

JOINT AU-UNODA-RECSA PROJECT TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEPTEMBER 2022 AFRICA AMNESTY MONTH in LIBERIA, TOGO and TANZANIA



Narrative Report–July 2022 to December 2022

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1. Executive Summary

Africa Amnesty Month (AAM) is part of continental efforts toward the goal of creating

a conflict-free, integrated and prosperous Africa, as envisioned in Agenda 2063, by encouraging the citizenry to voluntarily surrender their illicit weapons and ammunition without prosecution. It offers an opportunity to increase the number of registered weapons in order to protect people from gun violence.

Since 2020 when RECSA supported the coordination of the AU-UNODA efforts, some successes have been recorded notably; implementation was in seven countries—Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Kenya. A total of 1,602 weapons were destroyed and in Ethiopia civilians were encouraged to surrender their weapons for registration. In 2021 countries that were supported were; Uganda, Madagascar and Niger with a total of 4,342 weapons and 1,668 ammunition were destroyed.

Additionally, various countries have improved their gun control laws as a result of the AAM resulting to; better licensing, registration, tracking, and monitoring systems for gun ownership. Many other countries – including those that recently experienced conflict, those that are presently experiencing conflict, and even those that currently enjoy a state of relative calm – are making effort to adopt these initiatives.

The participation of heads of state and senior government officials actively in the commemorations demonstrates strong commitment to the cause. The continued commemoration of AAM by member states, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms and partners builds trust among state security institutions as weapons custodians and citizens. It also enables the development of programmes and policy frameworks that facilitate the surrender of weapons to the relevant government authorities in the month of September without fear of prosecution.

1.1 HIGHS:

The project's tripartite partnership created and impetus vital in generating high-level political support and national ownership, as countries have fully appropriated the concept and feel responsibility as AU Member States to deliver on their commitment to the African Union "Silencing the Guns" flagship initiative. Most beneficiary countries had events graced by the respective Heads of States or Ministers in charge of Security. This generated not only crucial political momentum and increased visibility of NATCOMs and NFPs, but has also elevated SALW control and weapons and ammunition management

Workshops on; community policing, local and community sensitisation were a crucial information source and capacity-building opportunity for law enforcement agencies providing a step to improve understanding of local-level community involvement in improving security and understanding local conflict dynamics. Beneficiary countries were keen on continuous engagement with community policing initiatives and public education and awareness campaigns on the dangers of illicit SALW and ammunitions with the involvement of women and youth participating actively.

The project to consider supporting institutional capacity of some beneficiary countries with equipment of safe storage of Government stockpiles and ammunitions to curb diversions. Also strengthening regional coordination for the harmonisation of legislation on the management of civilian firearms ownership. Pursuing extension of activities, not only geographically, but also thematically, and more concretely allow for an establishment of the NATCOMs and NFPs as important national coordination mechanisms in SALW management and control within the country.

1.2 LOWS:

The implementation period of the approved activities is short (from September to December) this has led to beneficiary countries not fully accomplishing the implementation activities. The implementation period is shortened by some factors such as; involvement Senior Government official to support the implementation e.g during launching and public destruction for the political-will and also the affirmation of the Country's support to encourage proper SALW management and control.

The scope of the activities is limited since some beneficiary countries upon collection of voluntarily surrendered SALW do not have the capacity to destroy them either due to lack of capacity such as; equipment, lacking legislation, or the overlapping roles of security agencies.

2. Project background and rationale

African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 strategic framework for socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next five decades. The 4th aspiration of the agenda highlights the need for dialogue-centered conflict prevention, as well as the management and resolution of existing conflicts, with a view to silencing the guns in our Continent by the Year 2020.

Agenda 2063 provides that in order to achieve sustainable conflict prevention and resolution, a culture of peace and tolerance must be cultivated and nurtured in our children and youth, among others, through peace education.

Furthermore, in its First Ten Years Implementation Plan, Agenda 2063 stresses the imperative of ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence and violent conflicts and prevent genocide, as part of Africa's collective efforts to silence the guns in the continent by the year 2020¹.

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), dedicated its 716th meeting held on 4 September 2017, to an Open Session on the theme: "Inaugural Launch of the of the Africa Amnesty Month for the Surrender and Collection of Illegally Owned Weapons Pursuant to Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec. 645 (XXIX) adopted during the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union"².

According to the decision, persons who surrender their illegally owned weapons/arms shall not be subjected to disclosure humiliation, arrest or prosecution. As one of the African Union recommended Master Roadmap of Practical Steps (2016) to Silence the Guns in Africa by Year 2020, September 2022 Africa Amnesty Month marks as the fifth year of the initiative.

The Africa Amnesty Month represents on the one hand a tool to reduce illicit flows of small arms and light weapons (SALW) on the continent, and on the other hand an opportunity for all to jointly contribute to peace, security and sustainable development.

¹ [37996-doc-au_roadmap_silencing_guns_2020.pdf.en_.pdf](#)

² [Press Statement of the 716th Open Session of the PSC on the theme: "Inaugural Launch of the of the Africa Amnesty Month for the Surrender and Collection of Illegally Owned Weapons " -African Union - Peace and Security Department \(peaceau.org\)](#)

The illegal possession of SALW by non-state actors, individuals, and groups is known to be a key instigator of armed violence, impeding socio-economic development and security on the continent.

The nexus between illicit SALW trafficking, organized crime and terrorism is widely recognized and represents a crucial threat in many parts of Africa, including the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The outbreak of COVID-19 further exacerbated the suffering of those exposed to armed conflict complicating crucial access to health care facilities and shelter. The pandemic also brought new urgency to address the gendered impact of the illicit proliferation of small arms and ammunition pointing to a dramatic increase in cases of gender-based violence often facilitated through the misuse of small arms.

