

OAS SALW and Munitions Destruction Programme

MINE ACTION AND ARMED VIOLENCE REDUCTION

Guatemala

CASE STUDY | SEPTEMBER 2012

GICHD | CIDHG



The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), an international **expert organisation** legally based in Switzerland as a non-profit foundation, works for the **elimination** of mines, explosive remnants of war and other explosive hazards, such as unsafe munitions stockpiles. The GICHD provides **advice** and capacity development support, undertakes applied research, disseminates knowledge and best practices and develops **standards**. In **cooperation** with its partners, the GICHD's work enables national and local authorities in **affected countries** to effectively and efficiently **plan, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate** safe mine action programmes, as well as to implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other relevant instruments of international law. The GICHD follows the humanitarian principles of **humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence**.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CONTEXT	5
Ammunition storage safety	5
SALW proliferation	6
THE OAS IN GUATEMALA	6
PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE FOR THE CONTROL OF ARMS AND MUNITIONS	7
OAS PACAM Operations in Guatemala	9
Programme objectives and outcomes	9
Surveys/needs assessment	10
Capacity development	11
Munitions destruction	12
Arms destruction	13
Improving physical security	14
Destruction of hazardous chemicals	14
OAS capacity	15
Results	16
Role of Golden West Humanitarian Foundation	17
Information management	17
Quality Management	18
Standards	18
Monitoring and inspection	18
DONOR FUNDING	19
PACAM AND AVR INITIATIVES IN GUATEMALA	19
OTHER OAS SUPPORT FOR AVR IN GUATEMALA	19
LESSONS LEARNT	20
ANNEXES	
Annex 1 People consulted	23
Annex 2 Documents consulted	24
Annex 3 Sample SALW destruction form	25

INTRODUCTION¹

The Organisation of American States (OAS) is a regional organisation with headquarters in Washington, DC, United States. It was established in 1948 by 21 countries in the Americas with a mandate to “...achieve an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence.”² The OAS currently has 35 member states and its key pillars of support are: democracy, human rights, security and development.

In 1992, the OAS created the Program for Assistance to Demining in Central America (PADCA) based on requests for assistance from member states in Central America with mine/Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) contamination problems. In 1998, PADCA expanded to the Program for Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA in Spanish). With Central America having completed their mine clearance obligations, AICMA now focuses its support on Colombia, Peru and Ecuador in the form of Mine Risk Education (MRE), technical survey, destruction of stockpiles, victim assistance and information management.

The destruction of ERW, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition was traditionally included in AICMA. In response to additional requests for assistance from OAS member states with regards to ammunition management and firearms control, the OAS established the Program of Assistance for Control of Arms and Munitions (PACAM) in 2010. PACAM focal countries include Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The OAS started working on mine action in Guatemala during the 1990s, and in 2005, Guatemala completed its mine/ERW clearance obligations under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. An explosion at the Mariscal Zavala military munitions storage facility in Guatemala City in 2005 resulted in white phosphorous contamination, and raised fears that other storage facilities in civilian areas were also at risk of igniting. The explosions resulted in the evacuation of residents living approximately 300 metres from the storage area due to the white phosphorous (WP) munitions. White phosphorus munitions are often used in military operations to generate smoke screens. The smoke that is generated by WP is denser than the smoke generated by other types of smoke munitions. WP is highly flammable and burns when it comes in contact with air, making it useful against military targets such as fuel depots and ammunition storage sites. Although the smoke is fairly toxic if inhaled for an extended period, the primary danger comes from its flammable properties. In this case, immediately after the explosion, the military removed the WP from the storage bunkers, placed it in pits and covered it with water to prevent further incineration. This is an acceptable preventive measure for a short period of time. However, the problem is that no further action was taken for five years, so the WP munitions continued to deteriorate in the water, which risks further environmental damage in the form of soil and water contamination.

This led the Guatemalan government to contact several organisations for assistance. The OAS responded positively and in 2010, contracted Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, a non-profit foundation with experience in weapons and munitions disposal, to supervise the safe removal and destruction of these munitions. Approximately 8,000 items were destroyed. This led to requests from the Guatemalan military for additional assistance with ammunition management, and the eventual signing of a cooperation and assistance agreement between the Guatemalan Ministry of National Defence and the OAS General Secretariat in 2010. Since then, the OAS has been providing capacity development support and technical guidance to the Guatemalan military to safely destroy surplus munitions and SALW.

This case study will examine the OAS' rationale for expanding from mine action to SALW and munitions destruction, document its programme activities and results in Guatemala, and share lessons learnt.

CONTEXT

Guatemala's 36-year internal armed conflict was the longest and most violent in Central America. More than 200,000 people were killed, 83 per cent of whom were indigenous, and many more subjected to human rights violations.³ An estimated one million people were forcibly displaced. Peace Accords were signed in 1996, bringing an official end to the conflict. Since then, donors have invested significant amounts of money in security and justice sector reform but with little result.⁴ Democratic governance remains fragile; weak, under-funded government institutions are plagued with corruption and inefficiency. Wide income and social inequalities exist between urban and rural communities, and indigenous and non-indigenous groups. Guatemala has one of the highest measures of income inequality in Latin America and 51 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Some 15 years after the Peace Accords were put into place, Guatemala finds itself beset by crime, including gun violence and drug trafficking, which are indicated by a high rate of firearms homicides and a growing number of drug seizures.⁵

Guatemala's homicide rate has doubled in the last ten years, and it now has one of the highest non-conflict related homicide rates in the world. The homicide rate climbed from 28 per 100,000 persons in 2001 and peaked at 46 per 100,000 in 2009. There are signs that this trend may be reversing with a fall to 41 in 2010 and to 39 in 2011⁶, but it is not yet clear whether this is a sustainable decline. There are more homicides now than during the armed internal conflict. The level of violence and prevailing sense of insecurity is exacerbated by a lack of police capacity and mistrust of government security forces in many sectors of Guatemalan society. Guatemala's civilian police force has limited resources and capacity to respond to the country's increasingly complex security challenges, and is widely criticised as corrupt, inefficient and abusive.⁷ According to an International Crisis Group report, approximately 40 per cent of the country is not policed or governed by the state, and instead is under the control of organised crime and narco-traffickers. 125,000 gang members are estimated to operate in Guatemala, compared to a police force of 20,000.⁸

Guatemala's newly elected government is pushing a reform agenda with a strong emphasis on governance and citizen security. However, the government is using the military to bolster crime-fighting operations, even though the military has little training or experience in carrying out public security functions.⁹ The government maintains that this is a temporary measure. A police reform process has been underway for several years; however, progress remains slow.

