and ammunition) control.

through the recommendations of its committee, has recognized violence against women and GBV as forms of discrimination (General Recommendation No. 19, 1992); highlighted the need to consider discrimination against women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations (General Recommendation No. 30, 2013); and elaborated international standards on GBV against women, recognizing the need to rigorously apply these standards as a legal and moral obligation (General Recommendation No. 35, 2017).¹⁴

The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (and associated **SDGs**) succeeded the Millennium Development Goals as the global community's centralized effort to address sustainable socioeconomic development. The core principles of the SDGs emerged from the Rio+20 Conference, and it is in the context of the SDGs that development and peace, security, and arms control were first linked (McDonald and De Martino, 2016, p. 1).¹⁵ One of the 2030 Agenda's most important aspects is a focus on measurability, including the establishment not only of specific targets, but also of coherent indicators to measure progress towards achieving them. SDG 5 and SDG 16 include relevant targets and indicators for gender-responsive ammunition management, which are summarized in the Annex, although it should be stressed that all the goals, targets, and indicators are conceived holistically and are mutually reinforcing. Gender equality is considered to be an "accelerator"—that is, improving gender equality will help to achieve all the SDGs (UN Women and UNDP, 2018).

¹⁴ See OHCHR (n.d.) for more details.

¹⁵ The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2006) had attempted to fill the gap left by the Millennium Development Goals, which did not include any elements related to security and violence. The groundwork that the Geneva Declaration laid in this area was eventually taken up in the SDGs.

Conventional arms and ammunition control and gender

The **UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA)** (UNGA, 2001) is the politically binding instrument that forms the normative basis for international efforts to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In their biennial reporting on actions taken to implement the steps outlined in the PoA, some UN Member States report on ammunition controls, and their requests for assistance and cooperation in improving national practices often also refer to ammunition management.¹⁶ This implies that some states apply the PoA's provisions to ammunition management. The Outcome Document of the Third Review Conference on the PoA (RevCon3) acknowledges that states that apply PoA provisions to ammunition can exchange and apply relevant experience, lessons, and good practices in this area (UNGA, 2018, sec. A.1.(c), para. 18).

At the same time the RevCon3 Outcome Document made strong and explicit linkages to gender equality and gender mainstreaming not only by referring to the gendered impacts of arms and armed violence, but by calling for the increased participation of women in addressing illicit arms and armed violence, as well as the need for the collection of sex-disaggregated data. For the first time it also linked the implementation of the PoA to efforts to prevent GBV. Stronger still, the document establishes the importance of gender equity and calls for the gender mainstreaming of illicit arms control policies and programmes (UNGA, 2018, para. 76).¹⁷ For those states taking the PoA as a normative basis for supporting national LCMA practices, the normative call

¹⁶ Author interview with Paul Holtom, small arms transfers expert, July 2020. See also Holtom and Jongleux (2019, p. 10), citing UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) data.

¹⁷ See Pytlak (2019) for a further discussion of the convergence of the WPS Agenda, Agenda 2030, and the global small arms control regime.

for the implementation of effective gender mainstreaming is now explicit. Finally, in his Agenda for Disarmament, *Securing our Common Future*, the UN Secretary-General requests that

“All States should incorporate gender perspectives in the development of national legislation and policies on disarmament and arms control, including consideration of the gendered aspects of ownership, use and misuse of arms; the differentiated impacts of weapons on women and men; and the ways in which gender roles can shape arms control and disarmament policies and practices.” (UNODA, 2018, p. 39)

Preventing the diversion of conventional arms and ammunition—and the humanitarian and human rights impacts of this materiel—is a key objective of the **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**. The diversion prevention objectives are explicitly addressed in Articles 1 and 11 of the treaty (UNGA, 2013). While regulating the legal “trade” (transfer) is the main focus of the agreement, States Parties have sought guidance on preventing diversion at all points in the arms transfer chain, including in the post-delivery storage stage. In 2018 the Treaty’s Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation responded to these requests by drawing up a list of “Possible measures to prevent and address diversion” throughout the transfer chain (ATT Secretariat, 2018, pp. 18–24). The list includes a section on preventing diversion from national stockpiles that enumerates general arms and ammunition safety and security principles, and references both the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (more commonly known as MOSAIC) (UN, 2018) and the IATG (UNODA, n.d., Annex D, p. 22). In reality, however, the ATT reporting template does not explicitly request States Parties to provide information on post-import management measures. Therefore, national reports on PoA

implementation—despite the ambiguity of the PoA on the issue of ammunition noted above—are a better source of information on this point, although they frequently lack detail (Holtom and Jongleux, 2019, p. 9).

