DISPATCH FROM THE FIELD

WEAPON SUPPLIES FUELLING TERRORISM IN THE LAKE CHAD CRISIS

Analysis of illicit materiel seized in south-eastern Niger

May 2022

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Front cover image: Rifles laid out for documentation in Zinder, Niger, March 2021.

Inside cover image: Spent ammunition cartridges in Niger.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CAR	Conflict Armament Research
CNCCAI	Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites du Niger (National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons of Niger)
DESTO	Defence Science and Technology Organization
ECMK	Entreprise de Construction Mécanique de Khenchela
IED	Improvised explosive device
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JAS	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati wal-Jihad ('Boko Haram')
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NORINCO	China North Industries Corporation
PSSM	Physical security and stockpile management
SCLCT-CTO	Service Central de Lutte contre le Terrorisme et la Criminalité Transnationale Organisée (Central Service for the Fight against Terrorism and Transnational Crime)

KEY FINDINGS

- In October 2019, CAR documented 165 weapons and more than 6,000 units of ammunition that Nigerien authorities had recovered in the Diffa region of south-eastern Niger. This sample is supplemented by an additional 20 weapons documented by CAR in 2016-19 in Niger's capital, Niamey, where they were being stored following their seizure in Diffa, Maradi, and Zinder regions. This is the first in-depth international study of materiel seized or recovered from militants associated with Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS, broadly referred to as Boko Haram) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in southern Niger and the regions around Lake Chad.

- Regional state stockpiles and materiel held by security forces in Lake Chad's border area may represent a significant, albeit inadvertent, source of weapons and ammunition for local JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated militants. At least 32 of the documented weapons (17 per cent of the sample) were diverted from the national custody of three countries: Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. More than one-fifth (23 per cent) of the documented ammunition originated in the state stockpiles of Nigeria.

- JAS- and ISWAP-affiliates appear to have acquired a significant proportion of their weaponry opportunistically and within their area of operation, including through battlefield capture and raids on military and security force outposts, mainly between 2013 and 2019. A smaller proportion of the documented materiel was initially diverted from sources located thousands of miles from Niger, such as the Rwandan national arsenal, and there is minimal evidence of long-range trafficking support for armed groups fighting in the Lake Chad conflict.

- CAR investigators documented weapons and ammunition that were manufactured after 2010, which confirms that militants in this conflict do not rely exclusively on legacy weapons that have been in illicit circulation for decades. The most recently produced weapon in the sample was manufactured in Bulgaria in 2015 and exported to Nigeria's Ministry of Defence that same year. Three-quarters of the ammunition sample examined was produced in the 1990s and 2010s, with the most recent being a seizure of 1,958 units of 7.62 × 51 mm ammunition manufactured in China in 2012.

- Evidence suggests that JAS and ISWAP-affiliated militants also make use of local black markets and smuggling channels. One shotgun manufactured in Turkey is of the same unique brand as several thousand such examples that were smuggled into Nigeria from Turkey in 2017. A spool of commercial detonating cord documented amid the seized materiel was also probably acquired via smuggling or on the black market.

- The analysis establishes clear connections between the equipment seized from JAS and ISWAP affiliates in Niger and materiel

THIS IS THE FIRST IN-DEPTH INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF MATERIEL SEIZED OR RECOVERED FROM MILITANTS ASSOCIATED WITH JAMA'ATU AHLIS SUNNAH LIDDA'AWATI WAL-JIHAD (JAS, BROADLY REFERRED TO AS BOKO HARAM) AND ISLAMIC STATE WEST AFRICA PROVINCE (ISWAP) IN SOUTHERN NIGER AND THE REGIONS AROUND LAKE CHAD.

that CAR has previously observed in illicit circulation in the broader northern and western African regions. In particular, CAR has identified multiple connections with materiel known to have transited through Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Libya, Mali, and Morocco. Some of the weapons documented in Diffa share distinct features with those recovered from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and their allies in West Africa, indicating that the groups may overlap or use the same supply mechanisms.

- Nearly half of the documented weapons (79, or 43 per cent of the sample) were either manufactured in African countries (Algeria, Egypt, or South Africa) or exported to a country in North or West Africa (Chad, Libya, Morocco, Niger, or Nigeria). This indicates that a significant proportion of the equipment in illicit circulation throughout the region can be traced to African military production and activity.

REGIONAL STATE STOCKPILES IN LAKE CHAD'S BORDER AREA REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT, ALBEIT INADVERTENT, SOURCE OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION FOR LOCAL JAS- AND ISWAP-AFFILIATED MILITANTS.

- Nine weapons in the sample show evidence that parties deliberately obliterated markings. Three of these weapons belong to a group of assault rifles whose model designations and serial number formats CAR has observed elsewhere in the region. These weapons bear signs of similar obliteration techniques and were recovered after terrorist attacks or during counterterrorism operations in the region. The similarities indicate that otherwise distinct groups across the region may share certain supply sources.

▼ **Small-calibre ammunition organised for documentation in Arlit, November 2021.**

METHODOLOGY

HOW CAR WORKS

CAR field investigation teams document illicit weapons, ammunition, and related materiel in conflict-affected locations and trace their supply sources.

The teams inspect weapons in a variety of situations—whether recovered by state security forces, surrendered at the cessation of hostilities, cached, or held by insurgent forces. They document all items photographically, date and geo-reference the documentation, and incorporate contextual interview data gathered from the forces in control of the items at the time of documentation. CAR also works with contracted local data collectors, whom it has trained to support data gathering in sensitive locations.

CAR occasionally uses information and photographs from social media as background information but does not base its investigations on them, since the provenance of such data is often difficult to verify. Moreover, open-source information does not always provide the detailed physical elements—notably external and internal markings—required to trace weapons and ammunition.

CAR traces only a portion of the items it documents in the field. This traced materiel is usually of particular significance to CAR investigations. If numerous individual items were to be traced, an excessive burden would need to be placed on the national governments and manufacturing companies concerned.

▼ A CAR field investigator documenting an assault rifle in Arlit, November 2021.

Furthermore, some of the documented items are untraceable. For example, most loose small-calibre ammunition lacks the lot numbers required to identify it in production, sales, and export records. Similarly, records pertaining to the production, sale, and export of many older weapons are no longer available. CAR supplements formal weapon tracing by analysing physical evidence gathered from the weapons themselves and from related materiel; obtaining government, commercial, transport, and other documents; and interviewing individuals with knowledge or experience of the equipment transfers under scrutiny.

CAR retains all documents, interview notes, emails, recordings, photographs, and other data obtained from third parties in a secure, encrypted format. Wherever relevant, CAR publications refer to these items as being 'on file'. To protect its sources, CAR refrains from publishing all details about them and the circumstances under which it acquired certain items. CAR's sources provide all such items willingly and with full knowledge of their use by CAR. CAR does not undertake undercover work or use other clandestine investigation methods. For privacy reasons, CAR publications do not refer to private individuals by name, except in the case of well-known public figures.

CAR has contacted all governments and companies substantively referenced in this report. Unless specified, no reference to the names of countries of manufacture, manufacturing companies, intermediary parties, distributors, or intended end users implies illegality or wrongdoing on the part of the named entity. CAR would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the governments, companies, and individuals whose responses to CAR's trace requests and provision of other information have been critical in its ongoing investigations.

CAR'S NATIONAL PARTNERS IN NIGER

In Niger, CAR has worked in collaboration with the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (CNCCAI) since 2016.[1] CNCCAI's mandate is to support Niger's presidency in the implementation of strategies to combat the proliferation and circulation of illicit weapons (Niger, 2014). CNCCAI also serves as the national focal point for the implementation of international agreements on the arms trade and weapon management.

CNCCAI personnel assisted CAR in the organisation of field missions, accompanied CAR investigators on the ground, and authorised CAR field investigation teams to document materiel that Niger's defence and security forces had seized and recovered. CAR supports CNCCAI in creating and maintaining a national digital inventory of illicit weapons, ammunition, and related materiel that have been seized and recovered across Niger.

Since 2014, CAR has also benefited from the support and collaboration of Niger's specialised Central Service for the Fight against Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime (SCLCT-CTO),[2] the Ministry of Justice, and the country's defence and security forces in many aspects of data gathering and analysis.

CAR HAS WORKED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE COLLECTION AND CONTROL OF ILLICIT WEAPONS (CNCCAI) SINCE 2016.

▼ **Traditional tea being brewed in Arlit, Niger, November 2021.**

INTRODUCTION

From late 2012, following several years of violence and terrorist activity in north-eastern Nigeria, the conflict between state forces and insurgent groups spread into western Chad, northern Cameroon, and south-eastern Niger—an area referred to in this Dispatch as the Lake Chad border area (see Map 1).

In 2014, backed by the African Union, regional governments reinforced the Multinational Joint Task Force to combat the Nigerian-origin group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (the Sunni Muslim Group for Preaching and Jihad, or JAS)—more commonly referred to as Boko Haram[3]—and, from 2015, the emergent Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).[4]

Between October 2019 and October 2021, complex attacks on Chadian, Nigerian, and Nigerien forces and civilians in the Lake Chad border area intensified, resulting in heavy casualties, kidnappings, executions, and significant captures of military materiel (Hoinathy, 2020; see Table 1). As of November 2021, more than 2.8 million people had been displaced by insecurity. Although the threat of violent conflict around Lake Chad remains undiminished,[5] regional and international attention has turned towards the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali, and western Niger, in view of the area's rapidly deteriorating security situation and the proliferation of armed and jihadist groups within it.

Map 1

Lake Chad border area and CAR weapon documentation sites in Niger, 2016–21

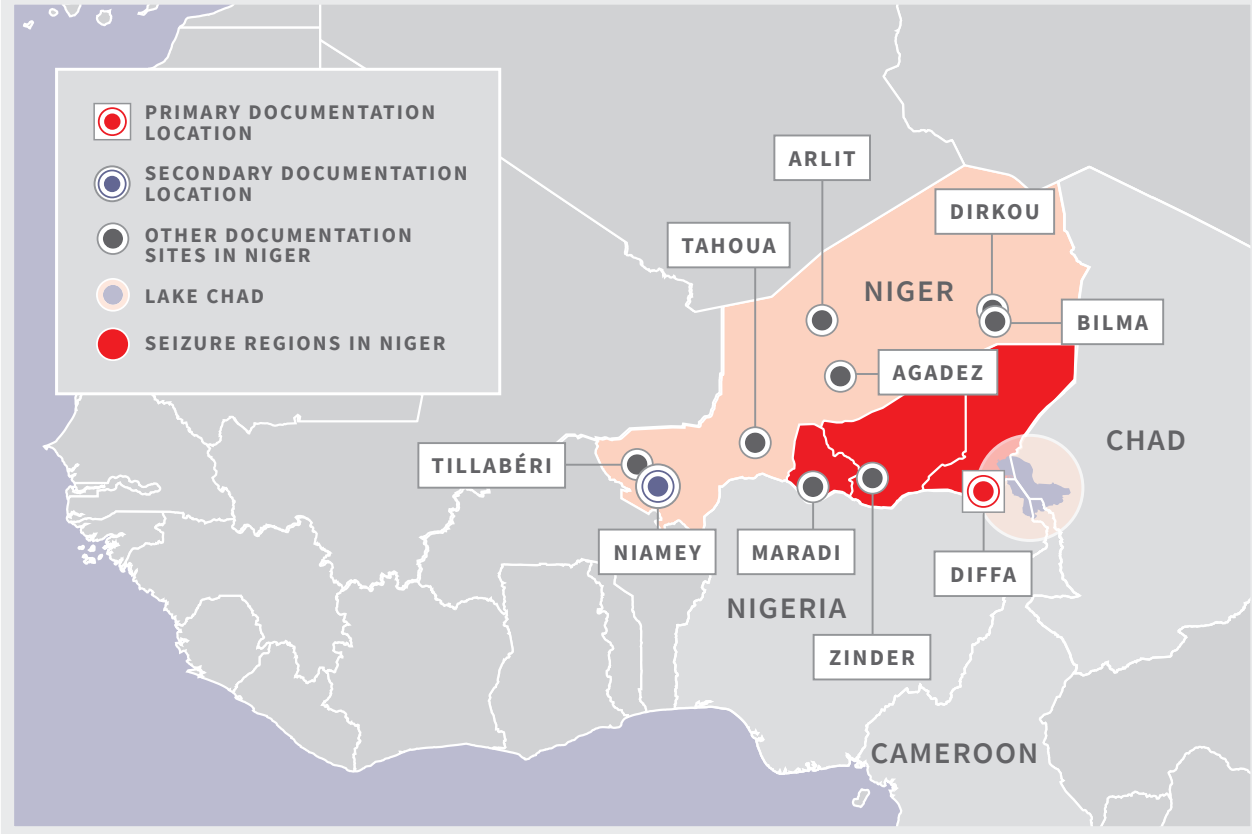

Figure 1

Evolution of militant groups in the Lake Chad border area

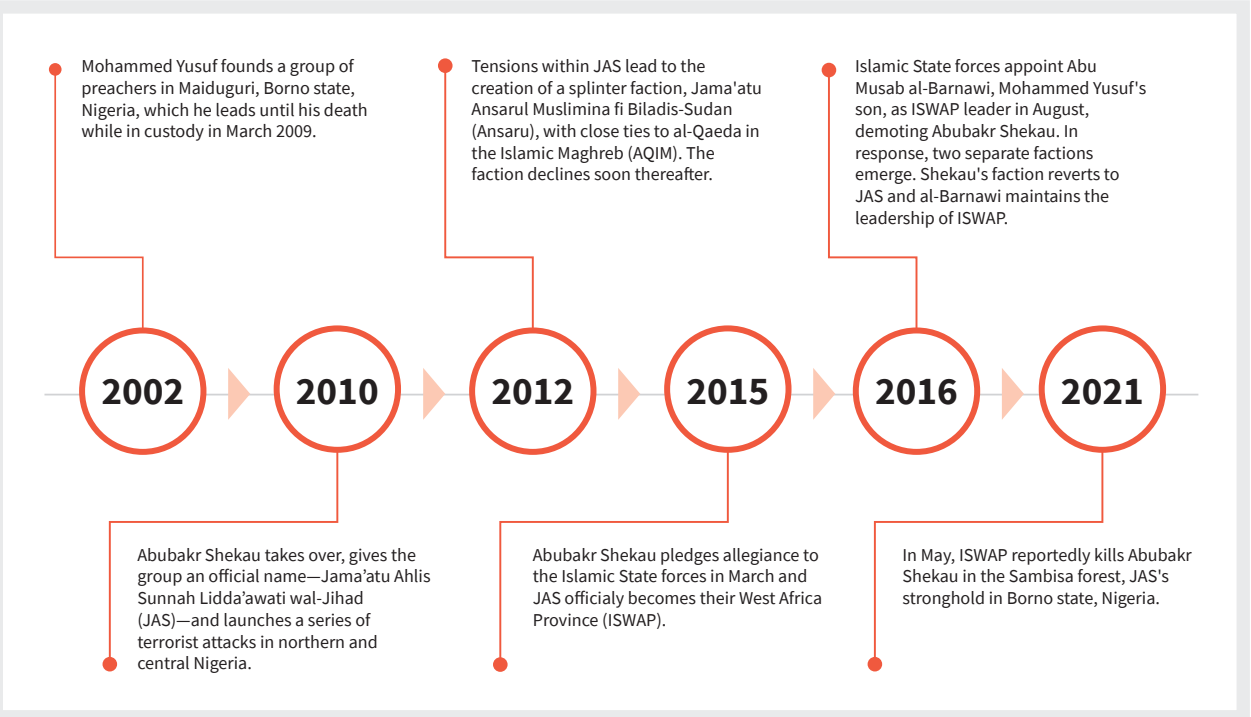

Table 1

Selected attacks in the Lake Chad border area, reported between October 2019 and October 2021

Date of attack	Description
30 October 2019	An attack on the Blabrine military outpost, in Niger's Diffa region, claims the lives of 12 Nigerien soldiers and leads to the theft and destruction of equipment.
24 March 2020	An attack on a military outpost on Chad's Boma peninsula results in the deaths of 92 Chadian soldiers and significant losses of equipment.
27 October 2020	A US citizen is kidnapped near Birnin Konni in southern Niger (and subsequently rescued by US Special Forces).
28 November 2020	At least 44 farmers are killed when armed men reportedly affiliated with JAS attack the village of Garin Kwashiba, in Borno state, Nigeria.
14 December 2020	A raid attributed to JAS-affiliated militants, targeting the village of Toumour in the Diffa region, results in at least 27 casualties.
8 January 2021	Twelve civilians are killed during a complex attack (firearms and suicide bomber) conducted in the department of Mayo-Tsanaga, in the Extreme North region of Cameroon.
17 April 2021	An attack on the Chadian Armed Forces' position in Litri, in the Lake Chad border area, leaves at least 12 soldiers and several civilians dead.
3 June 2021	In Nigeria, 136 female students are kidnapped from the 'Sahilu Tanko' school of Tegina, Niger state. (All victims are released by August 2021.)
24 August 2021	About 50 combatants who are reportedly affiliated with JAS target the Niger Armed Forces' unit in Baroua, in the Diffa region, leaving 16 soldiers dead and nine injured.
16 September 2021	A convoy of the Nigerian Armed Forces travelling by road between Maiduguri and Mogono is reportedly ambushed by JAS-affiliated armed men, who kill 12 soldiers and capture three vehicles transporting military equipment.

Source: CAR (2022)

In October 2019, CAR investigators travelled to the Diffa region of south-eastern Niger to document weapons and ammunition seized by Nigerien defence and security forces. The seizures were conducted between 2014 and 2019, as part of military and counterterrorism operations. Nigerien authorities report that many of these operations targeted armed actors with links to jihadist groups operating in the regions around Lake Chad, but they are unable to determine with certainty which materiel they seized from which groups. Seizure information does indicate, however, that the Nigerien authorities recovered the majority of the materiel that they subsequently showed to CAR from groups linked to JAS and ISWAP. These cases involve seizures in the Diffa, Maradi, and Zinder regions of Niger, as well as the areas bordering north-eastern Nigeria and the Lac region of Chad.

