



Co-operating to Disarm

RECSA

Newsletter 2024

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Message from the Executive Secretary

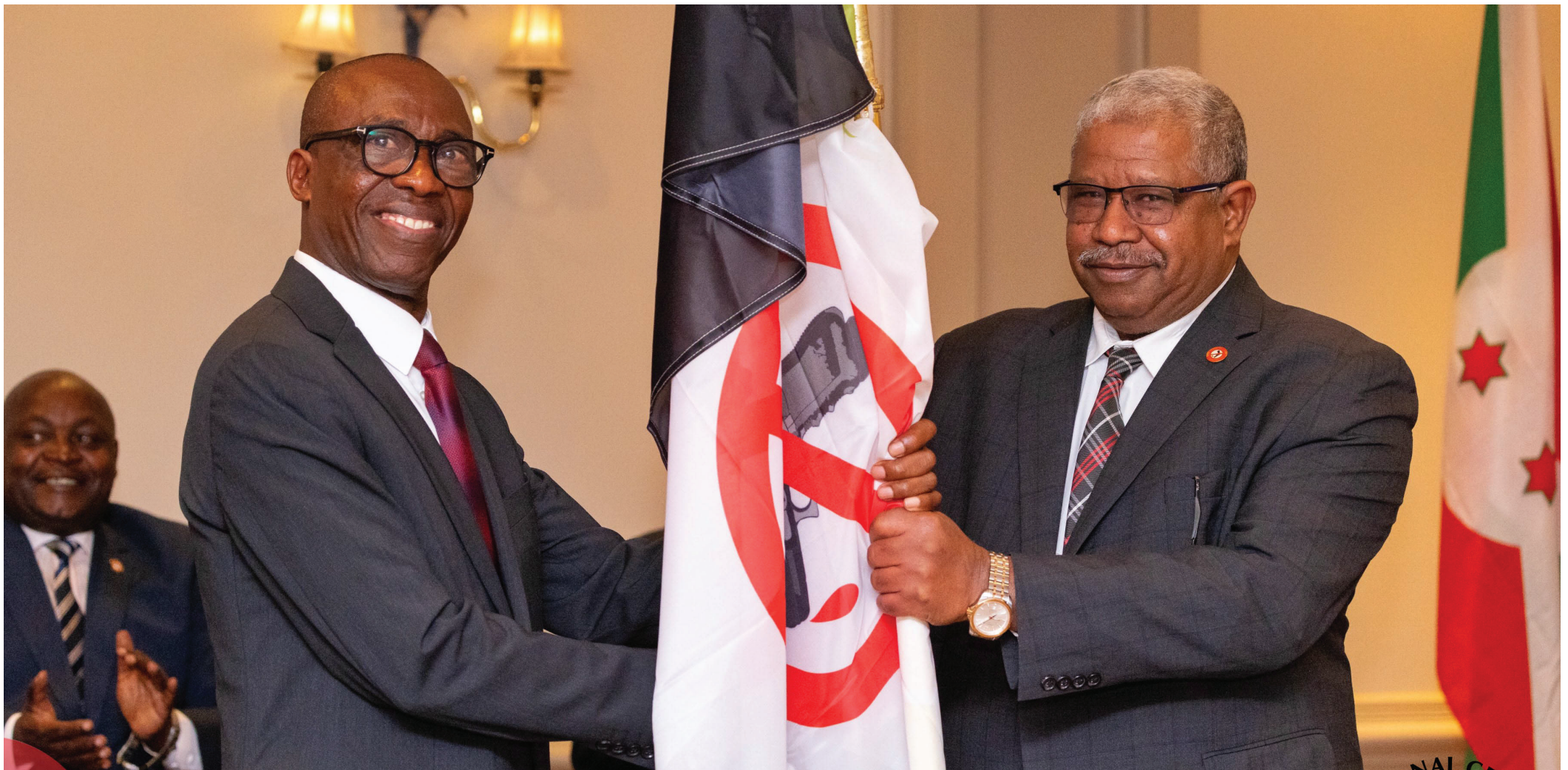
Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

As 2024 draws to a close, we take this opportunity to reflect on our shared achievements and chart the way forward. Over the past year, RECSA has remained steadfast in its mission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). This newsletter encapsulates our successes, highlights areas needing support, and reinforces our commitment to building a secure and peaceful sub-region. Thank you for your continued partnership in this critical journey. I extend warm wishes to all our esteemed partners for a joyful festive season filled with peace, prosperity, and gratitude.

