

**Eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties
to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War to
the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions
on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons
Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively
Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**

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Report(s) of any subsidiary organ(s)

Report on generic preventive measures

Submitted by the Coordinator¹ on generic preventive measures

Introduction

1. At the Seventh Conference of Protocol V High Contracting Parties agreed to “continue exchange of views on the management of munitions sites during the 2014 meetings, with the view to minimize the failure rate of ammunition”. The management of munitions sites is highly relevant to Protocol V and its objective of preventing humanitarian harm from explosive remnants of war, specifically by minimising the risk of munitions becoming explosive remnants of war. Poor management practices may cause the quality of stored ordnance to deteriorate, which will lead to an increase in explosive remnants of war during armed conflicts. There are many other adverse consequences arising from deficiencies in the management of munitions storage sites that should be of serious concern to Protocol V High Contracting Parties.

2. The first and most obvious of these is safety, and protecting both workers at such sites and the population who live and work close to such sites. Another important issue is security of munitions. Poorly secured stockpiles of weapons and munitions can have a serious destabilizing impact in the State itself and throughout the region. Even small quantities of explosives and explosive ordnance can have devastating consequences when incorporated into improvised explosive devices. Therefore it is incumbent on all States, including of course Protocol V High Contracting Parties, to continue to strive for the highest possible standards of safety and security at munitions sites in line with national and international best practises.

3. A second recommendation agreed to at the Seventh Conference was for “the CCW Implementation Support Unit to follow-up on key issues with High Contracting Parties that have not yet reported on their implementation of [GPMs]”.

¹ Mr. Jim Burke, Colonel, of Ireland was appointed by the President-designate of the Eighth Conference as Coordinator.



The management of munitions sites

4. To focus the work on assessing the implementation of generic preventive measures and particularly those measures that address the management of munitions sites, the Coordinator posed questions on the key issues concerning the management of munitions sites. The purpose of the questions was to explore the progress being made by States on the effective and safe management of munitions sites. The Coordinator on national reporting, Mr. Lode Dewaegheneire, Major Aviateur, in his presentation on reporting under Article 9 on generic preventive measures underscored that States producing or procuring munitions were required to report on measures taken across the entire lifecycle of munitions. Responding to the Coordinator's questions were Argentina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cuba, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Mali and the United States of America. Set out below is an assessment of the questions, their relevance to Protocol V and the responses received.

5. Who in your country's armed forces is responsible for the management of munitions sites? Does this responsibility change during an armed conflict? A clear command and control structure for the management of munitions is critical for ensuring that there is oversight, responsibility and control of munitions. All those responding to the questions were able to identify who is responsible for the management of their munitions sites. For the majority of countries, the responsibility for munitions sites remains unchanged during an armed conflict. On this issue, during an armed conflict the United States assigned responsibility to the individual units within its armed forces who were actually going to use the munitions. Argentina emphasised the importance of inter-service coordination within its system for managing munitions.

6. What are the standard operating procedures under which your munitions are managed? Are these procedures in accordance with the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines? The implementation of clear standards for the management of munitions is essential for maintaining well organised munitions sites and ensuring the necessary checks and safety procedures are being carried out and consistently followed-up. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, India and the United States referred to their respective standard operating procedures. There was reference to the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the standards applied by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) members. Countries with the necessary resources often designed and implemented their own standards, which may exceed the requirements set out in the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. Whereas those countries that face challenges will struggle to reach to implement the first level of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining spoke on its work to develop the Ammunition Safety Management Tool, which provides a step by step guide to achieving Level 1 of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. The Ammunition Safety Management is now available online.

7. What measures are taken to maintain munitions storage areas? Are the munitions sites regularly checked? And if so, how often are the sites checked? The poor maintenance of storage areas has contributed to major accidents. Even simple measures such as the clearance of vegetation and isolating storage facilities can improve the maintenance of storage sites. Cuba presented a paper on its experience of the safe storage of ammunition². The paper outlined a number of measures that Cuba takes to safeguard the safety of its storage facilities, including basic measures such as forbidding the lighting of fires

² "Cuban experience in the safe storage of ammunition", which covers (I.) Section and requirements for sites intended to build ammunition warehouses, (II.) Ammunition warehouse characteristics, (III.) Requirements for storing rockets and munition, (IV.) Safety and fire protection measures and (V.) Safety regulations during transportation of ammunition. The working paper is available on the CCW Protocol V website under the section on generic preventive measures.

100 metres within a storage facility, prohibiting smoking and flammable goods in warehouse premises and maintaining all electrical installations. On the regularity of storage facilities checks, Hungary and the United States reported conducting inspections on a daily basis.

8. What records are kept of those who enter such sites? Records or logs of those entering and exiting munitions sites are an indication of the controls in place and efforts undertaken to ensure only the necessary and qualified personnel are entering such sites. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, India and the United States reported that they maintain an access roster and/or logs on personnel entering and exiting munitions facilities.