The ATT is the first legally binding treaty that recognizes the link between the arms trade and GBV, including not only conflict-related GBV, but also femicides, “honour killings”, and intimate partner violence. With the inclusion of Article 7.4 in the ATT, the risk of GBV has been established as an essential criterion in the export assessment that must precede the authorization of any export of arms (UNGA, 2013, Art. 7.4, p. 8). The ATT thus makes it mandatory for State Parties to the treaty wishing to export arms to assess the risk that the exported weapons may be used for committing or facilitating GBV. If such an underlying risk is established, exporting States should consider denying the authorization of the arms export.

This obligation, which applies to all ammunition transfers, is equally relevant to States Parties during the disposal stage, which frequently involves the export of surplus ammunition (as opposed to its demilitarization). In 2019 ATT States Parties agreed to several commitments in relation to gender and GBV meant to improve the implementation of Article 7.4 and gender equality in ATT meetings and mechanism. Like the 2018 PoA Review Conference (that is, RevCon3), these developments indicate that the normative discussion is evolving and expanding.

Box 2

Research priority: the gendered impacts of ammunition diversion

Diversion is generally understood to refer to

the situation in which conventional arms that have been legally produced and owned come into the possession of rebels, gangs, criminal organizations, pirates, terrorist groups, or other entities that have not been authorized by competent national authorities to possess these previously legally owned weapons (Holtom and Jongleux, 2019, p. 3).¹⁸

So-called “end-use diversion” can also take place if arms and ammunition suppliers have indicated in an agreement that the items shall not be put to a specific use.

Diversion takes many forms. With respect to stockpiles, diversion can include the theft of individual items; mass looting by civilians; and losses incurred as a result of an attack, corruption, and poor management and accountability practices. But diversion can take place in any phase in the ammunition life cycle, from the manufacturing facility where it is initially produced to its transfer for disposal.¹⁹ The UN Secretary-General has called the diversion of conventional arms and ammunition “a colossal problem” in many parts of the world (UNSC, 2015, para. 9).

While the full scale and scope of different types of ammunition diversion are not fully clear, studies and national reporting suggest that it is in aggregate in the millions of rounds each year.²⁰ To date, reporting and studies have yet to systematically unpack the circumstances and risk factors underlying diversion events, which would help to prioritize the assigning of scarce resources to address losses. This is partly because seizure data alone rarely provides sufficient circumstantial information on individual seizures.

The working assumption, which is difficult to demonstrate statistically but widely accepted, is that diverted arms and ammunition pose a heightened risk for use in armed violence of all kinds because of the involvement of criminal or rebel elements in its acquisition and their willingness to use violence. This is the fundamental basis and rationale for the international community’s consensus that preventing arms and ammunition diversion is important (UNGA, 2018, p. 8).²¹ Furthermore, attention is now focused on the gendered nature of the humanitarian impacts of diversion (UNHRC, 2020; UNIDIR, 2020). UNIDIR (2020, pp. 2–6) in particular provides conceptualizations of how weapons and ammunition diversion can impact women and girls in a number of spheres. These focus areas need to be filled out with case studies and sex- and age-disaggregated data collection.

The diversified impacts on women, men, girls, and boys are an important rationale for assessing LCMA practices in the light of gender, because the diversion of ammunition has gender dimensions that require distinct responses, including, but not limited to, those that address GBV. Women, men, girls, and boys can also play differentiated roles in ammunition diversion and the use of diverted ammunition, which is another area that requires further analysis.

18 This definition refers to Greene and Kirkham (2010, p. 9), McDonald (2008, p. 156), Parker (2016, p. 118), Small Arms Survey and AU Commission (2019, p. 46), and UNSC (2015, para. 9). Note that diversion includes cases of loss that are deliberate (for example, theft) and unintended (for example, due to negligence).

