

**Report on the Work of the Arms Registration and
Marking (ARM) Program and on Community
Security and Arms Control (CSAC) in West Darfur**

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This publication is part of a project funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Executive summary

My assignment was to study the Arms Registration and Marking (ARM) program and the work on Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) and make suggestions for greater effectiveness. My report has mostly focused on the ARM program.

The government of Sudan has launched an effort to mark and register weapons held by tribes in Darfur, relying on the voluntary cooperation of native administrators and tribal leaders. Germany and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are supporting this venture with technical advice and equipment. Additionally, UNDP is carrying out activities on the ground to support ARM directly, and also engaging in development and conflict-sensitive projects that create an enabling environment for ARM. The Sudanese police are also helping to carry out ARM. However, the ARM program has no money for operational expenses. I recommend that the Sudanese government provide funds for this purpose.

In my opinion, the ARM approach makes sense as a first step toward weapons control and improved security in a region torn by conflict. The program's reliance on native administrators and tribal leaders seems appropriate in a tribal society like Darfur. I think this program has the potential to make a useful contribution to security and stability in a region that urgently needs peace and development.

However, in practice, this good idea has run into difficulties that brought progress to a complete standstill in June 2013. In the first of two six-month phases, very little has been achieved in terms of marking, registration and data collection. More work was done by UNDP in providing information on the program and making the public aware of the dangers of firearms. However, if the marking and registration process does not start producing significant results very soon, the expectations raised by the public information and awareness campaign will be disappointed.

I do not fully understand why technical problems (e.g. a lack of transport for essential supplies) and administrative difficulties (e.g. the failure of Sudanese customs authorities to clear computer equipment within a reasonable period) took so long to overcome that they paralysed the program for several months. It seems to me that communication and cooperation between the various authorities and organizations engaged in the ARM program needs to be intensified and improved. And if the Sudanese government considers this program important, it is hard to see why it does not take urgent measures to remove the obstacles blocking its progress. I recommend that these problems be addressed as soon as possible at the highest possible level.

The marking and registration process looks only at who is in possession of which weapons. It pays no attention to the way weapons are handled, carried, stored and used, except to ask native administrators to prevent misuse of the weapons. Besides, it pays no attention to ammunition, although it is the bullets that kill and maim, not the guns. Finally, the people engaged in marking and registration do not look at sources, flows and stocks of weapons. Their attention is entirely focused on the arms offered for registration and marking. I recommend that ARM include these topics in their conversations with native administrators, and try to convince the chiefs to promote the safe handling, transport and storing of weapons and ammunition, as well their responsible use.

I also recommend that people wanting to legalize weapons by registering them in Darfur be increasingly required to meet conditions similar to those that a person requesting a Sudanese firearm license must fulfil. This will pave the way for full weapons control in Darfur.

Indeed, the authorities tell me that when the phase of marking and registration is over, they will enforce the Law on Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives, confiscate illegally held arms, and punish the possessors. I think they are right to work towards this goal.

For reasons I can also understand, the Government of Sudan has promised not to collect weapons in Darfur until the communities of the region agree to it. This was supposed to reassure people and motivate them to register and mark their weaponry.

However, I believe the government needs to explain to the people of Darfur how it plans to enforce weapons control and yet keep its promise not to collect weapons without a general agreement. A clear and convincing explanation will enhance the credibility of the ARM program and increase public confidence in it.

I think the ARM program is a good idea, and can make a useful contribution to peace and development in Darfur. I hope it will overcome its problems and realize its potential. This will require the government to act swiftly and decisively to clear away the obstacles that are blocking the progress of the program. I also hope the government will consider some of my recommendations for making the program stronger.

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Community members waiting outside a remote arms registration and marking site at a police station in Sirba. The sheer size of Darfur means that many community members wishing to register or mark their weapons have to travel great distances, often at their own expense, a concern that frequently surfaced in interviews. West Darfur, June 2013.

Introduction

The main purpose of my trip to Sudan (23 August to 1 September 2013) was to study the program to mark and register weapons held by tribal communities in West Darfur and suggest improvements. I will call this program ARM. Another part of my job was to report on UNDP's CSAC program, which is intended to support ARM. I received this assignment from the Sudan DDR Commission (SDDRC) and the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) in Germany.

Visit to Khartoum

Before leaving for Darfur, I interviewed

- Dr. Mahmoud Zinelabdin, SDDRC
- Mr. Salah Idris, SDDRC
- Brigadier-General Abd el Aziz Malik, Criminal Investigation Department, Ministry of the Interior
- Mr. Adel Shareef, ICRC
- A senior journalist,
- Professor El Tayyeb, former Director of the Institute of Peace
- The UNDP DDR team.

I was also able to brief Dr. Mahmoud Zinelabdin and Mr. Salah Idris on my findings upon my return to Khartoum, before my departure for the Netherlands.

Visit to West Darfur

In El Geneina, I conducted interviews with

- Focus groups of women;
- Focus group of male youths;
- Focus group of internally displaced persons (IDPs);
- Mr. Mohamed Hassan, Head of National Security and Military Intelligence in West Darfur;
- Mr. Isa Adam Baraka, Head of Sector Office of the SDDRC in El Geneina;
- Mr. Abdallah Hamdaan Ballal, Head of the Arms Registration Committee;
- Ms. Shiho Akamatsu, UNDP;
- Ms. Mardea Martin-Wiles, UNDP.

Teamwork

I gratefully acknowledge the cooperation I received from Sudanese authorities, both in Khartoum and in El Geneina. However, my illness on 28 to 29 August¹, the official restrictions on travel and communication, and the rains all limited my ability to conduct interviews and collect information in West Darfur.

I am particularly grateful for the help I received from Dr. Mahmoud Zinelabdin and Mr. Salah Idris of SDDRC, their colleagues of the Arms Registration and Technical Committee (ARC) in El Geneina, my interpreter Mustafa el Tayyeb, Wolf-Christian Paes of

¹ Many thanks to the staff of UNAMID Level I and II Field Hospitals.

BICC, the staff of the Acropole Hotel in Khartoum, and above all Nikhil Acharya of BICC, who was my constant companion and adviser.

Although I am responsible for the content of this report, it mostly reflects the information, assessments, opinions, concerns and wishes shared with me by people in Sudan and in Germany. In this sense, the report reflects a collective effort. It shows the strong and weak points of the ARM program as seen by the people involved, with some observations of my own. It contains recommendations mostly based on what the people involved in ARM think is needed. Here again, I have added a few points of my own.



