

SEMINAR REPORT  
**RESEARCH ON SMALL ARMS  
IN CENTRAL AFRICA**

Hosted by SaferRwanda and  
Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

Edited by Nelson Alusala

13 December 2007 Hotel des Mille Collines, Kigali

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Christine Muhongerwa (SaferRwanda), Agar Ngwenya (ISS) and Nelson Alusala (ISS) whose efforts ensured the success of the seminar.

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# Executive Summary

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The seminar on *Impact Oriented Research on Small Arms in Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo (RoC) and Rwanda* brought together researchers from these countries to discuss the state of research on small arms and light weapons (SALW) in their countries, and collaboratively to outline their research work plans for 2008 and beyond.

By the end of the seminar a number of things had become apparent. Most research in Central Africa has been conducted by foreign researchers, with very limited direct participation by locals. One consequence of this is that local people, including those in the communities studied, have seldom benefited from the results of this research, which usually is published abroad in foreign languages. The seminar concluded, therefore, that local research capacity needed to be developed with the support of Central African governments and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA). Participants agreed to engage their governments as well as donors on the need for such support, and urged that research findings be considered in the national policymaking process.

There was also agreement that researchers should work closely with their national focal points and in the case of RoC, with the *Haut Commissaire a la Réinsertion des Ex-Combattants* – HCREC – in order to implement RECSA's research objectives.

As the researchers enumerated their priorities for 2008 and beyond, certain areas emerged that were common to all countries, such as the movement of illicit SALW across national borders (including arms brokering), marking and tracing, informal border trade and arms proliferation, best approaches to DDR, with emphasis on sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants and the impact of armed violence on health, environment and regional stability.

While there are sufficient momentum and capacity to initiate further research in Central Africa, it was noted that the biggest problem was funding. With sufficient funds, those present indicated their readiness to undertake policy oriented research especially geared toward supporting the work of their national focal points (National Focal Points), and hence their governments, on effectively addressing the scourge of SALW.

The seminar identified the need to bring together researchers and policy influencing institutions such as National Focal Points on a regular basis to address matters of common research concern. The participants thanked the organisers for facilitating this successful seminar, and requested that a similar occasion be arranged in the future.

# Introduction

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The seminar was held on 13 December 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda, and was attended chiefly by researchers from four countries: Burundi, DRC, RoC and Rwanda. It was facilitated by SaferRwanda and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and had two principal aims.

The first of these was to initiate an active research community to constitute the core of a pooled local research resource that would work closely with the existing national mechanisms such as NFPs in the respective countries of the region on controlling the proliferation of SALW. The second aim was to implement the strategic plan of RECSA on Integrating Research Capacity-Building and Information Exchange on SALW, as stipulated in Pillars 1 and 3 of RECSA's Strategic Plan.

The choice of these four countries arose from their geopolitical links in conflicts affecting them, and from the need to enhance the limited local research being undertaken on these issues.

External researchers have tended to dominate this field of research in the region, despite a frequently poor understanding of the local dynamics of the societies they study. This becomes evident when one considers that most published research on Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region has been conducted with only limited direct involvement of local researchers, except where locals have been gathered in focus groups to be interviewed by external researchers. However good the quality of such research findings may be, the researchers seldom return to the society under study to disseminate their findings, which are

usually published in a language and format inaccessible to the researched community. This is one of the reasons why such research findings make so little impression on local policymakers and have so little policy impact there. This is also detrimental, in so much as local communities never get to benefit from the research findings about themselves.

Although the RoC was not a member of RECSA when this seminar was held, its participation was important in that the effect that of arms proliferation there has been similar to that in the DRC. It is anticipated that RoC will eventually join RECSA.

