

October 1999

*The Conflict, Security  
& Development Group*

# bulletin

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& Development Group*

Security issues are moving rapidly up the development agenda. Behind the emerging concept of 'security first' is the recognition that a secure environment is a necessary foundation for sustainable development.

As a result, there is a new focus on the role of security forces – including military, paramilitary and police units – in the economic and political systems of many poorer states. It has long been recognised that bloated and unregulated security sectors impede development, but until the end of the Cold War the problem was largely 'off limits' to aid agencies.

## **Reversing the legacy**

Public welfare and poverty eradication were not part of the political logic that shaped Cold War relations between the superpowers and developing countries. Patterns of international assistance were predominantly conditioned by the security concerns of the superpowers and the imperative to maintain international stability. Emphasis was placed on protecting client regimes – however repressive or undemocratic – rather than on the needs of the people. Scant attention was paid to the impact of militarisation on the stability of these fragile societies and their prospects for long-term development.

The collapse of the former Soviet Union released donor countries from traditional geopolitical constraints. There is now less concern that aid processes will be held hostage to political dynamics between competing powers. While questions of strategic interest do remain important in determining which countries in crisis receive

*Also in this issue* Rt Hon Clare Short MP, British Secretary of State for International Development, on security-sector reform ... *Policy Brief* and *Operational Focus* on child soldiers ... plus regular features *Web Watch*, *Timeline*, *Update* and *Pointers*.

assistance, how much, and in what form, aid agencies are now better placed to respond to security problems in a holistic manner.

There is a growing acceptance that security is an essential public good, like education, health and clean water, and that poorer states may need international assistance to meet this need. Aid agencies are showing an active interest in a new range of issues relating to the effectiveness of public forces of law and order. These include: the best possible allocation of public spending between the security and non-security sectors; the nature of the relationship between civilians and the security establishments; and the impact of international arms sales on conflicts in the developing world.

### **Linking security and development**

The transformation in development thinking has created new opportunities to address security problems, and has also injected a much needed sense of realism regarding the limitations of outside intervention. Those developing countries with more stable economic and political prospects will be encouraged to ensure that their security sectors support, rather than undermine, other development goals. Some donors may well make aid conditional on reduced military spending and on increased legislative control over the security sector. This might be seen as an opportunity to break the cycle linking defence spending and underdevelopment.

For the majority of poorer, heavily aid-dependent states, plagued by weak

administrations, political instability and poor economic potential, security-sector reforms will follow different paths. In some cases, they will be seen as an opportunity to re-launch the development process by re-orienting government spending towards the social sectors. In others, reforms will be considered necessary to prevent unstable countries from sliding further into crisis by salvaging what is left of the state's monopoly of force. One concern is that, without proper verification, there is the risk that some factional or national leaders within developing countries may abuse the agenda for their own reasons.

The increasing diffusion of political authority, though, calls into question many of the state-centric assumptions on which aid interventions are based. By far the greatest challenge over the coming years will be how to respond to so-called 'failing' states, where the government has lost its monopoly of force completely. Several of the world's civil wars are sustained by light-weapons

proliferation and the lucrative international network linking warlords and the multinational corporations that extract and sell valuable natural resources. The histories of Somalia and Sierra Leone indicate how difficult it is to reconstruct a failed

state, even with the best will and resources of the international community.

### **The way forward**

Addressing the underlying causes of these problems is a daunting challenge. Donors have been compelled in recent years to concentrate more resources on addressing

... Security is an essential public good like education, health and clean water

emergency situations, ranging from war to natural disasters. The enormity of the humanitarian task has forced the international community to compartmentalise issues. The recent emphasis on the 'unholy trinity' of anti-personnel landmines, illegal light weapons and the use of child soldiers is symptomatic of this development.

International opinion may have been alerted to the human tragedies associated with states in crises, but attention has been deflected from looking for the required comprehensive solutions.

At the heart of the dilemma of security-sector reform is the need to reconcile two seemingly competing objectives.

