CAR loyalist soldiers drive around Bangui in November 2002, shortly after President Ange-Félix Patassé squashed an uprising with the help of fighters called in from Libya and DRC.
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The Central African Republic: A CASE STUDY OF SMALL ARMS AND CONFLICT

11

INTRODUCTION

In the past ten years, the Central African Republic (CAR) has hosted four international peacekeeping operations and witnessed conflicts in neighbouring states that have routinely made international headlines. Yet, relatively little literature exists on the country. As will be shown, this study has relevance far beyond the troubled, landlocked nation that is its subject. It challenges many widely held assumptions about security-sector reform (SSR) that have continental and global implications. The study also provides a richer context for acquiring a better understanding of continuing threats to peace and security throughout the region. It underscores how conflicts are interrelated and how progress in one country can harm that of another if proper attention is not paid.[1]

CAR—a country spanning 623,000 square kilometres (somewhat larger than Portugal and Spain combined)—has fared poorly and experienced considerable turmoil since gaining independence from France in 1960. Its 3.9 million citizens are among the poorest people in the world. There have been four coups d'état, the latest on 15 March 2003, when former military Chief of Staff General François Bozizé overthrew President Ange-Félix Patassé (see Table 11.1).

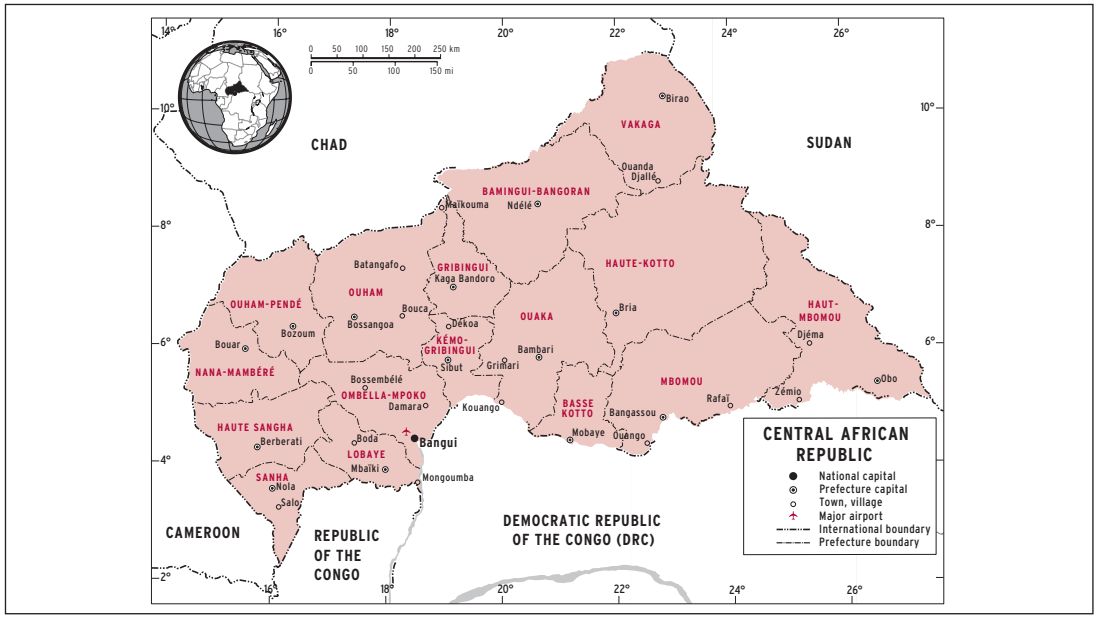
Table 11.1 Central African heads of state, 1960–2005

President	Tenure	Ethnic group	Birthplace/ home town (prefecture)	Position prior to assuming office	Reason for leaving office (date)
David Dacko	1960–65	Ngbaka	Bouchia (Lobaye)	Minister of the Interior, Economy, and Trade*	Coup d'état (31 December 1965)
Jean-Bédel Bokassa	1966–79	Ngbaka	Bobangui (Lobaye)	Chief of staff of the armed forces	Ousted in absence by French troops (21 September 1979)
David Dacko	1979–81	Ngbaka	Bouchia (Lobaye)	Bokassa's personal adviser	Coup d'état (1 September 1981)
André Kolingba	1981–93	Yakoma	Kembé (Basse Kotto)	Chief of staff of the armed forces	Election defeat (19 September 1993)
Ange-Félix Patassé	1993–2003	Sara	Paoua (Ouham-Pendé)	Former prime minister	Coup d'état (15 March 2003)
François Bozizé	2003–	Gbaya	Bossangoa (Ouham)**	Former chief of staff of the armed forces	

Notes:
* CAR enjoyed substantial autonomy prior to independence.
** President Bozizé was born in Mouila, Gabon, but grew up and has his roots in Bossangoa.
Sources: BBC (2005); Sangonet (2005); *Telegraph* (2003); Fundación CIDOB (2001a; 2001b); Kalck (1992)

Still, CAR has been relatively peaceful compared to the majority of its neighbours. Of the five countries that border CAR, only Cameroon can say the same. Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Republic of the Congo, and Sudan have all endured civil wars and insurgencies.

Map 11.1 Central African Republic and its neighbours



Small arms did not figure prominently in the country's misfortune until 1982. It was then, after a failed coup attempt (Kalck, 1992, p. xlii), that non-state actors in CAR began to take receipt of arms from abroad. The change in government in Chad in 1982 also had serious ramifications for CAR, including the movement of armed personnel across the border.

The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a number of coup attempts, suspected coup attempts, and relatively small-scale violence involving dissatisfied factions and the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) (Kalck, 1992, pp. xliv-lv).

The situation, however, deteriorated sharply in 1996, when elements of FACA mutinied, culminating in the looting of the country's largest arms depot at the Kassaï barracks, in the capital, Bangui (McFarlane and Malan, 1998, pp. 49–51).[2]

In 1997, following the overthrow of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko, thousands more weapons flooded into CAR. A similar situation ensued two years later, when the Ugandan-backed Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC), a rebel group led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, defeated the Forces armées congolaises (FAC) of Laurent Desiré Kabila, Mobutu's successor. During 2002 and 2003, still more weapons entered CAR via Chad, which backed General Bozizé's military campaign.[3]

This chapter focuses on events between the years 1996 and 2003 that have affected the state's ability to regulate weapons among civilians and have led to a massive influx of arms into large parts of the country. Together, they have created a clear threat to national security and to law and order.

The chapter comprises four main sections. The first examines small arms availability and distribution with respect to state and non-state actors in CAR. The second looks at small arms flows and trafficking, both direct transfers from states and indirect transfers from states and armed groups. The third assesses the impacts of small arms use and availability. The fourth analyses the various disarmament efforts undertaken in CAR in recent years.