The seminar was framed around five key tasks:

- To assess and further document the research capacity existing locally in the individual countries at personal and institutional levels
- To identify focus areas for assisting research. These are areas of research that policy makers in each country would consider supporting and implementing findings
- To initiate sustainable interaction among researchers in the participating countries with a possibility of inter-country research activities on issues of common interest
- To share research agendas/work plans (for 2008 and beyond) among participating researchers
- To share best approaches to research in these countries, with due consideration for country sensitivities and issues of personal security





# Proceedings of the Seminar

Opening Ceremony

Session One: Researching in  
the Central African region

Session Two: Identifying  
immediate areas of research

Session Three: Country-specific research  
and implementation areas for 2008



# Opening Ceremony

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Mr Eric Kayiranga, the coordinator of the Rwanda National Focal Point (NFP) on small arms and light weapons (SALW), officially opened the seminar by welcoming the participants to Kigali and wishing them success in their deliberations. He assured the seminar that the Rwanda NFP would fully support the difficult task of improving research capacity in the four countries, and thanked SaferRwanda and the Institute for Security Studies for their cordial relationship with the Rwanda NFP, which also looked forward to future collaboration.

Mr Kayiranga was confident that with the assistance of RECSA, whose mandate included research and capacity building, all member states could augment their capacity for policy-oriented research, to the benefit of the governments of member states. He called upon civil society in the region and other parts of Africa to support RECSA's member states in fulfilling the organisation's mandate.

## SESSION ONE

# Researching in the Central African Region

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### **CHRISTINE MUHONGERWA (SAFERRWANDA)**

Christine Muhongerwa, the Director of SaferRwanda, chaired this session. There were four speakers: Nelson Alusala, Eric Kayiranga and Holger Anders, and Joseph Dube.

### **NELSON ALUSALA (INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES)**

Nelson Alusala's presentation was entitled *A Researcher's Field Experience in Central Africa*. His years of experience in conducting research in Central Africa had convinced him that there was a serious dearth of local research capacity in the region. In Africa, he argued, most of those described as 'specialists on African issues,' were academics neither from Africa nor, indeed, living here. A consequence of this was that local people had limited opportunities to contribute to the research process or its findings.

He suggested a number of reasons for this state of affairs. First, the costs of carrying out research, especially primary research, are often prohibitive; only financially endowed research institutions such as those in the West have the capacity to meet these costs. He also mentioned the difficulty of flying within the Central African region given the price of tickets and the unreliability of airline schedules. In addition, the research environment was often unsafe, in that so much of the region either is involved in armed conflict or recovering from it. This means that researchers are seen to be encroaching on subject matter that is held to be the preserve of the state, and as a result may even be accused of espionage.

Local research institutions often lack resources and support. That the role of research institutions is not 'visible' in the daily lives of the community has led to an ignorance of the positive impact that research could have in improving local conditions. As a result, there is a general scepticism locally about the importance of research in promoting social development;

Governments themselves have shown limited interest in the findings of the research conducted. A number of Central African countries have yet to recognise the contribution research and research institutions can make to national development. Until this happens, whatever the quality of the research findings may be, government will remain sceptical or even indifferent.

Having mentioned just a few of the issues impeding research in Central Africa, Alusala concluded that this seminar was vital

to the realisation of the enormous potential for research in the region. The seminar created an opportunity for researchers and policymakers from the region to meet each other and to initiate a relationship that would be of mutual benefit. It also allowed for a discussion of the priority areas and the formulation of plans on the way forward. Finally, it promoted the establishment of structures to facilitate cooperation at national and sub-regional levels with other relevant structures such as RECSA, African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN).

Alusala told the participants that although the biggest challenge in initiating a more effective research structure at any level lay in financial stability, it was essential that a strong local network/collaboration be formed between civil society/research institutions and state organs to create an environment free of fear and hostility.

Alusala gave examples of the research he had already carried out in Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, DRC, RoC and Rwanda -- all highly successful ventures because of the buy-in he had received from the authorities of these countries, through the local civil society organisations with which the ISS collaborates. He emphasised, however, that some government structures remained apprehensive about the research even after comprehensive explanation. This, he felt, was something common to all the governments in the region, and he warned that researchers should always be cautious and try to obtain clearance from the relevant authorities before proceeding with research, in order to allay possible suspicions.

### **ERIC KAYIRANGA (RWANDA NATIONAL FOCAL POINT)**

Eric Kayiranga discussed the issue of *Managing Smooth Interaction between Policy Makers and Researchers – Experience from Rwanda*. By way of background, he said that the Rwanda NFP was established in March 2003 and now had a full-time staff concentrating exclusively on matters of SALW. Research was increasingly becoming a central focus for the NFP, the aims being to understand the factors underlying the proliferation of arms flows into Rwanda (demand factors), and to establish the most effective approaches to apply to the problem.