Author conducting interviews with focus groups of women. West Darfur, August 2013.

In the following, I will not often indicate which information came from which interview, as some of the persons I spoke to asked me not to do this. Instead, I will use references like "ARM staff believe...", "some women in the region think..." or "some observers feel..." However, when I quote from documents, I will cite the source.

Structure

In the main body of the report, I will follow:

1. The structure, composition and resources available to the ARC in West Darfur, as well as the linkages between the Committee and the state government and other national actors.
2. The current approach to the sensitization, registration, and marking of illicit civilian weapons in West Darfur.
3. The perceptions of stakeholders (such as community, political and religious leaders) in West Darfur vis-à-vis the proposed arms registration process.
4. The linkages between the work of the ARC and those of other stakeholders, in particular the CSAC and Community Labour Intensive Projects (CLIP) of UNDP and the African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

5. The potential impact of the project on human security in West Darfur, as well as whether this approach could be replicated in other locations in Sudan and beyond.



Community leaders attend a consultative meeting on the ARM process at the Legislative Assembly Hall in Geneina, West Darfur. The Sultan on the right wears a traditional scarf denoting his status. Mr. Isa Adam Baraka, Sector Chief, SDDRC West Darfur Office can be seen in the background. December 2012.

1. Resources, operations, and problems of the ARM team in West Darfur

There are about seven people working on the ARM program and based in El Geneina, the capital of the State (*wilaya*) West Darfur. The operational unit, headed by Mr. Abdallah Hamdaan Ballal, is referred to as the Arms Registration and Marking Technical Committee (it's also known as the Technical Committee or the Registration Committee). Its job is to implement the project, which includes running the project from day to day, and dealing with technical issues. Its work is linked to that with the Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) program of the DDR section at UNDP Sudan. CSAC plays a leading role in raising awareness and raising support for arms registration and marking in Darfur.

The Technical Committee is overseen by a Steering Committee chaired by the governor (*wali*) of the state.

The ARM project began in December 2012 with a workshop and consultations in El Geneina with the native administration. A large consultative and information meeting was held at the hall of the Legislative Assembly in El Geneina. In early 2013, several public launching events caught the attention of the public and, I imagine, raised expectations of improved security in the region. These expectations have not yet been fulfilled, for reasons I will discuss below.

The ARM team approaches the 'native administration'² to request the cooperation of these authorities in registration and marking. Typically, they would approach the native administrators at the highest levels (*sultans* or *ameers*). If indeed these leaders decide to cooperate, a delegation from the tribe headed by lower chiefs (*omdas* or *sheikhs*) will accompany tribesmen to the registration site.



Community members entering a remote arms registration and marking site at a police station in Sirba. Mr. Dakdak, a senior community leader, can be seen wearing a white turban, second from right.

The dot-peen or micro-percussion marking machine, a Spanish product called Couth MC 2000, was provided to the Sudan DDR Commission by the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA). With the signing of the Nairobi Protocol in 2004, 11 Member States of RECSA, including the Sudan, committed themselves to marking their national stockpiles of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The objective of this exercise was to ensure that any weapon found on the illicit market could be traced back to its original, legal owner through a unique identifying code. The participating states viewed this measure as an essential precursor to controlling diversion—the 'unauthorized transfer of arms and ammunition from the stocks of lawful users to the illicit market'³.

² The English term 'native administrator' was introduced by the British colonial authorities, which relied heavily on local rulers, and is still used today. Most of Darfur is divided into *dar* administrated by native administrators or traditional leaders who, in most cases, rule over inhabitants of various ethnic groups. In some cases, the leader may belong to a minority group. So, strictly speaking, native administrators are neither tribal leaders nor government officials, but a bit of both. See Gramizzi and Tubiana, 2012.

³ James Bevan. 2008. "Arsenals Adrift: Arms and Ammunition Diversion." In *Small Arms Survey 2008: Risk and Resilience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 42–75. As quoted in Bevan and King, 2013: 13.

The firearm-marking initiative originates in Article 7 of the Nairobi Protocol. This stipulates that the parties must mark firearms under national control or jurisdiction with 'a simple marking permitting identification of the country of import and the year of import, and an individual serial number if the small arm or light weapon does not bear one at the time of import so that the source of the small arm or light weapon can be traced' (Bevan and King, 2013: 16).

In 2005, the region's states agreed upon a common weapons marking format, which consists of a star to denote state-owned weapons in the RECSA region, an International Standards Organization (ISO) country code and a unique serial number. States may also introduce codes that specify the particular branch of service or particular unit of the defence or security forces (*ibid.*)



Couth MC2000 marking machine in operation on the Sudanese-Chadian border. Sirba, June 2013.

In the same year, the States Parties to the Nairobi Protocol further committed themselves to marking their entire stocks of SALW by the end of 2008. This was an unrealistic objective—especially as RECSA did not supply the majority of the marking machines until 2009—but it provided an important impetus for states to commence with marking operations (*ibid.*)

Bevan and King explain that marking the weapons, registration and tracing are all essential links that must go together if marking and registration is to improve weapons control (see Table 1 below).

As we will see, Bevan and King also review lessons learned in other RECSA countries about the use, transport and maintenance of the marking machine.

In West Darfur, weapons are supposed to be registered at local sites throughout the state where holders of weapons can be convened.

However, due to various challenges posed by transport, security and maintenance, this often proves impossible. On some occasions, tribesmen were asked to travel for hundreds of kilometers in order to get their

Table 1: Assessment criteria.

Category	Sub-category	Indicators
Marking	(a) Technology	Marking rate Number of operable machines
	(b) Process	Total marked Information marked
Record-keeping	(a) Accounting system	Appropriate data recorded (weapons ID, user ID) Use of daily issue procedures
	(b) IT infrastructure	Existence of a national database Is data retrievable?
Tracing	(a) Capacity	Can traces be performed?
	(b) International mechanisms	Number of international traces conducted Established procedures

Source: Bevan and King, 2013; Table 2.

weapons registered and marked in El Geneina. The ARM team does attempt to go to locations outside the state capital, but during a trip to Kulbus in the north of the *wilaya*, the marking machine lost some of its lubricant in transport. This minor technical hitch developed into a serious problem because for months, no effective action was taken to restore the machine to working order.

Apparently, the machine uses a lubricant that is not available locally. The ARM team requested a new supply of lubricant from Khartoum. However, the item was stuck for months at Khartoum airport, for lack of transport. In late August 2013 I was told that commercial airlines refused to carry it for safety reasons. I was also told the lack of lubricant had brought the marking and registration process to a standstill. After some 135 weapons had been marked in May/June, no marking and registration took place throughout the summer and autumn. In September, no one knew when the lubricant would arrive in El Geneina.