**Warm regards,
Jean Pierre Betindji
Executive Secretary, RECSA**

**Key
Achievements
in 2024**





1. Coordination of SALW Control Interventions

The RECSA fourth Executive Secretary of, Mr. Jean-Pierre Betindji has placed a strong emphasis on strengthening bilateral relations with RECSA Member States and its partners through active engagements. These high-level discussions have underscored the importance of fostering ownership, operations, and support for RECSA as an inter-governmental body dedicated to the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control, and Reduction of illicit small arms and light weapons.

Pivotal meetings with Key Leaders and Partners

In line with this vision, the Executive Secretary has held pivotal meetings with key leaders and stakeholders, including the African Union Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department; UNODC's Chief of Global Firearms Programme, The Cabinet Secretary and the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Interior & National Administration, Republic of Kenya; the Minister of Interior, Republic of Rwanda; Vice Prime Minister in the Ministry of Interior, Security & Customary Affairs, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); RECSA Member States' Police Chiefs ; Director, East African Standby Force; Director, International Peace Support Training Centre; Policy Advisor, Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA), U.S. Department of State and the Executive Director, Institute of Security Studies. These engagements reflect RECSA's commitment to forging stronger ties with stakeholders and advancing the Secretariat's mandate to coordinate the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol.

Meetings with RECSA Diplomatic Missions based in Nairobi, Kenya

Leading RECSA delegation, Mr. Betindji has also prioritized outreach to eight RECSA Member States' diplomatic representatives, including: Republic of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of Seychelles, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of the Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, and Republic of Uganda. These meetings focused on building stronger networks among Member States to collectively address challenges related to ratification and implementation of the Nairobi Protocol.

REVCON 4

At the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons Review Conference (REVCON 4) in June 2024, RECSA reaffirmed its commitment to the Common African Position on Small Arms and Light Weapons, spearheaded by the AUC. This unified stance aims to harmonize national legislation, foster regional action plans, and create platforms for cross-border cooperation and experience sharing with a focus on tackling emerging challenges associated with small arms proliferation.

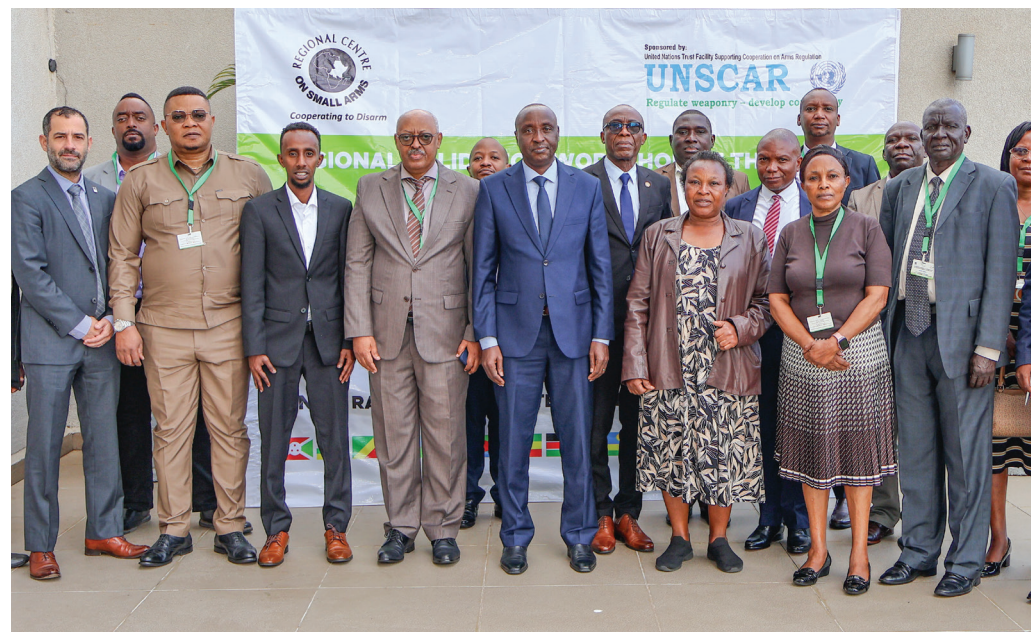


Promotion of ATT in Member States

RECSA has also intensified efforts to promote the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) among its Member States. Through technical assistance and high-level engagements, RECSA has supported countries like Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan in aligning their legislative frameworks with ATT provisions. In April 2024, the RECSA Executive Secretary, Mr. Jean-Pierre Betindji, hosted the Head of the ATT Secretariat, Mr. Dumisani Dladla in Nairobi, to explore strategies for intensifying the ATT's adoption. At the 10th Conference of ATT States Parties, RECSA championed responsible international arms transfers and highlighted the critical role of implementing agencies in preventing arms diversion.