- First is the restoration and maintenance of physical security so that development projects can proceed.
- Second is an increase in social and economic spending, which is essential for successful long-term development.

Limited resources mean that the pursuit of security involves delicate compromises between short- and long-term goals. It is difficult to determine whether security can best be achieved by increasing the effectiveness of police forces, for instance, or by tackling diverse societal ills that might undermine political stability in the future.

There will be a temptation to apply universal models that gloss over these dilemmas and local characteristics, reminiscent of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's broad-brush structural-adjustment programmes in the 1980s. This approach provided a blunt and

## ... 'punitive' conditionality ... is giving way to more 'positive' approaches

ruthless tool to align developing countries with the neo-liberal economic agenda that had achieved primacy in many Western

capitals, but proved to be incompatible with the diverse needs of developing countries. It assumed that states had the political will and the ability to see through difficult reforms, without taking into consideration either their complex

environments or the unacceptably high social costs.

The 'punitive' conditionality of the past is giving way to more 'positive' approaches. Although many donors will continue to use aid as a bargaining chip to promote policy reforms – albeit less overtly than before – acceptance is growing that there is a need for longer-term institution-building initiatives. This is the hallmark of the 'good-governance' programmes that have become increasingly popular among donors, and which are likely to form the basis for the security-sector-reform agenda. Possible policies include:

- promotion of efficiency and transparency in public administration;
- respect for human rights and the rule of law; and
- a greater role for civilian bodies in monitoring and managing the security sector.

How donors approach the question of military expenditure will be indicative of their more general attitude to security-sector reform. Some will focus on *levels* of military spending, while others will address the *process* by which spending decisions are made. The former suggests a willingness to dictate from

the outside how countries should meet their security needs, if not to determine arbitrarily what levels of security expenditure are acceptable. Making international assistance conditional on immediate policy changes may result in reduced security spending over the short-term, but there is little guarantee that military spending will stay down or that there will be a corresponding rise in social expenditure.

Moreover, where a heavy-handed approach is taken, it will not be long before analysts point out that some of the donor nations most active in promoting 'good' government are themselves among the largest suppliers of military equipment to developing countries. The extension of democratic control over the security sector is therefore one of the few ways to ensure that reforms have meaningful, long-term benefits. This will entail the kind of support that donors currently find difficult to provide and to sustain over the long periods required to make a real difference.

Efforts to reform the security sector will take place against the background of conflict between good intentions and political reality. Awareness that long-term development is impossible in the absence of stability implies a growing commitment to address the sources of insecurity. And increasingly a strong case will be made to fold many of the single-issue concerns into the broader development programmes. 'Security first', in its most comprehensive form, is emerging at the cutting edge of development policy as an enlightened and necessary counterpart to the narrow focus of previous decades.

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The editor invites readers to make comments and to submit articles for future editions.

Governments and non-governmental organisations have adopted the child-soldier issue. Even rebel groups are feeling the pressure to pay at least lip service to this concern. But disagreement about the minimum age for military recruitment means that legislation is full of discrepancies and diplomatic compromises.

**Protocol II of the Geneva Rules, 1977**, states that children under 15 years 'shall neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities'. This is not yet ratified by all states.

**UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989**. Almost universally ratified, but the language is tempered: 'State Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities'. Age of Recruitment is set at 15 and above. For all other purposes in the CRC a child is defined as below 18.

**Organisation of African Unity Charter on the Welfare and Rights of the African Child, 1991**, keeps the reference to 'direct' hostilities made in the CRC, but has 18 as the cut-off age. The Charter is not yet in force.

**Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998**, establishes individual criminal responsibility for the recruitment or use in hostilities of under 15s. Statute needs to be ratified by 60 states for the Court to come into effect.

**International Labour Organisation Convention on the worst forms of child labour** covers the *forced* or *compulsory* recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. First international convention to set 18 as the minimum age limit.

Practical responses to child-soldier demobilisation are often based on reactive programming, and lack sufficient coordination and 'quality control'.