To CAR's knowledge, this research marks the first time that international observers have conducted such in-depth investigations into weapons documented in these regions—in large part owing to the precarious security situation on the ground and difficulties in accessing this remote area. As a result, this Dispatch provides a first systematic assessment of the origins of some of the illicit weaponry deployed by JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated militants.

The Dispatch concentrates on a sample of 165 industrially manufactured small arms (mainly assault rifles and machine guns), 6,243 units of small-calibre ammunition, 24 mortar rounds in their original packaging, 99 CS gas cartridges, and 82 presumed riot-control baton cartridges, as well as a spool of commercial detonating cord (see Box 2), all documented in Diffa in October 2019.

The sample is supplemented by an additional 20 weapons seized from individuals reportedly affiliated with JAS and ISWAP in the southern and south-eastern regions of Niger: 8 weapons seized in Zinder in July 2015; 11 weapons seized in the Madarounfa Forest, south of Maradi, in January 2017; and 1 weapon seized in Diffa in July 2019. CAR documented all of these weapons in 2016-19 in Niger's capital, Niamey, where they were being stored following their seizure.

The investigators examined materiel held by the Nigerien military, National Guard, Gendarmerie, tribunals, and Niger's Central Service for the Fight against Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime (SCLCT-CTO). At the time of documentation, it was not possible to determine precisely from which jihadist faction each weapon had been seized because such detail was either not known or not recorded by the security forces holding the materiel in their custody.

▼ **Ammunition in its original packaging documented in Diffa, October 2019.**

BASELINE ANALYSIS

Of the 185 documented weapons that had been recovered in south-eastern Niger, the overwhelming majority (158 rifles, 85 per cent of the sample) are 7.62 × 39 mm assault rifles (see Figure 2).

The full sample also includes 11 machine guns (6 medium, 3 heavy, and 2 light); 6 other assault rifles (4 in 7.62 × 51 mm (.308 WIN) and 2 in 5.56 × 45 mm); 4 rocket launchers; 2 grenade launchers; 2 self-loading pistols; 1 mortar; 1 pump-action shotgun; 1 revolver; and 1 blank-firing pistol. While these weapons originated in at least 21 countries, more than half stemmed from just three producing states: China (35 per cent), the Russian Federation (12 per cent), and Poland (10 per cent) (see Figure 3).[6]

Despite the preponderance of assault rifles chambered for 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition (a Soviet-era calibre), 7.62 × 51 mm (a NATO calibre) is by far the most common calibre, comprising more than 90 per cent of the 6,448 units in the sample of ammunition (see Figure 2). The prevalence of NATO-calibre ammunition reflects the fact that Nigerien forces seized large numbers of 7.62 × 51 mm rounds manufactured in China and the UK (see Figure 4). Their presence suggests that JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated militants (whose weapons are almost exclusively chambered for 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition) captured the materiel from one or more military units deployed in the region.[7]

The items documented by CAR in Diffa and Niamey form the full data set used for this Dispatch and which is available on iTrace® at www.itrace.com.

Visit https://bit.ly/iTrace_LakeChadcrisis to explore the data further.

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Figure 2

Documented weapons (n=185) and ammunition (n=6,448), by calibre

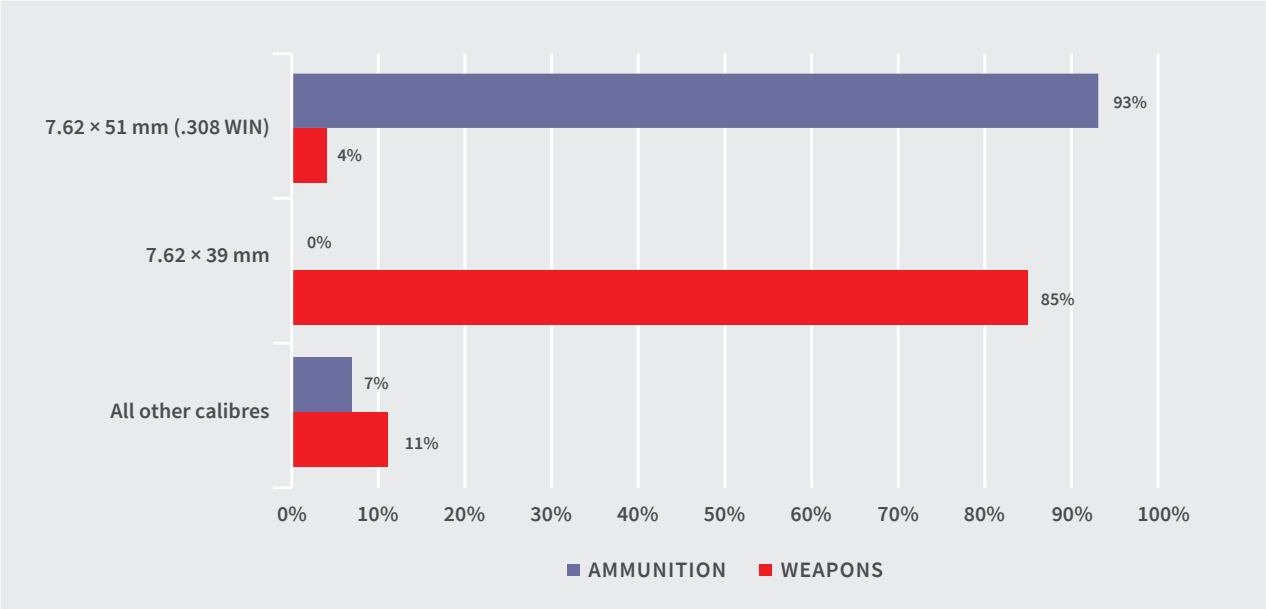


Figure 3

Documented weapons by manufacturing country and weapon category (n=185)

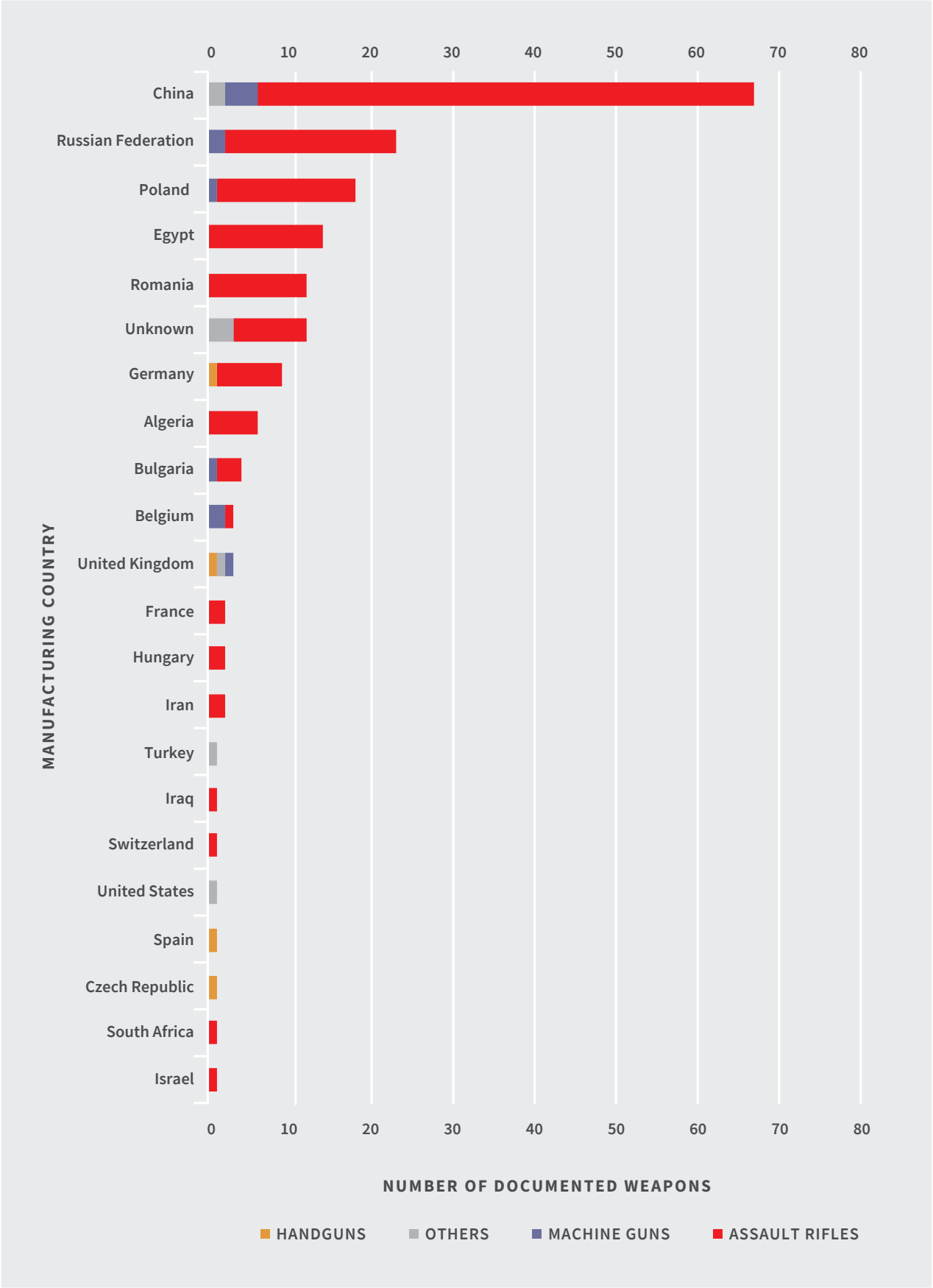
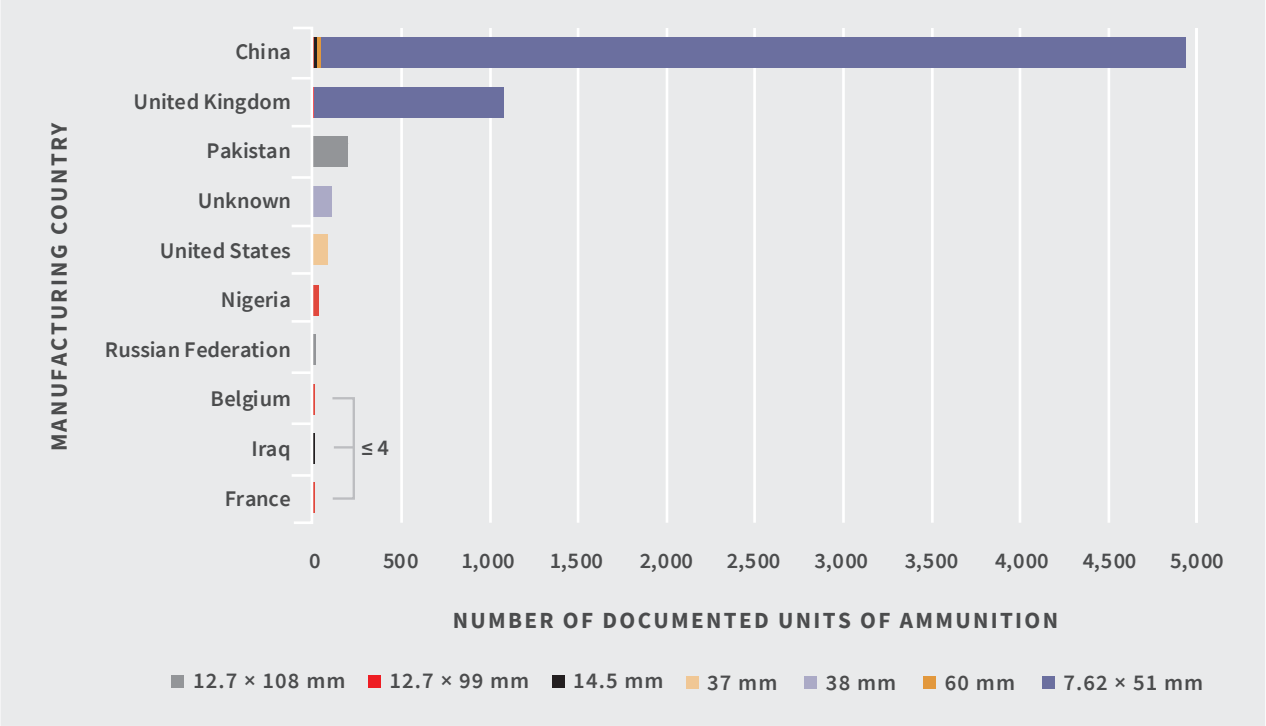


Figure 4

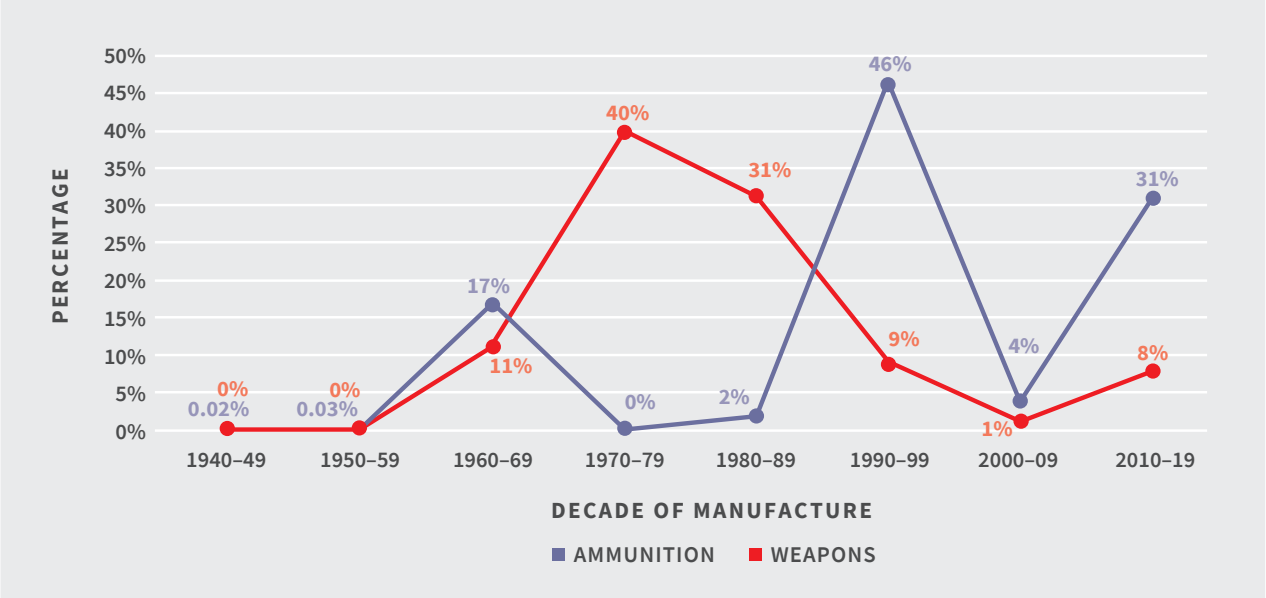
Documented ammunition by manufacturing country and calibre (n=6,448)



CAR investigators identified a date of production for nearly 50 per cent of the weapons (90 items) and 98 per cent of the ammunition in the sample. Forty per cent of the weapons date from the 1970s, while 46 per cent of the ammunition was produced in the 1990s (see Figure 5). The high proportion of ammunition produced in the 2010s reflects the above-mentioned seizure of Chinese-manufactured 7.62 × 51 mm ammunition.

Figure 5

Documented weapons (n=90) and ammunition (n=6,317) by decade of manufacture[64]



MATERIEL FROM NATIONAL STOCKPILES OF COUNTRIES BORDERING LAKE CHAD

CAR's analysis shows that at least 32 of the documented weapons (17 per cent of the total sample) and 1,461 units of ammunition (23 per cent of the overall sample) had previously been legally transferred to countries bordering Lake Chad and were subsequently diverted from the national custody of these countries. A dearth of information on the circumstances of seizure precludes a definitive assessment of the diversion mechanisms and of the procurement methods that armed groups may have used to obtain these weapons in Niger's south-eastern regions.

CAR's analysis of the Niger data set identifies three main origins for the weapons and ammunition in the sample:

- recent diversion from the custody of states bordering Lake Chad;
- legacy circulation from previous regional conflicts; and
- opportunistic procurement through smuggling from local illicit markets.

There are no indications that any West African governments intended to supply militant groups and the use of these weapons by unauthorised actors is not necessarily the result of wrongdoing by state personnel in charge of the weapons' custody. Unauthorised actors could have acquired weapons lost on the battlefield or via incidents of raids or theft from storage facilities, for example.

ITEMS SUCH AS THE PUMP-ACTION SHOTGUN AND THE REEL OF DETONATING CORD MAY HAVE BEEN ACQUIRED AT LOCAL ILLICIT MARKETS.

The findings are not necessarily indicative of any widespread or systemic vulnerabilities. They do show, however, that maintaining custody of military materiel represents a challenge for the region's national security forces, particularly those engaged in active military and counterterrorism operations.

The sample includes weapons circulating in the wider region as a result of previous conflicts. CAR traced materiel that originated in the state arsenals of Chad, Libya, and Rwanda. Other equipment corresponds to weapons CAR has repeatedly observed in legacy circulation among a range of armed groups in West Africa and the Sahel since 2014. CAR cannot confirm the date of seizure of these weapons, although none of them appear to have been diverted recently. Their presence among the seized materiel that CAR documented in Diffa and Niamey confirms that extensive trafficking routes have long connected south-eastern regions of Niger and the Lake Chad border areas to the Sahel and beyond.

Of the items seized from armed groups in Niger, some—including riot-control cartridges, a pump-action shotgun, and a reel of detonating cord—do not correspond to military-type equipment. Items such as the pump-action shotgun and the reel of detonating cord (see Box 2 on page 51) may have been acquired at local illicit markets. The overall sample confirms that armed groups in the Lake Chad border area tend to acquire materiel opportunistically, including by collecting equipment that has little tactical utility (such as riot-control cartridges) or that is not compatible with their holdings.

NIGERIA

CAR investigators examined several machine guns and rifles, as well as a self-loading pistol, a series of crates, boxes, and tins of small-calibre ammunition, 60 mm mortar rounds, and riot-control and baton cartridges. Markings on all of these items suggest they were previously in the possession of Nigerian security forces.