According to the Weapons Destruction Modular Small-Arms Control Implementation Compendium 5.50 (MOSAIC)³, “Weapons destroyed after being collected in a post-conflict setting can send a clear message that war is over and can bring hope to those who are seeking to re-build their lives. Weapons destroyed after being recovered in crime can never again find their way into the hands of criminals.

Weapons destroyed after being identified as surplus to national requirements can result in reduced costs to the State associated with their long-term storage, management and security.”

Robust participation in destruction can help countries to better achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Particularly, SDG 16.4 which aims at significantly reducing illicit arms flows by 2030.

As noted in the UN Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda “Securing Our Common Future⁴”, explains that disarmament can support progress on SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), which includes targets on disarmament and arms regulations.

In addition, it identifies connections between disarmament and SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 14 (life below water), SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

The Africa Amnesty Month supports the broader AU “Silencing the Guns” flagship initiative, in helping to prevent and reduce the illegal circulation and misuse of SALW, which is central to realizing peace, security and stability on the continent.

It constitutes an important opportunity to attain the goals laid out in the Lusaka Roadmap, as well as a commitment to the joint achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. In this regard, Africa Amnesty Month particularly supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions and its Target 16.4 on the significant reduction of illicit arms flow.

Assembly Decision⁵ [Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV)] adopted during the 14th Extra-Ordinary Session on Silencing the Guns held on 6 December 2020, in

³ [Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium \(MOSAIC\) – UNODA](#)

⁴ [Disarmament Agenda \(un.org\)](#)

⁵ [ext-assembly-au-dec-1-and-decl-1-xiv-e.pdf \(peaceau.org\)](#)

Johannesburg, South Africa, extended the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa for a period of ten (10) years (2021–2030) and accordingly, extended the commemoration and conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month during September of each year for a period of ten (10) years (2021–2030) within the context of Agenda 2063.

The extension of the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa to 2030 provides an important opportunity for the UN, AU and regional/sub-regional organizations to strengthen and synchronize their collaboration.

In 2022, in the efforts to continue on the annual September Africa Amnesty Month, the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa, and Bordering States (RECSEA) is implementing the joint project in three (3) African interest who have expressed interest namely; Liberia, Tanzania and Togo. The project is coordinated by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), together with the African Union Commission (AUC) with funding from the Federal Government of Germany.

The project sets four key objectives, including sub-objectives, according to which project activities and sub-activities were designed.

2.1 Project objectives

- i. Reduce illicit ownership of SALW and their ammunition
- ii. Decrease levels of armed violence
- iii. Strengthen capacity of law enforcement/military on:
 - a. Outreach towards civilians including trust building measures such as community policing;
 - b. Establishing of voluntary weapons collection;
 - c. Stockpiling of SALW and ammunition including adequate marking, recordkeeping; and
 - d. Weapons destruction
- iv. Increase awareness through media among civilians on harmful consequences of illicit SALW ownership

The below project components are designed to achieve the set objectives in the four key areas, namely sensitization, capacity-building, weapons collection and safe storage, and destruction.

2.2 Project components

- a) Conduct nation-wide communication and sensitization campaigns through national and local media (primarily radio, but also TV and social media), and physical sensitization

missions carried out by the National Small Arms Commissions' teams in rural and urban areas to raise awareness on the negative effects of illegal gun ownership and illicit proliferation of small arms and ammunition within and among communities;

b) Organize community-based policing workshops for national law enforcement officers with the aim of generating local level approaches to policing and security provision linked to small arms control that will contribute to enhance trust between local communities and law enforcement;

c) Prepare weapon collection points, and proper storage of collected small arms and ammunition carried out through the National Commissions supported by national law enforcement officers and following international and regional standards and good practices;

d) Organize a public destruction events of collected weapons in accordance with international and regional standards and good practices.

3. Implementation

Adhering to the principle of national ownership, UNODA required that beneficiary countries adapt project activities according to their national realities and that the project team, together with the project national coordinating structure (national commission/national focal point) developed national implementation plans according to the local context and priorities. Accordingly, while the core areas of the project remained similar in all countries, the specific activity design varied from country to country. In that way, project planning was context- sensitive, including with regard to security and culture-related specificities.

The monitoring and evaluation component, which included a security perception survey, provided crucial insights into local security conditions, trends of illicit trafficking, and local security arrangements and security networks provided by traditional mechanisms in the absence of State authority.

The perception survey was conducted in the local areas designated for the project implementation by national authorities. Its aim was to assess impacts of illicit trafficking on local security, including a gendered impact, as well as to gather information on primary types of weapons in circulation, cultural linkages to holding of weapons (e.g. traditional hunters), and trust in the state when regarding the provision of security and local conflict resolution mechanisms.

The following will provide a general overview per country, including the main project activities, results, and indicators, timeframes, and locations, as well as the status of activity completion.

In addition, each country overview is followed by main findings of the security perception survey to contextualize the project implementation and deduce key recommendations for future programmatic engagement.

3.1 Republic of Liberia



The Government of Liberia through the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA), the national competent authority and Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons received funding to organize and promote initiatives for voluntary surrender of illicit weapons in civilian possession in selected communities in Liberia in response to the AU “Silencing the guns in Africa by 2030” declaration.

The Liberian component of the African Union September 2022 Amnesty Month project aims to improve public safety by sensitizing the communities on their obligations to voluntarily surrender illegally acquired arms, promote the registration and licensing of firearms in the possession of civilians, strengthen community relationship with the police, identify potential approaches, appropriate actions and best steps in addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the country, promote voluntary surrender of illegal firearms to the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms or the Liberia National Police during the Amnesty period.

The project target areas were: selected communities in Montserrado, Sinoe, Lofa and Bong counties. The planned activities implemented within the project period of September to November 2022 were;

3.1.1 Public launch

The Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA) officially launched the African Union Amnesty Month: Silencing the Guns” project in Liberia on August 16, 2022. The official launch brought together over one hundred five (105) stakeholders from state security agencies, relevant government Ministries, civil society actors and the media. In addition, the ceremony was attended by international partners including ECOWAS, EU, AU, MRU, UNDP, GIZ and selected diplomatic missions accredited near Monrovia. The launch initiated the official commencement of the Liberian component of the project which was implemented in selected communities in Montserrado, Sinoe, Lofa and Bong counties.