Furthermore, international human-rights and humanitarian-law provisions are too ambitious and not sufficiently prescriptive.

In Rwanda, for example, both the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) recruited child soldiers during the genocide and war of 1994. Children joined the opposing sides for a variety of reasons, ranging from the need to survive after they had been separated from their families, to the desire for revenge. In addition, not all of the children affiliated with the two armies actively participated in combat. Living conditions for the children attached to military units were physically rigorous and psychologically stressful. Children lost contact with their families, were exposed to violence and, as a result, lacked sociability.

In October 1994, the new Rwandan government declared its commitment to demobilise all child soldiers, known as *Kadogos* (little ones). But it drew a distinction between the estimated 5,000 child soldiers attached to the 'victorious' RPF and those serving with the FAR. The latter were largely held in Rwandan detention centres accused of genocide-related crimes, and were excluded from the reintegration process.

The Rwandan government created a single rehabilitation centre for the *Kadogos*. In June 1995, a former military-training school was opened with 41 teachers, 15 social workers, and a small administrative staff. Its initial intake of some 2,400 children was selected by the authorities using undefined criteria. The school offered little more than primary education and basic material necessities – albeit of a high standard – such as

# operational focus

## *Child-soldier demobilisation*

food, clothing and shelter. Lacking was a fully-fledged reintegration programme, including vocational training, a tracing system to aid family reunion, and some form of community preparation for the return of child soldiers.

Despite its shortcomings, the facilities of the school were superior to those of other educational institutions. The *Kadogos*' special status also gave them preferential access to limited places in the secondary education system. And former child soldiers expected special treatment in recognition of their contribution to 'the struggle'.

This illustrates the more general challenge of finding a balance between meeting the needs of child soldiers on the one hand, and making them too 'special' on the other, which can cause resentment in the community and inhibit their ability to reintegrate. The 1998 European Union Evaluation on Human Rights Mechanisms in Rwanda described the *Kadogo* school as representing 'the worst form of institutional placement'.

Some *Kadogos* even applied to rejoin the armed forces. After initially refusing these requests, the Department for Demobilisation at the Ministry for Reintegration and Social Affairs decided to consider applications on a case-by-case basis. This change of policy has to be viewed in the context of the civil war raging again in the north-west of the country and the

new recruitment drive initiated by the armed forces. Another factor was that, at this point, the majority of *Kadogos* were between 16 and 20 years of age, and, therefore, were not considered children according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This raises questions about the ethics of recruiting former child soldiers, now adults, when demobilisation and reintegration programmes have been ineffective.

In Rwanda, no clear co-ordination mechanism existed between the different ministries dealing with demobilisation of child soldiers. There was a similar lack of consensus and co-ordination among non-governmental and international organisations. Relevant legislation has not been coherently overhauled,

although there are some new initiatives. The juvenile justice system, in particular, needs revision given the large numbers of children held in detention centres.

Drawing on the example of Rwanda and other cases, the UN published a study in 1996 on the impact of armed conflict on children. In the report, Special Rapporteur Graca Machel recommends that:

‘Governments, donors and relief organisations should prevent the institutionalisation of children. When groups of children considered vulnerable, such as child soldiers, are singled out for special attention, it should be done with the full co-operation of the community so as to ensure their long-term reintegration.’

## pointers

► Guinea has one of the most lenient asylum policies in Africa, with refugees making up 10% of its population. It now faces a security threat from rebel groups – mostly Liberian – who gain entry under the guise of being refugees, and then allegedly participate in attacks on border villages. This situation may affect Guinea’s attitude towards refugees and increase tension with Liberia.

► In August, Nigeria announced plans to cut its armed forces by 30,000 to 50,000 soldiers, which could impact on their peacekeeping role. Troop withdrawal from Sierra Leone was halted in early September after strong lobbying from

Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the UN, but it is scheduled to resume in October. Nigeria has been talking with UK and US military teams about training for the army.