Bulgarian MG-1M machine gun

CAR documented a 7.62 × 54 mm R MG-1M medium machine gun, manufactured in Bulgaria by Arsenal JSCo (see Figure 6). It was exported to the Ministry of Defence of Nigeria in 2015 and bears the serial number BA 55 1158 (see Figure 7). It is the most recently produced weapon in the sample analysed for this Dispatch.

In response to a formal trace request issued by CAR, Bulgarian authorities confirmed that the machine gun was of Bulgarian manufacture and exported to Nigeria in 2015. They also specified that the Nigerian application was accompanied by an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) certificate of exemption[8] and that the consignee issued a delivery verification certificate.[9]

This weapon was thus diverted from Nigerian state custody within four years of its initial legal export in 2015. The precise date and circumstances of its diversion, and how it ended up in the hands of militants, are unknown. Several scenarios are possible, including loss or capture during a clash between security forces and the insurgents or leakage direct from national stockpiles.[10]

Figure 6

An MG-1M with the serial number BA 55 1158, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 7

Markings on the MG-1M with the serial number BA 55 1158

Serbian CZ 999 Scorpion handgun

CAR's tracing process has confirmed that a second weapon from the sample in Niger originated with the Nigerian Armed Forces: a 9 × 19 mm CZ 999 Scorpion handgun with the serial number 16149 (see Figure 8). This weapon was manufactured in Serbia by Zastava oružje a.d. and seized on 10 July 2019 in the Diffa area from an individual reportedly linked to JAS.

On 12 October 2020, Serbian authorities responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR, confirming that the weapon had been exported to the Navy of the Republic of Nigeria in March 2014. The weapon was part of a larger consignment, including 1,500 CZ 999 handguns and related ammunition. The shipment was authorised for export in January 2014 and delivered to Nigeria on 12 March 2014, as confirmed by a delivery verification certificate issued by the Nigerian Naval Headquarters on 7 April 2014.[11]

While CAR could not determine the exact circumstances under which the handgun was diverted, one possibility is that it was captured during an attack on Nigerian Navy forces in Borno state, where the navy controls outposts on the shores of the Nigerian portion of Lake Chad. On 26 December 2018, for instance, an attack claimed by ISWAP resulted in the occupation of the town of Baga, where militants overran the local naval post, which had been established in 2016 to operate as a component of the Multinational Joint Task Force (AFP, 2018; BBC, 2018).

Figure 8

A CZ 999 Scorpion handgun with the serial number 16149, documented in Niamey in November 2019

Belgian FN MAG machine gun

CAR documented a Belgian-manufactured 7.62 × 51 mm FN MAG general-purpose machine gun with the marking NAF, indicating that it had once been in the possession of the Nigerian Air Force.[12] FN Herstal manufactured the weapon on an unknown date. The original serial number for this weapon could not be determined during the documentation process; however, the receiver of this weapon bears the code NAF-MG-0242 (see Figures 9 and 10).

As the code NAF is believed to refer to the Nigerian Air Force, CAR submitted a formal trace request to the Government of Nigeria. On 26 January 2021, Nigerian authorities responded and confirmed that this machine gun had belonged to the Nigerian Army and was lost by troops during clashes with JAS affiliates between 2013 and 2017.[13]

Based on information collected while documenting the machine gun, CAR understands that the item was seized during Operation Gama Aiki II, conducted in April 2017 under the command of the Multinational Joint Task Force. The operation intended to dismantle the presence of an ISWAP-affiliated group in the area of Gueskerou, in the Diffa region.

Figure 9

An FN MAG with the secondary marking NAF-MG-0242, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 10

Markings on the receiver of the FN MAG

Weapons with hand-painted rear stock insignia

CAR documented three weapons—two Chinese rifles and one British machine gun—that featured distinctive hand-painted alphanumeric insignia on their rear stocks. All three weapons were seized from militants in Niger's Lake Chad area. CAR determined that the marks, all of which appear to have been applied following initial export, identify battalions of the Nigerian Armed Forces that possessed the weapons prior to their diversion.

On 26 January 2021, the Nigerian authorities responded to formal trace requests submitted by CAR, confirming that the three weapons belonged to the Nigerian Army and that they were lost by troops during clashes with alleged terrorist groups between 2013 and 2017.[14] The authorities did not clarify the meaning of the insignia, however.

The two Chinese-manufactured weapons were Type 56 assault rifles, each produced by State Factory 313, bearing serial numbers 5203280 and 5203051, and carrying the painted inscription SP COY 174BN on the right side of the rear stock (see Figures 11 and 12). This mark probably refers to Support Company, the 174th Battalion of the Nigerian Army. Although one of the two marks is not fully legible (see Figure 12), it seems very plausible that the two rifles were assigned to and diverted from the same unit, whether simultaneously or separately.

THE DISTINCTIVE HAND-PAINTED MARKS ON SEVERAL RIFLES' REAR STOCKS MAY IDENTIFY BATTALIONS OF THE NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES.

Nigerian authorities have not provided details regarding how the traced weapons may have been diverted. Media reports indicate, however, that JAS-affiliated militants raided the base of the Nigerian Army's 174th battalion in Abadam, Borno state, close to the border with Niger, in November 2014, and that they looted the battalion's equipment (Premium Times, 2014).

The third weapon, a 7.62 × 51 mm HK21 general-purpose machine gun with the serial number EN 50937, was probably manufactured under licence by Enfield in the UK (see Figure 13).[15] It features a painted mark that reads 192BN C 1927. This mark may refer to the 192nd battalion of the Nigerian Armed Forces, which has conducted operations against JAS in recent years. CAR could not determine the age of the weapon. British authorities found no matches in their records and informed CAR that records predating 2007 may be incomplete or inaccessible.[16]

Figure 11

A Type 56 assault rifle with the serial number 5203280, documented in Diffa in October 2019, and a close-up of its painted rear stock

Figure 12

A Type 56 assault rifle with the serial number 5203051, documented in Diffa in October 2019, and a close-up of its painted rear stock

Figure 13

HK21 machine gun with hand-painted rear stock insignia, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Ammunition in its original packaging

More than one-fifth of the ammunition sample (1,461 of 6,448 total units) that CAR documented in Niger originated in the state arsenal of Nigeria. In several cases, CAR investigators were able to identify the Nigerian Armed Forces as the last likely legal custodian of ammunition seized from JAS and ISWAP affiliates since the material was recovered in its original packaging.[17]

Pakistani 12.7 × 108 mm cartridges

CAR documented 200 rounds of 12.7 × 108 mm calibre P1A1 armour-piercing incendiary ammunition inside an open metal box, which was likely diverted from the Nigerian Armed Forces. Marks on the exterior of the box and headstamp markings indicate that Pakistan Ordnance Factories manufactured the cartridges in 2005 (see Figure 14). Marks painted on the box include a reference to a contract number (5541), the box number (069), and the intended consignee (Minister of Defence, Ministry of Defence, Ship House, Abuja).[18]

Formal trace investigations are underway between CAR and the Nigerian authorities to ascertain whether the P1A1 ammunition bearing the mark 5541 belonged to the Nigerian Army prior to its diversion.[19]

British tracer cartridges

Investigators documented UK-manufactured ammunition boxes bearing markings that show that they had at one time been exported to the Nigerian Armed Forces. When a CAR field investigation team documented them, the boxes contained numerous Chinese-manufactured ammunition cartons, which were not original to the ammunition boxes. UK-manufactured tracer ammunition, which was recovered alongside the boxes, was probably part of the original export.

CAR documented 1,076 cartridges of 7.62 × 51 mm L5A3 tracer ammunition manufactured in the UK and contained in four H52 MK2 tins (see

Figure 14

Exterior markings and contents of a box of 12.7 × 108 mm P1A1 ammunition produced by Pakistan Ordnance Factories in 2005 and documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 15). CAR identified the manufacturer of the cartridges as the now-defunct British company Kynoch, and the year of manufacture as 1965. As a result of the cessation of Kynoch manufacturing activities[20] and the absence of comprehensive UK records for the years prior to 2007, CAR cannot confirm the full chain of custody of this tracer ammunition.[21]

CAR also inspected three H50 MK1 metal boxes produced by the same manufacturer in the same year as the above-mentioned tins containing the L5A3 tracer ammunition. The box markings refer to the L5A3 tracer cartridges documented in the tins and indicate that the first legal consignee was the Central Ordnance Depot of the Nigerian Army in Yaba, Lagos (see Figure 16).

Figure 15

Tins labelled H52 MK2 for L5A3 tracer cartridges, documented in Diffa in October 2019, and a close-up of the ammunition headstamp

Figure 16

H50 MK1 box for L5A3 tracer ammunition, documented in Diffa in October 2019

THE COMMONALITIES BETWEEN THE MARKINGS ON THE TINS CONTAINING CARTRIDGES AND THE METAL BOXES SUGGEST THAT THE L5A3 CARTRIDGES WERE ORIGINALLY EXPORTED TO THE NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES.

At the point of documentation, however, the H50 MK1 metal boxes contained 2,932 cartridges of 7.62 × 51 mm ammunition, with headstamp markings that indicate manufacture by China's Factory 61 in 1993 and 1994. The cartridges were still packaged in several cartons, which were marked as originating from China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO) and which referred to the calibre .308 WIN—a commercial equivalent of the NATO-standard 7.62 × 51 mm cartridge (see Figure 17). Due to a lack of available information, CAR could not determine if these Chinese-manufactured rounds were placed in the MK1 boxes before being diverted, or after being seized by Niger's security forces

Although the L5A3 cartridges were not stored inside the marked MK1 boxes when CAR documented them, the information collected by personnel in charge of their custody confirms that both the British-made packaging and ammunition were seized at the same time and location in south-eastern Niger. In view of the commonalities between the markings painted on the tins containing the cartridges and the metal boxes, CAR considers it likely that the L5A3 cartridges were originally exported to the Nigerian Armed Forces.

Figure 17

7.62 × 51 mm ammunition, documented inside NORINCO-branded cartons inside H50 MK1 boxes and bearing the headstamps 61_93 and 61_94

Chinese 60 mm mortar rounds

CAR documented 24 60 mm mortar rounds and 12 MP-1B fuzes, as well as primary and augmentation charges (see Figure 18). The items were packaged separately in plastic containers, which were mostly unopened, and contained inside two wooden crates.

Markings on the sides of the crates indicate manufacture by Chinese State Factory 313 in 2008. The inscriptions painted on the crates identify the shipper as Poly Technologies Inc., a subsidiary of state-owned China Poly Group Corporation and traders in defence equipment, and the consignee as the Chief of Army Staff, Army Headquarters, Area 8, Abuja, Nigeria (Poly Technologies, n.d.; see Figure 19).

Nigerian authorities confirmed to CAR through a formal trace response that the mortar rounds were part of Nigerian Army stockpiles before JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants captured them, between 2013 and 2017.[22] Due to the lack of detailed information on the seizure in this case, CAR could not determine from which unit, or under what circumstances, this equipment was diverted and acquired by militants operating in south-eastern Niger.

Figure 18

60 mm mortar rounds and boxes of MP-1B fuzes documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 19

A crate containing mortar rounds destined for the Nigerian Army, documented in Diffa in October 2019

▼ **Spent ammunition cartridges in Niger.**

37 mm and 38 mm riot-control cartridges

CAR documented dozens of 37 mm baton and 38 mm CS gas cartridges, 72 per cent of which (131 out of a total of 181) were probably diverted from the custody of the Nigerian Police Force.

Eighty-one of the 37 mm baton cartridges were manufactured by the now-dissolved UK company Haley & Weller in 1985.[23] These cartridges were contained in an unsealed wooden crate, which was originally intended to house a total of 130 cartridges. Inscriptions overpainted on the crate appear to be fully consistent with the markings on the cartridges themselves; the identity of the manufacturer (H&W), the date of manufacture (1985), and the lot number (004) are all replicated both on the crate and on the cartridges.

Given the uniformity of the markings, it is highly plausible that the wooden crate is the original packaging of the cartridges and, therefore, that the first legal consignee of the baton cartridges is the one marked on the top the crate: Inspector General of the Nigeria Police Force, Force Headquarters, Moloney Street, Lagos (see Figure 20).

CAR also recorded a total of 99 38 mm CS gas cartridges contained in two marked cardboard boxes. Based on the markings, the boxes themselves appear to have been part of a larger shipment of 140 identical boxes, each one containing short-range 38 mm CS cartridges manufactured in 2011 and destined 'for the use of Nigeria Police Force' (see Figure 21). Both boxes also bear the mark 'Transhawk Global Services Limited', which could refer to an entity that acted as an intermediary during the procurement process. A company with that name was registered in Lagos, Nigeria, in 2010, although its current status is unknown and CAR cannot confirm what role, if any, this company played in the transfer of the CS gas cartridges.[24] The boxes do not indicate who manufactured the cartridges contained within.[25]

Figure 20

A wooden crate containing 81 37 mm baton cartridges destined for the Nigeria Police Force, and close-ups of the rounds, all documented in Diffa in October 2019

As the original sealing of one box was untouched, CAR investigators were able to confirm that the first legal consignee of at least 50 CS cartridges was Nigeria's police. The second box had been opened and filled with 50 different cartridges originating from at least six manufacturing lots, including one 37 mm cartridge. This may have been a misplaced baton cartridge, but CAR was unable to confirm its identity (see Figure 22).

Only five of these CS cartridges had markings that enabled CAR to identify their manufacturer. These five were produced by the Defence Science and Technology Organization (DESTO) in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on an unknown date.[26] However, considering the mixed provenance of the various cartridges inside this second box, and the fact that it was unsealed prior to its documentation, CAR is unable to confirm that these cartridges were also part of the original export to the Nigeria Police Force.

Figure 21

Cardboard boxes documented in Diffa in October 2019, containing CS gas cartridges destined for the Nigeria Police Force, possibly via Transhawk Global Services Limited

Figure 22

One of the two boxes, containing an array of different 38 mm CS gas cartridges and a possible 37 mm CS gas or rubber baton cartridge, documented in Diffa in October 2019

▼ **A H50 MK1 box for L5A3 tracer ammunition, documented in Diffa in October 2019.**

NIGER AND NIGERIA

Chinese-manufactured Type 56 assault rifles

Twenty-three of the weapons that CAR documented in Diffa are 7.62 × 39 mm Type 56 assault rifles, all of which were produced by Chinese State Factory 313. Nearly three years earlier, CAR documented two other Type 56 rifles with the SCLCT-CTO in Niamey. These weapons had been seized in Niger's southern Maradi region in January 2017 from individuals reportedly linked to terrorist groups. These two additional rifles are included in this analysis as a further point of comparison because their features and serial numbers fall in line with the 23 rifles documented in Diffa. The serial numbers of all 25 rifles suggest that they may have originated in the arsenals of one or more states in the region, possibly Niger and/or Nigeria. All their serial numbers fall within the following series: 520XXXX, 521XXXX, 522XXXX, and 523XXXX. As highlighted in Table 2, several rifle serial numbers are within 500 units of one another.

Table 2

Type 56 assault rifles manufactured by Chinese State Factory 313, documented in Niger and falling within the series 520XXXX, 521XXXX, 522XXXX, and 523XXXX

Series	Serial number	Units apart from previous number	Date of documentation	Documentation site
520XXXX	5201355	n/a	February 2017	SCLCT-CTO, Niamey
	5201696	341	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5203051	1,355	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5203280	229	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5207543	4,263	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
521XXXX	5212691	n/a	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5215315	2,624	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5216035	720	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5216793	758	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5218020	1,227	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5219147	1,127	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
522XXXX	5222084	n/a	February 2017	SCLCT-CTO, Niamey
	5222512	428	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5222757	245	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5223911	1,154	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5224525	614	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5225965	1,440	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5226009	44	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5227026	1,017	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5227189	163	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5228091	902	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
523XXXX	5230236	n/a	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5231498	1,262	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa
	5233237	1,739	October 2019	High Court of Justice, Diffa
	5234293	1,056	October 2019	Military Governorate No. 5, Diffa

Figure 23

A Type 56 assault rifle with the serial number 5216035 documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 24

A Type 56 assault rifle with the serial number 5226009 documented in Diffa in October 2019

While CAR cannot be conclusive in its assessment of serial number relationships without more detailed information on the marking practices for this model and production facility, the data is strongly suggestive of a procurement connection. The number of Type 56 rifles in the sample is significant (13 per cent of the total sample), as is the proximity of some of their serial numbers, indicating that they may have been transferred as part of a limited number of consignments to one or two countries in the region.

In response to a CAR trace request, Nigerian authorities confirmed that their Armed Forces were the custodians of two of the Type 56 rifles in the 520XXXX series: the weapons with the serial numbers 5203051 and 5203280 (see Figures 11 and 12). Both were subsequently recovered from an armed group in Niger.[27]

As mentioned at the start of this section, CAR investigators previously documented two Type 56 rifles in Niamey that were also manufactured by Chinese State Factory 313 and bore serial numbers consistent in format with those of the weapons documented in Diffa. Therefore, the possibility that some of these Type 56 rifles were once owned by Niger's security forces cannot be discounted. CAR considers it conceivable that Niger and Nigeria may have been among the legal importers of some of the Type 56 rifles discussed in this section.

THE SERIAL NUMBERS OF ALL 25 TYPE 56 RIFLES SUGGEST THAT THEY MAY HAVE ORIGINATED IN THE ARSENALS OF ONE OR MORE STATES IN THE REGION.

CHAD

In Diffa, CAR identified two assault rifles of different models, both of which appear to have originated with the Chadian Armed Forces. One is an SG 542 manufactured in France, the other is a Galil rifle produced in Israel.

The first rifle, an SG 542 with the serial number 62011, was manufactured under licensed production by Manurhin (see Figure 25). CAR previously documented another nine French-manufactured SG 542 assault rifles that Niger's authorities had seized, mostly in Agadez, but also in Zinder. Unlike the rifle documented in Diffa, none of the nine weapons seem to have been seized from combatants affiliated with JAS or ISWAP (see Table 3).