Below are the main findings.

- Armed elements in CAR seriously outgun government forces (with the exception of the presidential guard), which are not prepared to counter them.
- The government, which claims that 50,000 small arms are circulating nationally beyond its control, may be *underestimating* the scale of the problem.
- Long-standing arms stockpile multipliers for the FACA are extremely small. Consequently, past calculations of government small arms holdings throughout Africa may be well below present estimates.
- Peacekeeping operations have not been a significant source of weapons.
- While regional states have supplied weapons to government forces and to rebels seeking to acquire power, the type of hardware has been relatively limited and has not included surface-to-air missiles.
- Non-state actors not only receive *matériel* and other kinds of support from governments, but they can also play a crucial role in aiding recognized state administrations.
- While firearms-related deaths and injuries in CAR may be relatively insignificant compared to other conflict zones in the region, the country suffers greatly from the economic and psychological effects of small arms use and availability.
- Arms recovery programmes in CAR have been poorly designed and badly implemented. In addition, they have been considerably less successful than touted and arguably have undermined national security.

Most armed elements in CAR seriously outgun government forces.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF SMALL ARMS

Central African governments have relied on and supported different services within the armed forces and security sector to varying degrees. For the first 20 years of independence, however, the state more or less effectively—and, at times, ruthlessly—monopolized the coercive use of force.[4] This changed in the early 1980s, with the establishment of the first armed opposition groups.[5]

President Patassé, a Sara from the north, never trusted the army, whose ranks his predecessor, André Kolingba (see Table 11.1), had filled to an unprecedented extent with fellow Yakomas from the south. Instead of trying to reform the institution, he built up the presidential guard at its expense—which largely explains why, in 1996, so many soldiers opted to mutiny. When the presidential guard failed to provide him with the protection he sought, he created a succession of pro-government militias.

Patassé never exercised effective control over the weapons that his regime distributed to such entities. These militias were relatively well armed, many receiving AK-47 (or Chinese Type 56) assault rifles.[6] By contrast, many government soldiers possessed antiquated weapons, such as MAS-36 bolt-action (single-shot) rifles.

Governmental institutions issued with small arms

Forces armées centrafricaines

Attempted coups, mutinies, and politically motivated neglect—as well as selective reward processes—have taken their toll on FACA. After the 1996 mutinies, FACA received little support. President Bozizé, though, has shown interest in reforming and strengthening the institution (Frères d'Armes, 2000, pp. 22–24).

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FACA soldiers march in a parade in Bangui, March 2004.

The force has never been very large, and its strength appears to have peaked under President Jean-Bédel Bokassa. By the end of his tenure in September 1979, the armed forces consisted of 7,500 soldiers (Decalo, 1989, p. 165). The subsequent presence of French troops (until 1998) contributed to CAR's security and hence FACA's strength was reduced substantially. By 1996, it had been cut by more than 50 per cent. In 2000, according to then Central African Minister of Defence Jean-Jacques Demafouth, 500 new recruits joined its ranks (Frères d'Armes, 2000, p. 19). Their addition, along with an influx of several hundred presidential guard members, brought the size of FACA to close to 4,000. Approximately 1,250 soldiers, however, reportedly fled to the DRC after Kolingba's unsuccessful coup attempt of May 2001.[7] Another 300 apparently attached themselves to General Bozizé's rebel force in November 2001.

It is difficult to ascertain the quantity and type of weaponry in service with FACA. In October 1963, shortly after independence, the army was lightly armed, possessing 1,017 weapons. All but ten of these items were small arms. The only rifle issued was the MAS-36, comprising nearly two-thirds of firearms in the military's inventory. Light weapons consisted of two 12.7 mm machine guns, four 60 mm mortars, and four 81 mm mortars (SHAT, 1963, p. 38). The introduction of Kalashnikov assault rifles over the years has not changed the bottom line: FACA is a lightly armed force.

Gendarmerie

Rather than complementing the army, the gendarmerie has historically competed with it—and with other government security agencies—for the president's trust and support. Reportedly, there were 1,600 gendarmes in 1970 and some 1,300 in 2000, with plans to increase the size of the force to 1,800 (Frères d'Armes, 2000, p. 34). In June 2002, 200 new recruits (the first since 1994) began a nine-month training course at the gendarmerie school in Kolongo (Frères d'Armes, 2002, p. 40), suggesting that the force has yet to realize its planned strength, or that intentions have changed. According to President Bozizé, there were 1,310 gendarmes in 2003 (CAR, 2003, p. 6). Gendarmes are principally armed with pistols, MAT-49 sub-machine guns, MAS-36 bolt-action rifles, and Kalashnikov assault rifles.[8] Forces loyal to General Bozizé ransacked many of their depots in 2002.

Presidential guard

The force primarily responsible for protecting the president has had many names over the years. Two things have remained fairly constant, however: it has been comparatively well staffed; and it has been relatively well treated. Furthermore, its members are better armed than colleagues serving with other armed services and public security institutions in the country.

Under President Patassé, presidential security personnel, whether in uniform or not, could be identified by the personal firearms they carried. They tended to be outfitted with Kalashnikov assault rifles, AA-52 light machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs).[9]

In 1997, President Patassé undertook to transform the presidential guard into the Force spéciale de défense des institutions républicaines (FORSDIR), a process completed in early 1998 (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 1999). At the end of 1999, the strength of FORSDIR was officially put at 642, but Faltas contends that its actual size was closer to 900 (Faltas, 2000, p. 92). In 2000, as part of a package of negotiated reforms, President Patassé changed FORSDIR into the Unité de la Sécurité Présidentielle (USP), and, at least on paper, integrated it into FACA. Although the USP was supposed to report to the chief of staff of the armed forces and ultimately to be accountable to the minister of defence, in reality it continued to report to, and take orders directly from, the president and remained largely autonomous.[10]

Police

Police services in CAR have never enjoyed significant government support. In 1963, for example, the police, which then numbered 315, possessed just 61 firearms: 6 pistols; 40 sub-machine guns; and 15 rifles. All of the latter were bolt-action Mousquetons, first produced in the 19th century (SHAT, 1963, pp. 62–63). Subsequently, police officers were usually armed with French MAS-36s, another bolt-action rifle, but of more recent (Second World War) vintage. Currently, however, they are effectively unarmed. Most police depots were looted during the mutinies and coup attempts of 1996–97 and 2001–02. The key exception is the police unit tasked with combating banditry: the Office central de répression du banditisme (OCRB). Its members used to be armed with MAS-36s, but in December 2003, all 45 of them were issued with a Kalashnikov assault rifle.[11] This was possible because the OCRB is allowed to use some of the armaments that it recovers from criminals (see Arms recovery and disarmament efforts, below).[12] In December 2003, President Bozizé authorized a transfer of 50 Kalashnikovs for the 1,685-strong police force and provided officers with 50 magazines and 1,500 additional cartridges.[13]

Most police services in CAR are effectively unarmed.