The ARM team also did not know how large the quantity they would receive was, and how long it would allow the marking machine to operate.

Yet, by early December 2013, this problem had apparently been resolved, and registration had resumed (Ballal, 2013).

In their April 2013 study on marking weapons in the Member States of RECSA, Bevan and King had reported that the Couth MC 2000 is an adequately rugged machine, but can nevertheless suffer damage if transported unboxed on untarred roads in the back of a pickup truck. To prevent this from happening, South Africa developed special boxes for use in transport (Bevan and King 2013: 26).

Another operational problem that the ARM project suffered in West Darfur was the lack of computers and electronic equipment for record-keeping and communication. A load of equipment sent from Germany to Sudan by BICC was stuck in Sudanese customs for months. Eventually, it was officially handed over to the Sudanese DDR Commission in October 2013, after a long delay.

Furthermore, the procedures for handling the data leave much to be desired. The sensitive data being collected is not being adequately backed up. BICC technical advisors have tried to do this, but it needs to be undertaken systematically.

Bevan and King confirm the critical importance of accurate and systematic record-keeping, as well as the need for electronic systems that allow law enforcement officers to consult the registration database throughout the country and region (ibid.: 33 ff).

Status of the project according to the ARM team

In a status report dated 4 December 2013, the Arms Registration and Marking Technical Committee reported that in the first year of the project

- 282 weapons were marked, of which 200 in El Geneina;
- 2,500 weapons were registered⁴;
- Expenditure for running costs totalled 52,540 Sudanese pounds, about 8,750 euros;
- The performance of the project was “very weak”;
- Administratively, the project lacked regular meetings, monthly reports, financial reports and follow-up on the remote areas;
- Arms registration forms were distributed and many weapons were registered, but not marked⁵;
- The marking machine should be guarded better, because it could be targeted by armed groups in the insecure areas;
- The registration process stopped for reasons related to the agricultural season (all families moved to their farms);
- In Silaia, the conflict in the Gabal Amir area stopped registration;
- The armed movements that signed peace agreements with the government have large arsenals of weapons, but are not included in the arms registration and marking program;
- Upheavals in Egypt and Libya led to increased arms trafficking in Darfur and Central Africa and higher prices for weapons;
- A weapon that is very popular and widely spread is referred to as ‘Shania’⁶. People have little inhibitions about it. Ammunition is easy to get;
- Nomads move from north to south in October. This is an opportunity to mark and register their weapons.

The status report singles out some things that favored the ARM project:

- Awareness activities did indeed encourage people to cooperate;
- The prices of weapons are rising. For instance, a Kalashnikov went from 4,000 to 12,000 Sudanese pounds. This, the report claims, led to lower demand⁷;

⁴ It follows that 2,218 of the registered weapons were not marked.

⁵ The report says ‘not collected’, which may be an erroneous translation.

⁶ I do not know which weapon this refers to.

⁷ It seems more likely to me that the price has risen because fewer weapons are offered for sale.



A soldier wears the insignia of the Joint Sudanese-Chadian Border Forces or Force Mixte on patrol outside Bir Saliba, West Darfur. June 2013

- The joint Sudanese–Chadian border patrols discouraged arms trafficking and proliferation in the border region;
- Better weapons control on the Chadian side of the border had the same effect;
- The suffering caused by the use of guns has changed some people’s attitudes regarding the possession and carrying of guns;
- The IT equipment delivered to the project: a laptop, three desktop computers, one generator, a video camera, a photo camera and a video project.

The status report goes on to report the following problems:

- Progress in registration and marking is “very slow”;
- Habilla, Forbaranga and other areas have not begun registration yet;
- The team lost a well qualified technician (a ‘CI officer’) when he was transferred to Khartoum;
- The weapons held by movements that signed a peace agreement with the government are not included in the project.



Staff conducting the arms registration and marking process prepare arms registration cards to record the details of participating community members. Sirba, West Darfur, June 2013.

Finally, the ARM team presents some challenges and recommendations:

- There is a serious lack of funds. The project needs an appropriate budget. For instance, it has so far been unable to pay for registration forms;
- It also needs an appropriate vehicle for registration and marking. At present, the technical committee does not have its own car;
- The technical committee also needs additional expert members;
- It also needs separate premises;
- It needs more guards to secure the marking machine during transport.

This leads me to the **following observations**:

1. In the first six months of the program, very few weapons were marked and registered. By the end of the program's first year, 2,500 had been registered, of which only 282, some 11 percent, had been marked. The ARM team is right to call this a very weak performance. If a weapon has been registered, but not marked, law enforcement officers will hardly be able to check its status on site. In terms of weapons control, registration only it is not very useful.
2. The severe lack of progress was partly due to the lack of transport for essential materials and the failure of Customs authorities to clear equipment for ARM within a reasonable period of time.
3. The complete lack of activity between June and October 2013, and the low level of activity at other times, however, is also due to inadequate support by the Sudanese government. If they had wanted to, government authorities could have quickly resolved issues like the lack of lubricant and the delay of IT equipment at customs. Also, if it considered the project important enough, the Sudanese government would give the ARM team what it needs to operate effectively. It would find ways to overcome the difficulties in communication and cooperation between the SDDRC, the Ministry of the Interior, and other government agencies. I recommend that the President's office instruct, as soon as possible, all state agencies to actively support this project and provide the project staff with the means to do a good job. This includes providing operating funds to the ARM team working on the ground. The aid that Germany provides does not, and was never intended to, cover such expenses. BICC's role is to provide capacity development, technical and

financial support for precisely defined purposes—not to finance or lead the running of the project.

4. If the structural problems mentioned above are not tackled and resolved as a matter of urgency, the next year of the program will be no more successful than the first.
5. To prevent future problems, the people involved in the execution of the ARM program also need to communicate better with each other. I cannot be sure, but I suspect the responsible authorities in Khartoum knew of the problem with the marking machine before we told them about it on 31 August 2013. BICC and its technical advisers were definitely not aware of the problem. Had they known, they would have tried to help get the urgently needed lubricant for the marking machine to El Geneina. In the event, they and I heard on 30 August that the marking machine was not been operational. We received this information not from the ARM team directly, but from a government official in El Geneina who is not involved in the technical work of ARM. When we asked the ARM team, we found out that the machine had not been in working order for months.