► Sierra Leone’s Civil Defence Force (CDF) has handed over 89 child soldiers to the government. CDF ‘Co-ordinator’ and Deputy Minister for Defence, Chief Hinga Norman, estimates the number of CDF child combatants to be 11,000 – significantly more than first thought. In the region of Bo, 3,175 of the 18,000 registered CDF combatants are children.

► The International Monetary Fund (IMF)’s ‘Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility’ is now known as the ‘Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility’. The idea is that the Fund and the World Bank will work together with a focus on poverty reduction. The IMF will continue to take the lead on macro-economic policy.

# Development and the security sector

In November 1997, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) published the first ‘White Paper’ on development for more than two decades.

*Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century* commits Britain to using its influence directly and in collaboration with others to mobilise a stronger international commitment to the government’s poverty-eradication goals. These include:

- reducing by 50% the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015; and
- ensuring universal access to primary education and basic health care by the same date.

In order to achieve these targets, political and structural obstacles to poverty reduction must be tackled.

One of the most important obstacles to development is violent conflict and

insecurity, the human and development costs of which can be enormous. The principal victims of wars in the 1990s are civilians, particularly women and children. Furthermore, these conflicts generate a great number of refugees and displaced people, which, in turn, can cause further regional instability.

In many poorer countries, the security sector itself is to blame for the insecurity. This happens when elements within repressive regimes – including the military, paramilitary and intelligence units, as well as those services responsible for policing, penal systems and the administration of justice – foment violence and commit human-rights abuses.

## **Post-conflict societies**

The security sector poses a particular problem for societies that have suffered long periods of civil war. In such circumstances, there are often large numbers of unemployed former combatants marooned in demobilisation camps, waiting to return to a ‘normal’ civilian life. If demobilised soldiers are not reintegrated into civilian society and given a stake in the peace, there is a real prospect that many of them will resort to violent crime or succumb to pressure from ‘warlords’. The underlying causes of conflict will resurface, and full-scale violence is likely to resume.

In part, this is what happened in Sierra Leone, from which we have much to learn. The UK government is continuing its efforts both to introduce a far-reaching demobilisation plan, and to rebuild a security sector that is accountable to the democratically elected parliament and executive. Sierra Leone’s recent history illustrates the cost of not engaging sufficiently early and proactively in security-

sector reform. The physical damage and human suffering clearly highlights the development case for security-sector reform.

Of course, not all of the activities categorised as security-sector reform are appropriate for DFID. Consequently, our work depends on close collaboration with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD). DFID focuses on promoting good governance, conflict prevention, human rights and post-conflict reconstruction.

### Putting theory into practice

Security-sector reform is an integral part of our overall contribution to development and poverty reduction. DFID has seven priority areas for action.

**A shared vision.** We want to integrate a security-sector-reform perspective into our country programmes and into the thinking of other donors and multilateral development agencies, such as the European Union and the international financial institutions. Programme specifics will vary depending on the individual country, but the broad objective is the same:

- to support and to encourage democratic accountability, control and transparency in the security sector; and
- to reshape security sectors so that they serve the interests of citizens.

**Partnerships.** DFID will work to secure partnership programmes with the UN, and with regional and sub-regional organisations that are willing to co-operate on conflict and security issues. The first such programme was agreed in February 1999 with the

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Organisation of African Unity. We hope in the near future to develop a programme with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The objective would be

to help strengthen the organisational capacity of ECOWAS to fulfil its role in monitoring the implementation of the West Africa Moratorium on the Import, Export and Manufacture of Light Weapons.

**Human-rights training.** We want to expand our provision for training members of the armed forces and the police in developing countries in human rights and international humanitarian law. Such training will not guarantee an end to human-rights violations, but it does increase the expectation that soldiers and police officers will act professionally in conflict situations.

**Child soldiers.** In collaboration with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the UN Children's Fund, DFID has committed itself to reducing, over the next three years, the number of children involved in armed conflicts – currently estimated at some 200,000. A range of national and international initiatives will be needed to achieve this goal, including working with warring parties, and encouraging them to adhere to basic humanitarian norms. This means giving priority to children in demobilisation programmes, and providing alternative livelihoods for child soldiers so that they can return to civilian life.