Other

It is more difficult to document the structures and firearms in service with other governmental institutions outside of the armed forces and police. According to French military archives, in 1963 three such public forces possessed armaments: forest guards; hunting guards; and diamond mine district personnel.[14] The first two were armed with MAS-36 rifles, while the third was equipped with pistols (SHAT, 1963, p. 65). Together, they likely did not number more than 100 people, if that. In 2000, the state employed 70 guards to protect its natural resources—no new recruits have been hired since the mid-1980s (Blom and Yamindou, 2001, p. 11). In December 2003, the number stood at 51.[15]

The former state intelligence services—the Centre national de recherche et d'information (CNRI) and the Section d'enquête, de recherche et de documentation (SERD)—with approximately 250 personnel were officially dismantled in 1997. The staff and arms of the CNRI, the larger of the two agencies, were transferred to FORSDIR.[16] It is not believed that the current intelligence service, the Direction générale de la documentation et des enquêtes (DGRE), is particularly large or well armed. SERD, which was to have been dismantled, still exists, however. One informed observer put SERD's strength at 20–50 men and said all carried arms.[17]

Non-governmental armed groups

Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain

Many members of President Patassé's political party, the Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain (MLPC), were armed. President Patassé and his supporters first received arms after his unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 1981. Some MLPC cadres remained armed even after President Patassé took office in 1993. President Bozizé's government

has placed the strength of an armed 'parallel police force' of MLPC members at 820 (CAR, 2003, p. 7). It is unclear whether this is the same as a 'MLPC militia' mentioned by some informed observers. One source put the strength of this group at between 500 and 1,000 in 2003, adding that each member is equipped with an automatic weapon and some perhaps with crew-served armaments and grenade launchers.[18]

© Francois Mori/AP Photo

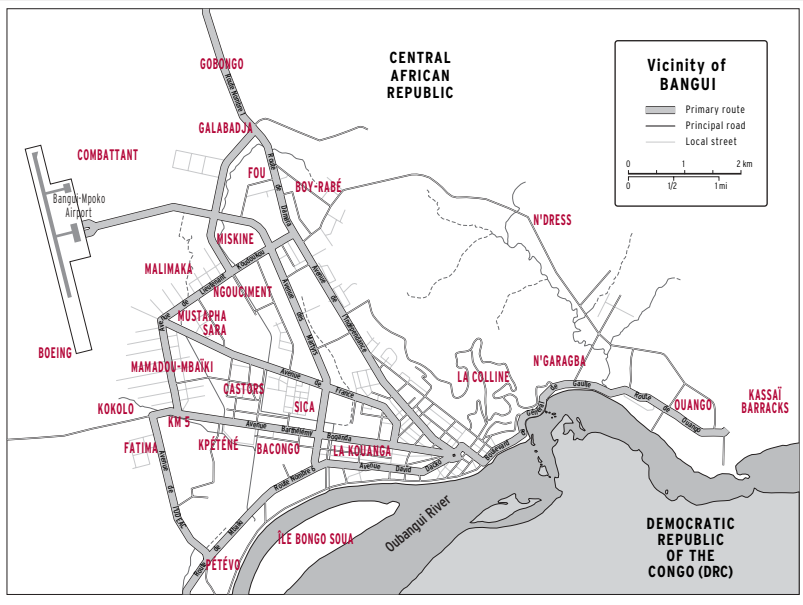
CAR President Ange-Félix Patassé is escorted by his guards in Bangui, May 1996.

Karakos, Balawas, and Sarawis

Following the mutinies of 1996, President Patassé, who had previously relied primarily on the presidential guard and armed MLPC elements, now felt that these forces were insufficient to guarantee his personal and political survival. He thus established three Bangui-based militias known as the Karakos, Balawas, and Sarawis. These neighbourhood militias would soon grow to encompass some 1,500 individuals in total. They largely comprised unemployed young men whom the president counted among his supporters.

Bangui has eight *arrondissements* (districts), divided into *quartiers* (see Map 11.2).[19] The Karakos militia was based in the Boy-Rabe quartier, where mostly Gbaya reside (Leaba, 2001, p. 172), in the fourth arrondissement. The Balawas militia, comprising chiefly members of the Kaba ethnic group, was based in the Combattant quartier in the eighth arrondissement. The Sarawis militia was concentrated in the Sara quartier, named after the ethnic group residing there in large numbers, in the fifth arrondissement. Sarawis militia members were also present in large numbers in other quartiers of the fifth arrondissement, such as Malimaka, Miskine, Mustapha, and Ngouciment. Each militia was around 500 strong, and armed mostly with Kalashnikovs.[20]

Map 11.2 Bangui *quartiers*



Société centrafricaine de protection et de surveillance

President Patassé subsequently created two more militias. In 1999, he established the Société centrafricaine de protection et de surveillance (SCPS). Headed by his chauffeur, Victor Ndoubabé (the son of a family friend), the SCPS was ostensibly a private security company. While it did engage in commercial activities, it is best seen as a standby militia force tasked with providing security to the president.[21] President Patassé had been under substantial international pressure to reform and scale down significantly the FORSDIR. Indeed, the SCPS would come to count among its number former FORSDIR members (Leaba, 2001, p. 168).

Ndoubabé was killed in the March 2003 coup,[22] and the SCPS ceased to exist as a cohesive unit shortly thereafter. In early 2003, informed observers placed its strength at between 1,000 and 1,500. According to President Bozizé, the number of surviving ex-SCPS guards in November 2003 was 850 (CAR, 2003, p. 7). These guards were armed with Kalashnikovs.[23]

'Abdulaye Miskine'

In 2000, President Patassé established yet another militia known by the name of its leader, 'Abdulaye Miskine'—whose birth name, according to President Patassé, is Martin Koumta Madji. Chad has accused Miskine of being a Chadian insurgent who killed another rebel leader. President Patassé maintained that he was a Central African patriot who Chad had wrongly identified. Leaving aside his contentious background and objectives, there is consensus that, at the time of General Bozizé's October 2002 coup attempt, the militia numbered between 300 and 350.[24] President Patassé armed them with Kalashnikovs.[25] Miskine departed CAR in November 2002,[26] but later returned. With Bozizé's successful coup, it is widely believed that Miskine does not currently have any armed troops under his command.