Ammunition storage safety

A fire in 2005 at a military ammunition storage depot based within the densely populated Guatemala City, resulted in over 5,000 flammable, highly-volatile white phosphorous projectiles. In response, the military placed the munitions in open, water-filled pits but recognised that they lacked the capacity to safely destroy the munitions. The explosion raised fears that other ammunition depots in civilian areas were also at risk of igniting. Following the explosion, the Guatemalan military identified the need to reduce the risk of an unplanned explosion and improve its stockpile management capacity in order to prevent possible theft and leakage. Guatemala had significant stocks of ammunition resulting from obsolete weaponry or excess of national defence and security needs, posing a serious threat due to deterioration after decades of storage.

SALW proliferation

Guatemala has become a regional hub for the trafficking of SALW and ammunition. SALW are widely available and Guatemalan society is generally highly armed. The northern part of Guatemala in particular suffers from an influx of arms from Mexico which is linked to drug trafficking. In 2008, Amnesty International estimated that there were approximately 1.8 million firearms in Guatemala, 90 per cent of which were unregistered.¹⁰ Despite this, Guatemala's imports of firearms are considerable given the size of its population and armed forces. For example, between 2000-2009, Guatemala imported military type pistols and revolvers worth USD 18.1 million.¹¹

The level of armed violence in Guatemala is among the highest in the world. Between 2004 and 2010, 81 per cent of homicides that took place involved the use of firearms, which is higher than the world average; for example, during the same time period, 19 per cent of homicides in Western Europe involved firearms.¹² The majority of perpetrators and victims of armed violence are young men (in the 18-39 age group), although there is an increasing number of female victims.¹³

There have been no significant disarmament efforts in Guatemala apart from the disarmament of armed groups in 1997. Since then, the police regularly seize illegal firearms but often lack the capacity to mark, trace and destroy these arms systematically, adding to fears that the weapons may re-enter the illicit market or even be obtained through legal international arms transfers.¹⁴ Actual convictions for SALW-related homicides remain very low.¹⁵ Legislation passed in April 2009 by the Guatemalan Congress on arms control has not yet had a demonstrable impact on the arms trade, and widespread proliferation of arms continues.¹⁶

THE OAS IN GUATEMALA

After the 36-year internal conflict, Guatemala had limited contamination by mines; however it had a significant quantity of ERW, mostly Unexploded Ordnance (UXO).¹⁷ In 1995, the Government established a Demining Coordinating Committee and in 1997 an Executive Coordination Unit prepared a National Plan for demining and destruction of UXO. Through the plan, the OAS and the Inter-American Defence Board (IADB) provided assistance to Guatemala for demining and UXO clearance. The plan was carried out involving three main Guatemalan actors - the Corps of Voluntary Fire-fighters, the military and reintegrated members of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG) – with technical advice and monitoring by personnel from the IADB.¹⁸ Conceptually, the fire-fighters and former URNG members were responsible for a nationwide risk education effort which also collected information on mine and UXO locations from the communities that they contacted. Meanwhile, the army provided demining / Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams to respond to this information. In December 2005, Guatemala completed its national plan to clear all known mine and UXO hazards. A mobile demining unit, comprised of members from the military demining teams, was created in December 2005 and since 2007, serves as Guatemala's residual mine/UXO clearance capacity.

PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE FOR THE CONTROL OF ARMS AND MUNITIONS

The OAS' PACAM programme was established in 2010 to provide OAS member states with financial, technical, logistical and administrative assistance for the control and/or destruction of firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related material.¹⁹ PACAM is implemented by the same OAS team that has traditionally implemented AICMA, with some activities supported under the terms of an OAS agreement with Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, who provide technical assistance in the areas of EOD and arms destruction, and also deliver training to OAS and staff from the national authorities. The programme was established following several requests for assistance from OAS member states to deal with excess ammunition and SALW control problems.

OAS support for SALW and munitions destruction takes place within the framework of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) and the UN Programme of Action on SALW. CIFTA seeks to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms and to promote and facilitate cooperation and information exchange and experiences among signatories. It also falls under the OAS General Assembly resolution 2627 of June 2011, which resolved to continue organising special workshops and training programmes on stockpile management and the destruction of arms and munitions.²⁰



The objectives of the programme are to:

- > support the destruction of firearms and small calibre munitions under government control that have been classified as obsolete, confiscated or in excess of national security and defence needs
- > assist Central American countries in increasing their control over firearms in their jurisdiction through improvements in the physical security of national storage sites²¹

The anticipated outcomes of the programme include the:

- > reduced likelihood of unplanned explosions at munitions storage sites
- > strengthened safety and security at storage facilities to prevent unwanted loss of arms, ammunition and explosive materials

PACAM's core areas of support include:

- > national capacity development
- > destruction of firearms
- > destruction of munitions and explosives
- > removal of abandoned and unexploded ordnance
- > physical security and stockpile management

In Central America, the OAS has signed cooperation agreements with the governments of Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. PACAM is coordinated and implemented through a regional office in Managua, where a seven-person team is based with EOD Level three capacity, as well as coordination, administrative, technical and logistical support. Oversight for the programme is provided through the OAS office in Washington.²² As part of PACAM, the host countries are responsible for: identifying priorities, implementing agreed plans, providing national staff, supplying medical assistance and transporting munitions.