**Light weapons.** There are an estimated 100 million light weapons in Africa alone, a high proportion of which are recycled from conflict to conflict. There are no easy

solutions and DFID has commissioned analysis of how we might curb flows of arms and ammunition in conflict-prone regions and reduce the number of weapons in circulation. An example of such an initiative is the 'weapons-for-development' project in northern Albania, which DFID is supporting through the UN Development Programme.

**Military expenditure.** DFID is holding a major international conference on military expenditure in London in February 2000, which will build on work carried out by the Canadians and others. We shall bring together experts from government, the international financial institutions, non-governmental organisations and academia, as well as other interested parties, to discuss how we can help countries and regions make reasonable judgements about the threats to their security, and the appropriate level of defence spending required to meet them. In most – although not all – cases this should lead to a lower level of military expenditure, potentially releasing resources for essential investment in anti-poverty programmes.

We should also support efforts to increase transparency and to encourage dialogue between nations at a regional level. This would help developing countries to make more informed assessments about what is an appropriate level of military expenditure. Moreover, it is important that developed countries do not encourage excessive levels of defence spending, either by an irresponsible approach to arms exports or by the poor use of export credits.

**Regional peacekeeping.** The MoD and the FCO have a more direct role in strengthening the military capabilities of developing states for peacekeeping missions. DFID's function is to ensure effective co-ordination between the military and civilian components of a peacekeeping force. We are

working with the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations on these issues, and we have commissioned work to develop peacekeeping-training components that directly address cultural and gender issues.

There is a growing trend towards the regionalisation of peacekeeping operations. We must strengthen the capacity of poorer countries to tackle security crises themselves, which should help to build trust and to increase co-operation between countries and regions, and thus contribute to regional security and peace-building.

### Conclusion

Security-sector reform is now firmly on our development agenda. Nobody should pretend, however, that this alone is a panacea or that it will be an easy policy to implement. We cannot simply assume that any funds freed from military expenditure will automatically be spent on social programmes.

We have to be vigilant that our support is not used to endorse or to strengthen the power of an illegitimate government or security force. Equally, civilian political control over the armed forces depends on the existence of an effective and efficient civil service, and a functioning relationship between the executive and the bureaucracy. These are complementary agendas of great complexity.

Security-sector reform is not possible without the genuine commitment of the countries concerned. But if security-sector-reform programmes do succeed, this will ensure that the international development targets are fully met.

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**Rt Hon Clare Short, MP, Secretary of State for International Development**

# time line

**13 and 20 October 1999** Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce Lecture Programme (London, UK)  
Respectively, International Committee of the Red Cross President Cornelio Sommaruga on 'The 50th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions: The Challenges of Protecting Civilians in Times of Armed Conflict', and UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Olaru Otunnu on 'Innocent Victims: Protecting Children in Times of Conflict'. Telephone +44 (0)20 7451 6868

**17–21 October 1999** Peace Through Tourism (Glasgow, UK)  
Organised by the University of Strathclyde. Contact Tom Baum at t.g.baum@strath.ac.uk or on +44 (0)141 548 3941

**18–20 October 1999** The European Conference on the Use of Children as Soldiers (Berlin, Germany)  
Organised by the International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Invitees only, but information and papers will be available at [www.child-soldiers.org](http://www.child-soldiers.org)

**29–30 October 1999** Workshop on Security in Refugee Populated Areas (Boston, US)  
Focus on the physical security and protection problems affecting refugees, relief workers and other people in refugee-populated areas. Closed session, but there will be a special volume of *Refugees Survey Quarterly*.

**8–12 November 1999** All Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (UN Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)  
Contact Dr Timothy Murithi on +41 (0)22 917 8595.