I realize that carrying out a program in a place like West Darfur is not easy. Working under difficult conditions, a program like ARM cannot avoid suffering operational problems from time to time. However, good communication and cooperation between all concerned should prevent such difficulties from paralyzing the program for months on end.

2. Security through marking and registration? The ARM approach

Governments can only effectively control firearms and other weapons if these are clearly identified and linked to the persons or organizations allowed to have them. This means that both the arms and their possessors must have a unique, reliable and official means of identification. Besides, there must be an official register that shows who is authorized to have which weapons.

It is easy to mark and register a weapon. It is less easy to do this consistently, comprehensively and in such a way that law enforcement officials in remote locations can quickly check the legal status of a weapon. Besides, the serial numbers provided by arms manufacturers are often unreliable. This is why governments are increasingly marking weapons themselves.



A unique arms identification number being marked on a Beretta M1951 model 9mm pistol. Criminal Investigation Department, Ministry of Interior, Khartoum, Sudan, June 2013.

Since 2005, they are obliged under international law to ensure that firearms on their territory are properly marked.

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a document with a long name, referred to informally as the Firearms Protocol. It is the only legally binding international agreement on small arms and entered into force in 2005. The Firearms Protocol requires states to ensure that firearms are marked during and after manufacture. In 2005, the UN General Assembly also adopted an International Tracing Instrument (the official name is much longer) which provides additional guidance on marking firearms, but is not legally binding (SAS, 2010: 1-2):

Thus the Arms Registration and Marking initiative in the Sudan serves to bring the state into compliance with the UN Firearms Protocol of 2001.



Couth MC2000 marking machine in operation on the Sudanese-Chadian border. Sirba/ Saleeba, June 2013

According to a Concept Paper of the Sudanese government on the ARM program dated January 2013,

The general purpose [of the ARM program] is to contribute to improving the security and stability and to the reduction of armed

violence in West Darfur through the implementation of control measures against the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and the promotion of social and economic development of its population.

The document goes on to list Specific Objectives:

1. To launch a process of SALW registration and marking owned by civilians through the civil and traditional administration, facilitating the tracing of arms in the area.
2. To collect basic information and data on the movement of arms (numbers, sources and locations) through the previous step.
3. To raise community awareness⁸ on the dangers of the spread of illegal weapons and its negative consequences for physical integrity and property (Government of Sudan, 2013:3).

The first and second of these specific objectives are the responsibility of the ARM program executed by the SDDRC. The third is mostly the work of UNDP, and is specifically meant to support ARM. UNDP is also mainly responsible for promoting social and economic development in West Darfur, which is part of the general objective quoted above. Thus UNDP is an essential partner. The SDDRC is responsible for bridging and coordinating the efforts of the various organizations involved in ARM.

In a different way, BICC is also important to the success of ARM. Drawing on its knowledge of weapons control acquired in other parts of Africa and the world, BICC is providing critical expertise to ARM, enabling it to benefit from lessons learned elsewhere. To a limited extent, the German government is providing, through BICC, some equipment and financial support. However, as I pointed out above, neither BICC nor the German government has assumed any responsibility for the running of the program.

I do not believe that marking and registering weapons held by tribesmen will on its own contribute to security, stability and the prevention of armed violence in the region. This technical-administrative work of marking the guns and registering them and their owners will only have a useful political and social impact if it takes place in a favorable environment

⁸ It is not always clear what the community should be made of. As I explain below, ARM's messages sometimes are (or seem) mixed. For instance, the authorities promise they will at some point remove surplus weapons from the region, but reassure gun owners that they will not do this without the agreement of the 'communities'. Furthermore, there are no messages on safe handling and storage.



Male community leaders in a preparatory meeting. Assembly Hall, Geneina, West Darfur, December 2012.

and is accompanied by supporting measures. In isolation ARM will do nothing to improve the security of people in Darfur.

The practitioners engaged in ARM are aware of this. They deliberately chose to work with and through the native administration, semi-official leaders of the armed tribesmen who can to some extent influence the men holding the guns. They included in the program various activities to alert the population to the dangers of firearms. This is mostly done by UNDP and its implementing partner the Sudanese NGO Mammen. Finally, they have also sought and obtained the help of UNDP in promoting social and economic development in the region.

Can this approach, if it is put into practice effectively, contribute to stability, security and the prevention of armed violence in West Darfur? I believe it has the potential to do so. I think the ARM approach is an excellent idea, an appropriate first step toward controlling weapons, improving security, building public confidence and promoting reconciliation in Darfur, a region torn by tribal and political violence. In my opinion, the success of this approach needs to be measured not merely by the number of weapons marked and registered, but even more by the degree to which the people of West Darfur are safer and feel safer as a result of ARM.

I see no reason why it could not also be applied successfully under similar conditions in other post-conflict regions, especially in tribal societies (see Section 5). Indeed, I hope this idea will be put into practice in such a way that it realizes its full potential. In this report, I will argue that the ARM program in West Darfur is not realizing its potential today. I hope the recommendations I make in this report will help make it more effective.

2.1 ARM's strong and weak points

The ARM approach as applied in West Darfur has strong points that favor its success and weak points that prevent it from achieving its full potential.

2.1.1 Local ownership by the Sudanese authorities

ARM is a program owned, run, and executed by the Sudanese government. This 'local ownership' is a strong point, especially as in the case of ARM, in some cases local community groups are brought into the program and share in its ownership. To be sure, ARM remains first and foremost a government-led program.



Senior community leader DakDak supervises and facilitates the participation of community members at each stage of the arms registration and marking process. Sirba, West Darfur, June 2013.

While the support provided by Germany (via BICC) and UNDP is essential to the success of ARM, local ownership is clear and important. First, we must assume that the Sudanese know best what their country needs. They also know better than outsiders what will work in their country.

Second, local ownership suggests to the population of Darfur and Sudan, as well as the international community, that the Sudanese authorities are serious about bringing peace and stability to this conflict-ridden region. This is a welcome signal, an eagerly awaited one. But to be effective, it must be true, and it must be believed. It will only be believed if the people Darfur see for themselves that the Sudanese government has stopped giving arms, money and encouragement to irregular fighting forces in the region. This will lend credibility to the ARM program, build public confidence in it, and enable it to move forward. In my opinion, it is only then that the ARM approach can succeed.



Sun-dried tomatoes being sold at the market in Bir Saliba on the Chadian-Sudanese border. June 2013. The market serves as a hub for producers in the region. The Sudanese-Chadian Joint Forces are cited as being responsible for creating conditions of security that allowed the revival of this market.