The Regional Action Plan for WAM in DDR Context

RECSA is pleased to announce the adoption of the Regional Action Plan for Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) in Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Contexts. This groundbreaking action plan marks a pivotal step in our mission to strengthen weapons and ammunition management within DDR processes. It sets clear guidelines and strategic objectives, empowering Member States to effectively prevent armed violence and foster sustainable peace. With this action plan, we are better equipped to address the challenges of illicit arms management, ensuring a safer and more secure future for the region.



RECSA Harmonized Reporting Tool

The Forum of National Focal Point Coordinators has officially adopted the RECSA Harmonized Reporting Tool, a cornerstone for monitoring and reporting progress under the Nairobi Protocol. This innovative tool offers a standardized framework that enables member states to efficiently collect, analyze, and report data on the control and management of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Its adoption represents a major milestone, reinforcing transparency, accountability, and regional alignment in combating the proliferation of illicit arms. By improving the efficiency and effectiveness of data collection and reporting, this tool will enhance our collective capacity to address SALW challenges across the region.

Meeting with the Chief of UNODC Firearms Trafficking Section

The Executive Secretary attended the the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 12th Conference . A key focus of the meeting was the implementation of the Firearms Protocol, where participants deliberated on legislative alignment, cross-border cooperation, and the integration of international tracing systems. On the sidelines, RECSA Secretariat held high-level discussions with the Chief of UNODC Firearms Trafficking Section, laying the groundwork for future collaboration

Meeting of the 92nd INTERPOL General Assembly

RECSA Secretariat was also represented during the INTERPOL 92nd General Assembly Meeting, held in Glasgow. This global forum, which gathered law enforcement representatives from over 195 countries, provided a strategic platform for RECSA Secretariat to highlight its role in combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW). The delegation also engaged in high-level discussions with key stakeholders, paving the way for strengthened partnerships in law enforcement and arms control across the RECSA Member States





Regional Conference on Cross-Border Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons

The RECSA Secretariat actively participated in a regional conference hosted by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Goma focusing on combating cross-border trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW). This event brought together experts and stakeholders to address critical challenges such as border porosity, coordinated arms transfer controls, and illicit trafficking. Key recommendations, including enhanced bilateral cooperation, the establishment of joint border commissions, capacity building, and the use of technology for improved border management.

The 15th RECSA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

The RECSA 15th Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting took place from November 20-22, 2024, in Nairobi. The event was graced by H.E. Dr. Musalia Mudavadi, EGH, Prime Cabinet Secretary of Kenya and Acting Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, alongside Dr. Raymond Omollo, PhD, CBS, Principal Secretary, State Department for Interior and National Administration, and Chairperson of the RECSA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Mr. Jean Pierre Betindji, RECSA Executive Secretary. Attendees included Permanent Secretaries, Chiefs of Police, and Government Experts on small arms and light weapons (SALW) from RECSA Member States. The meeting underscored the critical importance of enhanced coordination and resource mobilization to address the proliferation of SALW in the region effectively.



2. Adaptive Research, Public Awareness, & Education

AAM in CAR

September 2024 saw RECSA and the AUC launch Africa Amnesty Month (AAM), coinciding with the 20th Anniversary of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC). The flagship event in Bangui, Central African Republic, emphasized the voluntary surrender of illicit small arms under conditions of anonymity and immunity from prosecution. Chaired by Cameroon, the event featured the symbolic destruction of illicit weapons and drew participation from AU member states, the UN, civil society, and regional organizations.

Countries including the Central African Republic, Rwanda, and Djibouti received targeted support to mark AAM through public awareness campaigns and initiatives to strengthen national capacities for weapons collection, storage, and destruction.

AAM in Rwanda

The campaign launched on 23rd September, 2024, at the Police Training School in Gishari, spotlighting awareness about weapon surrender and hosting a five-day training on Physical Security and Stockpile Management for defense and security personnel. A Community based policing sensitization workshop targeting Rwanda National Police officers, Park Rangers and Private Security Service Providers was also conducted from 30th September to 4th October 2024 at PTS Gishari.