The OAS' role is to:

- > coordinate programme activities with the host government
- > provide logistics and administrative support
- > raise funds for training and destruction activities
- > provide supervision and technical expertise
- > deliver training - the OAS provides classroom and field-based training in Spanish in EOD. The OAS initially contracted Golden West Humanitarian Foundation ('Golden West') to deliver the training but the OAS EOD technicians now have the capacity to deliver the training themselves in-country. The OAS also facilitates the delivery of EOD training through the international demining centre in Spain
- > conduct quality control (transparency, accounting, end product)
- > certify that destruction operations are adequate, safe and efficient²⁵
- > supply technical and field equipment such as protective gear, tents, generators, communications, as well as supplies including fuel, lubricants, and medical items for field operations

The OAS has also been involved in assisting member states with the marking of SALW with identifiable information such as model and serial numbers, in an effort to improve accountability, traceability and anti-trafficking of weapons. The project "Promoting Firearms Marking in Latin America and the Caribbean" was launched by the OAS in 2009 with support from the US Department of State Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement to strengthen national capacities to mark weapons in 31 countries. Beginning in 2012, project activities in Central America were incorporated into PACAM.

The OAS, with advice from EOD technicians from Golden West, provides national authorities with:

- > approved guides for the transport of arms and ammunition
- > assessments for improving storage facilities
- > training in effective methods for firearms destruction

The OAS' ability to work in Guatemala on sensitive issues such as SALW control and munitions destruction has been facilitated by the contacts already made with the Defence Ministry and the military during the mine action programme. These contacts have facilitated the OAS' access to SALW and munitions stores, and their ability to carry out surveys of arms and munitions which are no longer needed or which have been confiscated through law enforcement operations.

OAS PACAM Operations in Guatemala

Programme objectives and outcomes

The objectives of the PACAM programme in Guatemala are to:

- > support the destruction of firearms and other small calibre munitions under government control that have been classified, confiscated or are in excess of national needs
- > assist Guatemala in the control of firearms in its jurisdiction through improvements in the physical security of national storage sites
- > develop the capacity of the Guatemalan military in stockpile management, ammunition disposal and SALW destruction
- > reduce the risk to citizen safety and to personnel of exposure to obsolete, excess or unstable munitions and other explosives
- > enhance citizen safety by increasing control and security over munitions kept in government storage facilities in civilian areas



The anticipated outcomes of the programme include:

- > a reduced likelihood of accidental explosions at munitions storage facilities with possible catastrophic results for the surrounding communities
- > strengthened safety and security at each facility which will serve to prevent unauthorised loss of explosive material
- > an organisation in charge of the overall direction and planning of arms destruction according to national plans and international standards
- > efficient and effective operational plans for the destruction of firearms
- > a 15 person operational detachment trained to implement firearms destruction plans using safe and efficient techniques

Surveys/needs assessment

The OAS and Golden West conducted a joint survey for the Guatemalan military in 2010. The purpose of the survey was to identify excess, degraded and expired munitions for destruction. Over a one month period, Golden West and the OAS visited 14 locations across the country which housed 37 different storage facilities. Golden West focused the survey primarily on stockpile management issues, and less on the physical state of the storage facilities, as per the request of the military. The survey also looked at how munitions were stored and which were at potential risk of an explosion. The Guatemalan military provided Golden West and the OAS with full access to all of their storage facilities which greatly facilitated the survey; something which has been difficult for the OAS to negotiate in other parts of Central America. Access was facilitated by the OAS' past involvement in demining in Guatemala, as well as the fact that the Minister of Defence at the time understood the risks.

Prior to the survey, the military had estimated that approximately 100 tons of munitions needed to be destroyed. The OAS survey found that in actual fact, a total of 600 tons required destruction, much of which consisted of expired and obsolete munitions, for which the military no longer had any weaponry. The survey team found that a lot of the munitions had expired and there were cases of leaking propellant, some of which had been poorly handled. They also found weapons systems which the military no longer used. The OAS survey made several recommendations, which included:

- > destruction of all munitions that are deteriorated/and or damaged, and separation from serviceable munitions
- > cleaning all storage facilities and using pallets for storage
- > storage of all items with compatibility in mind (ie blasting caps/primers, high explosives, white phosphorous/incendiaries, small arms stored separately)
- > individual inspection of all ordnance items on a consistent basis once original packaging has been opened; separation and proper disposal of those found to be unserviceable, due to damage, corrosion or age
- > individual inspection of all loosely stored small arms prior to use, and disposal of those found to be unserviceable
- > maintain ammunition in inner and outer packaging material with correct lot numbers to avoid mishaps and maintain accurate records²⁴

At approximately the same time as the OAS survey, the US Department of State had contracted the US based Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) to also conduct a survey of military storage sites. According to the OAS, DTRA's survey came to similar conclusions.

The military were very receptive to the OAS' survey findings and by the end of 2011, the OAS had destroyed over 600 tons of munitions. This included seventy-one 500 pound bombs, and all other munitions stored at the Air Force's facilities at the international airport in Guatemala City.

Capacity development

A key element of PACAM support is capacity development.²⁵ During the armed internal conflict and for many years after, the Guatemalan military was cut off from international assistance. The military acknowledge that the support from the OAS and Golden West has helped them open their eyes and recognise that they need to maintain their capacity. Guatemala, like other countries in the region, lacks capacity in disposing of excess, obsolete and expired munitions. The OAS has responded with specialised training in open incineration/burning, open demolition and other techniques for the safe disposal of explosive ordnance.

Through the destruction of munitions, Guatemala will no longer face the threat posed by excess and unstable munitions in the short term. And in the medium term, will not need to repeat destruction efforts. However, in the longer term, the military needs to develop its capacity in stockpile management to prevent dangerous handling and storage conditions from reappearing.²⁶ To address this, the OAS initially contracted Golden West (see p.17 for more information) to strengthen the capacity of the Guatemalan military in ammunition management and disposal and SALW destruction. The OAS now delivers this training through its regionally-based EOD technicians, and instead relies on Golden West for training and guidance on specific issues.

Refresher training is provided by the OAS approximately one week before each destruction event, which involves a review of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). In Guatemala, 35 members of Guatemala's Ministry of Defence Ordnance Service were provided with refresher training. When delivering in-country training, the OAS' EOD technical advisors base the training on the regional training modules that they and Golden West have developed, and which they adapt according to country context and needs.