Third, local ownership suggests that the ARM effort will be continued even if foreign assistance comes to an end. Senior SDDRC officials told me this without being asked. They added that they hoped the Sudanese government would put some of its own money into the program. I think this is very desirable, especially as the ARM team in El Geneina has no funds for running expenses. It relies on the police and other government agencies, which are chronically short of cash themselves.

It is not clear to me who receives the money (50 to 100 Sudanese pounds for each weapon to be marked and registered) paid by tribesmen participating in ARM. This needs to be clarified in order to enhance confidence in the program. Of course, the money should be used to cover the costs of ARM.

I suspect that the government's decision to work with and through the native administration in Darfur was right, and in my view this is another strong point of the ARM program. I am not sure who owns (or rather possesses) the tribal weapons. I get the impression that most are individually held, but we can assume that the native administrators and tribal chiefs influence the way they are kept and used. If they want, these leaders can have a restraining influence on the tribesmen who hold the weapons, which would be a good thing. However, I feel ARM could use this influence to better effect. I will explain this shortly.

2.1.2 Progress in security development and the rule of law

People are not safe, and do not feel safe, in West Darfur. As government authorities freely admitted to me, the peace is fragile. Many efforts are being

made to make it hold, but no one knows if they will succeed. There are outbreaks of violence between tribes, families and individuals. Armed violence erupts from time to time over the mining of gold. Armed robbery, car-jacking, kidnapping and the deliberate targeting of humanitarian and peacekeeping staff are specific examples recorded in Darfur. There are many complaints of sexual violence against women, girls and boys. All these are serious security concerns.

So the security situation is bad. But it is better than it was some years ago, and it is improving further. Relations between Chad and Sudan have warmed in recent years. The Chadian-Sudanese joint border patrols have achieved a reduction in cross-border crime. They have also helped to rebuild and restart schools and health centers in the border region. Another much-appreciated initiative was the re-opening of the market in the Sudanese border town Beer Saleba. As a result, people in the border region face a better life for the first time in many years.

A UK-supported community policing project has improved relations between the police and the community and raised the quality of policing. I am told that people are now less suspicious of the police. However, I am also told that people do not go to the police for help. This suggests that they do not fully trust the police yet.

There are also various efforts to improve the judiciary in West Darfur, supported by UNDP and the donors. They focus on opening new courts, including one specially for women and gender-related cases, improving the prisons and rehabilitating ex-convicts, raising the quality of the prosecution service and facilitating the access to free legal aid.



Community members develop traditional coping mechanisms to deal with living in an insecure environment. The woman on the left wears a distinctive amulet called a 'hijab' as a necklace. The amulets, often consisting of verses of the Koran pressed into a leather pouch, are believed to protect the wearer from violence. Bir Saliba, West Darfur. June 2013.

Finally, there is a wide range of development programs. Some of these focus on livelihoods, empowering women, improving access to clean water and other classical development tasks. Others have a direct bearing on security. One of these is a midwifery project that reduces the risks that women face in childbirth, for instance unsafe travel. Another



Community members bringing their daughter to a clinic established and run by the Joint Sudanese-Chadian Border Forces or Force Mixte. Bir Saliba, West Darfur, June 2013.

helps women to gather firewood without facing the risk of sexual assault. Yet others, run by UNDP and UNAMID, are deliberately targeted at creating an enabling environment for the Arms Registration and Marking (ARM) program. This applies to the UNAMID-run Community Labor Intensive Projects (CLIP), which offer young men an opportunity to develop vocational skills, and, it is hoped, encourage them to turn their backs on a life of violence. CLIP projects for women are few. It applies even more to the Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) projects, which inform the public about the dangers of firearms and the need to legalize such weapons. These CSAC projects are intended to directly support ARM. They do this by linking community development and community security with weapons control.

Discussions with focus groups and individual citizens suggest to me that people in West Darfur are aware of these improvements, appreciate them and are increasingly inclined to cooperate with the authorities.

In other words, West Darfur still suffers from insecurity and underdevelopment, but improvements in both areas are creating a better environment for weapons control and peace building.⁹ These are strong points.

⁹ An expert on arms and ammunition working in the region told me that the street price for illegal pistols is five times as high in El Geneina as in El Fashir, East Darfur. This suggests that in West Darfur, pistols are more difficult

2.1.3 Safe handling, secure storage and responsible use

The ARM program focuses narrowly on the possession of weapons. In the marking and registration process, it documents who has which weapon. I would recommend that it also look at the ways weapons are handled, carried, stored and used, and try to influence them.

At the moment, these critical issues are getting little attention. The Director of the SDDRC says that native administrators must guarantee that the arms being registered and marked will not be misused.¹⁰ Also, UNDP addresses the dangers of using firearms in the public information and awareness activities it carries out in support of ARM. This is welcome, but not enough in my opinion.

As far as I can tell, the ARM staff in West Darfur do not ask native administrators specifically to instruct their tribesmen to store the weapons safely. They do not tell them not to let unauthorized persons carry or use the weapons. Nor do they require a promise that the weapons will only be used for legitimate defense.

From what I have learned, they also do not discourage the firing of weapons at weddings and other celebrations. This is common in the Sudan. Stray and falling bullets can, depending on the trajectory and the type of the round, cause serious unintentional injuries and deaths.¹¹ To have a greater impact on security and the reduction of armed violence, I would advise that ARM pay more attention to the way weapons are stored, moved and used.

The Director of the SDDRC says that in South Darfur, where some 8,300 SALW were registered and marked, none of these weapons were later found to have been used in crimes. He also claims that this proves that registration and marking have improved public security.¹²

In my opinion, these claims are highly dubious. If, as insiders report, heads of households in Darfur have more than one weapon, we must assume that many weapons have not been registered. It also seems unlikely that people engaging in criminal violence would use a registered weapon, if they have the alternative of using an unregistered weapon. Finally, the only way to establish beyond reasonable doubt

to obtain. It also suggests that security is better than in East Darfur. I suspect it is also better than it was a few years ago in West Darfur.

¹⁰ Interview on film, cited above.

¹¹ The data on non-intentional firearm injuries are discussed in the *Small Arms Survey 2012*, chapter 3. Geneva, Small Arms Survey, 2013.

¹² Interview on film, cited above.

whether a particular gun was used in an act of violence is forensic testing carried out on the weapon. However, forensic testing is not available in Darfur.