The official launch of the Amnesty Project brought together 200 participants comprising of 59 females and 141 males drawn from: state security agencies and relevant government Ministries, civil society actors and the media as well as international partners including ECOWAS, EU, AU, MRU, UNDP, GIZ and selected diplomatic missions accredited near Monrovia.

The official launch served as a platform for the Government of Liberia, Citizens and residents of Liberia as well as international partners informed about the AU – UN September 2022 Amnesty Month Project voluntary surrender and commitment to voluntarily surrender illicit firearms during the Amnesty Month period.

Some of the key observations from the launch were:

- i. inclusion of Liberia in the Amnesty Month Project generated the need to integrate the September Amnesty Month initiatives into the National Arms Control Program.
- ii. involvement of diverse groups to discuss arms control issues, elevated the need for sustained engagements among multiple stakeholders to promote national peace and security.

From the launch it is worth noting that;

- i. there is a need to expand the Amnesty Month Project in additional counties.
- ii. the AU-UN endeavor to ensure that project planning with potential implementing countries begin at least six months prior to implementation and funding made available prior to date of actual implementation.
- iii. the September Amnesty Month initiative serves as a platform to foster continued commitment and support from the Government of Liberia, civil society actors and international partners towards peace and security through arms control programs.

3.1.2 Media campaigns and awareness raising

The Commission contacted the services of a Media Consultant to undertake media campaign and awareness raising for the September 2022 Africa Amnesty Month. The Consultant led the development of awareness materials on the AU Amnesty and voluntary surrender of illegal SALW towards silencing guns in Africa for Print and Electronic media coverage.

The awareness campaigns involved the conduct of radio talk shows, the production of SAAM theme song, news stories publications, printing and distribution of awareness materials. The awareness campaign also included the production, airing of spot messages and public service announcements. In addition, physical engagements were held with

civil society actors, state security agencies, Community Based Organizations, the media, donor partners and the general public.

The main outcome of the media campaign was that the citizens and residents of Liberia were informed and educated on the AU Amnesty Month initiative through Print and Electronic media coverage

Key takeaway from the media campaign was that the civil society actors and media practitioners' partnership promotes effective and sustained information dissemination about AU Amnesty Month initiative. As a way forward: partnership with civil society actors and media practitioners' partnership to promote effective and sustained information dissemination and the need for funding to promote sustained media outreach in additional communities

3.1.3 Local sensitization missions

The local sensitization campaigns targeted community dwellers including local security officers, community Watch Teams, community leaders, Town Chiefs, Market women, youth and women groups, Community Based Organizations, local media and other stakeholders.

The media consultant and a six-member team from the Commission travelled to selected communities in Bong, Lofa, Sinoe and Montserrado counties to sensitize and mobilize local communities to voluntarily surrender illicit firearms during the September 2022 Amnesty Month period without fear of arrest, harassment, intimidation or prosecution.

The awareness activities were conducted alongside the Community Policing training for two days in each county. The team engaged community dwellers including local security officers, community leaders, Town Chiefs, Market women, youth and women groups, Community Based Organizations, local media and other stakeholders. The team distributed awareness materials including posters and flyers with illustrated messages promoting the Amnesty Month project. In addition, messages and jingles recorded in the local vernaculars as well as the SAAM Theme song were featured on local radio stations.

Local Government authorities, Community Leaderships and residents of the targeted communities sensitized on the SAAM and community dwellers mobilized to voluntary surrender illicit firearms and ammunition during the collection period.

It was observed that continued engagement with community dwellers enhanced synergy with the Small Arms Commission and promoting visibility of the Commission programs and activities and the partnership with local leaders and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) was an opportunity to promote sustained arms control advocacy in the communities.

Proposed way forward includes;

- i. continuous engagements with community dwellers to sustain the momentum of the SAAM
- ii. Commission with support from partners to provide minimum support to at least one CBO in each of the target community to serve as campaigners for the voluntary surrender of firearms and report to the Commission

- iii. Expand the sensitization campaigns in other parts of the country to fulfill the full potential of the SAAM in Liberia.

3.1.4 Community Based Policing Workshops

One of the key activities of the Liberian component of the project was to conduct Community Policing Training for community dwellers and local police officers in the Project targeted counties, Bong, Lofa, Montserrado and Sinoe. The aim of the training was to improve public safety by sensitizing the communities on their obligations to voluntarily surrender illegally acquired arms as well as promote the registration and licensing of firearms in the possession of civilians.

The Commission in collaboration with the Liberia National Police (LNP) Community Policing Section conducted Community Policing trainings for a total of 100 participants, 25 in each of the four counties namely, Bong, Lofa, Sinoe and Montserrado.

The direct beneficiaries of the trainings were local police officers, county authorities, traditional chiefs and elders, farmers, hunters, traders and community-based organizations.

The Community Policing Trainings were conducted in Lofa, Bong, Sinoe and rural Montserrado counties for a total of 6 days (two days for actual training and additional two days for travel and awareness campaigns in each county).

The 6-member team including technicians from the Commission, officers from the Liberia National Police Community Police Section and the media Communication Consultant also carried out sensitization and awareness activities to inform the local population about the objective of the AU-UN Amnesty Project.

During the mission, the team also encouraged individuals to voluntarily surrender illegal firearms to the Liberia National Police or the Commission during the Amnesty period.

In addition, the team disseminated awareness materials including flyers and posters depicting the theme of the project and mobilized the local communities to voluntarily surrender illicit firearms during the Amnesty period. As the result of the awareness campaigns, a member of the Community Watch Forum voluntarily surrendered a firearm to the Commission during the training in Zorzor, Lofa County.