19 For a discussion of the diversion risks at each stage of the ammunition life cycle, see GGE (2020).

20 For example, states reported seizing more than 8 million rounds of ammunition in 2017 (UNODC, n.d.), while the Small Arms Survey has estimated that “millions of rounds” of small arms ammunition have been diverted from peacekeeping operations’ stocks alone over the last 20 years (Berman, 2019, p. 34).

21 This is implied in numerous statements by the UN General Assembly and Secretary-General. A recent example is found in the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament: “The loss of arms and ammunition from storage sites, and their onward proliferation, can be a catalyst for armed violence, conflict and insecurity” (UNODA, 2018, p. 44).

The case for gender mainstreaming life-cycle management of ammunition

As discussed above, gender mainstreaming has two interconnected components: considering at every phase of the life-cycle management of ammunition (LCMA) processes what the impacts are for women, men, boys, and girls; and ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of policies and practices. The main challenges facing the mainstreaming of LCMA include the underrepresentation of women in the sector and in decision making at the policy and practice levels; the fact that export evaluations and risk assessments do not adequately address gender concerns; the lack of sex-disaggregated data on the impacts of ammunition diversion and explosion events; and a lack of gender training among ammunition professionals.

Improving gender balance and meaningful participation

In the context of LCMA practices, the need to increase gender balance and the equal and meaningful participation of women implies efforts to increase the roles and responsibilities of women in the field. Because LCMA is primarily a set of requirements, processes, and practices overseen by the national ministry of defence, the gender balance in the security sector needs to be considered first before focusing on men's and women's roles in LCMA-specific activities.

Men and women in the security sector

The presence of women in militaries worldwide is thought to be growing, but there is not enough transparency from armed forces to confirm this. NATO's International Military Staff Office of the Gender Advisor (IMS GENAD) has collected annual gender data since 2008 from NATO Member Nations and some Partner Nations, although reporting is voluntary and not all states participate. It finds that women make up an average of 11.3 per cent of all active-duty military personnel in NATO militaries, up from 7.1 per cent in 1999 (NATO, 2018, pp. 15–16). Women are predominantly junior officers (making up 15.0 per cent of those ranks), and comprise 10.8 per cent of privates and corporals, 9.0 per cent of non-commissioned officers, 8.7 per cent of mid-level officers (majors, lieutenant-colonels, and colonels), and 1.8 per cent of ranks of general or higher (NATO, 2018, p. 53).²² The 2018 report notes an increase in the number NATO Member States introducing new policies or legislation related to the integration of gender perspectives into military processes and procedures, and a decrease in the number of reports of formal procedures, programmes, and strategies to respond to sexual harassment and sexual abuse, thus demonstrating the need to create a policy to deal with sexual exploitation and abuse (NATO, 2018, p. 94).

²² Some large NATO Member Nations do not contribute to this reporting mechanism (author communication with NATO IMS GENAD, July 2020).

The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons documents women comprising under 5 per cent of uniformed personnel in armed forces in militaries in the Western Balkans, although militaries have been actively recruiting women in the last few years (SEESAC, 2014, pp. 6, 14). Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina compiles statistics from Latin American countries, and the UN Department of Peace Operations tracks women deployed in UN peace operations, but all of the respondents contacted for this study regretted the absence of a global atlas of women in the military. Such a study would make an invaluable contribution to establishing a baseline against which steps to improve gender equality broadly could be measured.²³

In general, sex imbalance in the military is a sector-wide challenge that requires systematic efforts from ministries of defence to address. There is significant guidance available for states to do so, among them the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance's Gender and Security Toolkit, especially the modules on Defence and Gender (Tool 3) (Watson, 2019) and Integrating Gender in Project Design and Monitoring for the Security and Justice Sector (Tool 15) (Serrano, 2019). The Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations has also begun to unpack the barriers to women's participation in peace operations (Ghittoni, Lehouck, and Watson, 2018).