Figure 25

An SG 542 with the serial number 62011, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Table 3

Serial numbers of ten French-manufactured SG 542 rifles documented in Niger

Serial number	Date of documentation	Documentation site
46279	June 2019	Agadez
50145	June 2019	Agadez
54364	June 2019	Agadez
62011	October 2019	Diffa
62118	November 2019	Zinder
62257	June 2019	Agadez
62648	November 2019	Zinder
64292	June 2019	Agadez
64784	June 2019	Agadez
64943	June 2019	Agadez

Note: The rifle that was reportedly seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated combatants is highlighted.

In response to a formal trace request from CAR, French authorities confirmed that France had exported all ten rifles to Chad between 1985 and 1987.[28] This model of assault rifle is no longer part of the Chadian Armed Forces' standard equipment. It is thus unlikely that the use of these weapons by unauthorised actors in Niger is the result of any recent diversion. The presence of these rifles in the sample clearly illustrates, however, that materiel considered obsolete by national defence forces may still represent a valuable asset for non-state armed groups operating in Niger and the larger West African region. It emphasises the importance of securing all state stockpiles and materiel, including those classified as inadequate for current operational purposes.

The second rifle that appears to have been diverted from the Chadian national arsenal is an Israeli-manufactured Galil assault rifle with the serial number 2041973, which CAR documented while it was in the custody of judicial authorities in Diffa (see Figures 26 and 27). The emblem of the Israel Defense Forces on the receiver indicates that this rifle was once integrated into Israeli national stockpiles, prior to its export.[29]

Figure 26

A Galil assault rifle with the serial number 2041973, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 27

Close-ups of the markings on a Galil assault rifle with the serial number 2041973, documented in Diffa in October 2019

CAR had previously observed four other Galil assault rifles with identical markings and similar serial numbers in the Central African Republic, Niger, and Sudan.[30] The serial numbers, along with the dates and locations of documentation, are presented in Table 4. In view of iTrace® data and the findings of the UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, CAR understands that these five rifles were probably exported by Israel in multiple batches to the Chadian National Army, under the framework of government-approved contracts, between 2007 and 2010.[31]

Table 4

Serial numbers of five Galil assault rifles documented in West and Central Africa

Serial number	Date of documentation	Documentation site
2003025	July 2010	Darfur, Sudan
2006188[32]	March 2017	Agadez, Niger
2041973	October 2019	Diffa, Niger
2050234[33]	January 2017	Niamey, Niger
2070357	April 2015	Central African Republic

Note: The rifle that was reportedly seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated combatants is highlighted.

▼ **Documentation of seized weapons in Agadez, Niger, June 2019.**

WEAPONS ATTRIBUTABLE TO OTHER AFRICAN NATIONAL STOCKPILES

CAR's investigations of the materiel documented in Niger in 2019 reveals that armed militants in Niger's south-east rely not only on diversion of materiel in the custody of states in West Africa, but also acquire weaponry from the arsenals of African countries that are a great distance from Lake Chad. In particular, CAR identified 26 assault rifles (14 per cent of the sample) that had probably been diverted from the national arsenals of Libya, Morocco, and Rwanda.

The presence of these weapons among the equipment seized from JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated individuals suggests that these groups have the capacity to obtain weapons from various illicit streams that transit the continent. The diversion mechanisms that drove these rifles into the illicit sphere remain largely unknown. This is in part due to a low level of cooperation by some manufacturing countries in CAR's tracing process. In other cases, manufacturing countries were not able to provide CAR with information because of an absence of comprehensive records (CAR, 2020b). Based on the limited information that is available, CAR concludes that these weapons—and particularly those initially exported to Libya and Rwanda—are a legacy of past conflicts rather than the result of deliberate transfers from these governments to the Lake Chad border area.

Of the 185 weapons that Niger's security forces seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants, three stand out as anomalies: two AKM rifles produced in Romania and exported to Morocco, and one Vektor R4 rifle manufactured in South Africa and probably exported to Rwanda, all of which CAR documented in Diffa. Their presence in south-eastern Niger reinforces CAR's deduction that armed groups operating in the region are opportunistic in their acquisition methods.

WEAPONS DIVERTED FROM LIBYAN NATIONAL STOCKPILES

Between 13 and 20 March 2015, CAR investigators visited Lebanon and documented 2,224 items seized by the Lebanese authorities onboard the *Letfallah II*. The vessel had been intercepted in April 2012, while transporting military equipment believed to have been diverted from national Libyan stockpiles to Syria.[34] CAR also visited Tripoli, Misrata, and Sebha in July and August 2015 to confirm links between Libyan stockpiles and illicit weapons in the region. Investigators documented materiel that had been obtained from Qaddafi-era stockpiles, captured from Islamic State forces in Sirte, seized by authorities, or purchased from local ethnic militias or smugglers.

IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT 23 RIFLES SEIZED IN THE SOUTH-EAST OF NIGER BETWEEN 2014 AND 2019 (12 PER CENT OF THE SAMPLE) WERE DIVERTED FROM PRE-2011 LIBYAN STOCKPILES.

That materiel provided CAR with a partial baseline of diverted weapons in illicit circulation in western and southern Libya. This information subsequently allowed for the identification of Libyan-origin weapons among samples documented in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, and Syria.

It is highly likely that 23 rifles seized in the south-east of Niger between 2014 and 2019 (12 per cent of the sample) were diverted from pre-2011 Libyan stockpiles. It has not been possible to determine whether these weapons were diverted individually by one or several actors, or whether the diversions occurred simultaneously. Nor has CAR been able to establish whether the rifles presented in this section were transferred from Libya recently, or whether their last users (militants reportedly affiliated with JAS or ISWAP) acquired them directly from Libya.

Russian-manufactured AK103-2 assault rifle

One of the weapons that CAR documented in the custody of Niger security forces in Diffa was a 7.62 × 39 mm AK103-2 assault rifle of Russian manufacture (see Figure 28). Izhmash produced the rifle in 2007 and marked it with the serial number 071399398. CAR deems it possible that the rifle was diverted from Qaddafi-era Libyan arsenals during the turmoil of 2011 or shortly thereafter.

A 2014 report by the UN Panel of Experts on Libya confirmed that the Russian Federation legally exported several batches of AK103-2 rifles to the Government of Libya prior to the imposition of an arms embargo in 2011 (UN Panel on Libya, 2014, paras. 118, 135). The Panel's 2017 report presents a list of weapons seized between March and April 2016 by the Tunisian Armed Forces in the Ben Gardane region of south-east Tunisia. That list includes ten AK103-2 rifles with the serial number format 071XXXXXX (UN Panel on Libya, 2017, annex 44, p. 178).

Between 2012 and 2020, CAR documented 12 AK103-2 rifles that bear serial numbers of the same format. CAR collected data on these weapons across the wider West African region—in Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, and Niger. All 12 weapons had reportedly been seized from individuals affiliated with armed groups.

These findings suggest that the AK103-2 bearing the serial number 071399398, which CAR examined in Diffa, was diverted from Qaddafi-era Libyan arsenals during the state collapse of 2011 or shortly thereafter.[35] This inference may not be a sufficient basis on which to conclude that JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated militants in the south-east regions of Niger have established procurement schemes reaching as far as Libya. It does indicate, however, that weapons used by these groups were transferred through long-distance trafficking routes rooted in other regional conflicts.

Figure 28

An AK103-2 assault rifle with the serial number 071399398, documented in Diffa in October 2019

AKM assault rifles manufactured in 1983 and 1984

Among the weapons examined in the sample for this Dispatch, eight are 7.62 × 39 mm calibre AKM assault rifles manufactured in 1983 and 1984 (see Figure 29). All were seized from JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated militants.

In 2016 and 2017, CAR documented nine rifles with identical features and similar serial number formats, in particular in Niger's Dirkou region, close to the border with Libya. These weapons had been diverted from Libyan national stockpiles during, or in the aftermath of, the 2011 insurrection. It is thus likely that the eight rifles documented in the sample were similarly diverted from Qaddafi's arsenals. Table 5 lists the serial numbers, manufacturers, and seizure locations of all 17 rifles.

Four of the eight rifles that were reportedly seized from JAS or ISWAP affiliates were produced by Romanian manufacturers. In response to CAR's trace requests, Romanian authorities confirmed that rifles with the serial numbers 1983 NI 0227 and 1984 NX 8694 were produced by Cugir Factory, while rifles with the serial numbers 1984-AM 2815 and 1984-AN 0148 were manufactured by Uzina Mecanica Sadu (see Figure 29).[36] Under Romanian law, manufacturers of military materiel are required to maintain export records for 30 years and companies licensed to trade in such materiel for 20 years. As these rifles were produced nearly 40 years prior to their documentation, the exporters were unable to identify the first legal consignees.

Figure 29

Forward trunnions of four Romanian-manufactured AKM assault rifles seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants, documented in Diffa and Niamey in 2016–2019

Table 5

AKM rifles manufactured in 1983 and 1984 and bearing similar serial numbers

Serial number	Manufacturer	Date of documentation	Seizure site in Niger
1983 NF 9604	Unknown	18/04/2016	Unknown
1983 NH 7149	Unknown	02/03/2017	Dirkou
1983 NI 0227	Cugir Factory, Romania	29/10/2019	Diffa
1983 NI 3672	Unknown	18/04/2016	Zinder
1983 NI 9879	Unknown	18/04/2016	Zinder
1983 NK 2455	Unknown	02/03/2017	Dirkou
1983 NK 3272	Unknown	18/04/2016	Zinder
1983 NK 5693	Unknown	02/03/2017	Dirkou
1983 NK 6017	Unknown	18/04/2016	Zinder
1984-AM 1994	Uzina Mecanica Sadu, Romania	02/03/2017	Dirkou
1984-AM 2815	Uzina Mecanica Sadu, Romania	31/10/2019	Diffa
1984-AN 0148	Uzina Mecanica Sadu, Romania	18/04/2016	Zinder
1984-AN 1661	Uzina Mecanica Sadu, Romania	02/03/2017	Dirkou
1984-AN 4976	Uzina Mecanica Sadu, Romania	02/03/2017	Dirkou
1984 NX 7597	Cugir Factory, Romania	02/03/2017	Dirkou
1984 NX 8694	Cugir Factory, Romania	29/10/2019	Diffa
1984 NX 9473	Cugir Factory, Romania	15/03/2017	Agadez

Note: Rifles reportedly seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants are highlighted.

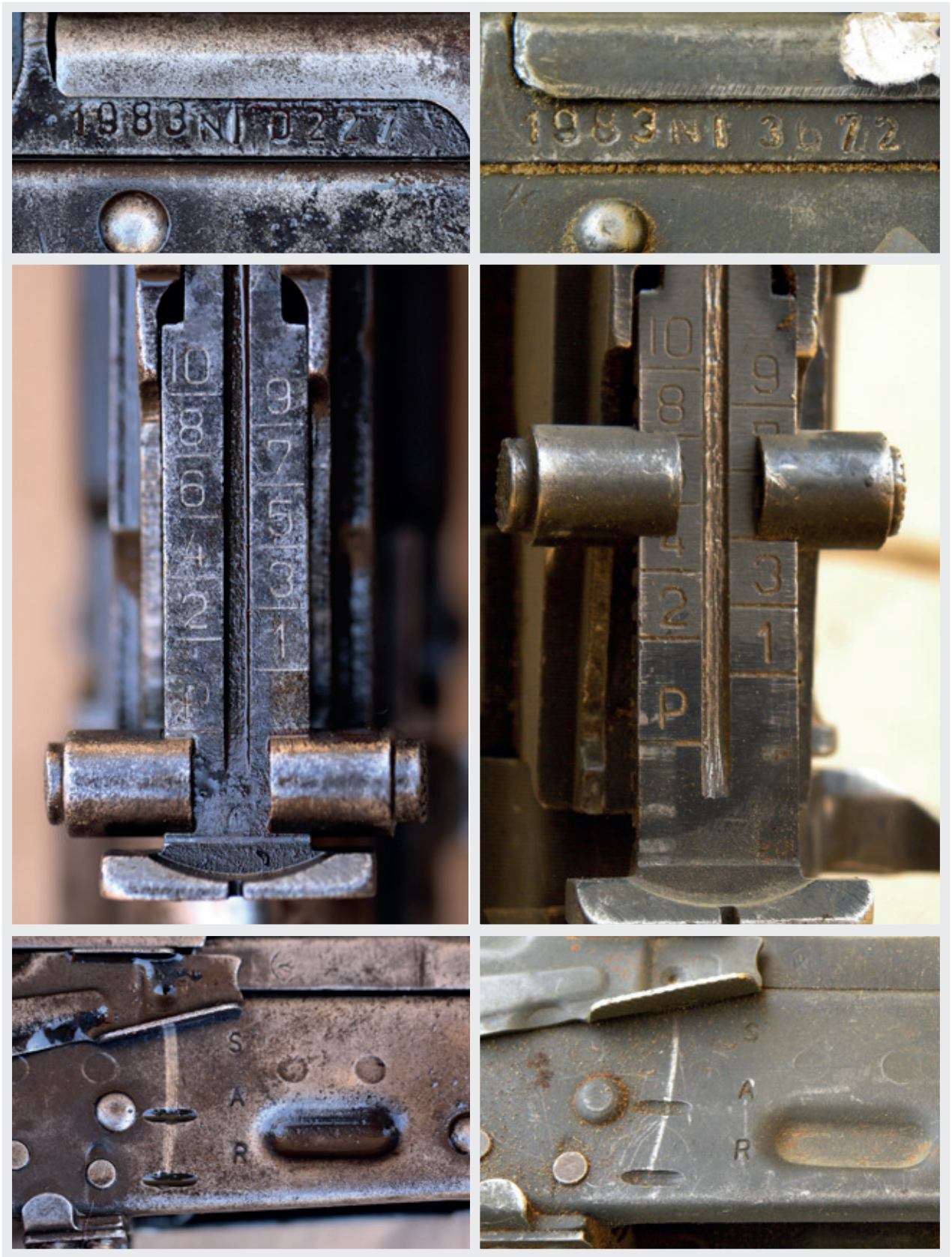
The manufacturers of the other four rifles seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants (rifles with the serial numbers 1983 NI 3672, 1983 NI 9879, 1983 NK 3272, and 1983 NK 6017) remain unidentified.[37] Features on these rifles—such as the fire-selector marks on the receiver (S/A/R) and the marking on the rear sight leaf (P)—are consistent with rifle number 1983 NI 0227, which was manufactured by Cugir Factory (see Figure 30).

The nine AKM rifles that CAR documented previously in Niger and that were not believed to be recovered from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated fighters were almost exclusively seized in Agadez and Dirkou. According to the information CAR collected during the documentation process, these rifles were reportedly seized separately between 2012 and 2017, close to the Niger–Libya border or from unauthorised individuals transiting the border area. In view of the similar dates of production, serial number formats, and other identifying features of the AKM rifles listed in Table 5, CAR deems it conceivable that they were all exported to a single first consignee—potentially in Libya—and subsequently diverted from the same source in an undetermined number of batches).[38]

CAR and Small Arms Survey interviews with Libyan Tubu traders travelling between southern Libya and northern Niger in early 2017 support this hypothesis. The traders suggested that militias loyal to Qaddafi distributed AKM-pattern rifles resembling those discussed here (specifically with three-point fire-selector marks 'S/A/R') to the civilian population of Fezzan province, in a late attempt to gain popular support for the regime in early 2011 (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2018).

Figure 30

Serial numbers, rear sights, and fire-selector marks of four AKM rifles



Left column: rifle with the serial number 1983 NI 0227; **top right:** rifle with the serial number 1983 NI 3672; **right centre:** rear sight of the rifle with the serial number 1983 NK 3272; **bottom right:** fire-selector marks of the rifle with the serial number 1983 NI 9879

Polish-manufactured Kbk-AKMS rifles bearing Arabic rear-sight markings

The documented sample includes 14 Polish-manufactured 7.62 × 39 mm Kbk-AKMS assault rifles, produced between 1975 and 1978.[39] CAR considers it plausible that they were also diverted from the Libyan national stockpiles during the 2011 insurrection, or its aftermath.