Children in West Darfur hold up rounds of ammunition they found while playing. The current arms registration and marking process does not take ammunition into account. Outskirts of El Geneina, West Darfur, August 2013.

2.1.4 Data collection

If I am not mistaken, the ARM team does not really use the process of registration and marking to “collect basic information and data on the movement of arms (numbers, sources and locations)” (GoS, 2013) although it is supposed to do so. They only collect information on the weapons they mark and register, and the people holding these weapons. As far as I can tell, they do not make a habit of asking the native administration about the total stock of weapons held by the tribesmen in their region, where these weapons come from, where they are stored, and what the tribe does with them. Consequently, such data is not recorded and stored. I am told that such questions are pointless because native administrators will often refuse to answer or provide incorrect information. Nevertheless, I think the questions should be asked.

There seems to be some confusion about the data that ARM is producing. A well-informed government official told me that by registering and marking tribal weapons, the ARM team finds out exactly how



A soldier from the Joint Sudan-Chad Border Patrol Force keeps watch from on top of a LandCruiser while on patrol in Bir Saliba, West Darfur, June 2013.

many weapons are out there and who has them. This is not correct. ARM only produces information on the weapons that tribes submit for marking and registration. Worse, as the status report of the ARM Technical Committee cited in Section 1 above points out, the large arsenals held by armed groups who have signed a peace agreement with the government are completely disregarded by ARM.

For its part, UNDP is working on a baseline study on SALW in Darfur. The results are not yet available, but I am told they will be soon.

2.1.5 Ammunition

I would also advise the ARM program to look at issues of ammunition. It is not the weapon that kills, but the bullet. Besides, stocks of ammunition are a better measure of firepower than stocks of weapons, which is why information on ammunition stocks is considered more sensitive than information on weapons. While I understand that it is difficult to get such data, here again, I think the question should be asked. Besides, I think ARM should make an effort to control the amount of ammunition in active use. It should try to limit the amount of ammunition a person holding an ARM Identity (ID) Card is authorized to have in his possession, just as government firearms licenses do (see 2.1.6).

2.1.6 Conditions for legalization

More generally, it seems a missed opportunity that (apart from asking native administrators to guarantee that registered weapons will not be misused and charging a registration fee of some 60 Sudanese pounds) the ARM program, when legalizing weapons, does not impose any conditions on the carrying, the storage and the use of the weapons, nor on the amount of ammunition the holder is allowed to have for use with the weapon.

The firearm licenses issued by the Sudanese government do impose such conditions (see 2.2.3). I think the Sudanese government would do well to gradually work toward the regularization of firearm possession in Darfur, so that at some point in the future, the only way to legitimately obtain a firearm is to apply for a government licence. As ARM works towards this goal, it seems necessary in my view to not only register and mark weapons, but also to require from registered possessors of weapons that they carry, store and use the weapons safely and responsibly. These requirements can be made stricter as the program progresses.



Representatives of five countries in the region: Libya, Chad, CAR, DRC, Sudan as well as South Sudan (as an observer state) attended the first Regional Expert's Meeting of the Sub-Regional Mechanism on Arms Control. Khartoum, 26-27 November 2013. Corinthia Hotel, Khartoum, November 2013.

2.2 The impact of the ARM program

I argued above that registration and marking tribal weapons will not contribute to security, stability and the prevention of armed violence if nothing else happens. As we have seen, other things are in fact happening, and several of them increase the chance that ARM will make a positive difference. I will mention several settings in which ARM can be useful and ask myself whether it is indeed realizing this potential.

2.2.1 Relations with countries of the region

Like the war between North and South Sudan, the wars in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the genocide in Rwanda and most other internal conflicts today, the conflict in Darfur had powerful international connections. Relations between Chad and Sudan, which had been good, deteriorated into a situation

in which each country was supporting armed movements that were fighting the government in the other country. This is why the Darfur conflict was called a proxy war.

Consequently, it will be very hard, if not impossible, to bring durable peace to Darfur without at the same time improving relations between Khartoum and Ndjamena. As I said earlier, these relations are indeed improving. The most visible evidence is the introduction of *joint border patrols*, which I am told are making a real contribution to improved security and cooperation in the border zones of the two neighboring countries.

Besides, there is a wider cooperation between countries of the region. On 23 May 2012, the governments of Sudan, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Libya signed the Khartoum Declaration, in which they agreed to work together to combat the proliferation and misuse of SALW. South Sudan is not a member of this cooperative venture, which is regrettable, since the conflict between North and South Sudan influenced the conflict in Darfur. In fact, relations between North and South Sudan (independent since July 2011) continue to influence Darfur.¹³

This growing regional cooperation is an environment that favours the ARM program in West Darfur. By the same token, the ARM program is likely to contribute to growing cooperation amongst the states of region in the combat against SALW violence. I hope South Sudan will join this cooperation before long.

2.2.2 Peaceful relations between tribes and communities

The Darfur war was mostly fought between tribes and armed movements associated with tribal communities. However, behind them stood sponsors who provided weapons, ammunition, money, encouragement, and sometimes uniforms and military training. Today, the main sponsors, especially governments, have reduced or ended their support for irregular fighting forces in Darfur. In this trend lies a great chance for peace. If external sponsorship for armed tribes and movements in Darfur comes to an end, and

¹³ In a positive development since the writing of this report, South Sudan has, however, attended the first regional Meeting of Experts of the Khartoum Declaration or the Sub-Regional Mechanism on Arms Control in Khartoum on 26 to 27 November 2013 as an observer state. Senior arms control experts representing South Sudan at the meeting expressed their deep commitment to convincing their government to deepen their engagement with this process.

is seen to have ended by the population, this will be an essential condition for building a durable peace in Darfur. Here again, the ARM project will benefit from this development, and help to sustain it. But if external sponsors were to go back to arming tribes and movements in Darfur, this could undermine the credibility and success of ARM.

The way ARM operates, asking and encouraging native administrators to come forward and legalize at least some of the weapons held by their tribesmen (and, I am told, some women of the tribe), can also help to cement peaceful relations between rival groups. If two tribal leaders who are rivals, and former enemies, both engage in the ARM process, this may well help to build confidence and prevent violent clashes between them.



T. Dolcetta/Traditional leaders and members of the arms registration committee (ARC) of South Darfur state in discussion with BICC's Technical Advisor, Nikhil Acharya. SDDRC Sector Office, Nyala, South Darfur, October 2013.

