



Mines Advisory Group's Physical Security
and Stockpile Management Project

MINE ACTION AND ARMED VIOLENCE REDUCTION

Somaliland

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**.

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INTRODUCTION¹

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has been working in Somalia since 2008, largely providing support and other expertise for disarmament and stabilisation efforts through the clearance and destruction of small arms and light weapons (SALW). In December 2010, the Police Commissioner in Somaliland's capital Hargeisa asked MAG to visit one of the main police armouries in Hargeisa.² Police officers and civilians were being put at risk by the poor storage conditions of arms, ammunition and explosives, which could cause a potential explosion.³ With funding from Act for Peace and the UK Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP), MAG renovated the armoury. MAG then conducted a survey of over 40 police armouries across Somaliland to assess physical security and storage conditions and make recommendations on how to improve safety and security. This initial request for support led to a multi-phased Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) project which began in June 2011 with funding from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

MAG's PSSM support in Somaliland has focused on the refurbishment of police and maritime police armouries and strengthening the capacity of armoury storemen responsible for the day to day management of the armoury, in order to prevent diversions from stockpiles managed by national authorities. This is a major concern, particularly given increasing levels of violent crime in Somaliland as well as ongoing political insecurity resulting from piracy and regional instability. The purpose of this case study is to document the approach MAG has taken to implement PSSM in Somaliland and learn lessons from its experiences.⁴

CONTEXT

Somaliland's police force was established in 1991 and has struggled to shed its identity as a colonial police force. The current police force consists of former police officers under Siad Barre's regime and demobilised clan militia. Police capacity remains weak with high levels of illiteracy, limited formal training and weak organisational structure.⁵ Somaliland has approximately 40 to 50 police stations, most of which are very basic with no communications and limited transport capacity. In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Somaliland's Ministry of Interior is implementing a police reform programme to achieve intelligence-led, rights-based, partnership policing.⁶ The intention is to transform the police into a modern public service, where policing is based on democratically endorsed laws, mutual respect and assistance.

As part of the mine action programme, the police have received training from the UNDP and MAG in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) in order to support mine/Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) clearance efforts. However, arms and ammunition management is one area where police capacity remains weak. The Somaliland police and maritime police lack the necessary resources in terms of trained personnel and equipment to effectively address arms, ammunition and explosives stockpiles.⁷ For example, police arms, ammunition and explosives stores are typically based in insecure locations, sometimes in densely populated areas. Arms, ammunition and explosives are often stored in the same room, with arms fully loaded and degraded, and unsafe explosives. Ammunition storage depots are also often crammed to more than full capacity.⁸

In Somaliland, MAG has not yet started looking at ammunition stores. However, police armouries should only store division 1.4S ammunition, ie small arms ammunition used for AK-47 assault rifles. Unfortunately, the Somaliland police store other ammunition in their armouries, effectively making them explosive stores. Police armouries are typically located in populated civilian areas. If explosives are stored in a police armoury then they become Explosive Stores which should be located away from populated areas based on safe quantity distances.

MAG'S PSSM PROJECT

MAG globally employs approximately 3,000 people and works in 17 countries. Originally an organisation that focused on humanitarian mine action, in recent years MAG has expanded the focus of its activities to include wider Armed Violence Reduction (AVR)-related activities, such as PSSM.⁹ At present, MAG is implementing PSSM projects in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Libya and Somalia/Somaliland, and is assessing opportunities in South Sudan.

MAG first started working in Somaliland in 2007, providing technical assistance and oversight to police EOD teams. With funding from the US Department of States Weapons Removal and Abatement programme (WRA), MAG then expanded its operations to Puntland in 2008 to clear conventional weapons and stockpiles. MAG established and trained a police EOD team in association with the Puntland Mine Action Centre. The team covered munitions recognition, the safe handling of explosive ordnance, conducting safe demolitions, first aid and communications. MAG has also undertaken ERW clearance and delivered Mine Risk Education (MRE) in Puntland.¹⁰

In December 2010, MAG received a request from the Hargeisa Police Commissioner to look at one of the police armouries. This led to a one year PSSM project focused on improving the security and safe storage of small arms, ammunition and explosives in police armouries, in order to reduce the risk of theft, diversion, fire and unplanned explosions. MAG has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Interior in Somaliland which covers support to the police and maritime police. The anticipated outcomes of the project are:

- > reduction in the threat of accident or injury from an accidental explosion at police armouries
- > better management and control of police and maritime police firearms

The project started in June 2011 and involved the refurbishment of 10 police armouries, the construction of a maritime police armoury in Berbera, the construction of three police EOD stores, and the training of police and maritime police armourers. The activities undertaken by MAG during this first year were divided into two phases, and are outlined below:

Phase One

1. conducted a survey of police armouries
2. consulted the police about their needs and priorities, and what is possible given available funds, eg would the police prefer armoury refurbishment or construction of new armouries
3. confirmed donor funding based on an outline of police priorities
4. conducted a second survey of armouries and produced technical diagrams with the proposed building specifications for contractors (eg armouries containing an airlock, ammunition store and weapons store)
5. issued a local tender and selected a local contractor
6. developed and submitted a technical work package to the police and received their approval
7. started implementation; the refurbishment process took between two to three weeks, while the construction of a new armoury took approximately four weeks
8. conducted monitoring and quality assurance; MAG regularly monitored progress on the construction or refurbishment and carried out quality assurance
9. once complete, MAG handed the armoury over to the police, with the Police Commissioner signing off on the handover documentation.

Phase Two

MAG delivered a one week training course for police and maritime police armourers on arms and ammunition management, and plan to provide training for line managers to ensure oversight and monitoring. MAG also provided training to military armourers in March 2012. The training covered the following topics:

- > weapon safety within the armoury
- > weapon identification, accounting and storage
- > ammunition hazards
- > small arms ammunition (SAA) identification, accounting and storage
- > armoury infrastructure and procedures
- > fire prevention and actions in the event of a fire

MAG plans to return to these armouries to check that arms, ammunition and EOD stores are being maintained correctly. MAG is developing a tool to reassess the quality and sustainability of training and systems provided. It will be implemented throughout the project and will be used during the current project on previously refurbished armouries.

The third phase of activities, scheduled for the second half of 2012 and 2013¹¹, will focus on:

- > liaison with national authorities to identify high priority police and high priority maritime police armouries for development
- > renovation of armouries in accordance with MAG's Technical Standard Guidelines and tailored to specific needs and conditions
- > training armourers in the safe handling, storage, issuing and cataloguing of firearms and small arms ammunition
- > supporting the Somaliland police and maritime police to implement manageable systems of firearms control in relation to the issuing and cataloguing of firearms and small arms ammunition
- > coordinating with other PSSM actors to initiate the development of a Somaliland PSSM framework
- > providing training and support to police and maritime police in the safe collection and destruction of obsolete and dangerous firearms and associated ammunition
- > applying MAG's Armoury Risk Assessment and Ammunition Store Risk Assessment to evaluate the need for and priority of interventions based on risk criteria
- > determining baseline standards and risk for each armoury prior to intervention to enable effective impact monitoring
- > applying MAG's Armoury Impact Assessment tool to all armouries to evaluate the impact of infrastructure, training and destruction activities

MAG has been focusing largely on bottom-up change. However changes in the security sector will likely take place in the near future due to a recent security sector assessment, which will likely lead to a Security Sector Reform (SSR) strategy for Somaliland. Once the strategy is in place, MAG believes it will be in a better position to engage in the development of PSSM-related policies and standards, which are planned during the fourth and final phase of MAG's multi-phased PSSM approach.

MAG is attempting to initiate and expand the destruction of surplus, obsolete and degraded arms, ammunition and explosives. Destruction activities have not been carried out to date as this is a sensitive issue in Somaliland. In 1992, UN Security Council Resolution 751 was adopted. It established, among other things, a Committee of the Security Council to oversee a general and complete arms embargo against Somalia. The embargo continues today and as a result, the security forces in Somaliland are somewhat reluctant to destroy surplus arms and ammunition regardless of their condition. MAG has therefore opted to focus first on building trust and gaining the confidence of the police and maritime police.



Strengthening physical security

Between June 2011 and May 2012, MAG completed the refurbishment of six police armouries in Hargeisa, Mandera and Gabiley, as well as a maritime police armoury in Berbera. MAG also refurbished three police armouries in Burao and Baraawe, and built police EOD stores.