The Kbk-AKMS assault rifles bear particular identifying features: the rear-sight leaf is marked with Arabic numerals and the Arabic letter ت is used as the battle sight setting (see Figure 31). As shown in Table 6, the 14 rifles belong to six different manufacturing lots: lot SW of 1975, lot HT of 1976, lot CK of 1977, lot SS of 1977, lot GL of 1978, and lot MG of 1978.[40]

Figure 31

A Kbk-AKMS rifle with the serial number 1978 MG04520 documented in Diffa in October 2019

Table 6

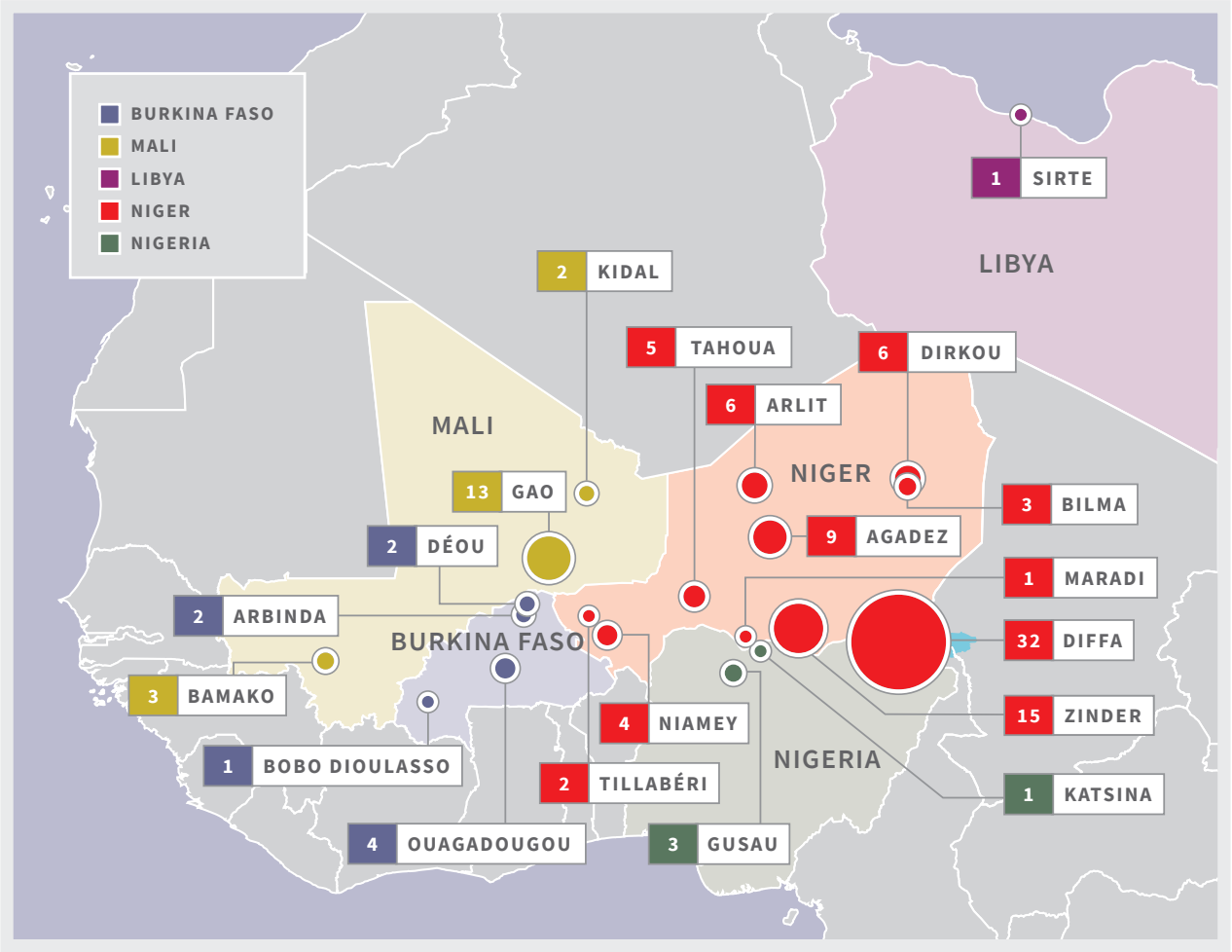
Lot and serial numbers of 14 Polish-manufactured Kbk-AKMS assault rifles, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Lot number (year)	Serial number
SW (1975)	1975 SW06156
HT (1976)	1976 HT00484
	1976 HT03402
	1976 HT12571
	1976 HT19454
CK (1977)	1977 CK26986
SS (1977)	1977 SS06982
	1977 SS11633
GL (1978)	1978 GL10431
MG (1978)	1978 MG04520
	1978 MG16397
	1978 MG25258
	1978 MG35198
	1978 MG35558

CAR previously observed rifles from all of these manufacturing lots, seized across the wider region. One rifle from lot SW of 1975 was documented in Nigeria; 5 rifles from lot HT of 1976 were documented in Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, and Niger; 4 rifles from lot CK of 1977 were documented in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger; 3 rifles from lot SS of 1977 were documented in Burkina Faso and Niger; 4 rifles from lot GL of 1978 were documented in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Nigeria; and 13 rifles from lot MG of 1978 were documented in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Nigeria (see Map 2).

Map 2

Kbk-AKMS assault rifles manufactured between 1976 and 1978, documented by CAR under seizure in Niger and neighbouring countries between 2014 and 2021



In some cases, there is a very small numeric gap between the serial numbers documented in Diffa and those recorded elsewhere in the region. For instance, the serial number 1978 MG35257 of the Kbk-AKMS seized in Burkina Faso in late 2019 stands only 59 units from 1978 MG35198, and 301 units from 1978 MG35558, both of which CAR documented in Diffa.[41]

Polish authorities confirmed that Kbk-AKMS rifles with this unique rear sight were manufactured for export to Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen during the late 1970s and 1980s (UN Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, 2013, para. 62).[42] In addition, iTrace® data collected in Iraq and Syria include Kbk-AKMS rifles manufactured exclusively in 1979–87. Taken together, these two indications strongly suggest that the Kbk-AKMS rifles listed in Table 6 and the above-mentioned ones CAR previously documented in other parts of West Africa and the Sahel were most probably exported to a single first consignee and subsequently diverted (simultaneously or separately) from a single state-owned arsenal, most conceivably Libya's.

THE RIFLES' WIDE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD MAY BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO SEPARATE EPISODES OF DIVERSION AND VARIOUS TRAFFICKING ROUTES.

The rifles' wide geographical spread may be attributable to separate episodes of diversion and various trafficking routes. It is important to note, however, that their use by two or more unauthorised actors does not necessarily demonstrate that the users have a direct relationship or that they share common supply networks.

AKM ASSAULT RIFLES DIVERTED FROM MOROCCAN CUSTODY

Weapons seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants in the Diffa region include two AKM assault rifles that display apparently close serial numbers—1993-AFA 2636 and 1993-AFA 2873, separated by only 237 units (see Figures 32 and 33). Both rifles were produced by Uzina Mecanica Sadu in 1993 and exported to Morocco in December of the same year, as confirmed by Romanian authorities in response to a trace request.[43] CAR sought to establish the weapons' onward chain of custody following their delivery to Morocco but Moroccan authorities are yet to respond to trace requests.[44]

Figure 32

An AKM rifle with the serial number 1993-AFA 2636 documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 33

An AKM rifle with the serial number 1993-AFA 2873 documented in Diffa in October 2019

VEKTOR R4 ASSAULT RIFLE DIVERTED FROM RWANDA

CAR documented a 5.56 × 45 mm Vektor R4 assault rifle that was manufactured in South Africa and reportedly seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated fighters in south-eastern Niger (see Figure 34). Lyttelton Ingenieurswerke (Lyttelton Engineering Works), now Denel Land Systems, produced the rifle on an unknown date and marked it with the serial number 797882A1. Based on previous trace correspondence regarding rifles of the same model and bearing close serial numbers, CAR deems it plausible that the weapon in question was legally exported from South Africa to Rwanda between 1990 and 1992.

This rifle is chambered for NATO-calibre ammunition, one of only two such weapons in CAR's sample of 185. Of the ammunition that was seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants in south-eastern Niger and that CAR investigators documented in the country, none corresponds to this calibre.

Figure 34

A Vektor R4 assault rifle with the serial number 797882A1 documented in Diffa in October 2019

THE PRESENCE OF THE R4 RIFLE AMID SEIZED MATERIEL IN DIFFA DOES NOT CONSTITUTE EVIDENCE THAT THE WEAPON WAS DIVERTED RECENTLY FROM RWANDAN GOVERNMENT CUSTODY.

CAR had previously documented only three other Vektor R4 rifles. Observed in Central African Republic in April 2015, these rifles were among weapons seized by the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the country and by French troops engaged in Operation Sangaris. The rifles bore serial numbers close to that of the R4 documented in Diffa: 711282A1, 796167A1, and 792539A1.

In June 2019, the Government of South Africa responded to CAR's trace requests regarding the three rifles documented in the Central African Republic, stating that they had been exported to Rwanda between 1990 and 1992.[45] To date, CAR's request for confirmation from the Rwandan authorities remains unanswered.[46] In August 2020, South African authorities responded to a formal trace request regarding the Vektor R4 documented in Diffa, informing CAR that they had forwarded the request to the UN ambassador's office in New York for consideration.[47] CAR has yet to receive further information.

CAR understands that Vektor R4 rifles with similar serial numbers were issued by their manufacturer to the South African National Defence Force, before being allocated to the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCOR) disposal programme. Certain rifles were then reconditioned and exported to Rwanda.[48]

The presence of the R4 rifle amid seized materiel in Diffa does not constitute evidence that the weapon was diverted recently from Rwandan government custody, nor that its last users in Niger procured it directly from Rwanda. Nevertheless, official confirmation that South Africa supplied rifles of this model to Rwanda in the early 1990s, coupled with CAR's documentation of similar rifles in the Central African Republic, suggests that the rifle used by militants in Niger may have been diverted in Rwanda, possibly as early as the 1990s, and that it may have remained in illicit circulation in Central Africa for a period of time before being trafficked to West Africa by unknown means (UN Panel on CAR, 2016b, annex 4.3).[49] It is also possible that South Africa supplied a different Central or West African government with similar batches of rifles, from which this weapon was subsequently diverted.

WEAPONS MANUFACTURED IN NORTH AFRICA

CAR's analysis finds that 20 assault rifles (11 per cent of the sample) seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated fighters in south-eastern Niger were manufactured in North Africa. Six of these rifles were manufactured in Algeria, the remaining 14 in Egypt.

CAR could not determine under what circumstances these rifles were diverted and subsequently acquired by JAS or ISWAP affiliates, nor was it possible to establish their chains of custody prior to diversion (see Box 1 for more on the factors that can hinder effective weapon tracing).

In total, CAR identified 50 weapons in the sample (almost 27 per cent) that correspond to models and manufacturing lots already observed in illicit circulation within the West African space, particularly in the Sahelian and Saharan regions. CAR considers it likely–and in some cases confirmed, as elaborated above–that these weapons were exported to or manufactured in North African states.

The presence of the Algerian and Egyptian-origin weapons in this sample is notable because it provides examples of the variety of military equipment in illicit circulation in south-eastern Niger. It also shows that the proportion of African-manufactured weapons used in armed conflicts on the continent is not always marginal.

BOX 1 — **INTERCHANGEABLE COMPONENTS**

CAR observed that at least three of the seized rifles documented in Diffa contained components that were marked with serial numbers that differed from those of the weapons in which they were documented. The numbers did match those of other seized rifles documented at the same site, however. The components appear to have been swapped between the weapons, but it was not possible to determine whether this exchange had taken place before or after the weapons' seizure.

From an investigative and law enforcement standpoint, the presence of one or multiple components from one weapon alongside another might be significant. If components are swapped following seizure, this practice should be discouraged as it can hinder efforts to identify and trace materiel accurately, thereby precluding findings that could otherwise inform judicial proceedings.

ALGERIAN-MANUFACTURED MODEL 89-1 ASSAULT RIFLES

CAR documented six Model 89-1 assault rifles in Diffa (see Figure 35). The Model 89-1 is the Algerian variant of the Soviet-developed AKMS, manufactured by Algeria's state-owned Entreprise de Construction Mécanique de Khenchela (ECMK). CAR's attempts to seek clarification regarding the previous chain of custody of these rifles with the Algerian authorities have been unsuccessful to date.[50]

Five of the six rifles documented in Diffa conform to the same serial number format: 0101XXXX.[51] The similarity of the numbers suggests that all five may have formed part of the same manufacturing lot and that they were probably destined for the same first consignee, prior to their diversion into the illicit sphere. Without more information regarding the manufacturer's serial number assignment process, however, these inferences cannot be confirmed.

ECMK's primary aim is to fulfil the Algerian state's need for military firearms (Sebti, 2006). It is therefore likely that the six rifles under review were diverted (simultaneously or separately) from the Algerian state arsenal.

In addition to the Model 89-1 rifles observed in Diffa, CAR has documented only a single rifle of this model to date. That weapon was seized in Niger's Agadez region, but its serial number does not conform to the format of the Model 89-1s recorded in Diffa. Consequently, CAR has not yet been able to draw any relevant connections.

Figure 35

A Model 89-1 rifle with the serial number 01019649, documented in Diffa in October 2019

EGYPTIAN-MANUFACTURED MISR ASSAULT RIFLES

The 7.62 × 39 mm Misr assault rifle is an Egyptian variant of the standard Soviet AKM. The weapon sample analysed in this Dispatch includes 14 such rifles, produced in Egypt between 1972 and 1984 (see Figure 36).

All 14 rifles were reportedly seized from individuals affiliated with JAS or ISWAP. CAR has requested information from Egyptian authorities about the first consignee for these rifles, but all trace requests remained unanswered at the time of publication.[52]

The Misr rifles documented in Diffa feature distinctive marks. These are consistent with markings that CAR previously documented in the broader West African region, in particular in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria.

Table 7 presents all the Misr rifles documented by CAR in Niger and Nigeria, showing that some of their serial numbers are particularly close in sequence.[53] It is possible that the rifles manufactured in 1980 and 1984 were produced as part of the same manufacturing lots and transferred in lot batches to a limited number of first consignees in Egypt, or to another state in the region. Without further indications from the manufacturer, however, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed.

Figure 36

Markings stamped on a Misr rifle with the serial number 1183457, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Table 7

Misr rifles manufactured in 1972–84 and documented in Niger and Nigeria.

Serial number	Units apart from previous number	Year of manufacture	Date of documentation	Seizure site
1000972	n/a	1972	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1033380	32,408	1975	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1084390	51,010	1979	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1097512	13,122	1978	April 2017	Katsina state, Nigeria
1099962	2,450	1978	January 2019	Plateau state, Nigeria
1156228	56,266	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
116[illegible]	n/a	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1164142	n/a	1980	June 2019	Tahoua region, Niger
1169134	4,992	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1169350	216	1980	June 2019	Agadez region, Niger
1170519	1,169	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1173331	2,812	1980	November 2019	Zinder region, Niger
1173340	9	1980	November 2019	Zinder region, Niger
1183068	9,728	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1183340	272	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1183457	117	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1184368	911	1980	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1188582	4,214	1981	November 2019	Zinder region, Niger
12356[illegible]	n/a	1981	June 2019	Tahoua region, Niger
1235765	n/a	1981	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1236[illegible]	n/a	1981	November 2019	Zinder region, Niger
1236117	n/a	1981	April 2016	Unknown location in northern Niger
1288662	52,545	1983	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1328726	40,064	1984	May 2018	Kaduna state, Nigeria
1328824	98	1984	March 2017	Agadez region, Niger
1328922	98	1984	October 2019	Diffa region, Niger
1328958	37	1984	April 2018	Unknown location in northern Niger

Note: Rifles reportedly seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated fighters are highlighted.

OTHER RECENTLY MANUFACTURED MATERIEL

In the sample analysed for this report, CAR identified additional, recently manufactured equipment that does not conform to the diversion patterns described above, including seven weapons and 1,958 7.62 × 51 mm cartridges.

These findings provide insight into emerging trafficking trends and show that JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated militants are not restricted to the use of legacy weapons. Indeed, some of the materiel seized from these groups was manufactured in the past decade, indicating that it was diverted only a short time after its delivery to the first legal consignee.

'JOJEFF' TURKISH SHOTGUN

The seized weapon sample CAR documented in Diffa includes five non-military-type firearms. One of these is a 12-gauge pump-action shotgun with the serial number 11161, produced in Turkey and branded 'JOJEFF' (see Figure 37).[54]

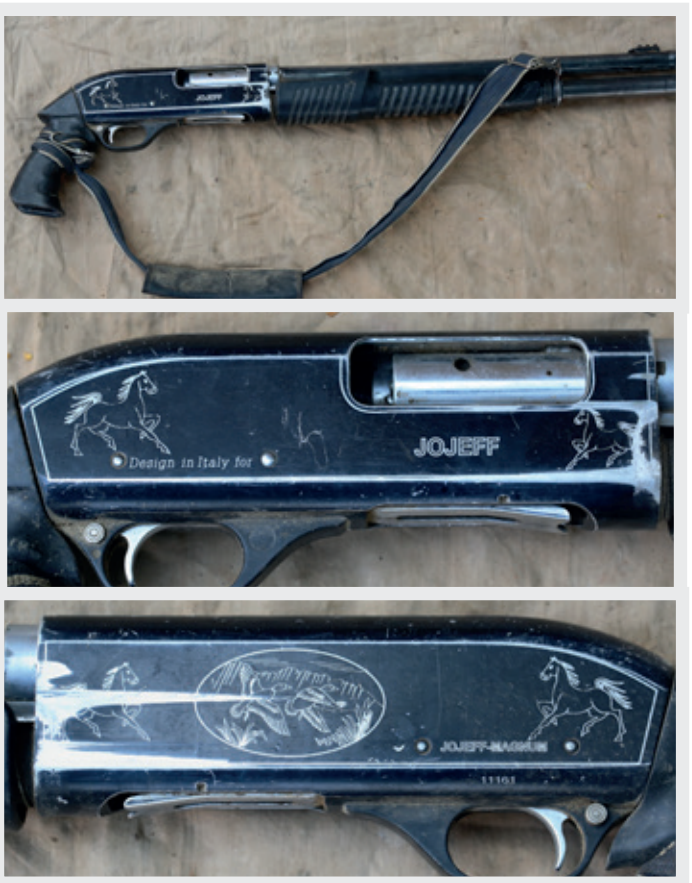
JAS or ISWAP affiliates most probably procured the JOJEFF shotgun in Nigeria. While CAR has yet to confirm the shotgun's precise production date, its form, style, and origin suggest it may be among the most recently manufactured in the data set.[55]

CAR investigators have been documenting recently produced Turkish shotguns and pistols seized from illicit circulation across their countries of operation for the past five years. Turkey has also emerged as a significant legal supplier of commercial armaments across Africa (CAR, 2020a).

CAR has not confirmed the identity of the shotgun manufacturer but has determined that the 'JOJEFF' trademark was registered in Turkey, probably on behalf of one of several manufacturing and trading companies registered in Konya province. Numerous manufacturers produce weapons that are exported from Turkey, including large companies with industrial production facilities and small workshops assembling components manufactured under different brands.

Figure 37

JOJEFF shotgun with the serial number 11161, documented in Diffa in October 2019



In addition to the shotgun documented in Diffa, CAR's iTrace® data set contains nine 12-gauge pump-action and semi-automatic shotguns that display similar features and the same brand name. One was documented in Syria in July 2015, after reportedly being seized from Islamic State forces, while the other eight were documented in Nigeria between April 2017 and April 2019.

It is plausible that this shotgun reached Niger after having been smuggled to, and through, Nigeria. CAR previously observed JOJEFF-branded 12-gauge shotguns in the illicit circuits of Nigeria. In 2017, for instance, Nigerian customs authorities seized four illicit shipments of more than 2,000 semi-automatic and pump-action shotguns manufactured in Turkey. The seizures included several hundred JOJEFF-branded weapons that had been produced in 2017. The weapons had been hidden inside containers and shipped by sea to Lagos Port (see Figure 38). Turkish and Nigerian law enforcement agencies subsequently found that the shippers had falsely declared the container contents as consumer goods. CAR's own investigations showed that this is an organised trafficking route involving actors based in both Nigeria and Turkey (CAR, 2020a).