# web watch

**[www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)** Department for International Development (DFID)  
Copies of the White Paper, country/region strategy papers, keynote speeches and press releases. 'Projects in the Pipeline' details programmes and research projects that receive DFID funding.

**[www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)** Department of Trade and Industry  
Information about Britain's export licensing policy, including essential a 'country-search' on export controls.

**[www.nisat.org](http://www.nisat.org)** The Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers  
NISAT is developing a database on international small-arms production and transfers. It has a security-sector-reform programme – see report on 'Community Support to Help Police Stop Firearms Proliferation in Malawi'.

**[www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org)** International NGO Training and Research Centre  
Information about training, consultancy and research services for organisations involved in international development and relief. Research programmes include: 'The Contribution of NGOs to Peace-building in Complex Political Emergencies'; and 'NGOs, Civil Society and Decentralised Government in Africa'.

**[www.gn.apc.org/sworld](http://www.gn.apc.org/sworld)** Saferworld  
Looks at security-sector reform as part of its Conflict Programme. Saferworld's Arms Trade Programme includes a Light Weapons and Illicit Trafficking subsection. Executive summaries of their reports are available – see 'Spreading good practices in security-sector reform: Policy options for the British Government'.

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The editor does not accept responsibility for the content of any of the websites listed.

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update

**Dr Chris Smith** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Defence Studies (CDS) and Director of the Conflict, Security and Development Group. His main research interests include South Asia and Africa, light-weapons proliferation, anti-personnel landmines, and security-sector reform. Prior to joining CDS, he was a Fellow of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, and of the UN University in Delhi.

**Dr Susan Woodward** joined the Centre in June from the Brookings Institution where she was a Senior Fellow on the Foreign Policy Studies Program. Susan has held several academic posts in the US, including at Yale University, Georgetown University, and Johns Hopkins University. She also served as head of the UN Analysis and Assessment Unit in Croatia, and as Special Projects Advisor to Head of Mission, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Bosnia–Herzegovina. Her publications include: *Socialist Unemployment: The Political Economy of Yugoslavia, 1945–1990*; and *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*.

**Dylan Hendrickson** joined CDS as a Research Fellow in June. His academic background is in international relations and development studies, with a focus on Africa and Southeast Asia. From 1991–93, he worked as an aide in Cambodian Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh's cabinet. Between 1995 and 1999, he carried out research on the security problems and peace processes of developing countries for various non-governmental organisations, UN agencies and the British government. Dylan's current research is on military expenditure and post-war restructuring of security sectors.

**Dr Comfort Ero** joined the Centre as a Research Fellow in August. Previously, she was a Research Associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), where she wrote an Adelphi Paper examining the realities of building order in post-Cold War Africa. She holds a Ph.D on *The Evolution of Norms in International Relations: Intervention and Non-intervention in Intra-African Affairs* from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Comfort's research focus is on conflicts in Africa, and she is currently examining the lessons that can be drawn for Sierra Leone from other attempts in Africa to build a new national army, to co-ordinate security agencies, and to develop the role of civilian authorities.

**Richard Jones** is Editor of the *Working Papers* and the *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development*. He holds a BSc (hons) in Economics and Political Science from the University of London, and an MA in International Politics and Security Studies from the University of Bradford, Department of Peace Studies. Richard was Director of International Security at Dfax and Editor of *International Peacekeeping News*. Before joining CDS he was Assistant Editor of *Strategic Comments* at IISS. His main research interest is the role of the business community in conflict management and international relations.

**Roxanne Bazergan** is Research Officer and Editor of the *Bulletin*. She has a BA (hons) in Modern History from the University of Sussex and an MA in China Area Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies. Roxanne joined CDS from the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)'s West Africa project. She has also worked with journalists based in Central Asia, providing research and building contact networks.

**Penny Admiraal** is the Programme Administrator. She also manages the Centre's work on anti-personnel landmines, light-weapons proliferation, and on Kashmir. Prior to joining CDS, Penny worked at the Institute for Education, University of London, the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, and the BBC.

# bulletin

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