Kayiranga indicated that the positive collaboration between the government of Rwanda, the Rwanda NFP and civil society had led to several achievements, such as successful public

awareness campaigns on the dangers of illicit SALW, leading to the surrender and collection of different types of arms and ammunition, which were eventually destroyed. He emphasised the need to integrate research into the operations of NFPs, pointing out that this would enable NFPs to understand in detail the issues they engaged in, hence avoiding unnecessary pitfalls. In this regard, Kayiranga lauded the efforts of RECSA in establishing a research and gender section to spearhead research among member states. He thought that the current seminar was a step in the right direction by the countries present, and conformed with the strategic plan of RECSA, which called upon member countries to identify specific areas of research at the national and international levels.

### **HOLGER ANDERS (GROUPE DE RECHERCHE ET D'INFORMATION SUR LA PAIX ET LA SÉCURITÉ - GRIP)**

Holger Anders spoke about his field research experience in Rwanda, in a presentation titled *Field Research in Rwanda: An Outsider's Experience*. He began by saying that if a researcher was to carry out research successfully in a foreign environment or country, it was essential to win local acceptability. He then discussed the various advantages and disadvantages for an outsider of researching in a foreign environment.

Among the advantages enjoyed by a foreign researcher was the liberty of being able to ask certain questions irrespective of their sensitivity among local people, and obtaining genuine responses because locals viewed the researcher as non-partisan, which created an element of mutual trust. In instances in which a foreign researcher encountered problems or risks, it was easier to escape repercussions by simply leaving the area. This would be more difficult for a local researcher, who might find that, even if he or she escaped retribution, punitive measures could be extended to his own family. It was also easier for a foreign researcher to maintain impartiality in research and avoid personal judgements than for a local researcher who might be drawn to take sides on contentious issues. In this regard Anders cited the example of a local researcher in a country in the Great Lakes who conducted a study on the accountability of structures in the military. When the report was released through a contracting organisation, the government of that country raised no issues. After a while, however, the media leaked the name of the researcher, leading to his being forced to leave his own country.

Among the disadvantages relating to the operations of a foreign researcher, Anders pointed out the apparent risk of creating false hopes and expectations, either explicitly or implicitly, as the community, especially in Africa, tended to view a foreign researcher as a prospective provider of a solution to their problems, or even as a prospective donor. There was also the possibility of a foreign researcher being misinformed or misled during the research. A community deliberately might portray a situation in excessively adverse terms to arouse sympathy, a ploy more difficult to achieve with a local researcher with more background knowledge. Communities tend to be more sceptical of

a foreign researcher and it took time for an outsider to win trust and dispel suspicions that he or she is a spy or a mischief-maker. Anders advised that it was wise for a foreign researcher to be accompanied by local colleagues or guides to allay suspicions and avoid unnecessary danger. Research conducted by foreigners also tended to be more expensive, since it involved foreign travel, usually by air, and hired accommodation. While agreeing that research in Central Africa remained a costly activity even for locals, Anders said that there were types of research that could be carried out locally at relatively little cost, such as reviewing media reporting on SALW issues, which would entail simply going through library records and newspapers to analyse the issue and coming up with recommendations, some of which might prove useful to policy makers.

He concluded his presentation by pointing out that from his experience of researching in Central Africa, it was evident that the region is very donor dependent, a situation that needs remedying.

### **JOSEPH DUBE (INTERNATIONAL ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS - IANSA)**

Joseph Dube spoke about *Research Coordination between IANSA and Civil Society*. IANSA, he said, was a network of 800 civil society organisations working in 120 countries worldwide. He added that this was a global movement against gun violence, aimed at halting the proliferation and misuse of SALW, and which sought to make people safer by securing stronger regulation on guns in society and better controls on arms exports. It represented the voice of civil society on the international stage, for example in the UN process on small arms, and drew on the practical experience of its members to campaign for policies aimed at promoting human security.

IANSA comprised a wide range of organisations concerned with small arms, including policy development organisations, national gun control groups, women's groups, research institutes, aid agencies, faith groups, survivors of gun violence, human rights and community action organisations.