Men's and women's roles in LCMA

In terms of the recruitment, training, professionalization, and retention of the women and men involved in LCMA-related tasks specifically, a sector-wide assessment is needed. Nevertheless, based on consultations with a cross-section of informed subject-matter

23 There is an important difference of opinion about the objective to make militaries gender equal. Some partners object, for example, that "even if militaries were gender equal, they would still promote a culture of violence and maintain existing structures that foster conflict" (WILPF, 2015).

experts, some general observations can be made.²⁴

First, ammunition management international guidance and good practices emerged largely from the European cultural–military sphere. The development of the IATG, for example, was originally a product of British, male ammunition specialists. Second, recruitment leading to positions in the broad ammunition management area, such as those of ammunition technical officer (ATO) and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) specialist, or even logistics roles, tend to be traditionally drawn from technical science and engineering schools, where men may predominate, so the potential pool of recruits may be partly skewed as a result. Third, women drawn to military service may not have been offered the opportunity to be trained in these tasks. Gender norms defining what roles are appropriate or desirable for men and women to play—that is, what tasks are in line with generally accepted ideas of masculinity or femininity—are certainly a factor here.

Of course, dominant gender norms, which are culturally determined, vary by context, and have a strong influence on the options women see as being available to them. Contexts where strict gender traditions inhibit women's advancement or where political and traditional religious structures are intertwined may present special challenges. In any case, unless there are strong messages from national authorities that women are accepted and wanted in their militaries, women who are actually appointed to ammunition management posts will be the exceptions.

Some women ATOs and EOD experts interviewed for this paper noted their high job satisfaction and said that, in general, these posts offer the chance for women to be judged by the same technical standards as their colleagues, which they felt represented a

24 Author telephone interviews with subject-matter experts, May–July 2020.

form of equality.²⁵ Trainers echoed that women are just as suited to these posts as their male counterparts. Because of the increased pressure for women to succeed in a previously male-dominated field, they also suggested, they often found women attentive, careful, and professional in the execution of their tasks. Women may also be more likely to stay in their posts longer, they reported, reducing the need to continually recruit and retrain specialists.²⁶

While these observations are anecdotal, subject to specific cultural contexts, and cannot be generalized, they tend to support efforts to increase women's participation in the sector. At the same time, it is important not to "essentialize" men's and women's skills—that is, to reduce their qualities and capacities to innate aspects ascribed to their sex. Reaching parity in participation is simply the right thing to do.

Finally, it would be remiss in any discussion of gender in LCMA to fail to note disparities in the high-level forums dedicated to developing policies and practice guidelines in this area. For example, in 2008 the 17 members of the GGE on ammunition were exclusively male (Hessmann Dalaqua, Egeland, and Graff Hugo, 2019, p. 12), while this figure has climbed to parity (nine men and nine women) in 2020²⁷ after systematic efforts by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to implement the UN Secretary-General's directive to achieve gender parity on "all panels, boards, expert groups and other bodies established under his auspices in the field of disarmament" (UNODA, 2018, p. 67). Of the 13 experts on the UNODA roster of ammunition experts in 2020, all were men; of the 14 members of the UN SaferGuard Technical Review Board (TRB), all but one were men; and of the 30 members of its Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) of partners, all but

four were men.²⁸ The ammunition sector has made some progress in this area, but has a way to go to be fully inclusive and representative.

Improving LCMA outcomes for all beneficiaries

LCMA practice clearly has beneficiaries. The most salient are those individuals and communities that are protected from the harmful effects of ammunition diversion and explosion events such as UEMS. Sound LCMA practices benefit them; less than good practice puts them at risk of injuries, death, and negative livelihood and development impacts. The affected populations, as well as the impacts they suffer as a result of preventable explosion events and diversion, are gendered. Beneficiaries can also include soldiers and civilians whose safety and security are put at risk when their own ammunition stocks are unsafe or not secure, or when they are raided by hostile forces who can employ these stocks to attack them.

To identify how harm inflicted on communities as a result of suboptimal ammunition stockpile management is gendered requires a solid gender analysis. Context analyses, or situation analyses, oversight, and inspections are routine across the range of LCMA practices; these need to take account of the different experiences of women, men, boys, and girls. This is not a new concept, but already enshrined in the IATG, and some LCMA practitioners may already be conducting such analyses in a variety of ways (see Box 3).