Armoury refurbishment, which involves the renovation of an existing police armoury, is a relatively new area of engagement for mine action organisations. There are no international standards which specifically apply, apart from UN standards on the transport of arms, ammunition and explosives between countries and elements of the new International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs). While UK standards do exist for armoury construction, they are based on a European context, and according to MAG, would require significant investment often not possible or relevant in contexts like Somaliland. MAG has therefore developed its own approach to armoury refurbishment.

MAG has successfully used a work package approach for the infrastructure side of PSSM. Once the national authorities articulate their needs in terms of construction or refurbishment, MAG then develops the technical specifications for the building work and sends a letter to the most senior official in the police and maritime police, who signs off on the specifications. MAG then puts out a bid, identifies potential suppliers, checks with the national authorities and gets their sign off, and then initiates the construction work. Once the refurbishment

or construction work is completed, the national authorities check the work and sign off on it. Generally, this process ensures that expectations are managed and that it is clear from the outset what MAG is able to provide. In one instance, MAG was supposed to undertake three armoury refurbishments for the maritime police in Berbera but when they were about to start the work, the head of the maritime police in Berbera insisted on a new armoury. MAG informed their donor about the new needs, and used the funds for three refurbishments to cover the cost of building a new Central Armoury in Berbera.

To improve the storage of SALW, MAG uses metal gun racks which are built locally and installed within police armouries. The gun racks promote safer storage and help reduce the risk of theft and diversion. In some armouries, MAG has designed and worked with local contractors to install metal mesh/cage ceilings in armouries to further secure the building.

As part of the refurbishment or construction of police and maritime police armouries, MAG is also working with the police and maritime police to develop systems for ammunition storage. These include assessing whether ammunition and explosives can be stored elsewhere (eg given to the military), whether they need to be destroyed, or whether a separate EOD store needs to be constructed.

SALW identification and record-keeping

MAG has worked with the police to strengthen the capacity of armourers in the areas of weapons identification and accounting. Armourers in Somaliland typically lack the capacity to correctly identify the arms and ammunition housed in their armouries and EOD stores, and often no records are kept to keep track of the movement of arms and ammunition. MAG's support has therefore focused on strengthening the capacity of armourers to account for weapons; for example by recording information on each arm stored, eg type, serial number, manufacturer, model number, calibre, country of origin and its condition.

Capacity development

MAG delivered training for approximately 39 armourers over four six-day periods. The training covered SALW recognition, recording and distribution to ensure they know how to safely store and distribute arms and ammunition. MAG uses in-house PSSM training materials which draw upon training materials developed by MAG in the DRC and Burundi, as well as British and French armoury training materials. The materials are tested and the score is given to the local commander and Police commissioner. MAG is developing a sustainability measurement system that will be used to assess the quality of the training and how well it has been implemented by the national forces.

MAG's trainer, a former Ammunition Technician, visits armouries after the training has been provided. The visits generally take place between one to 12 months afterwards, and MAG scores each armourer to check whether they are implementing the armoury management training they received.

Since 2009, the United Nations has been supporting police reform in Somaliland with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DfID), which has involved training, among other things, for the police. There may be opportunities for MAG to include information on explosive stores and armouries in the standard training delivered to police across Somaliland.

MAG has taken a different approach to working with the military as it is far more sensitive than working with the police and maritime police. The military are far more secretive, as in most countries, due to the nature and quantity of items held. The police by comparison have only SALW and relatively small quantities of explosives. In March 2012, MAG trained 15 military armourers. The scale of the potential PSSM work with the military is much greater and while MAG plans to work much more closely with the military in future, this is subject to funding.

MAG capacity

Based on MAG's experience, the team managing a PSSM project should ideally reflect the nature of the intervention. For PSSM projects involving ammunition storage redevelopment, an ammunition technical background is required (ie knowledge and experience of ammunition storage, disposal, maintenance, repair and construction of storage facilities). For PSSM projects involving armoury storage redevelopment, a weapons storage and identification background is required. In both cases, construction experience (to monitor and conduct Quality Assurance [QA] on the construction process), and training/capacity development skills are required in order to effectively design and deliver tailored training for participants (in this case the police and maritime police in Somaliland).