Self-defence units and vigilante groups

There also is at least one armed 'neighbourhood watch-type' organization in CAR that deserves mention. In 1984, Yaya Ramadan—the village chief of Tiroungoulou, a respected religious leader in the region, and a former mayor of Birao—established a self-defence unit (SDU) in Vakaga prefecture. He recognized the threat that poaching posed to the region's wildlife, as well as to the well-being of his fellow citizens. Ramadan believed that revenues from international hunting represented a potentially lucrative and sustainable source of income.

The SDU, which received government approval, was relatively well armed. Bangui's support was political, not military, in nature, and did not encompass the provision of any weaponry. The militia procured its arms privately (probably from local sources), mostly Kalashnikov assault rifles, but also G-3s, M-14s, and FN-FALs. In August 2003, the group numbered between 250 and 300.[27]

© Olivier Nyirubugara

Central African vigilante group members from Ouham prefecture in north-west CAR, February 2004.

As evidenced by the photograph of the group of armed men from the village of Donzi in Ouham prefecture, other armed neighbourhood watch-type organizations, or vigilante groups, are operating throughout CAR.

Other

Just as Patassé subcontracted his security to a variety of militia, many other functions that were previously the sole responsibility of the state are now being carried out by private companies and ad hoc state-authorized (but foreign funded) concerns. While several private security companies have been established in the past five years in Bangui, with the exception of the SCPS, they are effectively unarmed. A few are equipped with *pistolets d'alarme* (blank-firing pistols).

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CAR President François Bozizé salutes troops in Bangui, March 2004.

Recognizing that the state was unable to protect national wildlife, the European Community launched, in 1988, the first of several anti-poaching initiatives (complementing government efforts) that involved the recruitment of armed guards. At the height of the programme in the early 1990s, the European Union was funding 120 armed anti-poaching guards in CAR. By December 2003, there were around half as many.[28] The guards are armed with Kalashnikov rifles and two AA-52 machine guns, which the ministry of defence issued to them. In addition, the teams retain some *matériel* seized from poachers.[29] In 1990, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) also financed an anti-poaching initiative in CAR. Initially, ten eco-guards were recruited. By June 2003, there were 40. The government furnishes each guard with a MAS-36 rifle. Teams also have access to a couple of automatic rifles.[30]

Stockpiles

The successful coup d'état in CAR on 15 March 2003 has both clarified and obscured the situation regarding the small arms and light weapons holdings of government forces. As already noted, General Bozizé and his supporters raided many police and gendarmerie depots across the countryside after the failed coup of October 2002. Most of the weapons have not been returned, and missing items have not been replaced.

Yet the government has entered into a dialogue with the World Bank in a bid to garner international financial support for SSR. As part of this endeavour,

it has recorded the strength of FACA, the gendarmerie, and the police, as well as of various non-state armed groups. The numbers provided are largely believed to be accurate in the case of the state, although it is noteworthy that Bozizé did not provide figures on his presidential guard (which is not believed to be part of the figure he provided for FACA). As for former militias, Bozizé appears to have provided a defensible estimate, although it is possible that he overestimated the size of some groups in an effort to secure additional financing. The government has not offered data, however, on stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

Historical analysis of inventories can help to shed light on current holdings. Very good information is available on the weapons that were in service with Central African state actors 40 or so years ago. The Government of France kept detailed records of small arms and light weapons in the hands of numerous Central African government services, as well as of their force strengths. Thus, for 1963 it is possible to determine accurate multipliers. They range from a high of 1.60 (the ratio of weapons to forces) for the gendarmerie to a low of 0.19 for the police.[31] Based on subsequent events and available information, the values of current multipliers (except for the presidential guard) are probably in keeping with these figures. The following ratios are used respectively for FACA, the gendarmerie, and the police: 1.25, 1.15, and 0.67. The rationale is that the weapons in service with FACA and the gendarmerie will have been reduced because of President Patassé's policy of marginalization and General Bozizé's looting.

Bozizé's presidential guard is reportedly well armed.

Bozizé's republican guard—or presidential guard—is reportedly well armed. As previously mentioned, the Central African government conspicuously chose not to disclose information on this unit when discussing its security and disarmament needs and plans. Eyewitness reports, however, suggest a ratio of 3.00, which is in keeping with information available on the ex-USP. The strength of the unit is not known, although a figure of 1,000 men is thought to be a conservative estimate.

Box 11.1 Determining a stockpile multiplier for FACA

It is also possible to calculate a multiplier for FACA in 1996 with some degree of specificity. According to the Government of CAR, in November 1996, at the time of the third army mutiny, 2,389 small arms and 127 light weapons were stored at Kassaï barracks (UNSC, 1997a, para. 22). Demafouth believes that government record-keeping was adequate at the time, and that the figures that it provided to the ad hoc African peacekeeping force known as the Mission interafricaine de surveillance des accords de Bangui (MISAB) were largely accurate. The army's other depot was at Bouar, and contained around 800 weapons, mostly Kalashnikov assault rifles. Very few light weapons were kept at Bouar.[32] Demafouth adds that the strength of FACA was approximately 3,000–3,500 in 1996.[33] This would put the ratio of weapons to soldiers at very close to 1.0. The government, however, took weapons from Kassaï barracks and moved them across town to the presidential guard's armoury at Camp de Roux after the first mutiny in April (McFarlane and Malan, 1998, p. 50). It was not possible to ascertain how many weapons were removed and how many may have been returned. But there is no reason to believe that the ratio of weapons to soldiers would have been higher for the army than it was for the presidential guard at the time (which Demafouth put at around 1.3).[34] Thus, the multiplier for FACA in 1996 would not have been very different from the 1963 multiplier of 1.34.

By the end of 2003, there had not been an appreciable change in the FACA multiplier compared to 1996. President Patassé continued to starve the military of funds and weapons, while aiding the presidential guard and other forces on which he felt he could rely. Although they could not be verified, reports of the army purchasing weapons from MLC rebels point to the dire straits in which the institution found itself. The multiplier certainly would not have increased under Patassé.

After the March 2003 coup, however, Bozizé recovered 1,300 weapons, primarily with the help of the Chadian Army (UN OCHA, 2003a) (and, to a lesser extent, Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC) peacekeepers). It is not known how many of these weapons, if any, were transferred to FACA.