25 Author telephone interviews with subject-matter experts, May–July 2020.

26 Author telephone interviews with subject-matter experts, May–July 2020.

27 Author communications with UNODA officials, September 2020.

28 TRB and SRG member information provided to the author by UNODA, March 2020.

Box 3

“We already do this”: evaluation in the IATG

The IATG (UNODA, n.d., 01.40, p. 11) defines evaluation as “a process that attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the merit or value of an intervention”. A note appended to that definition reads:

The word “objectively” indicates the need to achieve a balanced analysis, recognizing bias and reconciling perspectives of different stakeholders (all those interested in, and/or affected by programmes, including beneficiaries as primary stakeholders) through use of different sources and methods.

The clear objective of this focus is to anticipate and mitigate bias, and this is to be achieved by consulting a range of affected and engaged stakeholders, primarily the beneficiaries. This is the essence of a gender analysis, which is simply more explicit about breaking down and naming the consistent stakeholder groups, including along gender lines. In fact, gender analysis is one example of the insistence on the importance of diversity more broadly, and of the need to pay particular attention to those who are seldom consulted about matters that affect them, such as the elderly, the disabled, and other marginalized groups (for example, youths and ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities). This is why some programmes, such as mine action, speak of “gender and diversity” as one coherent concept.²⁹ This approach also serves to avoid the increasingly perceived limitations of the binary male/female dichotomy for analysis.

²⁹ The term “intersectionality” is used to describe the interconnected nature of social markers such as gender, race, class, and age, and their relations to patterns of power and discrimination.

Once ammunition is diverted, it is often very difficult to recover it—or prevent it from being misused. There are exceptional cases; for example, when intelligence clearly points to specific actors who are likely to have stolen or received stolen ammunition. Their political or criminal objectives may also be known, making it possible to identify scenarios in which particular targets might be put at imminent risk of armed violence. Clearly, the

best way to prevent diverted ammunition from being misused is to prevent its diversion in the first place. One reason such cases are so exceptional is that states have not established prerequisites to make diversion monitoring functional. SEESAC (2018) provides a set of principles and elements of the responsibility and accountability cycle for the safe and secure management of ammunition, which is one of the functional elements (phases) in LCMA.

Gender mainstreaming life-cycle management of ammunition

The life-cycle management of ammunition (LCMA) procedures follow a comprehensive approach and consider both the technical and policy aspects of ammunition management that are essential to meet a state's strategic needs and operational requirements. By adopting a strategic and systematic approach that includes gender mainstreaming, LCMA provides a starting point for comprehensive and ultimately more effective efforts in this regard. The implementation and sustainability of an LCMA system depends on the availability of adequately trained personnel at all levels, including at the:

- ▶ **strategic level**—senior ministry of defence and armed forces headquarters staff;
- ▶ **operational level**—managerial staff in the logistical command; and
- ▶ **tactical level**—technical staff working at storage facilities, processing plants, or demilitarization locations (Carapic et al., 2018, p. 57).

LCMA also requires an effective personnel management system—one that allocates a sufficient number of adequately trained individuals with appropriate ammunition management roles and responsibilities. Career planning and the development of career paths in the technical and political spheres of ammunition management are integral to LCMA, as is making these careers and disciplines

attractive to both civilian and military personnel (men and women). Professional development is especially important, given the turnover of personnel as a result of rotations, retirement, or moves to the private sector. Early gender mainstreaming efforts would promote better and more sustainable implementation of an LCMA system. In this context, it is essential that women have an equal opportunity to benefit from training, and for everyone—men and women—to understand the need for gender mainstreaming and how to apply it to their respective jobs.

National ownership

LCMA is driven by national ownership grounded in the premise that states need to take responsibility for conventional ammunition management and be actively engaged in ensuring the safety and security of their stockpiles—for all beneficiaries. National ownership is therefore a prerequisite for a comprehensive and sustainable LCMA system and serves as the structural element of the LCMA model. National ownership entails:

- ▶ **a normative framework** comprising laws, regulations, and standard operating procedures to govern the system;
- ▶ **an organizational framework** for coordination, oversight, and implementation of the system;

- ▶ **infrastructure and equipment** to operationalize the system; and
- ▶ **human resources** to implement and maintain related processes and activities (Carapic et al., 2018, p. 42).