The presence of gold reserves in Darfur, including West Darfur, can either be a blessing or a curse for the people of the region. If responsible governance and the rule of law prevail in the extraction and selling of the ore, the revenues can fuel sustainable development in the region, as is the case in Ghana. However, if mining is controlled by armed criminal gangs who illegally sell the ore, perhaps in collusion with corrupt government officials, as is the case in the north-east of the DRC, then gold reserves could give rise to resource wars. By the same logic, disputes about cattle, pasture, access to water and other important natural resources can potentially develop into armed conflicts.

ARM does not deal with armed political movements that are not under the command of the native administration. I am told that these are not present in West Darfur, or only in small numbers. We should bear in mind that ARM cannot reach, and does nothing to control, the weapons held by these movements. This is a built-in limitation of the ARM approach. Of course, it is open to question whether ARM is the right context in which to deal with the stockpiles of these

groups. The more appropriate context is perhaps the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program run by SDDRC, UNAMID and UNDP. The critical issue is that the arsenals left behind after the Darfur need to be dismantled in one way or another.

2.2.3 Weapons control by the state

Modern states generally want to tightly control the possession and use of firearms, especially types designed for military use, and their ammunition. Like most other states, Sudan has a law and a procedure for the licensing of firearms, and the possession of an unlicensed firearm is a criminal offence.

According to the Law on Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives of 1982 (amended in 2000), firearms may be held for three purposes, sports, hunting and self-defence only. The conditions for obtaining a licence are:

1. The applicant must be 30 years or older;
2. The applicant may have no prior convictions and no record of criminal violence;
3. The applicant must show a medical certificate that he or she is in good health;
4. The applicant must have undergone training;
5. The weapon must be stored in a safe place;
6. No weapons are allowed in hospitals and other public buildings;
7. No use of weapons for other than the ones mentioned above;
8. The weapon was sold by an authorized weapons dealer or a private person;
9. The licence applies to a maximum of three weapons (sometimes six);
10. The licence must be renewed every year;
11. The serial numbers of the weapons are checked and recorded;
12. These days, the weapons are also marked;
13. The name, address and other details of the applicant are recorded;
14. If the applicant violates the terms of the licence, it will be withdrawn, the weapon will be confiscated and sold to someone else, and the offender will not receive a licence in the future;¹⁴
15. The number of rounds allowed for each weapon is limited to 15 in the case of a pistol and 600 in the case of a shotgun (hunting weapon).¹⁵

The process of arms registration and marking in Darfur provides the holders of firearms with an 'interim licence'

¹⁴ A bill has been drafted which, if passed, will raise penalties for violations of the firearms law considerably.

¹⁵ These provisions give rise to many questions that go beyond the scope of this report.

which legalizes their possession of the weapon as long as their ID Card is valid. When it loses its validity after six months, it must be renewed. Without a valid ID of the ARM program or a government firearm license, the weapon is illegal.

SDDRC staff tell me that registration and marking are a first step to weapon control. Almost certainly, they say, this first phase will need to run for longer than the initially planned period of a year (two stages of six months). I agree that this will be necessary. For various reasons, including the serious operational problems I reported above (Section 1), I think only a long-term approach can produce useful results. The partners of SDDRC, Germany and UNDP, need to be aware of this. I would advise them to take a longer view, while urging and helping SDDRC to overcome the problems that affect the program today.

Certainly, registration and marking can potentially be a good first step toward strict weapons control by the government under the Law on Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives. But for this potential to be realized, I think the ARM program needs to do two things:

First, in my opinion the requirements for registration of firearms need to be made more, and increasingly, similar to the requirements for firearm licensing. Now, hardly any conditions are imposed on applicants requesting registration, even though this registration in practice amounts to legalization. I think the transition from registration to licensing needs to be gradual.

Second, the government needs to be clear, consistent and sincere about its intention to eventually collect weapons. I was told that after the phase of registration and marking, which may take up to five years, the government intends to confiscate weapons which have not been registered. There is also mention of collection, which suggests voluntary collection, of firearms.

I agree that as soon as this is feasible, it is desirable for the government to prosecute the illegal possession of firearms. The Law on Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives provides a legal basis for this.

However, it is not at all clear how this can be reconciled with the solemn promise (in fact, the English word used is 'guarantee') given by the Sudanese authorities that they will not collect weapons in Darfur unless the tribal communities comprehensively agree on the need for it. This lack of clarity will surely make some people in Darfur suspicious about the government's intentions in registering and marking tribal weapons.

My point is not that the government is insincere in its commitment to peace and reconciliation in Darfur, but that the authorities have not yet explained their



Dr. Mahmoud Zeinelebdin, SDDRC, is holding up a copy of the official guarantee from the Ministry of the interior stating that no weapons will be collected in this phase. Awareness meeting at Legislative Assembly Hall, El Geneinna, West Darfur, December 2012.

policy for the longer term clearly and convincingly to the people of Darfur. I would recommend that the authorities do this as soon and as publicly as possible.

I hope that the Sudan government's imminent National Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Action Plan for Registration, also expected soon, will provide this clarity.

2.2.4 Human security

It is considered good practice today to judge the effectiveness of security policy by the degree to which it provides human security, that is to say freedom from danger and freedom from fear, to each man, woman and child. For a discussion of the potential impact of the ARM programme on human security, see Section 5 below.

3. Perceptions of stakeholders

I have already described my impressions of how the government of Sudan, SDDRC and the staff of ARM, and various vulnerable groups in West Darfur view the program.

Most who are not directly involved in ARM themselves take a favorable or skeptical view of it. I did not encounter anyone who was against the program, but several people seemed doubtful that it would amount to anything useful.

Many of the skeptics say, registration and marking is not enough, we need the arms to be removed. I have argued that the government needs to explain clearly and consistently how it plans to do this without breaking its promise not to collect weapons without the consent of the tribal communities.

UNDP's perceptions and contributions are discussed in the next section.

In general, I would recommend that the SDDRC review its public information and sensitization activities to present a clearer, more specific and longer-term vision of how marking and registration will pave the way for security and reconciliation.

4. Linkages with other activities

We have already seen that there is room for improvement in the communication and collaboration between the ARM program and the work of other Sudanese government agencies and BICC.

The same applies to communication and cooperation with UNDP. The UNDP officials I interviewed in Khartoum left me in no doubt that they were fully committed to supporting the ARM program. They told me the government of Sudan has shown an increasing political commitment to work toward peace. UNDP has already made contributions to ARM by:

- Organizing four workshops (including one in the northern area of Kulbus) and a festival to engage various stakeholders in the ARM effort;
- Staging plays in various parts of the *wilaya* that deal with the dangers of firearms;
- Hiring traditional singers (*hakamas*), who customarily sing songs of war, to sing of peace and reconciliation;
- Using local radio stations (UNAMID radio and Darfur FM) to transmit messages on firearms and firearms registration;
- Distributing posters and brochures;
- Engaging in an SALW baseline assessment of the region, expected soon.