IANSA worked to reduce small arms violence by:

- Increasing awareness among policymakers, the public and media about the global threat to human rights and human security caused by small arms
  - Promoting civil society's efforts to prevent arms proliferation and armed violence through policy development, public education and research
  - Fostering collaborative advocacy efforts, and providing a forum for NGOs to share experiences and develop skills
  - Facilitating civil society participation in global and regional processes
- Promoting the voices of survivors, in solidarity with them and their families.

After explaining IANSA's operations, Dube posed the question about the role of the researcher and how one could enhance

the practice of research in Africa. He depicted the researcher principally as a provider of information, indicating that in Africa research findings are liable to be converted to the use of a political agenda, which suits donors' operations, since donors always have an agenda to fund.

Dube conceded, however, that the challenge was that sometimes a state's political agenda might not conform to the donor agenda, which accounted for some of the difficulties most African countries experienced in attracting external funding. Dube underscored the importance of research coordination between IANSA and its members, because the statistics that IANSA uses in its advocacy and campaigns (such as the current statistics of 1 000 lives being lost daily worldwide as a result of SALW), emerge only because research has been conducted on this. He suggested that researchers ought to consider other avenues through which they could transmit their findings, such as activist organisations such as IANSA, which could unpack the information and provide further analysis, including lobbying for policy implementation at both national as well as international levels.

Dube also discussed the thematic areas of research in which the IANSA secretariat could coordinate effectively with researchers:

*Community level research:* IANSA was a conglomeration of a large number civil society organisations of widely varying types, and therefore is in a position to provide vital information on any member country/community in which one would be considering research, providing the researcher with contacts among its members on the ground. He cited the example of IANSA providing the necessary contacts to the Small Arms Survey when the latter was preparing for research on small arms, violence and insecurity in Delta State in Nigeria, a study that yielded excellent results.

*Action-oriented research:* Since IANSA was an advocacy oriented organisation, Dube encouraged researchers to be proactive in examining issues of daily life and providing IANSA with actionable outcomes. As examples of such research questions he suggested: 'Where do guns come from in our surroundings? Who owns these guns? Who suffers? How is marking and tracing done?'

Dube also outlined what he viewed as some of the major challenges facing research on SALW in Africa:

*Insufficient indigenous researchers:* This had led to Africa becoming home to a host of foreign researchers who often viewed the environment from a largely alien perspective. Such researchers frequently formulated topics from outside Africa in such a way as to omit certain fundamental aspects that an indigenous researcher would incorporate. He emphasised the need to empower African universities to lead the way in training researchers.

*Limited coordination in data collection and storage:* Dube pointed out that in most instances the few researchers and research institutions that exist in Africa lack effective archiving facilities and hence the data collected during research is often poorly stored or organised for reference purposes. As an example, he mentioned instances where many hospitals in Africa lack consistent records on victims of firearm injuries, especially fatal ones.

*Limited informed information providers in the community:* Dube argued that although there was plenty of information at the community level to be collected and analysed by researchers, most (rural) communities in Africa were poorly informed about the important role they could play in providing actionable information in a coordinated way to researchers. It was important, therefore, to raise awareness in these communities about the important advantages they could gain from research, an awareness that could be reinforced if, at the end of the research, the findings were released to the community and recommendations made. This was likely to lead the community to set more value on research.

Dube posed the question as to why fewer and fewer national researchers in Africa were working on security issues, and wondered whether this was because of the sensitivity about this subject, or a lack of government support for such research; or was it to be explained by excessive dependence on foreign researchers? As a way forward, Dube made a number of recommendations. One of the ways of addressing the malaise was to strive to engage the local community, including the local authorities, in the research from the outset in order to ensure their buy-in throughout the process until the release of the findings. The process, according to Dube, should incorporate training of local people for future research projects in the community. When and where necessary, researchers should liaise with campaigners whenever they planned research so that more relevant topics were chosen from the perspective of public campaigning and advocacy. Universities should be encouraged to go beyond research solely for academic purposes and engage in research geared at policy implementation, especially for the benefit of the very communities in which the universities were located.