OAS PACAM Training Modules	Timeframe
EOD 3 (Training in Spain)	2 months
Munitions Destruction	
> Low Caliber	4 days
> High Explosives	1 week
> Low and High Explosives	1 week
> EOD 1	1 week
Arms Destruction	
> Destructions of Light Firearms by the Methods of Cutting Disc and Oxyacetylene	3 days
Site remediation	1 week

The OAS has also arranged, in collaboration with Spain's Ministry of Defence, to provide formal training to national authorities in stockpile management at the International Demining Center in Hoyo de Manzanares, Spain. The first course, held in January-March 2011, focused on the disposal of large quantities of munitions as well as the detection, identification, assessment and disposal of explosives and ERW found during mine action operations. This led to EOD Level 3 certification for the participants, from six Central American organisations and two regional organisations.²⁷ The training responds to the lack of qualified personnel in Guatemala's military to carry out destruction operations of obsolete or excess munitions, or to clear sites contaminated by UXO. This is a challenge common to national authorities across Central and South America. There is a chronic lack of qualified personnel to manage munitions and explosives, and to supervise their destruction.²⁸

The OAS has used a specific approach to capacity development in Central America for PACAM. It has developed specialist expertise in every country. As a result, specialists from one country are trained and are then deployed to assist other countries in the region. For example, the OAS developed capacity for mass ammunition destruction using liquid explosives in Nicaragua. Guatemala has developed capacity in the destruction of white phosphorous munitions and SALW. Costa Rica has developed capacity in CS gas destruction and also in the use of liquid explosives. The OAS has since deployed these experts to share their experiences in order to assist other Central American countries.

Munitions destruction

The national institution responsible for munitions storage facilities is the Ordnance Service of the Ministry of National Defence. Since February 2010, OAS technicians have assisted the military in identifying, transporting and eliminating both small and large calibre explosive munitions located in military storage sites in densely populated areas. Munitions destruction takes place at a central destruction site on the outskirts of Guatemala City, which is the property of the Ministry of Defence. The PACAM team uses the following approaches for munitions destruction: open detonation, open burning and closed incineration. In general, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE - helmets/vests) is used by personnel during the actual detonations but not during preparation of the munitions for demo, as PPE would not do them any good if they were in the demo site during an unplanned explosion.

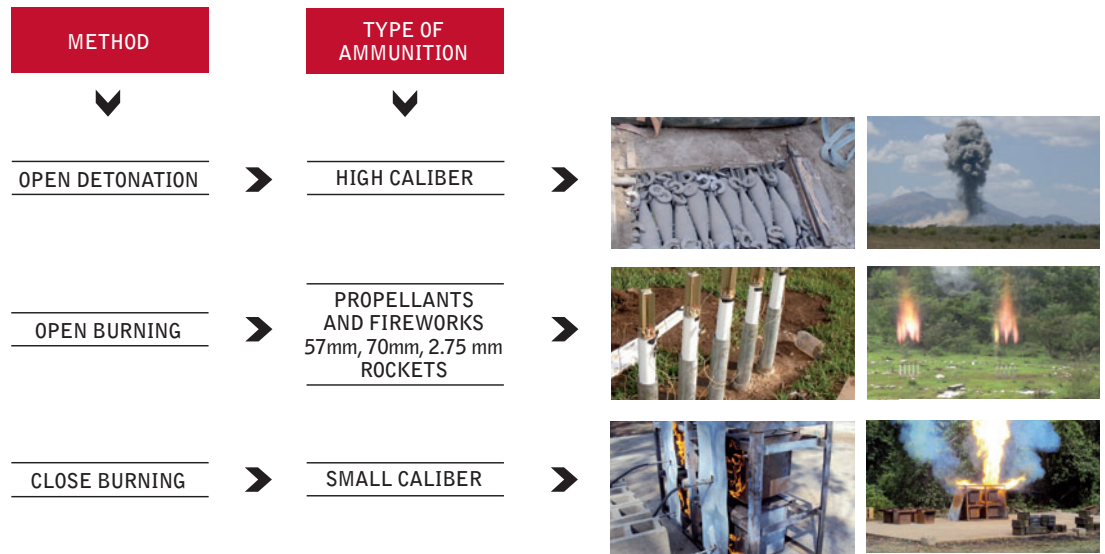
When detonating excess ammunition, the OAS has used binary explosives, an approach developed by Golden West, which can be easily and safely handled and transported. Binary explosives are approximately one tenth the cost of an equivalent amount of conventional explosives like TNT; this has helped reduce the cost of destruction operations significantly.

The OAS also has a mobile modular propane gas-powered burner unit for the safe destruction of 12.7 calibre ammunition. The OAS has also supplied PACAM focal countries with small arms ammunition burning units. The Guatemalan Ministry of Defence has manufactured the burners locally using OAS/Golden West specifications.

Given the Central American context, industrial demilitarisation is not a cost effective option for munitions destruction. It is also often difficult to get actual munitions figures from the authorities, which in turn makes it difficult to justify to donors the need to fund the purchase of industrial demilitarisation machines/equipment.

Based on the technical advice and capacity development support provided by the OAS, Guatemala's problem of excess and obsolete munitions has largely been addressed. The focus of capacity development has been ensuring that the military has sustainable capacity in ammunition management and destruction. In response to the support from the OAS, and as part of efforts to promote sustainability, the military has created a new office within the Inspector General's office which will be responsible for ensuring that ammunition stockpiles are managed and destroyed according to the procedures agreed upon with the OAS.

Figure 1 | OAS Munitions destruction methods



Arms destruction

As previously mentioned, in recent years, Guatemala has become a regional hub for SALW trafficking. The level of non-conflict related armed violence is among the highest in the region and the world. A significant number of illicit SALW are in circulation, a small number of which have been seized through arrests and security operations. Once SALW are seized, they are placed in the Guatemala’s judicial warehouse. With training, technical and logistical assistance, and equipment provided by the OAS, the Guatemalan military has worked with the judicial authorities to destroy 983 SALW in 2012 that were seized through criminal operations. This is the first time that the military has been involved in destroying non-military SALW. Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic delays in getting official approval from the Supreme Court, approximately 40,000 SALW that have been seized through criminal proceedings continue to await destruction. Given concerns regarding security in Guatemala, particularly in Guatemala City where the arms are stored, the judicial authorities responsible for storing the weapons are anxious to expedite the approval process to have the arms destroyed.