Furthermore, as described above, UNDP is carrying out various projects to promote development and the rule of law in West Darfur.

5. Human security and replicability

Let us now consider to what extent the ARM program is contributing to improved human security in West Darfur. We will then ask ourselves whether the ARM approach could be successfully applied elsewhere.

5.1 Human security

With the help of the ARM team in El Geneina, I was able to speak to focus groups of women, male youths and internally displaced persons (IDPs). They described the security situation as bad, but some of the women noted improvements.

The women told us that the security risks they faced were war, sexual violence and bad living conditions, including bad water. They described the dangers of women being violated on the way to collect firewood, and women in the IDP camps standing in line for hours in the blazing sun in order to collect rations that were not enough to feed their families. They did report that they did not hear gunshots as often as some years ago.

The women also pointed out that this is a potentially rich region, with fertile land, enough water, huge animal resources and gold. Development must unlock this potential. Now the region is underdeveloped. No more than 15 to 20 percent of the girls go to school. The government must take the lead, they said. The government must also get the weapons under control, they told us. Registration must be followed by collection. Some of the women stressed the need to also get a grip on weapons held by bandits and other uncontrolled groups. They complained that they were tired of the presence of firearms in their daily lives.

I noted that although according to the SDDRC one of the lessons learned in South Darfur was that ARM needed to engage the women, ARM has done very little so far in West Darfur to reach out to them. By contrast, UNDP's sensitization campaigns and conflict-sensitive development programs frequently focus on women.

ARM can potentially make a good contribution to women's security in West Darfur. However, even well-educated and well-connected women know little about it.

The male youths we spoke to stressed the need for vocational programs, to be carried out at their club, to provide a constructive alternative for young men who might otherwise lead a life of crime and violence.



Interviews with women in West Darfur confirmed that, as in most areas affected by armed violence, women experience risks differently from men—often being vulnerable to sexual violence and rape while conducting daily chores such as gathering firewood or collecting water.

Nothing I have seen so far illustrates the consequences of the conflict in Darfur better than the following map of Darfur published by the United Nations. It marks the camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs) all over the region. I counted some 77 in West Darfur alone. The IDPs I met are living in various camps in or near El Geneina. I asked them where their homes were and why they could not return. They said their homes were not far from El Geneina, but they had been driven away by Arab attackers who might kill them if they returned. They said they themselves were from various African tribes. They can sometimes receive visitors from home, in the rainy season.

The IDPs painted a desolate picture of life in the camps. The available water is bad, and the World Food Programme packages of foodstuffs they receive are inadequate. Besides, rations have been reduced. The inhabitants of the camps used to get blankets and shelters, but no more.

They said that there is no armed violence in the camps, and UNAMID provides protection as best it can, but outside the camps, the IDPs are often the target of criminal violence. Robbers steal their phones and their cars. Going to the market is dangerous, but when they set up their own market, the government demolished it, they say.

None of the people I spoke to in the focus groups displayed a good knowledge of the ARM program. Those who were aware of it seemed to consider it a useful start. I too think this is an appropriate way to describe it.

If and when the ARM program starts working again, convinces people that the government is serious about fighting the proliferation and misuse of firearms in the region, and combines this with efforts to strengthen the rule of law, boost development, empower vulnerable groups and promote reconciliation between former enemies, then I expect it will make a good contribution to improved human security. At the moment it does not have that effect.

5.2 Can it be done elsewhere?

If I am right to think that the ARM approach is potentially a good way to start fighting the proliferation of SALW in West Darfur, then it follows that it could also be a useful first step in other post-conflict regions with similar conditions. While I am sure the people of West Darfur consider their homeland unique, its weapons-related problems are not.

In my view, the main characteristics of West Darfur with respect to weapons possession and weapons control are:

- Darfur is a tribal society. Beyond family, people's allegiance is to their tribe, more than to their country. Tribal chiefs and native administrators are among the most effective leaders, and generally speaking, they are capable of determining whether, when and how their tribesmen will exercise armed violence. Vendettas are also common.
- Darfuri tribes are in many cases nomadic, pastoralist communities, accustomed to defending

Map 1: IDP camps, HIC Darfur



Source: UN Planning Map, HIC Darfur, 2005. Note: Tent symbols represent IDP and refugee camps.

their herds and pastures with firearms. Others are agriculturalists who defend their fields against encroachment by grazing animals and their herders. Today, this too is done by the use of firearms.

- The weapons and ammunition held by tribesmen are to a significant extent controlled by the tribal leaders and/or native administrators.
- Apart from cattle, pastures and water sources, there may be other resources that can give rise to violent rivalry and conflict, such as mineral reserves that can be extracted without much specialized equipment.
- The national government is not capable of imposing weapons control on the region, at least not yet. Large numbers of military-style SALW were inserted into Darfur by the government of Sudan and other countries that wished to support some tribes against others but were unable or unwilling to send regular armed forces to fight in the region. They were also introduced by nomadic tribes and private arms dealers.
- Armed conflict has come to an end, but security, development and public confidence in the government and the former fighting factions have not reached a level that makes it feasible to run voluntary weapons collection programs.

Under such conditions, the ARM approach may prove a useful first effort to fight the proliferation of small arms. As I argued above, it should preferably not be limited to the issue of weapons possession, but should also tackle issues of the unsafe handling, insecure storage and irresponsible use of firearms. In fact, the misuse of SALW is a greater threat to security than the proliferation of these weapons.

As I have also said above, to be effective, the marking and registering of firearms must be combined with efforts to promote development, build public confidence in the government security forces and promote reconciliation between former enemies. The targeted community security approach employed by UNDP in support of ARM is appropriate and helpful, but needs to be linked more strongly to weapons control.

The ARM approach could perhaps be replicated, with modifications to suit local conditions, in other parts of Darfur and the Sudan, as well as in the other states that have signed the Khartoum Declaration, namely the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Libya. Unfortunately, South Sudan is not a signatory to the Khartoum Declaration yet.

In the Khartoum Declaration of 23 May 2012, the five states resolved to collaborate very closely in fighting the proliferation and misuse of SALW. They are currently establishing a secretariat that will support and coordinate their efforts.

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