The normative framework informs the processes, activities, and division of responsibilities within the national LCMA system. The development of an appropriate framework is a national responsibility and is based on national needs and priorities. As a result, the introduction of gender mainstreaming should be applied throughout all aspects of national ownership and the functional elements of the LCMA model.

Gender and LCMA functional areas

Each of the LCMA functional areas³⁰ is briefly highlighted below with some examples of gender considerations in each phase. These are indicative only; national authorities need to undertake a systematic gender analysis of the entire LCMA process before they implement specific policies and procedures. These considerations are also relevant for programmes and projects that donor states, international organizations, and NGOs implement.

Planning. The planning stage is perhaps the most critical, because it sets the stage for the entire ammunition management process. It is the main link between the normative, organizational, and infrastructural frameworks established at the national level and all relevant operational activities. It is in the planning phase where the principles of gender equality, as described in national and institutional policies and statements; the use of gender analysis; and other related tools are built into all activities.

³⁰ The areas described below are not mutually exclusive, but represent broad stages/steps in the ammunition life cycle.

A gender analysis of LCMA would provide insights into the extent to which the requirements for manufacturing ammunition are gender sensitive; for example, in the safe handling and transport of hazardous components and byproducts. It would assess, for example, whether employment hiring targets for ammunition manufacturers are gender equal and transparent; or whether manufacturers include an assessment of the gendered impacts of accidental explosions in their risk assessments for the placement of manufacturing facilities.

Procurement and pre-transfer. Government ammunition procurement regulations should require all potential vendors of ammunition to have policies in place on gender equality and non-discrimination, be transparent in their hiring processes, and establish targets for equality in the selection processes for management positions. These requirements should apply to both civilian and national entities involved in supplying ammunition.

Under the risk assessment of Article 7 of the ATT, State Parties to the treaty are obliged to consider gendered impacts as part of their pre-transfer risk assessments before authorizing or denying an application to export ammunition (see p. 9 above). Specifically, States Parties must assess the risk that an authorized export could be used to commit or facilitate serious acts of GBV or violence against women and children. Importing states therefore need to consider and, if necessary, take steps to improve their country's record of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including GBV, as these will increasingly be taken into consideration in export risk assessments and will affect their prospects for acquiring conventional ammunition. Conversely, importing states may themselves consider applying gender-relevant policies to their ammunition imports, such as ending ammunition imports from States with a record of significant GBV.

Requirements for the safe and secure transport of ammunition by road, air, land, and sea with accompanying administrative oversight and control mechanisms, including risk assessments, should be planned and implemented to ensure that they are fully implementable by both men and women (whether military or civilian) and that any gender-related risks are managed.

Stockpile management. The selection, recruitment, hiring, and training of women in all relevant positions, from leadership roles to those of technical officers, should be actively encouraged. Working conditions in ammunition storage sites, including infrastructure and barracks, should address the different needs of women and men and allow both to work effectively and safely.³¹ Risk assessments made as part of ammunition management risk decisions practices should take into account the different roles and needs of women, men, girls, and boys and address the gendered impact of accidental explosions of ammunition and its diversion.

Gender can be seen as implicit in two of the four principles guiding the preparation and application of the IATG (UNODA, 2019, p. 15), which embody good practices in stockpile management. First, the “need to protect those most at risk from undesirable explosion events (e.g. local civilian communities and explosives workers)” is a call to ensure that all relevant groups are not just considered, but also consulted in all relevant components of IATG practice. Second, the “need to maintain consistency and compliance with other international norms, conventions and agreements” implies the implementation of the principles of inclusion in the WPS and SDG agendas (see pp. 7–8 above).

Disposal. In the case of the disposal of ammunition, whether destruction, donation or sale, or demilitarization, the roles, needs

of, and particular risks for women, men, girls, and boys should be taken into account, in particular if the project offers new employment opportunities for the local population or if destruction methods may have an impact on the surrounding areas and local activities. When disposal involves the donation or export of ammunition, similar guidelines should be applied to the purchasers of ammunition and countries of import as described above (see “Procurement and pre-transfer”).