The Guatemalan military is also taking steps to destroy its supplies of excess and obsolete SALW. With training, technical and logistical assistance, and equipment provided by the OAS, the military destroyed 1,108 SALW in military possession during 2010 and 2011. A further 8,500 SALW in military possession await the approval of the military to proceed with their destruction. There are concerns that the delays from the military may partly reflect resistance from some elements in the military to SALW destruction.

To destroy SALW, the OAS has supplied the military with a rotating disc cutter and oxyacetylene torch, both of which are useful for cutting pistols and smaller arms. When using the machines, the military use standard goggles and aprons for protection. Once the arms are cut into several pieces rendering them unusable, they are sent to a local foundry and are melted down. Both the rotating disc cutter and acetylene torch are mobile. The OAS transports them using a trailer, and deploys them regionally within Central America.

The rationale for the mobile destruction unit is that it enables the machines to be used in several countries, and can also facilitate destruction in several parts of a specific country, eliminating the need to transport a large amount of weapons in countries with poor road conditions and security, to various destruction sites. The OAS refers to the mobile system as SEMAFORO (Sistema para la Eliminación de Municiones y Armas de Fuego – Regional). SEMAFORO has the capacity to destroy 300 weapons and 100,000 cartridges of small arms ammunition per day, and can safely destroy ammunition of up to .50 calibre. SEMAFORO cannot be used to dispose of explosive ammunition.²⁹

The OAS deploys SEMAFORO to countries according to planned destruction events. Its regional team, based in Managua, travel with the system to provide mentoring and training to national authorities, as well as certify the destruction of arms and ammunition.³⁰



Improving physical security

The OAS has provided the military with support to strengthen the physical security of two of its main ammunition storage facilities, including the Mariscal Zavala site in Guatemala City. The OAS has also established a temporary storage area at Mariscal Zavala and has had to secure it against potential theft. The OAS provided equipment and the military repaired and improved lighting, fences, doors and locks, among other things, according to their own Standard Operating Procedures.³¹ Additional facilities across the country require rehabilitation but OAS support to improve physical security will depend on funding.

Destruction of hazardous chemicals

In addition to SALW, Guatemala has also become a regional hub for drug trafficking. An increasing number of drug labs have started to appear along the border with Mexico, with most of the drugs destined for the North American market. A May 2011 report by the US Congressional Research Service said that 95 per cent of all cocaine entering the US comes through Mexico and its waters, with 60 per cent of that cocaine transiting through Central America.³² Approximately 250 metric tonnes of cocaine transited through Guatemala in 2009.³³

Increased controls over precursor chemicals in the United States have resulted in drug traffickers diversifying their sources and moving manufacture to other countries. According to a 2011 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report, as controls have increased in the US, the problem has moved into Mexico, and as controls have been strengthened in Mexico, more precursors are being channelled through Central America. Some countries in the region, such as Guatemala and Nicaragua, have reported an increase in amphetamine-type stimulant manufacture, and in 2008, an illicit amphetamine laboratory was discovered in Guatemala for the first time. Believed to be closely associated with this trend has been the continuous, and possibly increasing, influx of precursor chemicals associated with illicit drug manufacture into Central American countries through legal ports of entry. In 2001, only two significant attempts to divert precursors in South America, Central America and the Caribbean were reported. By 2006, the number of countries reporting significant diversions of pseudoephedrine had increased to ten, including El Salvador and Guatemala.

In 2012, the Government of Guatemala requested support from the PACAM team for the destruction of 23,000 barrels of precursor chemicals, typically used for the manufacture of synthetic drugs, which had been seized at Guatemala's ports. The military has noticed a considerable increase in recent years in the amount of precursor chemicals being found by port authorities.

Guatemala's Army Corps of Engineers has been tasked with destroying the chemicals but recognises that it lacks the capacity to safely and effectively neutralise and dispose of the chemicals. At present, they are being stored at the military's central destruction site just outside of Guatemala City. Despite strong rhetoric from the US government about tackling narco-trafficking, no American or international organisations have responded to Guatemala's request for assistance with destroying the chemicals. The OAS is assessing the feasibility of providing assistance to Guatemalan authorities to destroy the chemicals under the agreement it signed in July 2012 for the expansion of cooperation through PACAM. The OAS intends to source the necessary technical expertise for hazardous materials disposal from one of its member countries, as well as funding to facilitate the destruction. The request provides the OAS with an opportunity to use its expertise in munitions destruction, as well as a potential entry point to support the Guatemalan Government on broader security and safety issues in future.

OAS capacity

The OAS has a team of four based in Washington, DC that works for the PACAM programme; the team consists of a director, finance/administrative assistant, programme officer and a programme assistant. The OAS also has a regional office in Managua, Nicaragua, where a regional PACAM coordinator is based, along with an administrative assistant, three EOD technical advisors, a victim assistance specialist, a secretary and a database manager. The OAS also contracts specialist staff for specific projects. The EOD technical advisors, some of whom were previously involved in the OAS' mine action programmes, are based in Nicaragua but are regularly deployed to various PACAM countries to provide technical assistance to national partners. They have been trained to EOD Level Three certification. Golden West's technical staff are all senior EOD specialists, each with between 20 and 40 years of EOD experience to Level Four (former US military).

Results

The Guatemalan military has stressed that without international cooperation and assistance from the OAS, they would not have been able to address their problems of excess ammunition and SALW.

Munitions destruction

Figure 2 | Munitions destruction³⁴

Timeframe	Metric tonnes destroyed
February – September 2010	393.17
January – July 2011	154.31
September – December 2011	86.29
Total	633.77

Destruction of arms

The total number of arms destroyed in military possession (in 2010 and 2011) was 1,108. In 2012, 983 SALW seized through criminal proceedings were destroyed.

Figure 3 | Arms destruction

SALW type	2010	2011	2012
Grenade launcher (rapid firing)		1	
Machine gun MAG		1	
Machine gun	1	31	2
Homemade gun			1
Rifle firing mechanism			1
Carbines		1	7
Shotguns	4	54	99
Rifle	28	356	48
Assault rifles			2
Gailil assault rifle			1
Homemade rifles			3
Pen gun			1
Rocket launcher	3	79	
Grenade launcher	2	20	
Mini-Uzi			1
Pistol	14	140	335
Pen-type pistol			1
Revolver	26	128	406
Rifle	10	103	63
Air rifle			3
Sub machine gun	12	94	9
Sub-total	100	1,008	983
Total arms destroyed to date			2,091

Capacity development

The OAS, in association with Golden West, has trained approximately 60 Guatemalan military personnel on how to identify munitions that are dangerous and unstable. Over 35 from the Engineers Corps have been certified as munitions destruction specialists and approximately 24 military officers have been trained as SALW destruction specialists. Those trained were from military warehouses across the country. Although the military selects the personnel to participate in the training, the OAS can request replacements if officers do not meet the necessary requirements.