Given that the model and markings of the shotgun documented in Diffa in October 2019 match those previously observed, and that the seizure location is relatively close to neighbouring Nigeria, it is likely that this shotgun was smuggled through Nigeria into Niger. CAR has not yet determined how JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated individuals procured the firearm, however. The shotgun could very well be an overflow anomaly, especially since none of the ammunition seized in Diffa or Zinder corresponds to its calibre. Nonetheless, this firearm serves as an additional indication that armed groups in the region employ opportunistic procurement mechanisms and use local sources of supply, including black markets.

Figure 38

A smuggled shotgun shipment seized at Lagos Port in June 2017

© Nigerian Customs Service

BOX 2 — **DETONATING CORD MANUFACTURED IN FRANCE IN 2004**

CAR also examined non-conventional materiel that had been recovered alongside weapons and ammunition in the Diffa and Zinder regions of Niger. A 125-metre spool of commercial detonating cord was part of this batch (see Figure 39). The cord is further indication that JAS or ISWAP affiliates in Niger have been able to take advantage of local illicit markets—in this case, ones connected to unauthorised and artisanal mining activities—to supplement and increase their offensive capabilities.

Commercial detonating cord can be acquired on the civilian market for industrial purposes, commonly in the mining and construction sectors. It is not considered a military item although it can be used for offensive purposes, such as the manufacture of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Since JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated combatants have deployed IEDs in the context of the Lake Chad conflict, the presence of detonating cord amid seized materiel may indicate that these groups are manufacturing IEDs.[56] There is no information, however, to confirm that the documented spool of cord was used in this way.

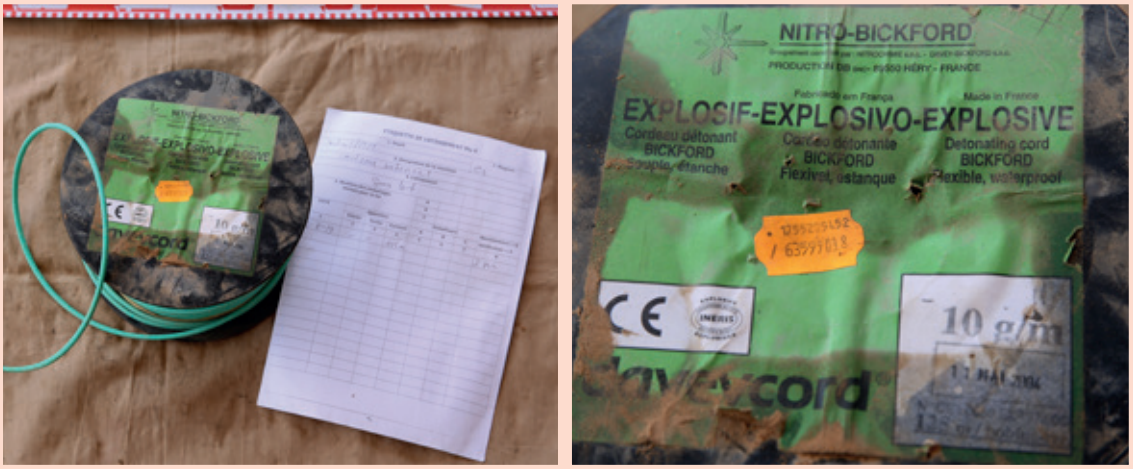
The detonating cord was manufactured by Davey Bickford Enaex in France in 2004. In response to CAR trace requests, Davey Bickford Enaex and French company EPC Groupe indicated separately— in February and May 2020, respectively— that a former economic interest group called NITRO-BICKFORD handled the sale of the detonating cord. According to Davey Bickford Enaex, it was sold via the civilian market to SOMAÏR, a uranium extraction company in Niger.[57] SOMAÏR is a subsidiary of the French multinational nuclear fuel company Orano S.A., owner of mining concessions in the uranium fields of Niger's far north, near Arlit (Orano, n.d.).

In August 2021, Orano confirmed that SOMAÏR acquired the detonating cord in question, but suggested that its diversion may have occurred after it had been transferred to smaller energy and mining companies in Niger. Orano stated that only two transfers listed in SOMAÏR's records for the period 2004–20 could not be fully traced by the company. The first one occurred on 2 December 2004, when, as a form of reimbursement, 25,000 metres of detonating cord were provided to SONICHAR, a Nigerien, partially state-owned company that produces electricity from coal extracted close to the SOMAÏR site. The second, dated 17 October 2007, relates to the transfer of 1,000 metres of cord that were provided to the 23rd Inter-Army Battalion of Niger's Armed Forces.[58]

To date, CAR has not been able to trace the two aforementioned transfers further, nor to determine the mechanism that resulted in the diversion of the reel documented in Diffa.

Figure 39

Detonating cord manufactured by Davey Bickford Enaex in France in 2004, documented in Diffa in October 2019



CHINESE MATERIEL PRODUCED AFTER 2010

Type 56-1 assault rifles manufactured in China in 2011 and 2013

CAR documented six 7.62 × 39 mm Type 56-1 assault rifles manufactured by Jianshe Machine Tool in China between 2011 and 2013. These rifles may have been diverted from the national stockpile of a country bordering Lake Chad shortly after delivery from the exporter.

Each of the six assault rifles carries an eight-digit serial number. The left side of the rear sight block bears manufacture details, such as calibre (7.62 mm), model designation (Type 56-1), year of manufacture and manufacturing country code (11-CN or 13-CN), and the manufacturer's logo (a 26 inside a triangle) (see Figure 40).

CAR began observing this marking format on certain Chinese-produced weapons in 2012. CAR cannot be conclusive in its assessment of serial number relationships without more detailed information on the marking practices for this model and production facility. Nevertheless, the documentation of a relatively large number of weapons with what appear to be similar serial numbers is strongly suggestive of a common connection.

The evidence in both CAR and open-source data sets indicates that the first two digits of an eight-digit serial number can be used to determine the date of manufacture of Type 56-1 rifles. Specifically, the first two digits are added to 1956, and 1 is subtracted from the total as 1956 itself is counted as the first year of production. Rifles with the serial number format 540XXXXX were manufactured in 2009, 550XXXXX in 2010, 560XXXXX in 2011, 570XXXXX in 2012, 580XXXXX in 2013, and so forth. Jianshe Machine Tool may have adopted this marking practice to ensure full compliance with the standards established by the International Tracing Instrument, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2005.[59]

Across all its areas of operation, CAR has documented 32 Type 56-1 rifles manufactured by Jianshe Machine Tool with serial numbers that start with '560' (manufactured in 2011) or '580' (manufactured in 2013). CAR documented 25 out of the 32 rifles in West Africa; 12 of them had been seized in Niger (see Table 8).

Figure 40

Rear sight block and forward trunnion of a Type 56-1 rifle with the serial number 58007612, documented in Niamey in February 2017 and seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants in the Madarounfa Forest in January 2017

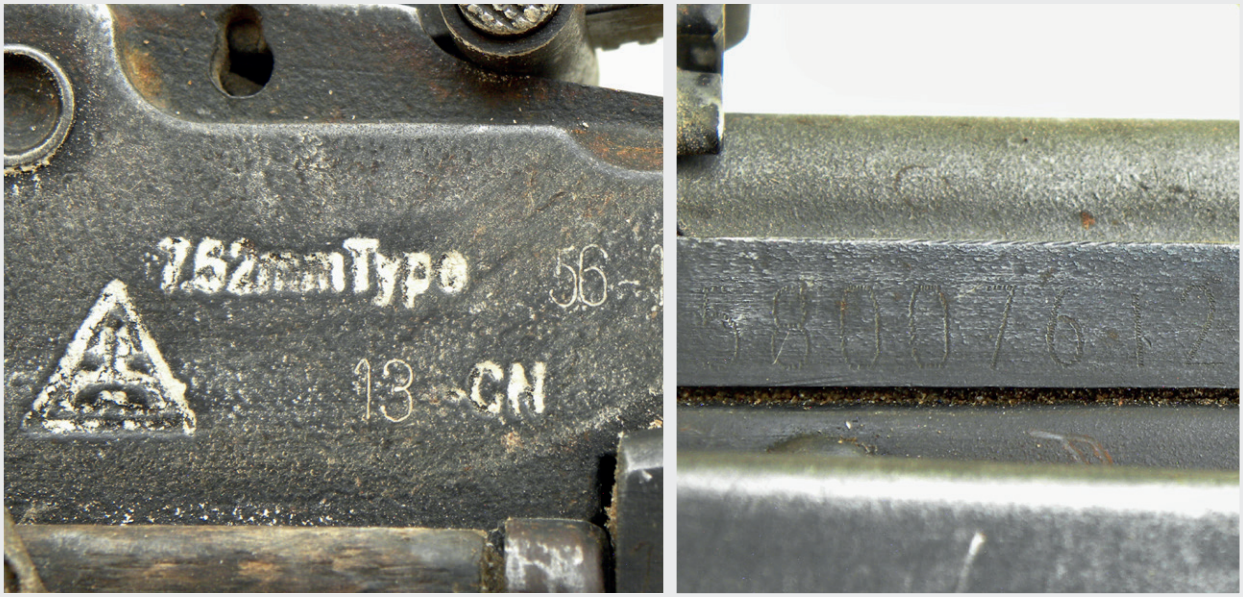


Table 8

Type 56-1 rifles documented in Niger, with serial numbers that begin with '560' and '580'

Serial number	Year of manufacture	Date of documentation	Seizure site
56003739	2011	October 2019	Diffa
56007933	2011	October 2019	Diffa
56041955	2011	July 2016	Arlit
56047966	2011	March 2017	Dirkou
56053748	2011	October 2019	Diffa
56055828	2011	April 2016	Unknown (Agadez region)
56057739	2011	June 2019	Agadez
56060594	2011	April 2016	Unknown
56066288	2011	July 2016	Arlit
58007612	2013	February 2017	Madarounfa Forest
58008768	2013	October 2019	Diffa
58008885	2013	October 2019	Diffa

Note: Rifles reportedly seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated combatants are highlighted.

CAR has not yet identified the first consignees of these Type 56-1 rifles, as Chinese authorities have yet to respond to tracing requests. In the absence of a formal confirmation from China, CAR also remains unable to confirm to what extent the markings observed on the rifles recently manufactured by Jianshe Machine Tool reflect standardised practice within the Chinese arms manufacturing industry.[60]

Some rifle serial numbers in Table 8 are numerically close, such as two documented in Diffa with the numbers 58008768 and 58008885, which are only 117 units apart. This apparent proximity suggests that the rifles may have formed part of the same manufacturing and export lot, and that it is therefore plausible that they were diverted from the national stockpile of a state in the region of Lake Chad.

One rifle from the Diffa sample (serial number 56053748) bears a strong resemblance to a group of Type 56-1s with obliterated markings that were used by al-Mourabitoun/AQIM in the terrorist attacks of 2015 and 2016 in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. This weapon is discussed in greater detail on page 56.

Belted 7.62 × 51 mm ammunition manufactured in 2012

The seized ammunition sample documented in Diffa in October 2019 contains 1,958 rounds of 7.62 × 51 mm small-calibre ammunition that were manufactured in China in 2012 (see Figure 41). The ammunition was seized and documented without any packaging, which limits the chances of successful tracing, given that manufacturers produce millions of identically marked cartridges for multiple recipients every year. CAR is therefore unable to identify the source of diversion or the nature of the supply mechanism that enabled JAS or ISWAP affiliates operating in Niger to obtain this ammunition.

These 811_12 cartridges are noteworthy on several counts. For one, CAR had not previously encountered them in the wider region, despite extensive documentation experience in West Africa. CAR has recorded 7.62 × 39 mm small-calibre ammunition with the headstamp 811_12 in numerous West African locations, including in Niger, yet investigators had not observed the same headstamp on 7.62 × 51 mm NATO-standard calibre cartridges until it documented the cartridges in Diffa.

In addition, the ammunition stands out precisely because it conforms to a NATO-standard calibre, since the vast majority of military-type weapons in illicit circulation in the region use Warsaw-Pact standard calibres. In 2018 CAR did record a single 7.62 × 51 mm cartridge with the headstamp 811_11, which indicates that it was manufactured by the same Chinese manufacturing company but produced in 2011. This item had been seized from unauthorised armed actors in Nigeria's Zamfara state on an unknown date.

Moreover, the fact that the 811_12 cartridges documented in Diffa are of recent manufacture and were seized in large number suggests that they were probably captured or otherwise illicitly obtained by insurgents from the stockpiles of a security force deployed in the region around Lake Chad.

Figure 41

Belted cartridges marked 811_12, documented in Diffa in October 2019

WEAPONS WITH OBLITERATED MARKINGS

CAR frequently documents weapons and ammunition with identifying markings that have been actively obliterated, as opposed to having worn away over time, through corrosion and handling. CAR defines active obliteration as the deliberate removal of identifying markings. The process can involve various means such as grinding, filing, chemical removal, or over-stamping. Obliteration is often carried out with the intent to conceal the identity of a weapon or destroy its traceability.

Investigators documented nine weapons in the sample that showed evidence of having some or all of their identifying marks deliberately removed. Three of the nine weapons belong to models and/or manufacturing lots that CAR has already observed elsewhere in Niger or the wider region. These three weapons bear similar active obliteration techniques and are discussed in greater detail below.

CAR interprets the low proportion of weapons with actively obliterated markings (five per cent of the sample) as an indication that JAS and ISWAP affiliates make limited use of criminal networks to expand their supplies. While individuals involved in organised crime may seek to avoid prosecution by concealing the identity of the weapons they acquired illegally, militants affiliated with insurrectional or terrorist movements may have less of an incentive to do so. JAS and ISWAP affiliates openly combat states' authority and legitimacy; the possession of weapons captured in battle from state security forces and the use of these weapons to target their enemies—often the very same state security forces—may thus support their ambitions and bolster their communication strategies.

THE LOW PROPORTION OF WEAPONS WITH ACTIVELY OBLITERATED MARKINGS IS AN INDICATION THAT JAS AND ISWAP AFFILIATES MAKE LIMITED USE OF CRIMINAL NETWORKS TO EXPAND THEIR SUPPLIES.

▼ An assault rifle with an obliterated serial number documented in Diffa, Niger, in October 2019.

TYPE 56-1 ASSAULT RIFLES: SERIES 560XXXXX

On one of the Type 56-1 assault rifles that CAR documented in Diffa—a weapon with the serial number 56053748—all the marks on the left profile of the rear sight block have been obliterated (see Table 8). Obliteration appears to have been conducted using a metal or stone grinding bit fitted to a handheld tool, such as a die cutter, to remove the factory logo, model name, calibre, date, and country code (see Figure 42).

The weapon is part of a group of rifles that CAR has repeatedly observed. They all bear eight-digit serial numbers beginning with '560' and show evidence of active obliteration on the rear sight block. Several of these weapons were recovered following major terrorist attacks or counterterrorism operations conducted in West Africa in recent years. Other, similar Type 56-1 rifles observed by CAR in West Africa show signs that the marks on the rear sight block have been removed and black paint has been applied to conceal the obliteration evidence (see Figure 43).

Figure 42

A Type 56-1 rifle with the serial number 56053748 and with obliterated marks on the rear sight block, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Figure 43

A Type 56-1 rifle with the serial number 56060594, documented in Niamey in April 2016 and seized in northern Niger from unidentified unauthorised actors, showing marks obliterated on the rear sight block and overpainted in black

Weapons from this distinctive set were used during a wave of terrorist attacks claimed by al-Mourabitoun and AQIM. The incidents took place in West Africa between August 2015 and March 2016. Since then, CAR has documented a total of 22 seized Type 56-1 rifles in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger (see Map 3). At least 17 of these 22 rifles were seized in the context of terror attacks or counterterrorism operations, including the rifle recovered in Diffa. At least 15 of the 17 rifles linked to terrorist activity have had markings removed in a similar, distinctive grinding manner.