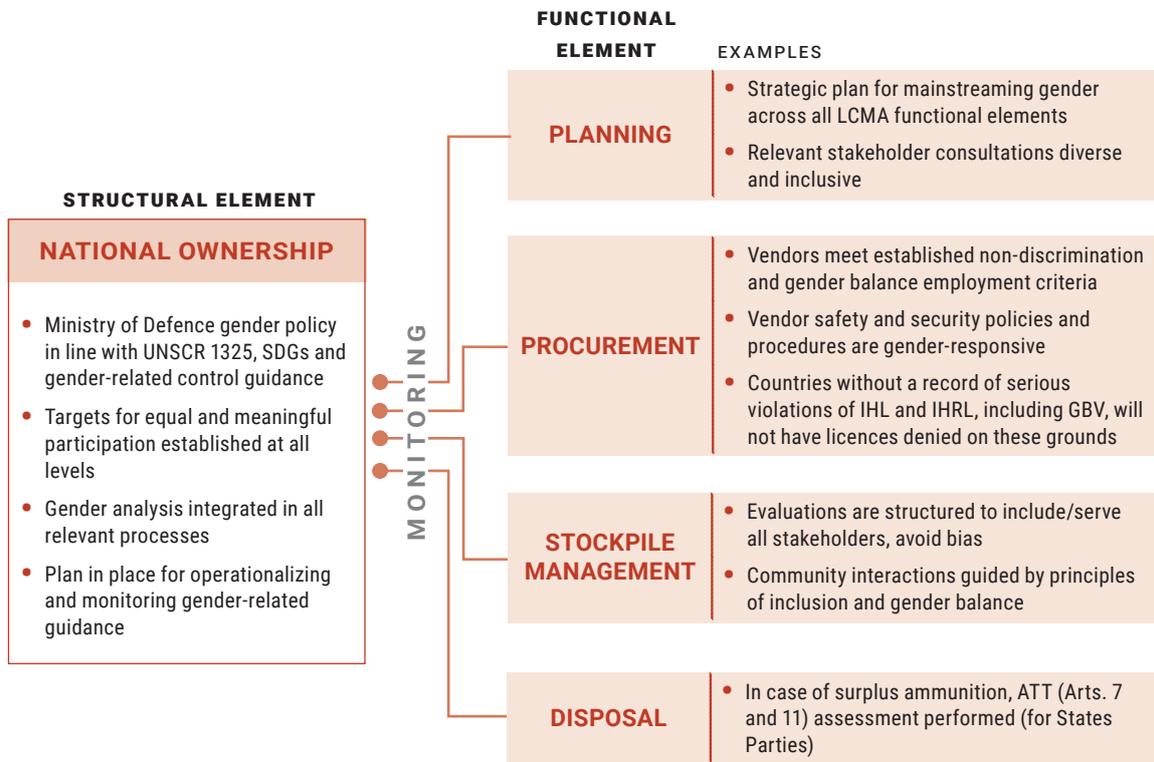
Monitoring and diagnostics. Any efforts to verify and monitor the functioning of the ammunition supply chain, including post-delivery inspection controls and coordination with law enforcement or other monitoring bodies, should incorporate and include as part of the verification tasks the relevant gender considerations described above. To ensure that monitoring and diagnostic activities are comprehensive and inclusive, men’s and women’s full and equal participation should be promoted when the relevant assessments are undertaken. Monitoring and diagnostics entities should themselves also have transparent gender-equality policies.

Figure 1 provides a schematic illustrating how national ownership of gender can be applied to examples of specific practices and considerations throughout the ammunition life cycle.

31 That is, in ways that prevent sexual and gender-based violence among implementing teams.

Figure 1

Examples of gender entry points in LCMA



Conclusions

Incorporating gender considerations is central to effective life-cycle management of ammunition (LCMA) policy and practice. The goal of gender mainstreaming is to make the management of ammunition more effective and sustainable by taking account of and addressing the diverse concerns and experiences of all stakeholders. This applies to beneficiaries of sound LCMA practices and procedures—the women, men, girls, and boys who could be affected by explosion events and ammunition diversion—and practitioners—the women and men involved in the many programmes and processes associated with LCMA. For the sector as a whole, this requires gender equality to be promoted from the highest policy-making level down to the tactical level; among civilians and soldiers; and among ammunition vendors and contractors. Fostering dialogue and exchanges of experiences within the ammunition community and with relevant actors in the small arms, mine action, and gender-equality communities is one important way of achieving these aims.