Table 11.2 Estimated small arms stockpiles in CAR, state agencies, and other (former) armed groups

State agencies (data as of September 2003)				Active and recent non-state armed groups (data as of November 2003)			
Service	Estimated strength	Multiplier	Estimated holdings	Group	Estimated strength	Multiplier	Estimated holdings
FACA	4,442	1.25	5,552	Ex-Balawas	510	0.67	342
Gendarmerie	1,310	1.15	1,507	Ex-Sarawis	600	0.67	400
Police	1,600	0.67	1,072	Ex-Karakos	593	0.67	397
Other*	250	1.00	250	Ex-MLPC	820	2.00	1,640
Presidential guard	1,000	3.00	3,000	Ex-USP	1,345	3.00	4,035
				Ex-SCPS	850	2.00	1,700
				Vakaga prefecture SDU	275	1.30	358
Totals			**11,381**	**Totals**			**8,872**

*Includes Intelligence (DGRE and SERD) and anti-poaching units.
Sources: Vakaga prefecture SDU: median of informed estimate (250–300); presidential guard: informed estimate; other: informed estimate; remainder: CAR (2003, pp. 6–7)

The ratios used to determine the stockpiles of non-state groups tend to be higher than those employed for governmental bodies. It is assumed here that each member of the Balawas, Sarawis, and Karakos militias received approximately two weapons for each three people recruited. Members of the MLPC, SCPS, and USP are thought to have had access to arms in excess of their respective strengths. In response to the May 2001 coup attempt, for example, MLPC officials were widely reported to have dispensed weapons, including Kalashnikovs, to party loyalists in Bangui in an effort to apprehend citizens who may have received firearms from Kolingba supporters.[35] More recently, during the March 2003 coup d'état, eyewitnesses claim that thousands of weapons were looted from the home of General Bombayeke, the head of the USP.[36]

Worryingly, these groups are generally armed with weapons of greater firepower and lethality than those in the possession of the state. Certainly, this is true of the gendarmerie and the police: the relatively few armaments that remain in their hands include a large number of MAS-36 bolt-action rifles. As noted above, President Patassé tended to arm his presidential guard and various militias with assault rifles. There are numerous reports of forces loyal to Patassé also having been equipped with light machine guns and RPGs.[37]

Additionally, there is reason to believe that assault rifles are now generally available throughout Central African society. As discussed below (see Arms recovery and disarmament efforts), it is increasingly common for police and anti-poaching guards to recover Kalashnikovs. In the past, they tended to collect and come into contact with rudimentary and antiquated shotguns and hunting rifles.

The government's calculation of the number of weapons in general circulation may *underestimate* the scale of the challenge. According to General Xavier Yangongo, the Chairman of the Commission de la défense et de la sécurité, up to 50,000 illegally-held guns are in general circulation (UN OCHA, 2003d), although he has provided no documentation or analysis to support the assertion. Many people might be inclined to dismiss it, therefore, as little more than a negotiating ploy on behalf of the government to extract resources from the World Bank and the wider international donor community for (yet) another arms collection programme. The number of guns in society, though, could be significantly higher. It is not unreasonable to assume that the six known militias and the SDU in Vakaga prefecture possess around 9,000 firearms in total. If only one person out of every 100 in CAR (with an estimated population of 3.9 million

citizens) was armed, this would add another 39,000 firearms to the pool. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that large sections of the population are armed and that the ratio of weapons to people is certainly higher than 1:100.

Twenty years ago, small arms proliferation throughout Central African society was not a pressing concern. Indeed, as late as 1979, relatively few arms were in circulation outside of state personnel. When government forces attacked civilians in January and April 1979,[38] citizens fought back with poisoned arrows (Kalck, 1992, p. xxxv). The situation has changed markedly since then. For example, according to an expatriate who lived and worked in Bamingui-Bangoran and Vakaga prefectures for several years, nearly every household in Vakaga is armed, with every person over 30 owning a weapon. These are not craft-production hunting rifles, but commercial firearms. The Kalashnikov is most common, but there are also quite a number of FN-FALs. Far fewer armaments are circulating in Bamingui-Bangoran.[39] Across the country in Sangha-Mbaéré prefecture, more than 60 per cent of the population of the Kouapili district of Salo reportedly possessed at least one firearm in 1998. These weapons, however, tended to be rudimentary, locally produced hunting rifles (Mogba and Freudenberger, 1998, p. 118). Manufactured shotguns are also in plentiful supply. Russian 12-gauge shotguns made by Baikal are so prevalent in that part of the country that locals use the term 'Baikal' to describe all such weapons.[40] Apparently, in the south-east of the country, it is not uncommon for three or four families in a ten-family village to own locally made weapons.[41]

The vast number of weapons that have entered CAR in recent years in ways other than direct state-to-state transfers supports the contention that more than 50,000 weapons are circulating outside of government control. The next section elaborates on this point.

SMALL ARMS FLOWS AND TRAFFICKING

As noted in the first section, successive Central African governments kept their armed forces and police relatively small and poorly armed. It is only in comparison to other entities that a particular service could be described as 'well armed'. With few natural resources with which to barter, and essentially no role in the cold war competition between the superpowers, direct transfers from states have been rather limited. France was the largest supplier of arms and ammunition. Chad and Libya have also provided significant quantities of *matériel*. Support from each of these countries is reviewed below, as is that of China, which is believed to have delivered military equipment, including small arms, in the past ten years. Nations not mentioned above that provided arms during the presidential eras of David Dacko and Jean-Bédel Bokassa include Israel[42] and Romania.[43] It proved very difficult, however, to obtain information on these countries' transfers, given the passage of time and the relatively low level of assistance offered. Of greater significance is that it appears that government-to-government transfers are not as important a source of small arms as are indirect weapons transfers by defeated, demobilized, or 'visiting' armed forces of neighbouring states.

Direct transfers from states

France

Not surprisingly, the colonial power, France, remained CAR's primary military supplier in the years following independence. In 1963, for instance, most weapons in state inventories were French and the few weapons not French-made probably came from France (see Table 11.3).