Thus far MAG has outsourced the construction work to local contractors and has then used an international advisor to manage the work. However, MAG is questioning whether it should continue with this approach or instead train a construction team to undertake all of the construction work. This would then help to contribute to building national capacity.



MAG has projects planned in Somaliland and in Puntland for 2012/13 which foresee a significant increase in the scale of construction. Depending on the availability of funding, MAG will hire an international construction manager (with a construction engineering background) and a national counterpart who will be responsible for management and QA of the construction work.

Quality Management

At present, there is no external Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QC) of MAG's PSSM work with the police or maritime police. This is because there is no UN body, eg UNDP or UNMAS, operating in Somaliland which is responsible for PSSM. Quality Management is handled through MAG's organisational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity, which is outside of the programme to enable independence. MAG is developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide its PSSM work, which include the following topics:

- > security management
- > visibility profile
- > personal security
- > communications
- > road travel
- > accommodation
- > security and threat states
- > crisis management
- > hibernation
- > evacuation

MAG's Technical Operations Manager is responsible for checking that technical quality and standards are maintained.

During MAG's first phase of activities in Somaliland, MAG used its armoury risk assessment tool to assess the risks associated with each armoury. When constructing an armoury, which is done according to MAG's own standards, MAG re-assesses the risk of the armoury to check that it has been reduced.

Information Management

In terms of information management, MAG conducts assessments for each armoury and this information is then collated centrally and serves as baseline information for the programme. This information is stored in an Excel spreadsheet and MAG shares the data with the national authorities in the form of a final impact report.

MAG does not provide data on weapons storage and stockpiles to the Somaliland Mine Action Centre (SMAC) or to any other agencies given the sensitive nature of the information and the broader context in Somaliland and broader Somalia. For the same reason, MAG does not keep records of the arms and ammunition stored in the armouries and EOD stores that it visits and refurbishes.

Coordination with other operators

In Somaliland, MAG is not the only mine/ERW operator involved in PSSM. The HALO Trust has a parallel Weapons and Ammunition Disposal project which involves working with the police to refurbish police armouries. And on a much smaller scale, Danish Demining Group (DDG) is planning to refurbish a police armoury based on a request from the police in a community in which DDG is already operating. Initial efforts by MAG and HALO Trust to support the police in PSSM were poorly coordinated, resulting in miscommunication, disagreements and duplication in the tasking of operators by the police. However they both recognise that coordination is essential in such a complex operating context, and in association with DDG and UNMAS, they have established a PSSM

working group. The intention is to focus on developing basic minimum standards for PSSM in Somaliland to ensure consistency of outputs. For example, the operators will agree that: an armoury should have X number of doors and gun racks; that training for armourers should comprise a minimum core set of topics and that training on armoury management is consistent regardless of who delivers it; and that refurbished and newly constructed armouries should look similar across Somaliland.

Results

MAG has been working with the police and maritime police in Somaliland to put in place the foundations for safe weapons control using a bottom-up approach. MAG has refurbished armouries, installed gun racks and provided training for armourers in the police and maritime police. In total, MAG refurbished 10 police armouries, constructed a new central armoury in Berbera for the Maritime police, and built three EOD stores for the police outside of Hargeisa and one in Hargeisa. MAG also delivered training for 39 armourers over four six-day periods.

The response from donors for MAG's PSSM work has been positive, in part because donors are interested in supporting stabilisation efforts in Somalia/Somaliland, but also due to concerns relating to the leakage of SALW to pirates and Al-Shabaab, and imminent changes to the arms embargo on Somalia. Given that the arms embargo on Somalia will likely be lifted or changed, MAG is advising donors of the need to put in place the foundations for improved SALW accountability and management, through capacity development and infrastructure.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a key concern for MAG and is what underpins the organization's bottom-up approach. According to MAG, "anyone can build an armoury". However, delivering sustainable impact involves going back to armouries to support the armourers in applying their training. MAG has spent time speaking with relevant ministers and police commanders to explain the importance of re-assessing armouries and the need to be able to return and demonstrate that armoury management has improved, and to make the case to donors for continued support. As part of the AusAID-funded work, MAG is developing a new impact assessment tool which it plans to use when it re-assesses a sample number of armouries that it has refurbished to check the extent to which they are secure and safely managed. This tool will assess the armourers' implementation of the training and management systems provided, and will score them accordingly. It will also assess the change in risk compared with the initial assessment.