The first EOD course delivered at Spain's international demining centre took place in 2011 with 17 participants from Central America, including two from the Guatemalan military. A second was held in 2012 for 20 participants, again with two from Guatemala, one of whom was the first female officer to complete the course. The training takes eight to nine weeks. Due to budget cuts in Spain, the only training provided at the International Demining Centre in 2013 will be the OAS EOD course.

Role of Golden West Humanitarian Foundation

Golden West was established in 2003, and consists of eight staff members. Golden West has been collaborating with the OAS in Central America, specifically in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala. Based on its experiences working with Golden West in Nicaragua and Honduras in 2006 and 2007, the OAS contracted Golden West to provide training and technical assistance to several PACAM countries, ie Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Golden West provides technical expertise, supplies specialised equipment and delivers training. Golden West initially became involved in Guatemala by responding to the request from the Guatemalan military to remove white phosphorous munitions resulting from a depot explosion in 2005. Golden West has since been used to train OAS technicians as well as Guatemalan military authorities in munitions and SALW destruction. As the level of capacity of the OAS' EOD technical advisors has increased, the OAS now draws upon Golden West only for specialist expertise and occasional Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Control (QC) visits.

Information management

The OAS' information management specialist based in Managua is responsible for reporting and maintaining the database. The OAS uses a Microsoft Access database through which it has developed a series of formats for daily reports and final reports, and they are in the process of optimising the application.

Given the military's past involvement in the civil war, its collaboration with the OAS on munitions and SALW destruction has raised its profile and lent credibility to its SALW destruction efforts. The OAS has worked with the military to put in place a transparent system for recording essential information about arms destruction.³⁵ For example, the military uses an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of data such as the SALW type and serial number, and it takes photos of each SALW destroyed. The information from destruction events is passed to the Inspector General whose team is responsible for maintaining the data in the military database. The Defence Ministry uses its own locally-developed Excel-based database programme.

The Judicial Warehouse maintains records of all items seized from criminal proceedings, including SALW. The database used by the judicial authorities enables them to track items as they move through the judicial process.

Quality Management

Standards

The OAS has developed a set of Standard Operating Procedures for munitions and SALW destruction activities which cover topics such as:

- > destruction of SALW using a rotating disc cutter and an oxyacetylene torch
- > destruction of munitions
- > site remediation
- > transport of munitions, explosives

The SOPs are used by the OAS across the region in PACAM countries, and are adapted to national needs and context as appropriate. New SOPs are developed based on need. SOPs are based on the International Mine Action Standards, the draft International Small Arms Control Standards and national legislation. When the OAS provides training to the Guatemalan military, the SOPs are used as a basis for the training curriculum.

Monitoring and inspection

The OAS office in Managua has EOD technicians that accompany the military's operations and ensure compliance with national SOPs and relevant international standards. The Guatemala office of the OAS is responsible for ensuring that country-level operations comply with OAS administrative requirements. Once a destruction operation has taken place, the national authorities fill in relevant forms to indicate what was destroyed, which the OAS' EOD technicians certify. This information is shared with the military and Ministry of Defence. The OAS contracts Golden West to assess the operations of the Guatemalan military at least once or twice a year.

The military's Inspector General has a team that is responsible for internal quality assurance of military munitions and SALW destruction operations, on behalf of the military, Inspector General and auditors. The team ensures that military units follow the SOPs developed in association with the OAS and approved by the government.

The military has emphasised that although it now has the capacity to undertake munitions and SALW destruction, OAS certification of destruction events provides credibility to the process and certainty to the public who may be sceptical about military involvement, particularly with regards to SALW destruction. In the past, weapons designated for destruction by the military have disappeared and have then shown up in criminal hands or in other countries. The OAS support has therefore helped to improve public perception of the military, as well as transparency and accountability. As an indication of this confidence, the military has been requested by various ministries and academic institutions to make presentations about their collaboration with the OAS and their newly developed expertise in munitions and SALW destruction.

PACAM personnel are responsible for assessing progress in association with the Guatemalan military, which monitors operations on a daily basis. A PACAM technical supervisor permanently monitors the project and keeps PACAM team members informed on operational activities through daily reports. During destruction operations, OAS EOD technicians/field supervisors provide daily and supplemental field reports to the OAS Managua office. The PACAM regional coordinator in Managua reviews all reports and analyses them before issuing certification of operation results. These daily reports are compiled into a final report. If any irregularities occur, the OAS EOD technicians inform the Managua office, which then decides which course of action to take. The reports are then shared with the OAS in Washington for overall evaluation and reporting to donors.

DONOR FUNDING

Funding for PACAM activities has come from the US Department of State and the Government of Spain. US funding has come through the Department of Narcotics, while Spanish funding has been channelled through the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. Given the global financial crisis, the OAS is encountering difficulties in sourcing funding for PACAM activities. As one illustration of this, Spanish funding for PACAM will not continue beyond 2012.

Given that donors have tended to provide the OAS with short term funding for PACAM, the OAS typically reports to donors on results in terms of outputs, eg the number of military personnel trained, the number of SALW destroyed, etc as opposed to medium/longer-term outcomes.



PACAM AND AVR INITIATIVES IN GUATEMALA

The OAS recognises that Guatemala's SALW problem is inextricably linked to broader problems of drug trafficking, governance and security. Likewise, it is acknowledged that working only with the military on munitions and SALW destruction is an insufficient response to tackle the much more complex problem of armed violence. In 2013, the OAS plans to move beyond munitions and SALW destruction to take a more holistic approach to reducing armed violence, for example through violence reduction campaigns at community-level, voluntary arms collections programmes combined with community development projects, and capacity development of the police. These plans are subject to the availability of funding as a more holistic approach will require more resources and staff working in-country to manage specific projects. The OAS also intends to broaden its scope of engagement and work in future with the civilian police in Guatemala.