Table 11.3 Weapons in service with Central African state actors, 1 October 1963

Weapon				Recipient				
Category		Model	Total	Armée de terre	Gendarmarie	Republican guard	Police	Other*
Small arms	Pistols and revolvers	MAC/MAS-1950	419	105	314	-	-	-
		MAB 7.65	30	-	-	-	6	24**
	Sub-machine guns	MAT-49	367	221	126	20	-	-
		MAS-38	30	-	-	-	30	-
		Sten	10	-	-	-	10	-
	Rifles	Mousqueton	338	-	-	323	15***	-
		MAS-36/51	1,630	636	359	555	-	80****
		MAS-49/56	60	-	60	-	-	-
	Light machine guns	FM-24/29	10	-	10	-	-	-
		AA-52	57	45	12	-	-	-
		Bren	14		5	9	-	-
Light weapons	Heavy machine guns	12.7 mm	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Mortars	60 mm	4	4	-	-	-	-
		81 mm	4	4	-	-	-	-
Total		**2,975**	**1,017**	**886**	**907**	**61**	**104**	

Notes:
* Other includes the Gardes forestiers with 50 MAS-36s, the Gardes chasse with 30 MAS-36s, and the Personnels des circonscriptions minières de diamant with 24 7.65 mm pistols.
** It is assumed that this is the same MAB pistol as the one used by the police.
*** The 8 mm rifles in service with the police are believed to be the same as the model (Mousqueton) used by the Republican Guard.
**** Grenade-launching MAS-36 rifles are included in the total. The army and the gendarmerie had 58 and 6 of these weapons, respectively.
Source: SHAT (1963, pp. 38, 51, 58, 63, 65)

France remained CAR's primary military patron until 1970, when relations between the two countries sharply deteriorated. Nevertheless, it remained engaged in CAR due to larger political considerations. These considerations, however, changed by the late 1970s. Strategic considerations, and concerns over human rights, drove France to curtail its military assistance and ultimately to orchestrate the overthrow of President Bokassa.[44] After President Bokassa was removed from office, France re-engaged with CAR militarily, shipping several consignments of small arms and light weapons during the early years of the Kolingba presidency (see Table 11.4).

France's military support for CAR during the tenure of President Patassé was largely indirect, via its own troops and then regional peacekeeping missions. Given the president's long-standing open hostility toward France, Paris was not favourably predisposed to the new president. Even so, it was Paris that pushed hard for President Kolingba to hold free and fair democratic elections in September 1993, and it did so with the clear understanding that Patassé would almost certainly emerge victorious. When FACA soldiers mutinied in April 1996, CAR-based French soldiers came to the aid of President Patassé. France backed the January 1997 peace accord and the establishment of MISAB. In 2002, France provided weapon systems and armaments for troops serving with the CEMAC peacekeeping mission. Direct transfers of French military equipment to President Patassé's government, though, were very limited. CAR did receive some matériel, such as vehicles, when France's military base in Bouar formally closed in 1998, but no small arms or light weapons were handed over.[45] According to the French government, the only small arms and light

Table 11.4 Weapons transfers from France to CAR, 1981–2003

Year of transfer	Type of weapon		Shipment value (with rounded USD equivalent****)	Number of weapons
	Category	Manufacturer/model(s)		
1981	Automatic rifles	Manurhin Défense	EUR 228,673 (USD 240,000)	n/a
1981	Anti-tank weapons	LRAC 89 mm*	n/a	50
1983	Anti-tank weapons	LRAC 89 mm	n/a	50
1984	Machine guns	SFM/SFET**	EUR 76,225 (USD 80,000)	n/a
1984	Assault rifles	DAT (now GIAT)***	EUR 2,287 (USD 2,400)	n/a
1985	Assault rifles	DAT (now GIAT)	EUR 30,490 (USD 32,000)	n/a
1986	Assault rifles	DAT (now GIAT)	EUR 22,827 (USD 24,000)	n/a
1994	Spare parts	MAT-49, AA-52, pistols	EUR 15,245 (USD 16,000)	n/a
1995	Spare parts	MAT-49, AA-52, pistols	EUR 6,860 (USD 7,200)	n/a

* Lance Rocket Antichar (LRAC)
** Société française des Munitions de Chasse, de Tir et de Guerre (SFM) / Société française d'Équipement de Tir (SFET)
*** Direction des Armements Terrestres (DAT) ; Groupement Industriel des Armements Terrestres (GIAT)
**** Rounded USD equivalents based on 1 January 2003 exchange rate.
Source: Written correspondence with French Ministry of Defence, 5 September 2003.

weapons transferred to CAR during the ten years President Patassé was in office were spare parts, with the last exchange occurring in 1995 (see Table 11.4).[46]

Libya

President Bokassa turned to Libya for support during the final years of his rule. He visited Tripoli in 1976, where he converted to Islam. Shortly after returning home, he reverted to Catholicism. Perhaps this explains the decision of Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi to assist Central African rebels intent on his overthrow.[47] Regardless, Libya continued to assist President Bokassa militarily up to his demise. Libyan aeroplanes transported stocks of war *matériel* to Bangui in August 1979, and a small number of advance units were put in position to support the president (Decalo, 1989, p. 163). Indeed, Bokassa was in Tripoli at the time of the coup.

Libya also supplied weapons to CAR during the tenure of President Patassé. In 1998, it dispatched two or three transport aircraft filled with armaments, including small arms and light weapons, to CAR, using the airport outside of Ndélé, not the one in Bangui. These items were destined for the USP headed by General Bombayeke,[48] not for General Bozizé, and more broadly for FACA, to which Bombayeke was supposedly subordinate. In May 2001, President Qaddafi supplied additional weapons to aid President Patassé, this time directly to Bangui.

Lybia assisted President Bokassa militarily up to his demise.

Libya also employed intermediaries. Some of the weapons Chad provided to CAR following the 1996 army mutinies came from Libya.[49] Libya also delivered significant quantities of *matériel* to the MLC in Gbadolite, DRC, in October and November 2002 (in support of President Patassé), when the airport in Bangui was not safe to use.

Chad

Chadian support for President Patassé, unlike that of France, involved both troops and small arms. During the 1980s, N'djamena apparently did not transfer any weapons to Bangui, despite having procured huge excess stocks from Libya.[50] Following the 1996 army mutinies in CAR, however, President Patassé received some 500 Kalashnikovs from

Chad.[51] Chad contributed troops during the MISAB operation and the follow-on United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). A small number of military advisers remained in CAR after MINURCA departed in February 2000.

Unfortunately for President Patassé, Chad also supplied weapons to the rebel outfit trying to overthrow him. According to Major Namboro Kette, cabinet chief of the head of the general staff, General Bozizé received all of his arms from Central African sources.[52] This claim reinforces the steadfast assertion of Chad that it did not extend any support to General Bozizé. There are credible reports, though, that Chad provided logistical assistance as well as *matériel*, including small arms and light weapons.[53] The apparent introduction of anti-personnel landmines by General Bozizé's forces[54] suggests that they did indeed receive outside help, as CAR is not known to have possessed any such devices.[55] It is not possible, however, to prove that Chad supplied these landmines. What is perhaps more important is not what Chad granted to General Bozizé, but what it seemingly did not: surface-to-air missiles (see Box 11.2).

Box 11.2 CAR, CHAD, and surface-to-air missiles

The Government of the United States provided significant levels of *matériel* in the 1980s to the Forces armées du nord (FAN) of Chad led by Hissène Habré. Washington did so because it was concerned about Libyan designs on Chad and President Qaddafi's increasingly close relationship with Habré's political rival, Goukouni Weddeye. Weapons included the Redeye surface-to-air missile (Foltz, 1995, p. 23). After the October 2002 coup attempt in CAR, when Libyan counter-insurgency aircraft were bombarding General Bozizé's forces, there was a real worry in the United States that Chad might furnish General Bozizé with such armaments. Apparently this did not happen.