The Community Policing Trainings were climaxed with the setting up of 8 community policing networks, two in each of the targeted county. The Community Policing Networks comprised of 7 members and the leaders drawn from the Community Watch Teams.

Other members of the Network are local leader from women and youth groups as well as police officers. Leadership structures were set up and formally inducted to supervise activities of the network and report to the Commission. The networks were charged with the responsibility to continue to sensitize and mobilize the local population to voluntarily surrender illicit firearms without fear of arrest, harassment and prosecution during the amnesty period. The Commission with support from SAAM provided operation support to the Networks.

The beneficiaries included police officers, local authorities, civil society actors, Community Watch Teams, Motorcycle Unions and community dwellers. The number of participants was 25 from each of the counties.

Community and state security relationship strengthened and reporting on illegal possession and voluntary surrender of firearms enhanced. The involvement of community dwellers is an important strategy to promote the voluntary surrender of illicit arms, ammunition and explosives.

It was noted that there was a need for the Commission with funding from donors to mobilize additional communities to promote the voluntary surrender of illicit firearms, ammunition and explosives.

3.1.5 Collection and transportation of voluntarily surrendered arms

The collection and transportation of arms voluntarily surrendered by community dwellers from selected communities in Bong, Lofa, Sinoe and rural Montserrado counties was carried out by three teams comprising two members each drawn from state security agencies including the Armed Forces of Liberia, the Liberia National Police and the Commission.

The teams travelled to three regions for a total of 9 days each to collect voluntarily surrendered arms, ammunition and explosives. The firearms were transported to the Edward Binyah Kesselly (EBK) Military Barracks in preparation for marking, recording and subsequent destruction.

As tabulated in table below.

Table 1: Description and Number collected weapons: (By County)

No.	County/ region	# of Firearms	Type	Ammunition	Explosives
1.	Montserrado	62	Shoulder-Fire Single Barrel, Short Single Barrel and AK-47 Rifles	1,600 pieces	5 Hand Grenades & 2 Mortar Bombs
2.	Bong	14	Shoulder-Fire Single Barrel & Short Single Barrel	400 pieces	NIL
3.	Lofa	19	Shoulder-Fire Single Barrel, Short Single Barrel, AK-47 Rifles & Carbon-15 Rifles	600 pieces	3 Pieces (Local Made Dynamites)
4.	Sinoe	7	Shoulder-Fire Single Barrel & Short Single Barrel	200 pieces	NIL

3.1.6. Public Destruction of the Collected and Surrendered Weapons, Ammunitions and Explosives

The Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA) in collaboration with relevant state security agencies and with funding support from the African Union September 2022 Amnesty Month: “Silencing the Guns” Project conducted a public destruction of weapons, ammunition and explosives voluntarily surrendered and collected from selected communities in Montserrado, Sinoe, Lofa and Bong counties.

The public destruction exercise, the first national destruction since the departure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia in 2016, was conducted on October 27, 2022 at the Edward Binyah Kesselly (EBK) Military Barracks located in Schiefflin Township, Margibi County.

In order to enhance the skills of security technicians for the intensive exercise, a week-long specialized training for twelve (12) security personnel in the operation and management of the arms destruction machine, safety methods and procedures, including major First-aid Assistance were conducted by the Mine Advisory Group (MAG) in collaboration with ECOWAS.

The destruction included weapons, ammunition and explosives voluntarily surrendered under AU-UN Joint Support September 2022 Amnesty Month Project and seized and obsolete arms and ammunition retrieved from Circuit and Magisterial Courts and Police Depots under the ECOWAS-EU Organized Crime West African Response to Trafficking (OCWAR-T) Project.

The destruction exercise was witnessed by Officials of Government, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, to include Ambassador of Sweden and a representative from the Regional Security Office, United States Embassy near Monrovia, Members of the Legislature and Judiciary, representatives from EU, ECOWAS, Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP, MRU, CSOs, Media, Hunter Union, Traditional Council and other relevant stakeholders.

The Commission received a delegation from the United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), headed by Dr. Ivor Richard Fung, Deputy Director, Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament-United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the Ms. Aude Feltz, Associate Political Affairs Officer of UNODA Conventional Arms Branch. Also, a delegation from the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) led by Lt. Gen. Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir Mohamed, Executive Secretary.

Table 2: Description and number of weapons, ammunitions, explosives:

Type of Item/related material destroyed	Quantity
Arms	102 pieces (assorted)
Ammunition	2,800 pieces (assorted)
Explosives	10 pieces (assorted)

Challenges encountered:

- i. Technical problem on the Weapon Cutting Machine provided by ECOWAS led to delay of the arms destruction within the project timeframe anticipated

- ii. Logistical constraints on the transportation of collected weapons, ammunition, and explosives from targeted counties

Lessons Learnt:

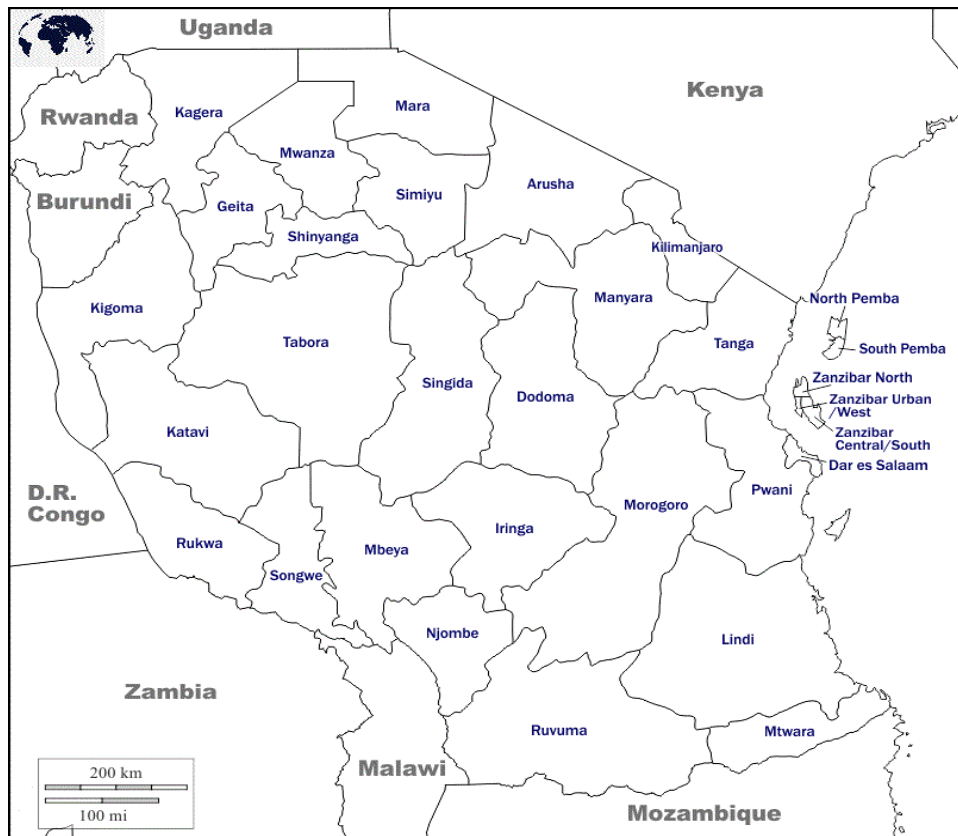
- i. Additional Technical Training in weapons destruction is required for Law Enforcement Officers to promote effective destruction and disposal of firearms, ammunition and explosives.
- ii. Periodic holding of public destruction with the participation of the general public increases public confidence and further accelerates voluntarily surrender of firearms among civilians

Way forward/recommendation:

- i. There is a need to provide specialized training for relevant security officers involved with the collection, marking and destruction of voluntarily surrendered firearms.
- ii. There is a need to conduct separate exercise for collection and destruction of explosives from firearms
- iii. That the destruction exercise be held annually

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3.2 United Republic of Tanzania



United Republic of Tanzania has signed numerous international agreements aimed at preventing the stockpiling of small and light weapons where the government has annually declared amnesty for persons possessing firearms.

The country has neighbors that have been or are embroiled in armed conflicts, resulting in the infiltration of illicit firearms by refugees. Three regions namely; Tanga, Tabora, and Morogoro were earmarked as pilot regions for implementing the africa amnesty campaign.

The planned activities implemented within the project period of September to November 2022 were; Public launch, Media campaigns, Local Sensitisation Missions, Community based policing. Collection of voluntarily surrendered weapons and ammunition. and Public destruction

3.2.1 Public Launch

The United Republic of Tanzania implemented the UN-AU September Africa Amnesty Month 2022 project through an official launch ceremony which was held on 05 September 2022 at Heroes Grounds in Dodoma region under the theme “Silaha Haramu sasa Basi Salimisha kwa Hiari” (No more illegal weapons, Surrender it voluntarily”).

The ceremony was officiated by the United Republic of Tanzania Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Hon. Jumanne Abdallah Sagini (MP). He urged citizens who possess illegal firearms in violation of the law to make good use of the government’s two-month amnesty to voluntarily surrender illegal firearms at police stations, local government offices, local government executive offices and villages without fear of being taken into custody or arrested. The launch event was attended by 455 participants; Men – 275 and Women 180

3.2.2 Media campaigns

A Media Consultant was contracted to organize, arrange and coordinate media to address sensitization programs to the members of the public to surrender illegal firearms. Some of media hired were; TBC, ITV, Azam TV, Channel Ten, Banana FM, E-FM, Wasafi FM, Dodoma FM and Online TV such as Milady Ayo, DAR24; various social media platforms like Tanzania Police-@Tanpol twitter, Instagram, and website etc. During the launch of the media campaigns;

3.2.2.1 The Regional and District Commissioners, Tanzania Police Force and local governments were to be urged to:-

- i. Conduct awareness programs in their area of responsibility all over the country,
- ii. Involve local government and political officials, religious leaders, media houses, and the public in the Africa Amnesty Month 2022 project.
- iii. Conduct sensitization programs to the various groups in their areas of responsibility.
- iv. At the end of the SAAM project to conduct police operation to arrest illegal possessors of firearms.
- v. Conduct operation to discover the sources of illicit firearms and disrupt them.

3.2.2.2 the Chief of Police noted:

- i. existence of public police partnership to enhance community policing and implement successful SAAM in their communities
- ii. Ward Community Policing Officers to work together with Ward executive officers in sensitization programs of SAAM and collection of surrendered firearms
- iii. case statistics of illegal possession of firearms from January 2019 to June 2022 as 997, whereas 52 firearms were stolen from legal possession to illegal possession.
- iv. to conduct the Police Operation after the end of the SAAM 2022 to reach out all illegal firearms still in the hands of bad guys.

3.2.2.3 the Regional Commissioner emphasized on:

- i. All local leaders at street/village level and ward level to conduct community policing programs basing on SAAM for surrender of illegal weapons.
- ii. Residents of Dodoma to use amnesty month granted by the government to surrender illegal firearms.
- iii. All District Security Committees within Dodoma Region to prepare work plan for sensitization programs during SAAM.

3.2.3 Local Sensitization Missions

During the local sensitization missions, it was acknowledged that the presence of illicit firearms in the community are specifically local manufactured guns some of which are modified to use as shotgun ammunitions.

The engagement of community in sensitization programs from the grassroots were able to know AAM concepts and laws governing firearms and ammunition and urged them to participate in SAAM campaign thus enhancing cooperation and trust between the Public and government officials. It created an opportunity for the public share their views.

suggestions and recommendations regarding SALW management and control interventions in the country.