9. What records are maintained on the number and types of munitions stored? Effective record keeping on the numbers and types of munition is important for preventing and detecting the diversion of munitions. There is also a link between a State having in place up to date records of its munitions and its ability to implement Article 4, which addresses recording the use and abandonment of munitions during an armed conflict. If a State is unaware of the numbers and types of munitions it has in storage then implementing Article 4 will be a challenge. Bulgaria has in place a reporting system that processes data on the quantity, quality and additional manufacturing data of its munitions. In addition, this system provides reporting on the munitions by quantity and type as they are stored. Bulgaria is developing a web based information for real-time munitions tracking.

10. How often are the munitions inspected? What procedures are in place to identify and remove degraded munitions? Sections 3(vi), (vii) and (viii) of the Technical Annex to Protocol V set out the best practises on munitions and life-firing testing, laboratory testing and where necessary for adjustments to be made to their shelf-life. Regular testing is the mechanism used to identify degraded munitions. The timeframes for testing varies between States. Bulgaria carries out initial laboratory tests from 8 to 12 years and initial field tests from 4 to 20 years. The results from this testing determined the timing of subsequent tests. The Czech Republic, in accordance with the relevant NATO standards, carried out technical physico-chemical and firing test following procurement, then at regular intervals, one year before the end of the munition's technical shelf life and following the revision, parts replacement of munitions, as well as extraordinary tests. The United States checked stockpile reliability on average every 4 years.

11. Has your country received outside expert assistance or advice on munitions safety in storage and transportation? Mali spoke about the challenges it was facing concerning the management of its stockpiles. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is assisting Mali with destroying obsolete stockpiles, evaluating storage facilities, providing training for personnel involved in the management of munitions sites, rebuilding storage facilities, developing standards for handling and the security of munitions. Mali acknowledged that the long term challenges were implementing the appropriate coordination structures, providing continuous training for personnel and ensuring decision makers understood the importance of this work and that the necessary financial resources were made available for implementing standard procedures for managing munitions.

Assisting those countries facing challenges with managing munitions sites

12. The Coordinator led a short discussion on what could be done to assist those States that were either not able to or were struggling to manage their munitions sites and stockpiles. Burundi spoke about the assistance it required, especially concerning munitions sites close to urban areas. France recognised that the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines were detailed and verged on being overly exhaustive. They proposed developing a 'light-weight' version of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines that could be applied in emergency situations when munitions stocks had been abandoned. The International Committee of the Red Cross believed that the key for States with limited

resources was stockpile destruction, in particular removing ageing and unsafe stock. Although this required an initial financial outlay, money would be saved by freeing up storage space and improving the safety and security of storage areas. A common method of stockpile destruction is open burning, but there are other methods. For example, Denmark has been following the method of reverse-assembling, which means taking ammunition apart in a safe way. This has proven to be cost-effective.

13. The practical suggestions for assisting States confronted with challenges in this area were welcomed. The CCW Implementation Support Unit undertook to identify those States and organisations able to provide cooperation and assistance in the area of managing munitions sites and stockpile destruction.

Follow-up with High Contracting Parties on the implementation of Generic Preventive Measures

14. In accordance with the tasking from the Seventh Conference to follow-up with High Contracting Parties that had not reported on the implementation of generic preventive measures, the CCW Implementation Support Unit sent messages and telephoned the concerned Missions. Also, to raise awareness of Protocol V's work on generic preventive measures and the challenges in this area, the CCW Implementation Support Unit organised along with Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the United Nations Mine Action Service a side event on the management of munitions sites. This took place in the margins of the United Nations Directors Meeting on Mine Action. The following High Contracting Parties either in their national annual reports or statements have provided information on their work on generic preventive measures at the national level: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Mali, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and the United States of America. A difficulty in assessing the progress of High Contracting Parties in implementing generic preventive measures is that some States only provide minimal information. Given the importance of generic preventive measures for preventing explosive remnants of war from occurring, it is proposed to continue to follow-up with High Contracting Parties on their implementation of measures to manage munitions sites and encourage the submission of detailed information.

Recommendations

15. The Eighth Conference of the Protocol V High Contracting Parties may wish to take the following decisions:

(a) All High Contracting Parties are encouraged to implement part 3 of the technical annex to Protocol V, report on such work in their Protocol V national annual reports and implement the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines;

(b) To continue to focus on the management of munitions sites at the 2015 Meeting of Experts and in particular, follow-up on the questions raised by the Coordinator in this report;

(c) The Coordinator with the support of the CCW Implementation Support to continue to follow-up with High Contracting Parties that had not yet reported on their measures to manage munitions sites; and

(d) The Coordinator with the support of the CCW Implementation Support Unit to identify those States and organisations able to provide assistance on the management of munitions sites and to promote this area of Protocol V's work in related *fora*.