China

Beijing provided Bangui with various small arms and other military equipment. The possibility of China supplying *matériel* to CAR came up during negotiations in 1997 to re-establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. For CAR, it was impolitic to retain diplomatic relations with Taiwan at a time when it was seeking UN Security Council support for a UN peacekeeping operation to succeed MISAB (given that China could exercise its veto).[56] Relations were re-established in January 1998, two months before the Security Council authorized MINURCA. According to Demafouth, the consignment of *matériel* arrived by road from the Cameroonian port of Douala in 2000. Equipment included small arms and light weapons as well as vehicles.[57]

Indirect transfers from regional armed forces

Chad

Despite the presence of myriad political and military actors in Chad and its long history of warfare since gaining independence in 1960, the armed forces involved in these conflicts were not a significant source of weaponry for CAR in the 1960s and 1970s. Largely this is because southerners dominated the Government of Chad, based in N'djamena, some 500 kilometres north of the border with CAR. While political tensions existed in southern Chad, even within the same ethnic group, the situation was relatively calm compared to that in the north,[58] the inhabitants of which considered themselves to be substantially disenfranchised. After the southern-dominated Chadian government fell in 1979, CAR remained largely unaffected by the Chadian conflict for three more years. The cold war backdrop to the Chadian conflict, however, heightened Western fears of Libyan adventurism. Combined with regional politics, these

factors contributed to a huge inflow of *matériel* during this period, including small arms and light weapons,[59] which would later have a profound effect on CAR.

The situation changed dramatically in the second half of 1982. Habré, who seized control of the capital that June, successfully employed a mixture of diplomacy and military might to pacify the threat posed to his fledgling administration by the armed opposition in the south. Nevertheless, many commandos, or Codos, from a military force that was part of a former Government of Chad, refused to join the new national army or lay down their weapons. Disaffected youth aligned themselves with these commandos (Foltz, 1995, pp. 21–22). Academic literature on Chad states that, by 1985–86, there were some 15,000 Codos. Only around 1,500 took advantage of the opportunity to join the armed forces loyal to Habré (Tartter, 1990, pp. 194–95). Many of those who did not join the military turned their attention (and their weapons) to supporting banditry along the roads of CAR and are known as *Zaraguinas* or *coupeurs de routes*. Today, for many Central Africans, the terms Codos and Zaraguinas or coupeurs de routes are interchangeable.

The situation deteriorated in the 1990s, when the Chadian Armed Forces went through a process of significant downsizing as part of a World Bank-initiated SSR programme. More than 25,000 soldiers were demobilized (World Bank, 2003). Despite international reintegration efforts, thousands of people found themselves essentially unemployed without skills or the opportunity to transition successfully into civilian life. Many Central Africans believe the problem with Zaraguinas or coupeurs de routes along CAR's roads escalated sharply as a direct result of weapons and armed personnel crossing from Chad into CAR in search of livelihoods.

More recently, members of the Chadian Armed Forces reportedly sold some of their weapons while transiting CAR after having served in the DRC. (Chadian President Idriss Déby, who seized power from Habré in 1990, contributed some 2,000 troops to assist DRC President Kabila in 1998.) On withdrawing from the DRC in May and June 1999, they spent more than a week in Kaga Bondoro, the capital of Gribingui prefecture, while the Central African authorities met with Chadian officials to try to find a way to assuage the soldiers' pent-up grievances. Paying the troops defused tensions. It is understood, though, that some of the soldiers sold an unknown number of firearms to Central Africans while in CAR.

Chadian Armed Forces sold an unknown number of firearms to Central Africans while in CAR.

Sudan

The three Central African prefectures that border Sudan are very sparsely populated and government oversight of the area is extremely limited.[60] Thousands of soldiers with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) are believed to have crossed into CAR in the 1980s looking for food and security (during periods of drought and Sudanese military offensives). Demafouth noted that, in 1985, perhaps 10,000–15,000 Sudanese sought refuge in CAR. He added that, according to the Central African police commissioner at the time, combatants made up approximately 50 per cent of this number, and estimated that they brought around 5,000 weapons with them. It was not uncommon for SPLA members to trade their weapons.[61]

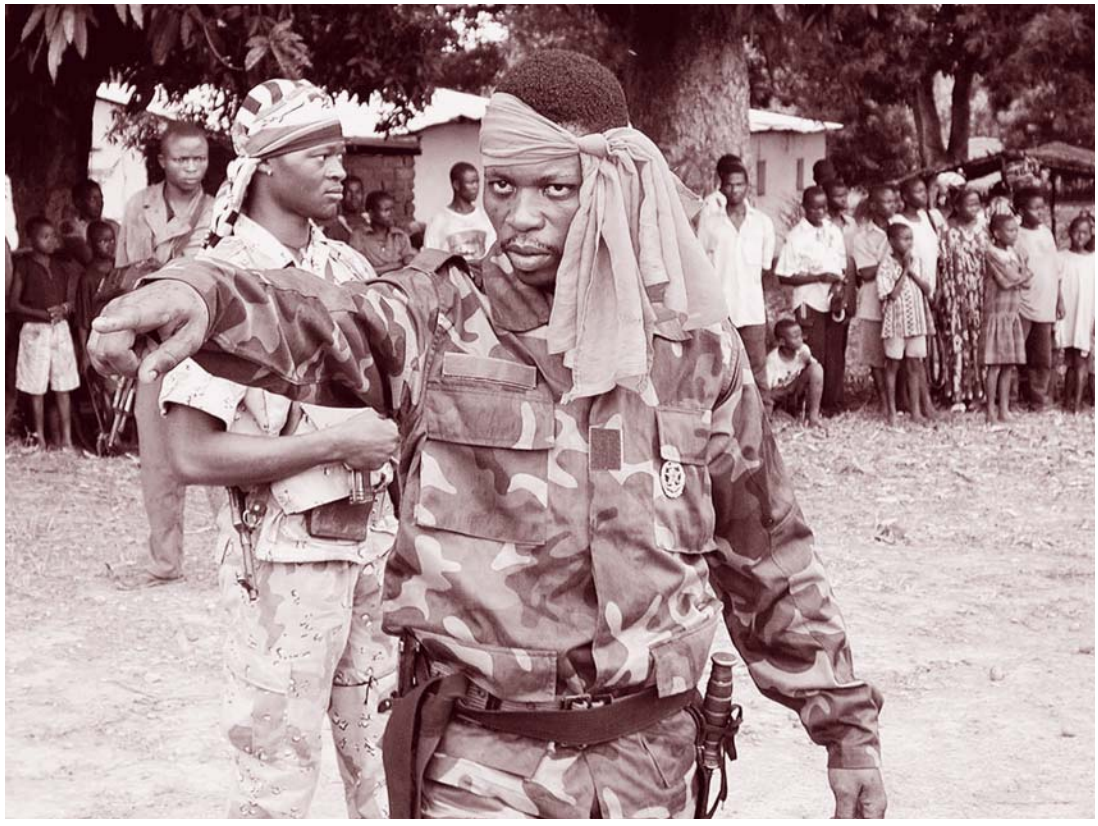
Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire)