It also requires the systematic application of a gender analysis across all LCMA elements to identify the different ways in which ammunition-related issues affect particular groups, so that their needs can be adequately acknowledged and addressed. The underlying motivation for this is already enshrined in the IATG; it should now be elaborated and implemented.

This Briefing Paper suggests some entry points to the LCMA process where gender concerns can appropriately be addressed, but national authorities need to undertake their own systematic reviews in this regard. Mechanisms such as the UN SaferGuard Programme, principally through the dissemination of the IATG and related guidance and training, seek to promote good practices in the various areas and stages of this process.

Finally, monitoring progress in achieving gender equality requires baseline data, some of which is not yet available. Fuller transparency about the respective participation of women, men, girls, and boys in national military and civilian LCMA-related roles at all levels is one important area where more data needs to be collected. Understanding the gendered impacts of explosion events and ammunition diversion-related armed violence, which is essential to ensuring that LCMA practices are responsive to those impacts, is another. Donors can play an important role in supporting research initiatives, information exchanges, and transparency to address these areas.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ATO	Ammunition technical officer
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
EOD	Explosive ordnance disposal
GBV	Gender-based violence
GGE	Group of Governmental Experts
IATG	International Ammunition Technical Guidelines
IHL	International humanitarian law
IHRL	International human rights law
IMS GENAD	International Military Staff Office of the Gender Advisor
LCMA	Life-cycle management of ammunition
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PoA	UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
RevCon3	PoA Third Review Conference (2018)
SCG	Strategic Coordination Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TRB	Technical Review Board
UEMS	Unplanned explosions at munitions sites
UN	United Nations
UNODA	UN Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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Annex

Selected Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators relevant to gender mainstreaming of LCMA¹

Goal	Target	Indicator	Relevance for gender mainstreaming of LCMA
 Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce, and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	Increasing the participation of women in LCMA will contribute to gender equality. Gender mainstreaming LCMA will contribute to the safety and security of affected women and girls.
	5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life	5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions	
	5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	

¹ While these targets and indicators do not explicitly reference ammunition, the SDGs provide a holistic framework for supporting sustainable development through safe and secure LCMA policy and practice by contributing to reductions in deaths and injuries due to diverted ammunition and unplanned explosions events. The global indicators listed here were adopted in the framework of the UN Statistical Commission's Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators; States are encouraged to develop and adapt their own targeted indicators.

Goal	Target	Indicator	Relevance for gender mainstreaming of LCMA
 <p data-bbox="153 383 248 412">Goal 11</p>	<p data-bbox="284 309 411 477">Make cities and human settlements safe, resilient and sustainable</p>	<p data-bbox="472 309 727 477">11.5 Significantly reduce the number of deaths, affected people, and direct economic losses caused by disasters</p> <p data-bbox="759 506 991 734">11.5.2 Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP, including disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services</p>	<p data-bbox="1046 309 1374 450">Reducing unplanned explosions at ammunition sites will reduce differentiated impacts on women, men, boys and girls.</p>
 <p data-bbox="153 853 248 882">Goal 16</p>	<p data-bbox="284 779 432 1211">Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>	<p data-bbox="472 779 727 891">16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere</p> <p data-bbox="759 779 999 920">16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age</p> <p data-bbox="759 947 999 1059">16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause</p> <p data-bbox="759 1086 1015 1227">16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months</p> <p data-bbox="472 1254 727 1485">16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</p> <p data-bbox="472 1534 727 1646">16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p> <p data-bbox="759 1254 1015 1518">16.4.2 Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments</p> <p data-bbox="759 1534 983 1736">16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p data-bbox="759 1762 983 1901">16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services</p>	<p data-bbox="1046 779 1334 920">Improving LCMA practices contributes to a reduction in homicides and non-fatal violence committed with diverted ammunition.</p> <p data-bbox="1046 947 1374 1059">Implementing all aspects of LCMA will contribute to the safety and security of affected women, men, boys, and girls.</p> <p data-bbox="1046 1086 1350 1198">Improving ammunition security practices increases identification of illicit ammunition.</p>

Goal	Target	Indicator	Relevance for gender mainstreaming of LCMA
	<p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>16.7.1 Proportions of positions in national and local institutions compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups</p>	

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