Some of the notable observations during the local sensitization missions were;

- i. Homemade guns used by elders during traditional/cultural rites and ceremonies are not regulated neither recognized in law;
- ii. Government local leaders, government officials, law enforcement personnel and religious leaders were not aware of the SAAM concept until when they participated in the sensitization programs;
- iii. The distance covered from meeting sites was long
- iv. The budget was insufficient to cover up some of activities including sensitization programs and transportation costs for the participants.

3.2.4 Community based policing

The Community based policing workshop was held to increase trust and partnership between police and community and the involvement of vulnerable groups in the SAAM campaign.

The following participated in the community policing workshops:

- i. **Tabora region** the workshop was held on 16/09/2022: Number of participants- 109 Men -79 : Women- 30.
- ii. **Morogoro region** the workshop was held on 08/09/2022: Number of participants were 60.Men 43: Women 17
- iii. **Tanga region** the workshop was held on 12/09/2022 with a total of 154 participants. Men 119 : Women 35
- iv. In **Kilimanjaro region**: Seminar was held on 01/09/2022 and Senior Police Officers – Men 190 : Women 24 participated

3.2.5 Local public sensitization

During the implementation of the September Amnesty Month 2022, participants were Government officials, political leaders, Ward leaders, Ward and Village executive leaders, village and street chairpersons, religious leaders, Representatives from women groups and civil societies.

Below are the numbers of people who participated in the **Local public sensitization**:

- i. **Dodoma region**: the campaign was done on 05 September 2022: Participants were 455 Men – 275; Women 180
- ii. In **Tabora region**: the Sensitization was held on 7/09/2022: Approximately a total of 432 participants Men -83%, Women 17%

- iii. **Morogoro region:** Sensitization held on 09/09/2022 with approximately 350 participants. Men -75%, Women 25%
- iv. **Tanga region:** Sensitization was held on 13/09/2022 with approximately 1,515 participants. Men 68%, Women 32%
- v. **Kilimanjaro region:** Religious Leaders(Men123:Female 114)
- vi. **Dar es Salaam:** workshop held on 24/09/2022: Religious leaders-142 participant: Women 40% and men 60%

3.2.6 Collection of voluntarily surrendered weapons and ammunition

During the collection of surrendered weapons, the following **was observed**:

- i. community members were Willingness to surrender
- ii. Some surrendered without reviling the identity
- iii. Even Licensed firearms were also surrendered
- iv. Licensed firearms possessed with family members who are not licensed were collected
- v. There is indication of existence of local manufacturers due to high number of local firearms collected
- vi. Local sensitization motivated the public to surrender the firearms in a big number

The following **Challenges** were also reported:

- i. Low budget to cover all the operations
- ii. Large number of staff involved due to number of regions
- iii. Small number of days to cover the operations
- iv. Delayed information from collection sites in rural areas

Recommendations on this activity include:

- i. Increase fund in collection program
- ii. To reach more fund for collection
- iii. To develop mechanism for information flow
- iv. To continue receiving the surrendered firearms after the project end

3.2.7 Public destruction

The destruction was done in open public for the purpose of public awareness and confidence building. Prior to the destruction process, the firearms were verified, recorded and labelled. The destruction method used is open air burning after getting approval of the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC).

The destruction event was held on 22/11/2022 in Dodoma with 214 Participants; Men 165 and Women 49. A total of 6,208 firearms were destructed as tabulated below.

TABLE 3: CATEGORIES OF FIREARMS DESTROYED ON 22ND NOVEMBER, 2022 IN DODOMA – UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

S/N	CATEGORY OF DISARMAMENT PROJECT	TYPES OF FIREARMS											TOTAL
		PISTOL	FN	S/GUN	RIFLE	LOCAL GUNS	AK	SKS	G3	UZGU N	SHEGU N	STERLING GUN	
1	AMNESTY MONTH 2022	18	00	122	30	1,049	01	00	00	00	00	00	1,220
2	AMNESTY MONTH 2021	05	00	38	10	174	01	00	00	00	00	00	228
3	OPERATIONS	14	05	99	169	4,339	117	11	01	02	01	02	4,760
GRAND TOTAL		37	05	259	209	5,562	119	11	01	02	01	02	6,208

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1. 3.3 Republic of Togo



In Togo, implementation of the project involved the entire country in terms of the media campaign and the collection or regularization of the administrative status of illegally held weapons, and targeted three (3) regions for capacity building workshops for the actors involved. The activities were implemented supported sensitization through a media campaign, capacity building of the actors involved including defense and security forces, religious leaders, traditional chiefs, local elected officials and civil society organizations (women's and youth associations).

The project also took into account the collection and destruction of weapons.

3.3.1. OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE SEPTEMBER LAUNCH OF AMNESTY IN AFRICA

In accordance with the established timeline, the project was launched through a ceremony that took place on September 07, 2022 in Lomé. It marked the beginning of the implementation of the programmed activities. The ceremony also recorded the effective presence of technical and financial partners such as the United Nations through the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) and the Regional Center on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Countries (RECSA).

Several entities took part in this launching ceremony. They include, among others, the ministerial departments in charge of foreign affairs, security, defense, environment, territorial administration and communication; civil society organizations such as WILPF-Togo, WANEP-Togo, RASALAO-Togo, National Youth Council, WILDAF-Togo, West African Women's Peace and Security Working Group, Togolese Civil Society Forum for Development, as well as public and private media.

Challenges :

- i. Organizational capacity due to the continental launch of Amnesty Month activities by the African Union Peace and Security Council from Lomé;
- ii. Taking charge of the invited guests for the occasion, given that no budget line had been provided for this purpose.

Lessons learned:

- i. Strong mobilization of the media;
- ii. Good collaboration with all the actors involved;
- iii. Discovery and better knowledge of the project by all the actors;
- iv. Great interest of the media for the theme from the exchanges (questions and answers) following the summary presentation of the concept note of the project.