## DISCUSSION

During the discussion that followed, Holger Anders asked whether civil society in Central Africa engaged in continuous dialogue with the NFPs, especially when formulating research agendas. Kayiranga responded that this was just starting to happen, given that Recsa had recently created the position of Research and Gender Officer, and hoped that better consultation between the NFPs, Recsa and individual researchers would result.

Kayiranga pointed out the risk of having foreign researchers dominate the scene, stating that this practice is leading to a tendency for foreigners to brand themselves as 'experts on Africa,' after only a brief stay in the region, even on issues they hardly understood better than the locals. Kayiranga proposed that in most cases locals should be encouraged to identify topics of research, and sensitised on the findings at the end of the process. He encouraged civil society to approach governments to discover ways in which the latter could assist them.

Commenting on the advantages enjoyed by local researchers, Kasongo Missak (Securitas DRC) added that they benefited from their command of the local language, especially in describing situations in an unadulterated form without diluting the meaning through translation. On the other hand, Kasongo went on, a lo-

cal researcher risked encountering problems of impartiality and acceptability, as he/she was likely to be seen as having a stake in the subject under study. In such instances, those being interviewed might withhold certain information, though they would have made this available to a foreign researcher. In certain cases diplomatic missions have more privileged access to information than local researchers. Similarly, foreign researchers have better entree to diplomatic missions than locals, which gave them easier access to information held by diplomats. Kasongo also pointed out that in many instances in Africa, government officials were more susceptible to corruption and might be more willing to provide information to foreigners than to locals in expectation that the foreigner would 'reward' them.

Joachim Tsoumou (*Haut Commissaire a la Réinsertion des Ex-Combattants* – HCREC - RoC) pointed out that in the RoC hard experience had taught them to allow Congolese themselves to take the lead in most of the implementation work. To clarify this point, Tsoumou referred to the failure of the first DDR process between 2001 and 2004, which was financed by a loan provided by the International Development Agency (IDA). According to Tsoumou, the process, which was led largely by foreigners, had little success. In subsequent processes, such as the current demobilisation and reintegration process funded by the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), the Congolese are taking the lead, with the very limited involvement (in areas such as training) of foreigners.

## SESSION TWO

# Identifying Immediate Areas of Research

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Nelson Alusala of the ISS chaired this session, at which researchers provided detailed examples of recent or current research. .

### BURUNDI

Jacques Ntibarikure and Virgile Ndiokubwayo of *Colonie des Pionniers de Développement* (CPD), presented the case of Burundi. They began by emphasizing that illicit arms were still widespread in Burundi, as reflected in the number of assassinations that had taken place in the country in the recent past, as well as the presence of an armed rebel group, the *Front National de Libération* (FNL).

Ntibarikure explained that the objectives of CPD included the analysis and dissemination of information, which was a proactive and real-time process in which CPD kept its collaborators informed on current issues relating to SALW in Burundi. The information was regularly published in an electronic format newsletter, *Periscope*. He added that the scope for research in Burundi was very broad, as many issues concerning SALW remained unresearched, and institutions capable of carrying out this work were few in number. CPD's research capacity is limited by the scarcity of funding, nevertheless the organisation has developed research themes and in some cases has developed funding proposals. In the past CPD has collaborated with international organisations in conducting research in the Great Lakes Region. An example was the collaboration between CPD and GRIP on the Mai-Mai militia, the findings of which were published by GRIP under the title *Qui arme les Mai-Mai?* Finally, he said, the CPD carries out advocacy and awareness campaigns in collaboration with other civil society organisations, as members of IANSA, lobbying legislators in particular.

Virgile Ndiokubwayo pointed out that a number of practical and difficult issues have been brought to the fore by CPD's regional research. First there was the challenge of maintaining one's credibility during the research process. He observed that throughout the Great Lakes Region, there was a great deal of suspicion whenever one went around asking questions, especially about guns. Potential risks included death threats and/or arrest. He gave an example of a certain researcher and his family who had to seek asylum in the West after his life was threatened following research he conducted in the region.

Poverty also had to be considered when determining the credibility of information: Ndiokubwayo explained that in some

cases interviewees provide false information with the aim of impressing the researcher in anticipation of reward. This, he said, obviously can have adverse effects on the final results of a study. Ntibarikure summed this up in a phrase, '*Information fiable, on n'achète pas*,-- 'Reliable information is free'.