AAM in Djibouti

As part of the Africa Amnesty Month celebrations, Djibouti hosted a series of impactful events led by the National Focal Point on Small Arms. The activities brought together defense and security personnel, community members, and civil society organizations (CSOs) in a powerful display of unity and commitment to peace. Participants joined in a symbolic march, showcasing solidarity in the fight against illicit arms. The event culminated in the burning of illicit and unserviceable weapons, a powerful demonstration of Djibouti's dedication to the African Union's ambitious goal to "Silence the Guns by 2030."





3. Institutional Development and Capacity Building

Regional Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) Training

RECSA Secretariat successfully conducted the Regional Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) Training in Nairobi for 50 participants drawn from Law enforcement agencies of; Tanzania, Seychelles, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, South Sudan, Rwanda, Eritrea, and Somalia were equipped with essential skills aligned with the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC)

Improvised Explosive Device (IED) training

In addition, the RECSA Secretariat conducted a one-week training on Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Awareness, equipping 25 officers from the Kenya Administration Police Service with essential skills to combat the rising IED threat in border areas. The training targeted officers from units stationed in high-threat regions, including the Rapid Deployment Unit, Border Police Unit, and Anti-Stock Theft Unit.

Handover of two modular containerized armories to the Government of Kenya

RECSA Secretariat also handed over two modular containerized armories to the Government of Kenya and trained over 70 security personnel in weapons and ammunition management. These modular armories are designed to enhance storage and accountability of state-owned stockpiles, are a significant step in strengthening small arms control and reinforcing regional security capabilities.

Staff sensitization training on ammunition by GICHD and UNODA





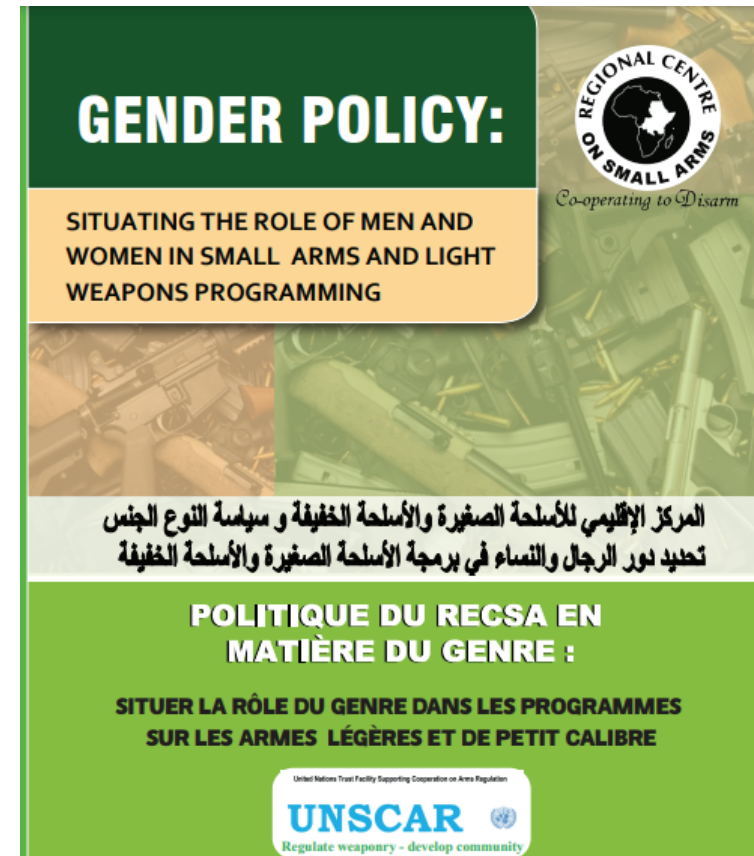
4. Mainstreaming Special Interest Groups

Youth, Peace, and Security Workshop

RECSA Secretariat participated in the Youth, Peace, and Security Workshop held from September 25-27, 2024, in Nairobi, Kenya, celebrating nine years of UNSCR 2250. Bringing together youth representatives, decision-makers, and key stakeholders from across the region, the workshop focused on fostering intergenerational dialogue, sharing best practices, and shaping strategies for conflict prevention.