CAR also observed two Type 56-1 rifles manufactured by Jianshe Machine Tool in 2011, both of which had partially obliterated marks. They were seized from Islamic State fighters in Syria

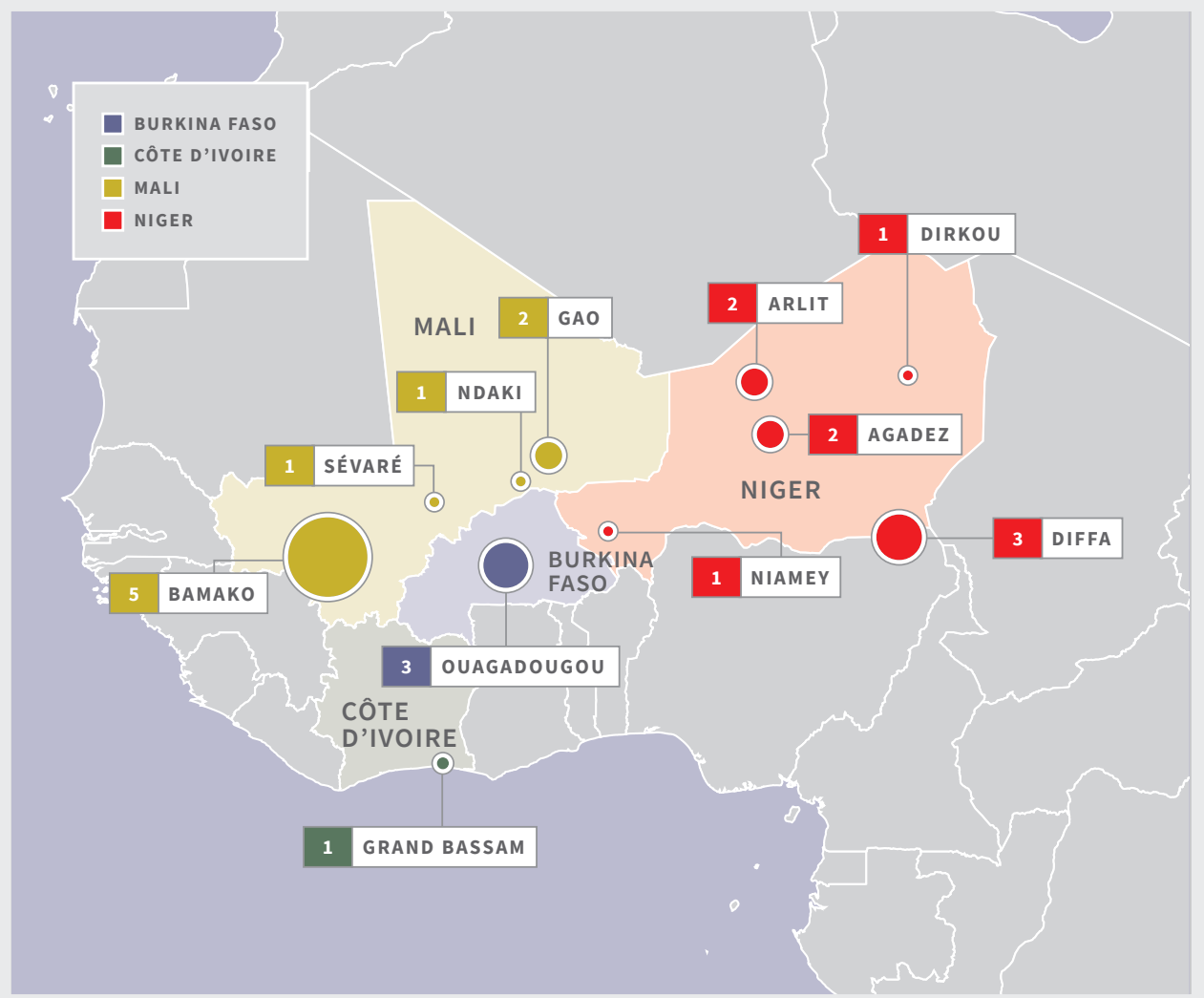
WEAPONS FROM THIS DISTINCTIVE SET WERE USED DURING A WAVE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS CLAIMED BY AL-MOURABITOUN AND AQIM.

in 2015. While their serial numbers also fall within the format 560XXXXX, it is not possible to determine whether they were part of the same consignment upon manufacture as the rifles that CAR documented in West Africa.[61]

The seizure of a Type 56-1 rifle with actively obliterated markings in the Diffa region could indicate that terrorist groups in the broader region share supply mechanisms.

Map 3

Type 56-1 assault rifles manufactured in 2011 (serial number format 560XXXXX) seized in West Africa and documented by CAR (2014 – 2019)



TABUK ASSAULT RIFLE WITH AN OBLITERATED SERIAL NUMBER

In Diffa CAR documented a 7.62 × 39 mm Tabuk assault rifle—a variant of the Zastava M70B, manufactured in Iraq by Al-Qadissiya Establishments. Its serial number (on the forward trunnion) and factory marks (on the rear sight block) were fully obliterated. The gas tube of the weapon bears the number 2048971, which is likely to be the rifle's original serial number (see Figure 44).[62]

Having examined the obliterated marks and compared them to those of other documented Tabuks, CAR determined that the weapon was part of a group of Tabuks manufactured in 1987. This group of rifles, which CAR has documented exclusively in West Africa, displayed similarly obliterated marks (see Table 9).

Unlike the obliteration methods employed on the above-mentioned Type 56-1 rifle, the approach used to remove the marks on the Tabuk rifles involved a stone grinding bit fitted to a handheld die-cutting tool. The identifying marks were removed from the forward trunnion and rear sight block of these Tabuks, yet CAR investigators were able to find some serial numbers marked on the gas cylinder. These marks are probably full serial numbers that match those of the rifles. Given that the gas cylinder is removable and can be exchanged, however, this assumption cannot be verified.

Tabuk rifles with markings removed in the same way were first recorded by UN personnel in Mali. Those weapons were used against Malian security forces in the centre of the country in January 2016, in an attack claimed by the Macina Liberation Front, a terrorist group linked to al-Mourabitoun.[63] To CAR's knowledge, this weapon type had not been documented elsewhere prior to this date. Malian forces recovered another weapon of this specification in Timbuktu in April 2016. Since then, CAR has documented a further 13 Tabuk rifles, all seized in Niger and Nigeria (see Table 9).

If CAR is correct that the number recovered on a weapon's gas cylinder corresponds to its primary serial number, then the Tabuk rifles in Table 9 appear to be in close order, separated by as few as 21 units for the rifles numbered 2048538 and 2048559. These weapons may therefore come from the same manufacturing lot and could have been exported to a single legal end user prior to diversion. Meanwhile, the observed commonalities in the way the marks have been obliterated on all these weapons—in Mali, Niger, and Nigeria—may indicate that they come from the same illicit source.

CAR has not yet identified which states might have been the legal end users of these rifles. Their spread across Mali, Niger, and Nigeria and the proximity of their recovered serial numbers suggest that the weapons were diverted in one of these countries or a neighbouring state.

Figure 44

A Tabuk rifle with obliterated markings and the number 2048971 on its gas cylinder, documented in Diffa in October 2019

Table 9

Tabuk rifles with obliterated markings, documented in West Africa in 2016–19

Possible serial number (retrieved from gas cylinder)	Date of documentation	Location of documentation or seizure	Country of documentation or seizure	Context of documentation or seizure
Irretrievable	April 2016	Niamey	Niger	Documented in the custody of the counterterrorism investigations unit
Irretrievable	April 2016	Timbuktu	Mali	Documented in the custody of Malian military
Irretrievable	March 2017	Dirkou	Niger	Documented in the custody of the Nigerien military
Irretrievable	March 2017	Dirkou	Niger	Documented in the custody of the Nigerien military
Irretrievable	April 2017	Katsina state	Nigeria	Weapon collection
Irretrievable	June 2019	Tahoua	Niger	Documented in the custody of Nigerien military
Irretrievable	June 2019	Tahoua	Niger	Documented in the custody of Nigerien military
2047907	March 2018	Zamfara state	Nigeria	Weapon collection
2048069	June 2019	Tahoua	Niger	Documented in the custody of Nigerien military
2048173	March 2018	Zamfara state	Nigeria	Weapon collection
2048538	June 2019	Agadez	Niger	Documented in the custody of Nigerien military
2048559	March 2018	Zamfara state	Nigeria	Weapon collection
2048971	October 2019	Diffa	Niger	Seized from jihadist militants
205XXXX*	January 2016	Mopti	Mali	Seized by counterterrorism forces from the Macina Liberation Front
2051487	November 2019	Documented in Zinder, Niger	Niger	Seized from jihadist militants

*CAR has the full serial number for the rifle listed as 205XXXX but has only included part of the number in view of ongoing law enforcement investigations.

AK-63F-PATTERN RIFLE WITH AN OBLITERATED SERIAL NUMBER

In Diffa CAR also documented a 7.62 × 39 mm AK-63F-pattern assault rifle displaying the fire selector marks '∞ / 1' and an 'A' mark as the battle sight setting on the rear sight leaf (see Figure 45). These features are consistent with Hungarian-produced rifles of the Warsaw Pact era.

The weapon's serial number—normally on the left side of the forward trunnion—and the identifying markings on its moving parts have been actively obliterated, rendering conventional tracing with the manufacturer impossible. The obliteration was probably carried out using a handheld grinding tool or disk cutter.

Partially visible on the left side of the weapon's receiver, however, is a mark resembling the Iraqi state arsenal mark: "ج" inside a triangle. CAR may be unable to trace the weapon via its manufacturer, but the presence of this mark indicates that this weapon was imported into Iraq prior to the beginning of the war in 2003 and incorporated into Iraqi national stockpiles (CAR, 2017, p. 15).

CAR identified the weapon as an AK-63F-pattern rifle based on its features and on visible markings. Overall, since 2017, CAR has documented four seized rifles with identical manufacturing characteristics in Niger, as presented in Table 10. The former Iraqi state arsenal mark is visible on two of these weapons, including the aforementioned one documented in Diffa.

The circumstances that led to the diversion of the rifle documented in Diffa and its subsequent acquisition by JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated militants in south-eastern Niger are yet to be determined.

Table 10

AK-63F-pattern rifles documented in Niger between 2017 and 2019

Serial number	Dates of seizure and documentation	Presence of Iraqi state mark
EV 6244[65]	Seized in 2014 in Dirkou; documented in 2017	No
H 63411	Seized in 2018 in Ouallam; documented in 2018	Yes
S 68734[66]	Seized in Diffa (date unknown); documented in 2019	No
Removed	Seized in Diffa (date unknown); documented in 2019	Yes

Note: Rifles reportedly seized from JAS- or ISWAP-affiliated elements are highlighted.

Figure 45

An AK-63F-pattern rifle with markings reflective of Hungarian manufacture, an obliterated serial number, and an Iraqi arsenal mark (circled), documented in Diffa in 2019

CONCLUSION

CAR's documentation of seized weapons and ammunition in south-eastern Niger highlights the diversity of equipment held by JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated militants. The heterogeneity of the sample, which includes a variety of types and models, reflects a range of supply and diversion mechanisms.

This Dispatch shows that JAS- and ISWAP-affiliated procurement tends to be conducted opportunistically. The approach also takes advantage of different sources, such as the national arsenals of states bordering Lake Chad and engaged in the Lake Chad conflict, regional trafficking networks, legacy weapons in circulation following past conflicts in the region, small-scale smuggling, and local black markets.

These militant groups appear to sustain their holdings of military equipment primarily through battlefield capture and raids on armed forces deployed in the Lake Chad border area. They have taken unauthorised possession of materiel that was legally supplied to Chad, Niger, and Nigeria– weaponry that the governments of these countries presumably acquired to combat these very same insurgent groups. In this context, the seizures of recently manufactured and recently diverted weapons and ammunition from JAS- and ISWAP- affiliates signal that states in the region are limited in their capacity to secure their own materiel, especially in remote conflict zones where they face the greatest threats.

JAS- AND ISWAP-AFFILIATED PROCUREMENT TENDS TO BE CONDUCTED OPPORTUNISTICALLY AND TAKES ADVANTAGE OF DIFFERENT SOURCES.

▼ A CAR field investigator documenting assault rifles in Niamey, March 2021

Since JAS and ISWAP affiliates tend to rely on materiel diverted from state custody in the region, they do not depend on trafficking networks that extend far beyond their areas of operation. Nevertheless, the evidence presented in this Dispatch shows that these militants can and do access weapons and ammunition via wider illicit networks and may share certain supply channels with other non-state armed groups operating across West Africa and the Sahel. The fact that local militants held assault rifles belonging to the same production series or presenting similar evidence of tampering as rifles used by terrorist factions farther afield points to some degree of interconnection between these groups.

CAR's analysis and tracing of the weapons in this sample found no evidence that JAS and ISWAP affiliates around Lake Chad systematically rely on direct, international procurement mechanisms. The data suggests that these terrorist groups operate in areas where the illicit market is active and offers several opportunities for supply. They are not likely to have coordinated long-range arms trafficking to acquire the weapons; rather, other actors may have moved the weapons from more distant illicit markets to closer ones.

This assessment also demonstrates the need for the local development and maintenance of record-keeping and monitoring practices. In addition to reducing the risks of diversion, such enhanced procedures would allow for immediate post-diversion follow-up, a better understanding of the trafficking routes used by different armed groups, and the collection of evidence about these groups' mutual interactions.

THIS ASSESSMENT ALSO DEMONSTRATES THE NEED FOR THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORD-KEEPING AND MONITORING PRACTICES.

CAR is grateful to the state authorities and company personnel who have engaged with the identification and tracing process. Tracing is vital to reconstructing chains of custody for diverted materiel. CAR continues to encourage stakeholders at every level to aim for greater participation and cooperation in the tracing process.

Taken together, the findings of this Dispatch demonstrate the importance of increased counterterrorism cooperation among actors managing the security crisis around Lake Chad, in particular with a view to facilitating information sharing, harmonising data collection and record-keeping practices, and enhancing the coordination of joint responses to prevent further diversion to terrorist groups.

▼ **Documentation of seized ammunition in Niamey, March 2019.**

ENDNOTES

1 The French name is Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites du Niger.

2 The French name is Service Central de Lutte contre le Terrorisme et la Criminalité Transnationale Organisée.

3 The name 'Boko Haram' has been widely used since 2007, although the group itself has not endorsed it. The group had no official name prior 2010 and was previously nicknamed Taliban or Yusufia (the followers of Mohammed Yusuf). This Dispatch refers to it as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati wal-Jihad or JAS.

4 On 23 February 2020, the Security Council Committee concerning Islamic State forces, al-Qaeda, and associated individuals and groups added both JAS and ISWAP to the list of individuals and entities subject to sanctions (assets freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo), in compliance with Security Council Resolution 2368 (2017). For details, see UN (2020).

5 See, for example, MSF (2022); OCHA (2021); and UNHCR (2021).

6 The items documented by CAR in Diffa and Niamey form the full data set used for this Dispatch and which is available on iTrace® at www.itrace.com.

7 The three seizures referenced in this paragraph comprise: 1) 1,076 7.62 × 51 mm tracer cartridges in their original packaging, manufactured by the British company Kynoch in 1965; 2) 2,932 7.62 × 51 mm cartridges manufactured in China by State Factory 61 in 1993 and 1994; and 3) 1,958 7.62 × 51 mm cartridges manufactured in China by State Factory 811 in 2012.

8 In compliance with Article 4 of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons and Other Related Materials that was adopted in 2006 and entered into force in September 2009, ECOWAS member states can request exemption from the prohibition of transfers (established in Article 3), when facing legitimate national needs or participating in peacekeeping operations. As per the provisions contained in Article 5.3, once granted by the ECOWAS Commission, the exemption certificate must accompany the request for an export licence as well as the end-user certificate. See ECOWAS Convention (2006, arts. 3–5).

9 On 10 September 2020, the Government of Bulgaria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 16 June 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) Arsenal JSCo manufactured the MG-1M medium machine gun with serial number BA 55 1158, the object of CAR's trace request, in 2015; and 2) the Government of Bulgaria authorised the export of the item to the Ministry of Defence of Nigeria, the declared end-user, in 2015. The Government of Bulgaria informed CAR that the application was accompanied by an ECOWAS exemption certificate and the Bulgarian authorities received a delivery verification certificate confirming receipt of the export.

10 On 4 November 2020, CAR submitted a formal trace request to Nigeria's Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, asking for clarifications regarding the circumstances of diversion of this weapon. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

11 On 12 October 2020, the Serbian authorities responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 9 April 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) Zastava oruzje a.d. manufactured the CZ 999 Scorpion pistol, with serial number 16149, which was the object of CARs trace request; 2) on 9 March 2014, Zastava oruzje a.d exported the item under export license number 740/2013 of 23 January 2014 to the Nigerian Navy, which was declared end-user; 3) Zastava oruzje a.d. exported the item as part of a larger consignment comprised of:

a) 250,000 rounds of 9 × 19 mm ammunition;

b) 500,000 rounds of 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition;

c) 2,000 AK-47 assault rifles; and

d) 1,500 CZ999 browning pistols.

4) The Serbian authorities received a delivery verification certificate, issued by the Nigerian Naval Headquarters, confirming the Nigerian Navy's receipt of the consignment on 12 March 2014; and 5) Rear Admiral Ie Ibas, Chief of Naval Staff of the Nigerian Navy, signed the delivery verification certificate dated 7 April 2014.

12 The NAF acronym is commonly used to refer to the Nigerian Air Force. See, for instance, the force's official website (NAF, n.d.).

13 On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the FN MAG machine gun bearing the mark NAF-MG-0242, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

14 On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the HK21 machine gun bearing the serial number EN 50937, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the Type 56 rifle bearing the serial number 5203280, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the Type 56 rifle bearing the serial number 5203051, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

15 The machine gun's serial number format, which includes the 'EN' code that refers to the Royal Ordnance Factories in Enfield, suggests British manufacture.

16 On 18 May 2020, the Government of the United Kingdom (UK) responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 9 April 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Government of the UK hold no records of the HK21 with the serial number 'EN 50937', the object of CAR's trace request, as the UK export licensing authorities do not hold information on serial numbers or quantities of materiel exported; 2) the UK export licencing authorities hold complete records of export licences granted since 2007 and incomplete records from between 2000 to 2007; and 3) since 2000, the UK export licencing authorities have issued 28 export licences for HK21 weapons, components, or accessories to the following 17 States or Crown dependencies:

- Brazil;
- Canada;
- Channel Islands;
- Finland;
- Germany;
- Japan;
- Jordan;
- Kenya;
- Mauritius;
- Netherlands;
- Norway;
- Philippines;
- Qatar;
- Sri Lanka;

- Switzerland;
- United Arab Emirates;
- United States of America.

17 In addition to the ammunition detailed in this section, CAR documented 30 rounds of ammunition bearing headstamp markings indicating likely production in Nigeria. As these were documented as loose rounds, investigators were unable to trace them, in accordance with CAR's methodology.

18 On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the P1A1 ammunition bearing the mark 3341, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

19 The box contract number was initially identified as 3341. On 22 February 2022, CAR issued a formal trace request to Nigeria's Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, seeking clarification regarding the circumstances of diversion of this ammunition. At the time of writing, investigations were ongoing. As a result, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

20 On 9 September 2020, Kynamco Limited responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 7 September 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) Kynamco Limited has no records of the L5A3 tracer rounds with lot numbers 196, 198, and 199, the objects of CAR's trace request, as Kynamco Limited only uses the Kynoch name as a trade mark; 2) Kynamco Limited produces sporting and specialist ammunition for industry and has never manufactured military grade ammunition; and 3) Kynamco Limited was established in 1994 and has no records from the Eley/Kynoch company.

21 In response to a request to trace the origin and supply of the HK21 with serial number 50937, the Government of the United Kingdom (UK) confirmed that the UK export licencing authorities hold complete records of export licences granted since 2007 and incomplete records from between 2000 to 2007.