Almost invariably, he said, law enforcement officers (police, military, gendarmerie), were reluctant to participate in research on SALW, pretending that the SALW problem had nothing to do with them. This, as Ndiokubwayo explained, was contrary to the actual situation, as law enforcers remained as central to the problem as anyone.

### DRC

The DRC case study was presented by Missak Kasongo (Securitas Congo) and Loochi Kizungu (*Association pour l'Education aux Droits - AED*). Kasongo told the meeting that the DRC was still bedevilled with the problem of armed rebels, especially in the east of the country. Some of the armed groups were from neighbouring countries while others were self-defence groups (*groupes d'auto-défense*). Kasongo and Kizungu referred to several instances in which, following the departure of President Mobutu Sese Seko, DRC combatants fled to the RoC across the River Congo, and that to this day the borders between the DRC and its neighbours -- Central African Republic (CAR), Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda -- remained threatened by armed rebellions.

Missak Kasongo said that because of the immensity of the DRC, there were several research projects under way there at any given time, some conducted by locals and others by foreigners. However, he referred to a study funded by GRIP the findings of which were published in August 2006 under the title *Le désarmement, la démobilisation et réintégration des combattants en RD Congo*. Among its conclusions about the DDR process in the DRC were that it would have to deal not only with Congolese combatants but with the disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) of foreign combatants as well. He indicated that this study had forewarned of two of the major challenges to the stability of pre-election and post-election DRC, a judgement that has proved correct. According to the researcher, a national DDR programme would cost of US\$250 million. However, the country managed to secure MDRP funding for an interim programme for a fund of US\$37,5 million and a further US\$15 million contributed by other donors



through UNDP. UNDP managed the implementation of the programme.

Funding was a major problem for implementation as well as research. In the research funded by GRIP, elaborate findings were outlined, among them the major challenges that DDR programmes faced in the DRC. First among these was the need to combat the influx of SALW in the east of the country; Missak Kasongo argued that for DDR to succeed, there was a need to first ensure that no further proliferation of SALW went on throughout the country, especially in the porous east. There must also be civilian disarmament and the implementation of a community focused disarmament approach, because in the course of recurring conflicts in the east, communities acquired arms, sometimes collectively, for self defence. It was also necessary to establish the accurate figures for *Forces Armées de République Démocratique du Congo – FARDC*, so that the *Commission nationale du désarmement, de la démobilisation et de la réinsertion* (CONADER) could plan adequately for the DDR process.

## REPUBLIC OF CONGO (ROC)

Jean Bruno Kihoussinga and Joachim Tsoumou, both Congolese researchers, presented the report on the RoC, in which Kihoussinga started by narrating the historical background to the conflict in the country. He noted that since 1993, the RoC had suffered successive armed conflicts that destabilised the social, economic and political fabric of the country. The problems emanating from these conflicts have continued into the present largely because the stakeholders as well as the international community have failed to research the situation fully in order to arrive at the most effective mitigation strategies.

The RoC continued to be affected by past and present armed conflicts in the neighbouring countries, particularly in the DRC, CAR and Angola. The refugees from these countries, many of whom have sought refuge in RoC, have created an atmosphere conducive to the proliferation of illicit SALW. That refugees were allowed to integrate freely into Congolese communities has also led to an increase in criminality, such as armed robberies. Renewed fighting in the Pool region in 2002 led to the arming of the Ninja militia under the command of Pasteur Ntoumi. There are a growing number of illicit gun runners operating between Kinshasa and Brazzaville, feeding on citizens' demands for the means to defend themselves in the event of renewed conflict. Tsoumou explained that in 2002 a national assessment of SALW in the RoC established that there were some 74 000 SALW in circulation. The government and the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) intervened and collected 19 142 arms, but surprisingly only 11 400 of those collected were retained in government stocks; these later filtered back into the community when the armouries were robbed.