OTHER OAS SUPPORT FOR AVR IN GUATEMALA

The CIFTA programme within the OAS Department for Public Security has provided support to the Guatemalan military with the marking of SALW in an effort to improve transparency and accountability, and mitigate SALW trafficking. Several marking machines were donated, and training was provided. The military believes this has improved its capacity to monitor and control their weapons, and establish when military weapons end up in criminal hands.

Armando Paz is another OAS programme, also in the Department of Public Security, which focuses on youth at risk, by using social media among other things to engage in public policy processes. The programme does not directly address the issue of SALW, nor does it raise awareness among youth about the risks and impact of SALW misuse. It instead takes a preventative approach, using positive messages to engage youth.

Although both programmes are part of the OAS' Department of Public Security, which also houses the PACAM programme, and involve some of the same actors in Guatemala, all three programmes were delivered by separate teams and were not coordinated at Headquarter, regional or country-level. This was a missed opportunity for the OAS to have maximum impact on reducing armed violence by coordinating and leveraging its support to the Guatemalan authorities. Fortunately, as of August 2012, the OAS has merged the CIFTA programme within the PACAM programme to enhance synergies and overall effectiveness, and open up potential funding opportunities for PACAM.



LESSONS LEARNT

Some of the lessons learnt by the PACAM team include the following:

- > It can be difficult at times for the military to reach a decision, due to their command structures, which in Central America, tend to be quite 'top heavy'. Getting approval for destruction activities can therefore take considerable time and result in delays to planned activities. To mitigate the command structure and promote information-sharing, the OAS EOD technical advisors meet daily with all officers involved in destruction activities to ensure information is passed on, and to build team work and motivation.
- > Collaboration between the Guatemalan military and the OAS has enhanced the credibility of the military, and of the munitions and SALW destruction process, particularly given the military's past reputation. Despite the fact that the military now has the technical capacity to undertake SALW destruction, the military still wants an OAS presence to certify the SALW destruction process. This is to compensate for the military's previously poor track record on SALW destruction, its lack of transparency and poor public perception.

- > Given that PACAM is a regional programme implemented by a regional team as opposed to country-based staff, logistics planning is critical. For example, the formalities involved in moving munitions and SALW destruction equipment from one country to another needs to be considered, as do the different procurement regulations. Climatic conditions and seasons must be considered, as for example, severe weather can result in delays or the postponement of activities, particularly munitions destruction operations. In Guatemala, munitions destruction activities need to be planned outside of hurricane season. Road conditions are also an important factor, as poor road conditions can make it very difficult to transport unstable ammunition and explosives.
- > The OAS recognises that Guatemala's SALW problem is inextricably linked to broader problems of drug trafficking, governance and security, and that support to the military to destroy excess munitions and SALW is an insufficient response to tackle the much more complex problem of armed violence. In response, the OAS intends to take a more holistic approach to reducing armed violence, one that goes beyond addressing just the instruments of armed violence.
- > It is important to build the confidence of national institutions. In Guatemala, the military have been reluctant to address the problem of precursor chemicals due to fear of making a mistake. However, with some guidance and capacity development, the level of confidence improves, which can help build trust and lead to other areas of assistance.
- > A regional SALW and munitions programme like PACAM enables the OAS to have greater coverage at a relatively lower cost. It has enabled the OAS to share capacity and expertise across the region. For example, the Guatemalan army has provided technical support to operations in Costa Rica and Honduras, which has also helped to build trust between countries in the region. On the other hand, the challenge of a regional programme is to accommodate different priorities and visions.
- > Each country is different, and although there may be some similarities across countries in a particular region, it is important to adapt the approach taken to the local context and local needs. The approach taken by PACAM in each of its focus countries in Central America has differed to reflect the different local context.
- > Militaries in the region often view outside organisations as a potential threat and are always very sensitive about information. They are particularly afraid and embarrassed to reveal the extent of their problems when it comes to excess, obsolete and degraded munitions housed in storage facilities. It is therefore important to establish trust and use an approach based on discretion. One entry point for the OAS has been through former mine action programmes, whereby the OAS has established good contacts with various military personnel, who have then helped to open doors and facilitate access for working on SALW and munitions destruction.
- > Securing resources to establish an AVR-related programme takes time, and funding available for AVR programmes in the Americas is more limited than for mine action.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ This case study was written by Sharmala Naidoo (GICHD) following a research mission to Guatemala in July 2012.
- ² OAS Charter, 1948, http://www.tjsl.edu/slomansonb/3.5_OASChart.pdf
- ³ Stefano Migliorisi and Anwasha Phabhr. Guatemala: World Bank Country-Level Engagement on Governance and Anti-Corruption. IEG Working Paper 2011/10, 2011.
- ⁴ International Crisis Group. Police Reform in Guatemala: Obstacles and Opportunities. 20 July 2012.
- ⁵ OAS Report On Citizen Security in the Americas, 2012, <http://www.oas.org/dsp/alertamerica/Report/Alertamerica2012.pdf>; OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, "Guatemala – Evaluation of Progress in Drug Control, 2007-2009", 2010.
- ⁶ International Crisis Group. Police Reform in Guatemala: Obstacles and Opportunities. 20 July 2012.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Migliorisi and Phabhr, 2011.
- ⁹ International Crisis Group. Police Reform in Guatemala: Obstacles and Opportunities. 20 July 2012.
- ¹⁰ Amnesty International. Blood at the Crossroads: Making the case for a global Arms Trade Treaty, 17 September 2008.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Small Arms Survey and CERAC. Guatemala en la Encrucijada. Panorama de una violencia transformada – Executive Summary. Editors: Jorge A. Restrepo, Alonso Tobón García, Geneva Declaration Secretariat July 2012.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ OAS. Reducing the Threat of Arms and Munitions in the Americas. Website – The OAS at Work – accessed 27 June 2012.
- ¹⁵ Amnesty International. Blood at the Crossroads: Making the case for a global Arms Trade Treaty, 17 September 2008.
- ¹⁶ Amnesty International and IANSA. How an Arms Trade Treaty can prevent armed violence, 2011.
- ¹⁷ ICBL. Landmine Monitor, 2002.
- ¹⁸ The IADB personnel worked through the Assistance Mission for Mine Clearance in Central America (MARMINCA), and were responsible for training and certification.
- ¹⁹ OAS. PACAM presentation, Carlos Orozco, 2012
- ²⁰ OAS. Mine Action Project Portfolio 2011-2012.
- ²¹ OAS. Control and Destruction of Small Arms and Small Calibre Munitions, OAS Mine Action Project Portfolio 2011-2012.
- ²² OAS. Regional Profile – Central America: Control and Destruction of Firearms, Light Weapons, Munitions and Related Materials. Mine Action, Arms Control, Destruction of ammunitions, Projects Portfolio 2010-2011.
- ²³ OAS. PACAM presentation, Carlos Orozco, 2012.
- ²⁴ Golden West Humanitarian Foundation/OAS. Guatemalan Site Assessment/QC, 18 August, 2010.
- ²⁵ OAS. Munitions Management and Munitions Destruction. Mine Action Project Portfolio, 2011-2012.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ OAS. Munitions and Explosive Management Training, OAS Mine Action Project Portfolio 2011-2012.
- ²⁸ OAS. Munitions Management and Munitions Destruction Regional Training Course, OAS Mine Action Project Portfolio 2011-2012.
- ²⁹ The OAS has submitted a proposal to donors to fund a munitions cutting system similar to the one used by Golden West in Cambodia for harvesting explosive filler from bombs and large explosive projectiles. The filler is converted to charges used in demining operations and the metal is recycled. The OAS proposal would not recycle explosive filler, only cut the munitions allowing the filler to be burned out in a contained area. This would eliminate the need to use open detonation in specific situations where large explosions are either too risky or environmentally restricted.
- ³⁰ OAS. Reducing the Threat of Arms and Munitions in the Americas. Website – The OAS at Work – accessed 27 June 2012.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Guatemalan president weighs drug legalization, blames US for not reducing consumption", *The Star*, 14 February 2012.
- ³³ Stefano Migliorisi and Anwasha Phabhr. Guatemala: World Bank Country-Level Engagement on Governance and Anti-Corruption. IEG Working Paper 2011/10, 2011.
- ³⁴ Figures from the following tables come from Carlos Orozco, OAS, PACAM presentation, 2012.
- ³⁵ See Annex 3 for a copy of the form used for SALW destruction.