Gender mainstreaming

During the Regional Conventional Ammunition Management Conference held in Gaborone, RECSA Secretariat participated and delivered a presentation on gender in ammunition management focusing on the RECSA regional perspective. The Secretariat remains committed to promoting gender mainstreaming in conventional ammunition management, recognizing the critical role of inclusivity in achieving sustainable security outcomes.



Priorities for 2025: Areas Requiring Support



Resource Mobilization

To effectively implement the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control & Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons, we call upon our partners, stakeholders, and Member States for support. Your collaboration is crucial in mobilizing resources, sharing expertise, and fostering partnerships that will enable us to achieve the objectives outlined in the Protocol.



Capacity Building

RECSA Secretariat seeks to enhance regional capacity-building efforts by organizing training workshops addressing emerging challenges, including the growing threats posed by 3D-printed firearms and online arms markets. Additionally, RECSA aims to expand technical assistance programs to Member States, equipping them with the tools and expertise needed to effectively tackle these evolving security risks. These initiatives are vital in strengthening regional responses to modern arms trafficking challenges.



Policy Advocacy

RECSA is intensifying advocacy efforts to promote ratification and implementation of the Nairobi Protocol and other key arms regulation instruments. As part of these efforts, RECSA is in the process of reviewing the Agreement Establishing RECSA and enhancing data collection mechanisms, ensuring that policies and strategies are informed by robust, evidence-based insights. Additionally, RECSA is advocating for greater policy alignment and international cooperation, reinforcing its commitment to fostering regional security.



Technology Integration

The RECSA Secretariat is committed to advancing the control of small arms and light weapons (SALW) by integrating cutting-edge tools for arms tracing and record-keeping. In line with recommendations from the 15th Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, efforts are underway to automate the RECSA Harmonized Reporting Tool, ensuring more efficient and accurate tracking and reporting across Member States. This step marks a significant move towards leveraging technology to strengthen regional security and accountability.



SPOTLIGHT

Arming with Knowledge

In support of the RECSA Gender Policy the Austrian Ministry of Defence is establishing a course for Women ammunition technical experts from **24th March to 5th April 2025 at the Humanitarian Peace Support School in Nairobi, Kenya**. Grounded in the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), the program will provide participants with advanced skills and knowledge, while also fostering a network of female experts in the field. This training is a significant step towards promoting gender inclusivity and strengthening capacity in ammunition management across the RECSA region.



Upcoming Events

1. RECSA 11th

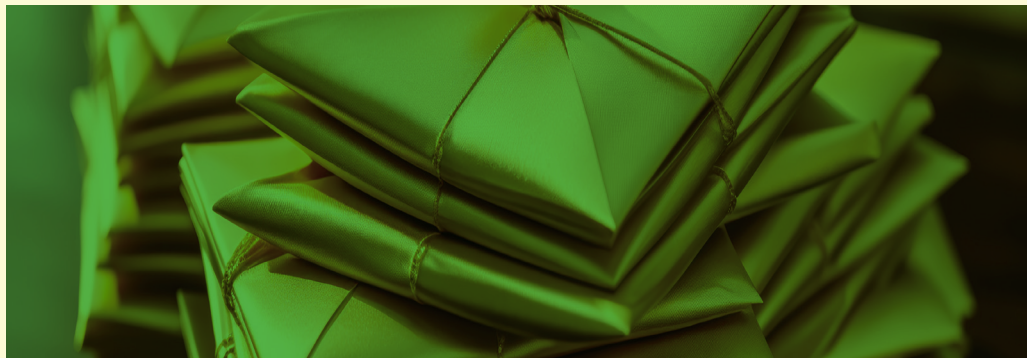
Ordinary Council of Ministers meeting

2. 16th RECSA

Technical Advisory Committee meeting

3. RECSA turns 20 years

since its establishment



4. Regional Physical Security & Stockpile Management Training

for the Francophone Member States

5. Regional Women in Ammunition Management Training

6. In-country -level capacity building workshop on the Harmonised RECSA Reporting Tool

7. ATT-VTF project in Tanzania

Call to Action

The RECSA Secretariat remains dedicated to its mission to build a cohesive and supportive network across Member States. By fostering collaboration and dialogue, RECSA continues to champion initiatives that enhance arms control, promote peace, and contribute to the security of the region.

For more information, please get in touch with us at:
Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons

✉ info@recsasec.org
☎ +254 0203876023 / +254 020387456

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