He described the location of the RoC in relation to its neighbours, to explain why the country acted as a transit point in the illicit arms trade. For instance Kihoussinga traced the two major highways, one of 1 700km from Pointe-Noire on the shores of

Atlantic Ocean to Bangui and N'djamena, with a branch joining Kisangani in the DRC, the other linking Pointe-Noire and Ouesso in Cameroon via the town of Sangha. These routes are inadequately monitored and were used by arms smugglers. A number of factors contribute to the easy proliferation of SALW in RoC. The borders with the neighbouring countries were all very porous, and the legislative and administrative structures of these states are weak. Illicit arms were also sold relatively cheaply in the markets of Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Cabinda and Bangui. This made it fairly easy for unauthorised people to 'experiment' with arms in the name of self-defence; unsurprisingly incidences of armed robbery were also on the increase.

## RWANDA

Scovia Umulisa and Claude Nkinzingabo, local researchers working closely with the Rwanda NFP, presented the section on Rwanda. Their presentation centred on a research project approaching finalisation, the result of a joint initiative of the Rwanda NFP and civil society. This entailed assessing people's attitudes about small arms in Rwanda and covered Gasabo District's prefectures of Remera, Kimirongo and Gisozi as well as former Cyangugu Province. It was supervised by the coordinator of the Rwanda NFP, Eric Kayiranga.

According to Scovia Umulisa, it was fairly common for genocide survivors to become emotional when asked questions about weapons. In such instances, the researchers first had to prepare the interviewee psychologically by counselling before embarking on the questions and discussions. Some local leaders were also hesitant about participating in the research and first wanted to establish the legality of the study. Researchers therefore had to produce government documents giving them permission to conduct the research, as a prerequisite for establishing trust with their interviewees. Most of the work was conducted in Kinyarwanda, which made for broad public involvement and allowed the interviewees to express themselves in detail.

Claude Nkinzingabo pointed out that among other lessons learned during the research was the importance of culture and language, as the use of the local language enabled the researchers to package conversations in the most culturally acceptable way.

Eric Kayiranga explained to the seminar that they could not provide further details of the research, as this was yet to be concluded and the results published. He elaborated, however, by outlining the stages in the preparation of the research. All the necessary security authorities were informed in writing beforehand about the intended research. A one-day seminar was held in which the likely implications of the research were discussed. It was agreed subsequently at the seminar that the press as well as other public channels of information would be used to sensitise the public about the research. The Rwanda NFP also published advertisements in the local media for the posts of researchers following which they conducted interviews and selected suitable candidates.

## DISCUSSION

During the discussion, Tsoumu provided interesting examples from a disarmament process in the Pool region, in which a reconnaissance study had indicated that a maximum of 450 weapons would be collected; the actual number collected was 550.

In another incident an elderly man brought out 'his' 10 illegal guns and asked the disarmament team to pick out one while he retained the rest. Still in Pool many locals advised the disarmament team to begin by disarming the rebels belonging to Pasteur Ntoumi before disarming the villagers, as their weapons were meant for their own self-defence.

## SESSION THREE

# Country-specific Research and Implementation Areas for 2008

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Christine Muhongerwa of SaferRwanda chaired this session, which she reminded participants, was supposed to chart the way forward in terms of the work the researchers planned for 2008.

The participants arrived at the following outline of research areas for the year 2008, noting that the biggest hurdle was to raise the funds necessary to conduct research. However, each group remained optimistic that they could approach various promising sources of funding in order to meet their goals. The research areas outlined were as follows.

### RWANDA

- Border research on the relationship between informal trade/human movement and insecurity the border between Rwanda and neighbouring countries, specifically in Goma, Gisenyi, Gatuna and Chanika
- The correlation between armed violence and poverty, with an emphasis on the wider causes of armed violence
- Impact of small arms on socio-economic dimensions of human life such as child education, growth and development
- Impact of small arms on the environment (poaching of rare species in Rwanda and other parts of the Great Lakes Region)
- Research on the extent of arms brokering in the region, both legally and illicitly
- Assistance with ammunition destruction

### BURUNDI

- Border research on the movement of arms and ammunition on the border between Burundi and Tanzania, starting with mapping of the problem in three specific districts
- An assessment of the possibility of instituting a marking and tracing process of government stocks
- Research on the best approach to DDR, especially with regard to the reintegration of ex-combatants
- Research on the extent to which ex-combatants are involved in private security activities
- The problem of arms brokering in the region