ANNEX 1 | PEOPLE CONSULTED

Alvaro Dubon | General Manager | Judicial Agency

Ambassador Ricardo Putzeys | General Director for Multilateral Policy | Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Arturo Matute | Project Manager, Role of Law and Peace | UNDP Guatemala

Carl Case | General Coordinator | Comprehensive Action Against Antipersonnel Mines and Assistance for Control of Arms and Munitions | Department of Public Safety | OAS

Carlos Orozco | PACAM Regional Coordinator | OAS

Carmen Rosa de Leon | Executive Director | IEPADES

Colonel Chiroy | War Materials Services

Colonel Eduardo Enrique Caballero Flores | Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers

General Douglas Gonzalez Monzon | Army Inspector General

Jaime Remmerswaal | Governance Advisor | Netherlands Embassy

Javier Puig, Second Secretary | Spanish Embassy

Len Austin | Golden West Humanitarian Foundation

Major Navano | War Materials Services

Nydia Guillermo | Armando Paz | OAS | Guatemala

Sergio Diemeck | Chief of the Judicial Warehouse

Siobhan Sheils | Desk Officer for Guatemala | US Department of State | Washington, DC

ANNEX 2 | DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Brands, Hal | Crime, Violence and the Crisis in Guatemala: A Case Study in the Erosion of the State | Strategic Studies Institute | May 2010

Central American Network for the Construction of Peace and Human Security | The Problem of Illegal Firearms in Central America | Guatemala | March 2006

IEPADES | Dealing with the problem of illicit traffic of fire arms from a regional perspective | Guatemala | July 2006

International Crisis Group

- > Police Reform in Guatemala: Obstacles and Opportunities | 20 July 2012
- > Guatemala: Squeezed between crime and impunity | 22 June 2010

Geneva Declaration Secretariat | Global Burden of Armed Violence | Geneva | 2011

OAS

- > Reducing the Threat of Arms and Munitions in the Americas | OAS Website – The OAS at Work | accessed 27 June 2012
- > PACAM presentation | Carlos Orozco | 2012
- > Control and Destruction of Small Arms and Small Calibre Munitions | OAS Mine Action Project Portfolio 2011-2012
- > Munitions Management and Munitions Destruction Regional Training Course | OAS Mine Action Project Portfolio 2011-2012
- > Regional Profile – Central America: Control and Destruction of Firearms, Light Weapons, Munitions and Related Materials | Mine Action, Arms Control, Destruction of Ammunitions | Projects Portfolio 2010-2011

Small Arms Survey and CERAC. Guatemala en la Encrucijada | Panorama de una violencia transformada – Executive Summary | Editors: Jorge A. Restrepo, Alonso Tobón García | Geneva Declaration Secretariat July 2012

Small Arms Survey | A semi-automatic process? Identifying and destroying military surplus. Chapter 3 | Small Arms Survey 2008 | Geneva

ANNEX 3 | SAMPLE SALW DESTRUCTION FORM

**PROGRAMA DE ASISTENCIA PARA EL CONTROL DE ARMAS Y MUNICIONES
PACAM - OEA
Proyecto de Destruccion de Armas**

País

Lugar de Trabajo

FECHA

Nº	Nº de Serie	Nº Registro/ Inventario	Tipo de Arma	Marca	Modelo	Calibre	País Fabricación	Proced/ Almacén	Método Destrucción	Observaciones

Recursos Umanos		
Nº Personal	Hora inicial	Hora final

TOTAL ARMAS DESTRUIDAS



**Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
Centre International de Déminage Humanitaire | Genève**

7bis, av. de la Paix | P.O. Box 1300 | 1211 Geneva 1 | Switzerland
t. + 41 (0)22 906 16 60 | f. + 41 (0)22 906 16 90
info@gichd.org | www.gichd.org