It was proposed as a way forward to consider better coordination between the United Nations, the African Union, RECSA and the beneficiary country (Togo);

3.3.2. MEDIA AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The media campaign including, among others, media coverage of all project activities, radio and TV broadcasts as well as the dissemination of awareness messages in the form of audio visual and sound spots, was conducted through several broadcast channels. These channels include radio, television, print and online media, and social networks. The broadcasting channels such as radios Lomé and Kara, the national television (TVT), the Grand Quotidien Togo-press and the Agence Togolaise de Presse are organs of national coverage.

Challenges :

- i. Identifying a media consultant with proven experience in small arms and light weapons;
- ii. Taking charge of media other than those identified for the activities;

Lessons Learned:

- i. Great interest of the media in the activity;
- ii. Creating awareness on "the silencing the guns" project, particularly the African Union Amnesty Month, by the public through the media.

Way forward/recommendation:

- i. Support countries to continue the media awareness campaign to raise public awareness of the harms of illegal gun ownership and encourage collection;
- ii. Support training and capacity building for media actors on the issue of small arms and light weapons in connection with the African Union's "Silencing the Guns" project.

3.3.3 LOCAL AWARENESS MISSIONS

Outside of Lomé, the project took place in three (3) regions targeted of: Savanes, Kara and Centrale for outreach. Meetings were held with some key actors who are the prefects/leaders of the regional capitals, the mayors, the representatives of religious and traditional leaders as well as the heads of the local media in order to agree on the modalities of national coordination and their effective involvement in the success of the programmed activities.

During the missions it was noted that there was lack of participation of certain groups such as youth and women groups; and the involvement of development actors and private sector at the grassroots level.

Despite the shortcomings notable milestones were: great interest and strong involvement of local authorities in the project; good replication of the project in the communes; and the acceptance of the population to the project (surrender and regularization of illegally held weapons).

3.3.4 CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

This phase consisted of accompanying public actors (local elected officials, religious and traditional leaders, women's and youth groups, civil society, defense and security forces) as well as local authorities on the processes of the weapons amnesty concept and on the implementation of community policing as well as peace education, which are the guarantees of the population's empowerment

Three (3) workshops were organized in the main towns of the regions concerned, namely Sokodé, on September 12, 2022 on behalf of the Central Region, Dapaong, on September 14, 2022 for the Savanes Region and Kara, on September 16 for the Kara Region. The participants were drawn from the following structures: Gendarmerie, Police, Water and Forests, traditional chiefs, religious denominations, communes and civil society organizations. In total, there were 120 participants whose capacities were reinforced.

Some of the key lessons learned were:

- i. The themes developed met the expectations of the participants;

- ii. It is expected that security will improve in the localities according to the participants' appreciation;
- iii. Need for awareness on the values of peace, especially the mechanisms of peaceful conflict resolution;
- iv. Expansion of the participants' knowledge and skills in community policing and peace education;
- v. Optimism noted at the level of the participants with regard to the measures established for the voluntary surrender of weapons or the regularization of administrative status;
- vi. Participants' willingness to duplicate the information received in their communities;
- vii. Good mastery of the topics by the trainers.

As a way forward, participants proposed that:

- i. Intensify training on the promotion of the culture of peace through education and awareness;
- ii. Accompanying women's and youth organizations in the popularization of the African Union's "Silencing the Guns" project among their peers;
- iii. Involve grassroots development committees in upcoming activities;
- iv. Encourage the registration and free surrender of illegally held weapons;
- v. Organize workshops in each prefecture and commune in order to improve ownership of the concept of Amnesty Month and community policing;
- vi. Integration of the "peace education" module into school curricula;
- vii. Promote income-generating activities for unemployed youth in border areas to protect them from terrorist propaganda;
- viii. Support local structures in the popularization of the "Silencing the Guns" project for better ownership.

3.3.5. COLLECTION OF RETURNED AND OBSOLETE WEAPONS, AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES.

During the period from September 8 to 26, 2022, under the authority of the prefects, illegal holders were encouraged to voluntarily surrender their weapons and to regularize the administrative status of said weapons without prosecution or arrest.

This activity was coordinated by CNLPAL/ComNat-Togo in conjunction with other inter-ministerial structures such as the ministries responsible for the armed forces, security and territorial administration. Gendarmerie brigades and police stations were the places indicated for the voluntary surrender of weapons. On the other hand, the administrative status of the weapons concerned was regularized at the offices of the prefectures.

According to the data provided by the Tir Armes et Munitions (TAM) division of the General Staff of the Togolese Armed Forces, which led the collection, the weapons were distributed differently by region. Thus, we note at the level as tabulated in table 2 below;

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF COLLECTED WEAPONS PER TARGET REGION

	REGION	NUMBER OF WEAPONS COLLECTED
1.	Greater Lome	148
2.	Maritime Region	159
3.	Plateaux Region	241
4.	Central Region	97
5.	Kara Region	87

6.	Savanes Region	92
	TOTAL	824

Regarding the regularization of the administrative status of illegally held weapons, statistics to date indicate 195 weapons regularized throughout the territory.

Some Challenges faced were: low surrender of weapons in the northern zone probably due to the prevailing security climate in the said zone with terrorist acts; and reluctance of some holders due to lack of financial or material compensation.

Way forward/recommendation:

- i. Where possible, provide compensatory measures to increase the ownership of illegal arms holders;
- ii. Support the mapping of local artisanal arms manufacturers;
- iii. Support any initiative aimed at community disarmament in order to prevent armed violence in the communities.

3.3.6. DESTRUCTION OF RENDERED AND OBSOLETE WEAPONS, AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES.

The end of the collection operations was sanctioned by a destruction ceremony that took place on October 04 at the Agoè-nyivé firing range. The event was attended by political, military, traditional and religious authorities as well as the United Nations represented by the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC). This destruction was witnessed by a bailiff.