### DRC

- Research on the best approach to stemming arms proliferation and movement of armed groups on the border between DRC and Central African Republic (CAR) and between the DRC and Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda
- Research on a marking and tracing process
- Research on the relationship between armed violence, poverty and child growth and development in Eastern DRC
- Impact of armed violence on health, environment and regional security and cooperation

### RoC

- Research on how a regional policy on arms proliferation might be established and enforced
- A study on illegal movement of goods (including small arms) between Kinshasa and Brazzaville across River Congo
- A study on the relationship on how outdated laws 'facilitate' armed violence
- The impact of DDR processes on socio-economic development of countries in Central Africa

### CONCLUSION

Eric Kayiranga, the coordinator of the Rwanda NFP officially closed the seminar by thanking both organisers (SaferRwanda and ISS) and participants, noting that it was due to the diligence and discipline of all participants that the seminar had managed to achieve its goals within the allocated time. He humbly requested the organisers and sponsors of the seminar to attempt organise another one in 2008, in which the progress towards the objectives set at this seminar would be evaluated. Kayiranga further noted that such meetings were rare in the region because of the rivalry among member states, and if meetings of researchers and policy-makers such as this were more frequent, common solutions could be formulated jointly to address the many problems facing the region. Kayiranga wished all those present a safe journey back to their respective destinations.



# Appendices

Appendix 1: Agenda

Appendix 2: List of Participants



# APPENDIX 1

## Agenda

08:00-08:15	Registration	
08:15-08:30	Welcoming address	Eric Kayiranga, coordinator, Rwanda National Focal Point
	<b>Session 1: Researching in the Central African Region</b>	<b>Chair: Christine Muhongerwa, Director SaferRwanda</b>
08:30-09:00	Topic: A Researcher's Field Experience in Central Africa	Presenter: Nelson Alusala: Arms Management, ISS
09:00-09:30	Topic: Managing Smooth Interaction between Policy Makers and Researchers- Experience from Rwanda	Presenter: Eric Kayiranga, coordinator, Rwanda National Focal Point
09:30-10:00	Topic: Field Research in Rwanda: An Outsider's Experience	Presenter: Holger Anders, GRIP
10:00-10:30	Topic: Research Coordination and Support between IANSA and Civil Society	Presenter: Joseph Dube, IANSA
	Discussion on Session 1	
11:00-11:30	Tea/Coffee	
	<b>Session 2: Identifying Immediate Areas of Research in Burundi, DRC, RoC and Rwanda</b>	<b>Chair: Nelson Alusala: Arms Management, ISS</b>
11:30-12:00	Topic: Research areas in Burundi	Presenters: Jacques Ntibarikure (Burundi researcher) Virgil Ndiokubwayo (Burundi researcher)
12:00-12:30	Topic: Research areas in the DRC	Presenters: Missak Kasongo (DRC researcher) Loochi Kizungu (DRC researcher)
12:30-13:00	Topic: Research areas in RoC	Presenters: Jean Bruno Kihoussinga (RoC researcher) Joachim Tsoumou (RoC researcher)
	Topic: Research areas in Rwanda	Presenters: Scovia Umilisa (Rwandan researcher) Claude Nkintimgabo (Rwandan researcher)
13:00-13:30	Discussion	
13:30-14:00	Lunch	
	<b>Session 3: Country Specific Research and Implementation for 2008</b>	<b>Chair: Christine Muhongerwa, Director SaferRwanda</b>
14:00-14:30		Presenters: All researchers to participate in outlining priority areas of research in their country, emanating from previous presentations. Order: Burundi, DRC, RoC and Rwanda
14:30-15:00	Topic: Formulating the Research Agenda for 2008 – How to Overcome the Hurdles	Presenters: An open discussion in which all researchers share plans for 2008 and best ways of collaborating (e.g joint field work, seminars, research network, training, etc.)
15:00-15:30	Topic: The way forward (formulating a common agenda for 2008)	Presenters: All participants
15:30-16:00	Closing remarks	Eric Kayiranga, coordinator, Rwanda National Focal Point
18:00	Cocktail	

## APPENDIX 2

# List of Participants

COUNTRIES	Organisation/ Institution	Nom et Prenom / Surname & Name	Titre / Title	Tél/Fax	Email address
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