On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the L5A3 tracer rounds bearing lot numbers 196, 198 and, 199, the subjects of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

22 On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the mortar rounds bearing the lot/batch mark 1-08-313, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

23 An earlier version of this report incorrectly identified the manufacturer as H&W (now Pyrotechnic Specialties Inc.) based in the US. On 18 September 2020, CAR issued formal trace requests to the Governments of Nigeria and the United States regarding these crates and riot-control cartridges. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

24 On 17 December 2020, CAR issued formal trace requests to Transhawk Global Services Limited, seeking information about the transfer of the two boxes documented in Diffa. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

25 The personnel in charge of the storing facility where the documentation was undertaken did not authorise CAR to open the sealed box.

26 On 6 November 2020, CAR issued formal trace requests to DESTO regarding these CS gas cartridges. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

27 On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the Type 56 rifle bearing the serial number 5203051, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

On 26 January 2021, the Government of Nigeria responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 March 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) the Nigerian Army was in possession of the Type 56 rifle bearing the serial number 5203280, the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) between 2013 and 2017, Boko Haram seized the item from Nigerian troops during encounters in the North East and South East of Nigeria; and 3) neither the Federal Government of Nigeria nor the Nigerian Army authorised the export or transfer of this item.

28 On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 46279, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987, the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 3 February 2021, the Government of France responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 6 January 2021. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 50145, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 54364, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987, the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 62011, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 62118, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 62257, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 62648, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG

542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 64292, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 64784, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

On 4 January 2021, the Government of France responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirmed that: 1) Manurhin manufactured the SG 542 assault rifle, bearing the serial number 64943, which was the object of CAR's trace request; and 2) between 1985 and 1987 the Government of France authorised the export of the item, as part of a larger consignment of 2,200 Manurhin SG 542 assault rifles, to Chad. The Government of France additionally informed CAR that the Chadian National Army no longer uses this type of weapon.

29 On 5 December 2019, CAR submitted a trace request to Israeli authorities regarding the Galil assault rifle with the serial number 2041973. At the time of writing, CAR had not yet received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

30 Between 22 April 2016 and 3 November 2020, CAR issued formal trace requests to the Permanent Mission of Israel to the UN regarding the four Galils listed. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

31 Reports of the UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic provide evidence that Galil assault rifles bearing serial numbers of the same format of those CAR documented in Niger were legally exported from Israel to the Chadian government in 2007 and 2009. See UN Panel on CAR (2014, paras. 156–59, annex 48; 2016a, annex 32).

32 For additional information on this rifle, see Tubiana and Gramizzi (2018, p. 99).

33 The rifle was reportedly seized in the Agadez region under unknown circumstances. CAR documented it while it was in the custody of the Gendarmerie Nationale, in Niamey in January 2017.

34 For additional details about the interception of the *Letfallah II,* see UN Panel on Libya (2013; 2014).

35 On 10 September 2020, CAR sent a formal trace request to the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN requesting information about the origin and export of this rifle. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

36 On 12 August 2020, the Government of Romania responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 7 July 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) Cugir Factory manufactured the AKM assault rifle with serial number 1983 NI 0227, the object of CAR's trace request, in 1983; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured more than 30 years ago, the manufacturer could not provide details regarding the export of the item.

On 12 August 2020, the Government of Romania responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 7 July 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) Cugir Factory manufactured the AKM assault rifle with serial number 1984 NX 8694, the object of CAR's trace request, in 1984; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured more than 30 years ago, the manufacturer could not provide details regarding the export of the item.

On 28 September 2016, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 September 2016. In its response, the Government of Romania confirmed: 1) UM Sadu manufactured the assault rifle with serial number 1984-AN 0148, subject to CAR's trace request; 2) UM Sadu delivered the item to the Romanian Ministry of Defence; and 3) the Department for Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Defence cannot provide any information on the export of this item as according to Romanian national legislation, records pertaining to military goods subject to international traceability instruments are kept for at least 30 years by the manufacturing companies and for at least 20 years by the exporters and the importers of such military goods.

On 12 August 2020, the Government of Romania responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 7 July 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) UM Sadu manufactured the AKM assault rifle with serial number 1984-AM 2815, the object of CAR's trace request, in 1984; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured more than 30 years ago, the manufacturer could not provide details regarding the export of the item.

37 On 28 September 2016, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 September 2016. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NI3672, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

On 28 September 2016, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 September 2016. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NI9879, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

On 28 September 2016, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 September 2016. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NK3272, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

On 28 September 2016, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 September 2016. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NK6017, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

38 On 20 November 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NH 7149, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

On 20 November 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NK 2455, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

On 20 November 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NK 5693, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

On 28 September 2016, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 September 2016. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that the AKM with serial number 1983 NF 9604, subject to CAR's trace request, was not produced in Romania.

On 14 December 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that: 1) UM Cugir manufactured the AKM with serial number 1984 NX 9473, subject to CAR's trace request, in 1984; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured and exported more than 30 years ago, the exporter could not provide details regarding the export of this item.

On 14 December 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that: 1) UM Sadu manufactured the AKM with serial number 1984-AM 1994, subject to CAR's trace request, in 1984; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured and exported more than 30 years ago, the exporter could not provide details regarding the export of this item.

On 14 December 2017, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 23 October 2017. In its response, the Government of Romania stated that: 1) UM Sadu manufactured the AKM with serial number 1984-AN 4976, subject to CAR's trace request, in 1984; and 2) taking into consideration

that the rifle was manufactured and exported more than 30 years ago, the exporter could not provide details regarding the export of this item.

On 22 September 2020, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 4 September 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) Cugir Factory manufactured the AKM assault rifle with serial number 1984 NX 7597, the object of CAR's trace request, in 1984; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured more than 30 years ago, the manufacturer could not provide details regarding the export of the item.

On 22 September 2020, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 4 September 2020. This response confirmed that: 1) UM Sadu manufactured the AKM assault rifle with serial number 1984-AN 1661, the object of CAR's trace request, in 1984; and 2) taking into consideration that the rifle was manufactured more than 30 years ago, the manufacturer could not provide details regarding the export of the item.

39 The sample also includes one rifle manufactured in 1961 and one rifle manufactured in 1994.

40 CAR considers that two Kbk-AKMS rifles come from the same manufacturing lot when they have the same year of manufacture and feature serial numbers with the same two-letter code. On 27 April 2020, CAR sent a formal trace request to the Government of Poland regarding the 14 rifles. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

41 On 27 April 2020, CAR sent a formal trace request to the Government of Poland regarding the rifle with serial number 1978 MG35257. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

42 A confidential diplomatic source also confirmed to CAR, in 2016, that Kbk-AKMS assault rifles manufactured in 1976 and 1977 with rear sight marks in Arabic were exported to Algeria in the same period.

43 On 6 February 2020, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 14 January 2020. This response confirms that: 1) UM Sadu manufactured the AKM rifle with serial number 1993-AFA 2873, the object of CAR's trace request, in 1993; 2) a Romanian company exported the item to Morocco in December 1993; and 3) taking into consideration the year of manufacture of the rifle, the exporter could not provide any further details regarding the export of the item.

On 6 February 2020, the Government of Romania responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 14 January 2020. This response confirms that: 1) UM Sadu manufactured the AKM rifle with serial number 1993-AFA 2636, the object of CAR's trace request, in 1993; 2) a Romanian company exported the item to Morocco in December 1993; and 3) taking into consideration the year of manufacture of the rifle, the exporter could not provide any further details regarding the export of the item.

44 On 28 February 2020, CAR submitted formal trace requests to the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the UN. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

45 On 28 June 2019, the Government of the Republic of South Africa responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 22 April 2016. This response confirms that the Government of the Republic of South Africa exported the rifle with serial number 792539A1, subject to CAR's trace request, to the Republic of Rwanda between 1990 and 1992.

On 28 June 2019, the Government of the Republic of South Africa responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 22 April 2016. This response confirms that the Government of the Republic of South Africa exported the rifle with serial number 711282A1, subject to CAR's trace request, to the Republic of Rwanda between 1990 and 1992.

On 28 June 2019, the Government of the Republic of South Africa responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 22 April 2016. This response confirms that the Government of the Republic of South Africa exported the rifle with serial number 796167A1, subject to CAR's trace request, to the Republic of Rwanda between 1990 and 1992.

46 On 7 August 2020, CAR sent formal trace requests to the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the UN regarding the Vektor R4 rifles documented in the Central African Republic. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

47 On 17 August 2020, South African authorities responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR regarding this rifle stating they had forwarded the request to the UN Ambassador's office in New York for consideration. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

48 Confidential source on file with CAR.

49 Statement based on CAR observations and on data published by the UN Panel on the Central African Republic (see, in particular, Annex 4.3 of report S/2016/1032).

50 On 27 April, 3 July, 17 August, and 2 November 2020, CAR sent formal trace requests to the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the UN regarding these Model 89-1 rifles. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

51 The full serial numbers are 01017416, 01018182, 01019649, 01019886, and 01019996. The other rifle bears the serial number 14009605, indicating that it belongs to a different lot of manufacture. Consequently, at the time of drafting, there were no relevant connections to draw.

52 CAR issued formal trace requests to the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the UN in April and September 2020 seeking information regarding the chains of custody for all the rifles listed in Table 7. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

53 CAR cannot disclose the details of the Misr rifles documented in Burkina Faso and Mali as, at the time of drafting, these weapons were part of active investigations and placed under judiciary seal.

54 In addition to the 12-gauge pump-action shotgun presented in this section, the sample also includes two self-loading pistols (one CZ999 and one Llama Especial), one Wembley revolver, and one ME 800 General blank-firing pistol. It is possible that the brand is specific to a particular customer or market. In Niger, Nigeria, and Syria, CAR has documented Turkish-manufactured shotguns of very similar construction, marked with different brand names and external decoration.

55 CAR issued a formal trace request for this weapon to the probable Turkish manufacturer on 27 April 2020. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

56 For concrete illustrations of JAS and ISWAP's use of IEDs, see, for instance, Counter-IED Report (2018).

57 On 24 February 2020, Davey Bickford ENAEX responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirms that: 1) Davey Bickford ENAEX manufactured the Daveycord detonating cord with lot/batch number 1755205452 / 6359903.8, the object of CAR's trace request; 2) Davey Bickford ENAEX sold the detonating cord to EPC Groupe; 3) EPC Groupe deals with all African sales for Davey Bickford ENAEX; 4) EPC Groupe sold the detonating cord with lot/batch number 1755205452 / 6359903.8 to SOMAIR, a mining company in Niger; 4) Davey Bickford ENAEX has not had any direct contact with SOMAIR; 5) Davey Bickford ENAEX has never sold detonating cord for military applications in Africa; and 6) all Davey Bickford ENAEX exports require an export licence and declaration to the French Ministry of the Armed Forces.

On 20 May 2020, EPC Groupe responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 3 April 2020. This response stated that: 1) NITRO-BICKFORD was an Economic Interest Group (GIE) founded in 1972 by two associate companies, namely DAVEY-BICKFORD and NITROCHIMIE, and designed to market the products of the GIE participant companies. The GIE was disbanded in February 2011; 2) EPC company is a producer of commercial explosives for the mining and construction industries; 3) NITROCHIMIE is a subsidiary of EPC and remains part of EPC Groupe; 4) it was through NITRO-BICKFORD GIE that DAVEY-BICKFORD, the manufacturer of the Daveycord detonating cord with lot/batch 1755205452 / 6359903.8, the object of CAR's trace request, sold the spool of detonating cord; 5) EPC Groupe did not purchase the detonating cord; 6) according to European Commission Directive 2008/43/EC, it is the responsibility of manufacturers to retain traceability information of commercial explosives for a period of 10 years, explosives manufacturers have an obligation to protect the

relevant data from accidental damage or deliberate destruction and that manufacturers are only obliged to provide information to the competent authorities of the relevant Member State; 7) the accounting, customs and transport documents of the GIE were kept for three, five, or 10 years; 8) as the NITRO-BICKFORD GIE is not the manufacturer of the detonating cord, the GIE hasn't existed for almost 10 years, and the item in question was manufactured over 15 years ago, the GIE has no obligation to retain traceability information; and 10) from the ID numbers presented on the detonating cord spool the GIE NITRO-BICKFORD would not have been able to identify the recipients of the products, sold for order and on behalf of its associates, without questioning the associate-manufacturer, DAVEY-BICKFORD. As a result, EPC Groupe and its subsidiary do not hold any information relating to the export of the detonating cord, and have no records for which the legal date of storage has passed.

58 On 5 August 2021, Group Orano responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 28 May 2020. This response confirms that: 1) SOMAÏR, a subsidiary of Orano, received the detonating cord, bearing the lot/batch number '1755205452 / 6359903.8', the subject of CAR's trace request, from Davey Bickford ENAEX; 2) SOMAÏR has a loan and reimbursement agreement on detonating cords with the COMINAK and SONICHAR companies, whereby it can loan materials to those companies to avoid interruption to their activities; 3) between 2004 and 2020, SOMAÏR conducted eight transactions:

- SOMAÏR lent 500 metres of detonating cord to COMINAK on 2 September 2004;
- SOMAÏR lent 3,000 metres of detonating cord to COMINAK on 4 November 2004;
- SOMAÏR sold 25,000 metres of detonating cord to SONICHAR on 2 December 2004;
- SOMAÏR lent 2,000 metres of detonating cord to COMINAK on 19 January 2005;
- SOMAÏR lent 5,000 metres of detonating cord to COMINAK on 13 April 2007;
- SOMAÏR lent 3,000 metres of detonating cord to SONICHAR on 22 April 2010;
- SOMAÏR lent 5,000 metres of detonating cord to SONICHAR on 22 May 2018;
- SOMAÏR ceded 1,000 metres of detonating cord to the 23rd Inter-Arms Battalion at Akokan, Niger on 17 October 2007;

And 4) SOMAÏR could not trace the use of the materials sold from SOMAÏR to SONICHAR on 2 December 2004 and the material ceded from SOMAÏR to the 23rd Inter-Arms Battalion on 17 October 2007, and therefore it is impossible to identify the point of diversion of the material that CAR documented. In addition, Group Orano informed CAR that SOMAÏR and COMINAK have identical internal tracing and control procedures for all transactions and that SOMAÏR stated all internal tracing procedures were properly followed, including record keeping of transactions of explosive material, having authorised staff on hand, using only the necessary quantities of explosives at each site, and record keeping of consumed explosives.

59 The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, known as the International Tracing Instrument, establishes that states will: 'at the time of manufacture […] either require unique marking providing the name of the manufacturer, the country of manufacture and the serial number, or maintain any alternative unique user-friendly marking with simple geometric symbols in combination with a numeric and/or alphanumeric code, permitting ready identification by all States of the country of manufacture; and encourage the marking of such additional information as the year of manufacture, weapon type/model and calibre' (UNGA, 2005, art. 8(a)). The marks on the rear sight block of the Type 56-1 rifles under review appear to be fully compliant with the cited provisions, as they include the calibre of the weapon, its model designation, a code identifying the manufacturer, and information regarding both the country and the year of manufacture.

60 CAR issued formal trace requests to Chinese authorities regarding all the Chinese Type 56-1 rifles listed in Table 8. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

61 On 10 September 2020, CAR issued formal trace requests to Chinese authorities regarding all the Chinese Type 56-1 rifles documented in Diffa in 2019. At the time of writing, CAR had not received a response. Given the absence of a trace response, CAR cannot assess the legality of the transfer/s in question.

62 Since the gas cylinder is removable, CAR is not able to confirm that the marks on it match the serial number that was obliterated on the forward trunnion. Marks that are consistent with a five-digit format are likely to correspond to the rifle's original serial number because, as iTrace® data collected in Iraq confirms, this was the standard marking format for serial numbers for Tabuk rifles manufactured during the 1980s.

63 The French name of the Macina Liberation Front is Front de Libération du Macina.

64 CAR was not able to identify the date of manufacture of all the items documented in this sample. Some items do not display any codes or features that indicate a date; on others, manufacture date marks have been removed through wear or deliberate obliteration (see the section on 'Weapons with obliterated markings' on page 55).

65 On 11 November 2020, the Government of Hungary responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 28 October 2020. This response stated that: 1) the current holder of the FÉG brand, FÉG Defense Systems Inc. and the Hungarian export licensing authority have no records of the AK-63F assault rifle with serial number EV 6244, the object of CAR's trace request; 2) FÉG Defense Systems Inc. conducted a technical analysis of the item and concluded that the rifle was assembled with mixed parts:

a) the forward trunnion [the primary traceable component], receiver, rear trunnion, barrel construction, and gas tube are of Hungarian manufacture;

b) the rear sight is presumably of East German manufacture;

c) the pistol grip is presumably of Romanian or Russian manufacture;

d) the lower handguard is of probable Romanian design (the upper handguard is presumably paired with the lower handguard);

e) the position of the marks and marking methods on the bolt carrier and return spring guide are inconsistent with genuine Hungarian marks; and

3) as no records of the serial number were found, neither the Government of Hungary nor FÉG Defense Systems Inc. were able to provide details regarding the export of the item.

66 On 12 March 2020, the Government of Hungary responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 5 December 2019. This response confirms that: 1) neither the current holder of the Fegyver- és Gépgyártó Részvénytársaság (FÉG) brand, FÉG Defense Systems Inc., nor the Hungarian export licensing authority has records of the assault rifle bearing serial number 'S 68734', the subject of CAR's trace request; 2) the serial number format for FÉG-manufactured AMM-model rifles is two letters followed by four numbers (AA 1111); 3) the following component parts and features of the rifle are consistent with Hungarian-manufactured AMM/AK-63-F assault rifles:

a) the fire selector marks;

b) the furniture (upper and lower handguard, grip, and buttstock), made of steamed beechwood;

c) the gas tube, rear sight, bolt carrier, and barrel;

4) the bolt, which is marked '455927', is not of Hungarian manufacture (FÉG-manufactured bolts bear a four-digit mark); 5) the bolt has been replaced and fitted to a reinstalled barrel (indicated by head-space adjustment marks); 6) the style of the receiver plate and trunnions suggests that the rifle was probably manufactured prior to 1970; and 7) although FÉG Defense Systems Inc. has observed matches in its records of partial marks, including '1661' on the receiver cover and '039' on the return spring guide, the potential matches with this partial serial number are too numerous to determine categorically which rifle they originally belonged, the decade of manufacture, or the intended end user.

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