Ghana Begins Marking SA/LW

News Brief

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In March 2014, the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NACSA) began marking Ghanaian national security forces’ small arms. As of 19 March, 1,000 military weapons received unique identification numbers, which will be used to create a database of state-owned arms.1 Marking will soon commence on police and Custom Excise and Preventive Service weapons, among others. According to Small Arms Survey, weapons marking is an often overlooked component of arms control, and “legislation and practical measures concerning the marking of firearms...are weak in a majority of African countries.”2 Likewise, adequate marking improves arms tracing capabilities, which can reduce the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons (SA/LW) throughout countries.

In 2004, an estimated 56.8 percent of civilian-owned guns in Ghana were illicit (125,000 illicit small arms out of 220,000).3 In 2005, however, NACSA unofficially estimated that 400,000 or more illicit SA/LW could be in Ghana.4 Craft-production guns, part of traditional Ghanaian blacksmithing, remain prevalent throughout the country; or working near contaminated areas in Afghanistan. Response times ranged from one day for emergency ERW spot check to two or three days for other tasks.

**Conclusion**

In its capacity as a coordinating-body, MACCA arranged for its implementing partners to train relevant personnel across the government networks in health, education and security in Afghanistan in order to expand mine/ERW RE’s reach, which ensured that a greater number of men and women were aware of the threats posed by landmines and ERW. In the context of transition, the success of this mainstreaming initiative has been to strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan’s national authorities to directly implement future mine and ERW RE.

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**Notes from the Field**

Samim Hashimi coordinates and monitors all mine/ERW RE and victim assistance operations for Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), including oversight of implementing partners, returnee activities, community-based MRE, teacher training and landmine-safety initiatives for U.N. aid workers, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), international NGOs and government staff. He also provides technical support to MAPA MRE/victim assistance partner NGOs and government-related ministries. He has more than 15 years’ experience in the field of mine/ERW RE and victim assistance, and represents gender in mine action within the U.N. country team in Afghanistan.

See endnotes page 51

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