Reporting on results

Donors, like AusAID, ask MAG to report on the results of the PSSM programme in terms of outputs and outcomes. Reporting on outputs is straightforward, according to MAG, as it involves listing the number of armouries refurbished, number of armourers trained, etc. However reporting on PSSM outcomes is much more difficult. Specific anticipated outcomes of the AusAID supported work include the increased capacity of armourers to safely manage weapons, as well as the reduced risk of leakage of SALW from armouries, which is more difficult to assess. MAG tries to report on this outcome by explaining that the opportunities for leakage have been reduced with improved security of armouries, training for armourers, ensuring only one person has the key to the armoury, etc.



LESSONS LEARNT

MAG has been implementing PSSM activities in Somaliland since December 2010 and has inevitably learnt lessons from its experiences. The following is a brief summary of these lessons.

- > Tailor PSSM advice and support to suit the local context by undertaking a step by step assessment approach. Rigid application of European standards in a context like Somaliland is not feasible.
- > Ensure PSSM sustainability by training police supervisors to monitor and oversee the work of police armourers to ensure standards are maintained.
- > Avoid the use of complex technical terms and jargon when engaging with national stakeholders like the police.
- > Coordinate with other operators and actors involved in PSSM, especially those supporting the same national authorities. As the police and the maritime police do not have the ammunition management capacity to coordinate these activities, it is essential that the operators ensure consistency among themselves when seeking funding and implementing programmes.
- > Operators like MAG are technical advisers and implementers. They are not in a position to tell governments what they should do. They can only provide them with technical advice which governments can use to make decisions about what they need and what must be done.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ This case study was written by Sharmala Naidoo (GICHD) and is based on a research mission undertaken in November 2011 and desk-based interviews and research carried out from June-August 2012.
- ² MAG had worked previously with the Somaliland authorities to provide EOD training.
- ³ MAG website, *Where we work, Somalia*, <http://www.maginternational.org/somalia>, accessed 19 November 2011
- ⁴ This case study should be read alongside the more detailed GICHD case study on MAG's approach to PSSM in Burundi. Interviews with MAG staff took place in Hargeisa in November 2011, and via phone in May 2012.
- ⁵ Interview with Udaya da Silva, Police Reform Advisor, UNDP Somalia, 17 November 2011.
- ⁶ UNDP Somalia. *Rights-Based Partnership Policing Reform Efforts Press Ahead as 300 More Officers Graduate*, 2011.
- ⁷ Somalia. *MAG Overview*, 2012.
- ⁸ In 2010, Amnesty International published a report on Somalia calling for training on "... accountable arms management and safe storage, according to international standards and best practice procedures. These should include: best practices in arms stockpile management and security established in the OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2003), including adequate record-keeping, auditing of those records, safe storage locations and an adequate transport and storage security plan for small arms and light weapons stockpiles; measures for the management, accountability, inspection, storage and security of conventional ammunition stockpiles recommended by the UN Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/72 to consider further steps to enhance cooperation with regard to the issue of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (A/63/182)." Amnesty International. *Somalia: International Military and Policing Assistance to should be reviewed*, 2010, AFR 52/001/2010.
- ⁹ For information on the expansion of MAG's activities from humanitarian mine clearance to AVR, see the GICHD case study on MAG's PSSM project in Burundi.
- ¹⁰ MAG. *Where we work: Somalia*, <http://www.maginternational.org/somalia>, accessed 2 July 2012.
- ¹¹ Email from Lauren Cobham, MAG Desk Officer, dated 30 August 2012.

ANNEX 1 | PEOPLE CONSULTED

John Shearer | Technical Field Manager | MAG Somaliland

Karen Culver | Programme Manager | DDG Somaliland

Nick Bray | Global EOD Officer | HALO Trust

Rob White | Director of Operations | MAG UK

Roly Clark | former Programme Manager | HALO Trust Somaliland

Rory Logan | Programme Manager | HALO Trust Somaliland

Tristan Grinsted | Country Director | MAG Somaliland

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