The weapons destroyed included: 824 weapons handed in (mainly 12-gauge weapons and homemade pistols); 683 weapons seized by the defense and security forces in the course of their missions.

It should be noted that one hundred 100 weapons were destroyed on 5 September 2022 during the continental launch of Amnesty Month in Lomé by the Peace and Security Committee (PSC) of the African Union.

In total 1,607 weapons were destroyed as part of the celebration of this amnesty month in Togo.

4.0 IN CONCLUSION

The establishment of a month of amnesty is a commendable initiative of our continental institution. It is rooted in the African security context where conflicts unfortunately persist, fueled by multifaceted factors and the tendency of civilians to acquire weapons to protect themselves. The situation is exacerbated by the scourge of the proliferation and circulation of weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons (SALW), which unfortunately are vectors of insecurity on our continent when they fall into the hands of individuals without faith or law.

African states have signed treaties in order to maintain peace in the regions. Most African countries set up national focal points or commissions to handle small arms control issues such as safe storage of weapons and ammunition, record keeping, voluntary weapons collection and destruction. The establishment of these national structures for collecting arms and ammunition is symbolic of countries' readiness to implement arms control initiatives, not least the objectives of Africa Amnesty Month.

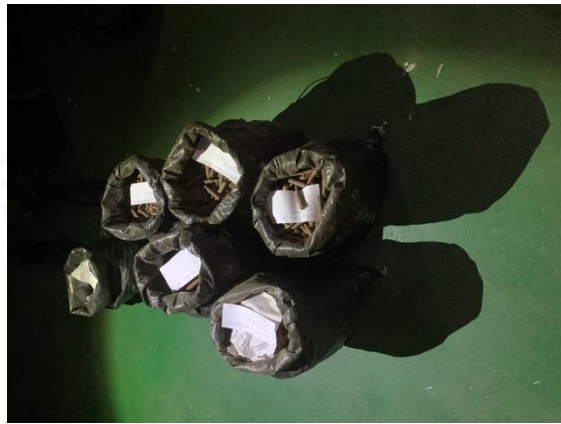
The top-down perspective of state and state stability for peace and security needs a bottom-up approach people centered conflict prevention. Civil society organizations have a unique "space to set agendas, create narratives, and be critical, and these are all things that can help to increase accountability, credibility, and the responsiveness of other actors. This inculcates a sense of ownership of the process in member states and encourages direct involvement of survivors and those affected by illicit arms.

Taking ownership of Silencing the Guns and actually developing national plans demonstrates the necessary political-will and leadership necessary to realize the aspirations of the initiative.

The AU can therefore build the necessary synergies with other stakeholders; the private sector, and civil society actors, to execute meaningful projects that can address different proportions to support the Africa Amnesty Month within the framework of implementing the AU Master Roadmap on practical steps to silence the guns.

5.0 ANNEXES with Links of Photos and news Papers

1. Republic of LIBERIA



Links to stories covering the National Destruction Exercise

<http://www.lincsa.gov.lr/index.php>

https://www.facebook.com/Kmtvlib/videos/792526872034250/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GKOT-GK1C (KMTV LIBERIA)

https://web.facebook.com/modliberia/videos/1151629699094301/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GKOT-GK1C (MOD LIBERIA)

https://web.facebook.com/STLLIB/videos/800109004650618/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GKOT-GK1C (SPOON TV LIBERIA)

<http://www.lincsa.gov.lr/gallery.php?61f9500a0e8ca174a15632efed4afcbf=MjY%3D>
(COMMUNITY POLICING GALLERY)

<http://www.lincsa.gov.lr/gallery.php?61f9500a0e8ca174a15632efed4afcbf=Mjc%3D>
(National Destruction Exercise)

<https://www.facebook.com/112373924640158/posts/pfbid02mxS84BNsMmHXZ71wCxmKqKn5FjcMcyweu3AVoaxkAFkx1AhBBPjxLKpDcuzlrKmel/?sfnsn=mo>
(National Destruction Exercise)

<https://fb.watch/gASRz-Fvt/> (National Destruction Exercise)

https://fb.watch/gAS_7Lzk6w/ (National Destruction Exercise)

<https://newspublictrust.com/defense-ministry-alarms-over-proliferation-of-illegal-weapons-in-liberia-2/> (National Destruction Exercise)

2. United Republic of TANZANIA



<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/1Rv-b0ly3DG-EOZt9-0mzopWs1HB8aJC6>

3. Republic of Togo



<https://full-news.info/mois-de-lamnistie-de-lua-togo-accueille-premiere-delocalisation/>
<https://manationtogo.com/mois-de-lamnistie-lunion-africaine-se-donne-lhorizon-2030-pour-eradiquer-la-circulation-des-armes-legeres-et-de-petits-calibres-en-afrique/>
<https://togobreakingnews.info/securite-debut-mois-amnistie-africaine-togo/>
<https://www.republicoftogo.com/toutes-les-rubriques/union-africaine/40-millions-d-armes-illicites-circulent-en-afrique>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrUOyvtzPjl2BhMZywmbyw/null>

<https://www.228actu.com/togo-presse-lancement-du-mois-de-lamnistie-en-afrique-a-lome>

<https://www.republiquetogolaise.com/securite/0610-7337-mois-de-lamnistie-plus-de-1500-armes-detruites>, <http://news.alome.com/h/140878.html>,
<https://togoreveil.com/singlepost-mois-de-l-amnistie-de-l-union-africaine---la-cnlpal-a-collecte-et-incinere-plus-de-1507-armes-au-togo-31-4980>,
<https://www.lenouveaureporter.com/togo-la-fin-du-mois-de-lamnistie-africaine-2022-marquee-par-la-destruction-de-plus-de-1500-armes-collectees/>
<https://afreepress.tg/2022/10/04/societe/mois-de-lamnistie-en-afrique-1-507-armes-saisies-et-detruites-au-togo/>

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