In 1997 and 1999, fighting in Zaire, later the DRC, resulted in large numbers of armed men crossing into CAR. The first wave came in the first half of 1997, when members of President Mobutu's presidential guard, police, and gendarmerie and the Forces armées zaïroises (FAZ) retreated across the border to escape Kabila's advancing Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre (AFDL). A similar exodus occurred in 1999, when forces loyal to Kabila fled across the frontier with CAR to evade Bemba's MLC and the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF).

These troops appear to have brought more than 10,000 weapons into CAR. Conversations with former members of FAC and FAZ who now reside in CAR revealed that they and their compatriots traversed the Ubangui River with numerous types of small arms, but few heavy weapons. Weaponry included a large number of pistols (mostly Belgian 9 mm models), submachine guns (largely Israeli Uzis, plus some Egyptian Port Saids), rifles (Belgian FN-FALs, German G-3s, Israeli Galils, US M-16s, and Kalashnikovs manufactured in the Soviet Union and elsewhere), and anti-tank weapons (Soviet RPG-7s). As for crew-served weapons, only 60 mm mortars were taken into CAR, and not in vast quantities. Most of these weapons have not been accounted for. Mutinous FACA soldiers seized many of them; the government also procured thousands.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan originally reported that many weapons taken from FAC had been jointly guarded by Congolese and Central African troops (UNSC, 1999a, para. 26). Later, however, he acknowledged 'persistent reports that some of [these] weapons […] had not been surrendered but clandestinely sold'. He added that 'only a few of the weapons could be recovered' (UNSC, 1999b, para. 38).

Libya provided transport aircraft to fly many Congolese troops back to Kinshasa, but without their weapons (UNSC, 1999b, para. 36). The Central African government admitted keeping 3,328 light arms belonging to FAC in safe storage until the war in the DRC was resolved (UNSC, 2000, para. 26). Of the 3,250 light arms that the Central African government collected from Congolese soldiers via MINURCA, the central authorities destroyed some 500 in 2000. Of the remaining 2,750 or so weapons, Demafouth said that approximately 300 were M-16s, 200 were Galils, and 100 were Uzis. Most of the others were Kalashnikovs.[62]



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A fighter in the rebel MLC orders a surbordinate to take a defensive position in Sibut in February 2003, one week after the MLC retook the town from other rebels.

In an unusual move, in June 2001, Bemba dispatched 700 MLC soldiers to protect President Patassé from a coup attempt in CAR. Within a month, the MLC troops had returned to the DRC.[63] When President Patassé's government came under attack again on 25 October 2002, Bemba sent some 2,000 soldiers.[64] This time, they remained behind after the immediate threat of rebellion had subsided. Bemba received considerable weaponry, presumably from Libya, in connection with this undertaking. Several Libyan military transport aircraft landed in Gbadolite, DRC, the site of the MLC's headquarters, between 26 October and 3 November 2002. Bemba denied the UN access to the airport, so it is very difficult to know what exactly was delivered.[65] It is not known how much, if any, of this equipment went directly to the CAR government. In less doubt, though, is that MLC cadres transferred weapons to Central African citizens. Bemba did not provide his troops in CAR with a per diem, food, or lodging.[66] As a result, MLC rebels looted properties and committed gross human rights violations. MLC troops allegedly sold excess small arms to anyone willing to purchase them.[67]

MLC rebels allegedly sold excess small arms to anyone willing to purchase them.

Republic of the Congo

Geographical, political, and developmental considerations all suggest that relatively few combatants from the internal conflicts in the Republic of the Congo have crossed that nation's border with CAR. The frontier between the two countries along the Dzanga–Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve is very remote. Eastward, along the southern border of CAR's Lobaye prefecture, the movement of goods and people is comparatively greater. Overall, it appears that the frontier has remained quiet in contrast to CAR's borders with Chad, the DRC, and Sudan.

Although significant numbers of combatants do not appear to have crossed into CAR from the Republic of the Congo, small arms and ammunition circulating in CAR are known to have originated in that state. Richard Carroll of WWF (US) noted that, between 1997 and 1998, there were indications that Kalashnikovs had come across the border with the Republic of the Congo after its six-month civil war ended in October 1997. He cautioned, however, that home-made hunting rifles and old Soviet 12-gauge shotguns—popular with expatriate hunters temporarily based in the country—remain by far the most popular weapons found in the Dzanga–Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve.[68]

Rwanda

Several thousand Rwandans entered CAR between 1994 and 1997. Relatively few arrived in 1994–96, but the situation changed in 1997, following the emptying of Rwandan refugee and military camps in eastern Zaire after Kabila instigated his rebellion. During the first half of 1997, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that some 3,000 Rwandans crossed into CAR. Many (more than 1,000) would have been members of the Interahamwe and former members of the Forces armées rwandaises (FAR).[69] The majority of Rwandans entering CAR did not have any weapons. A former Rwandan soldier who entered Bangui from Zongo said that many armed Rwandans (like armed Zairians) sold their weapons while in Zaire or had their firearms confiscated by the Central African authorities.[70] Most Rwandans have since left CAR.[71]

Weapons generated within CAR

Indigenous production

CAR does have a state-run military company, but it does not manufacture arms (Frères d'Armes, 2000, p. 27). Artisans fabricate many weapons, however. It is difficult to obtain information on the number of people involved in such

activities. Occasional references in published reports indicate that are mostly, if not only, rudimentary hunting rifles produced. These weapons number in the tens of thousands (Mogba and Freudenberger, 1998, p. 118).

Seizures from government forces

Mutinies have also served as an important domestic source of weaponry. Perhaps the most significant case of seizure and redistribution of weapons occurred in 1996, when Central African soldiers emptied the arms depot at Kassaï barracks. According to the government, more than 2,500 small arms and light weapons were taken. During 2001 and 2002, General Bozizé's forces (while retreating north from the capital toward CAR's border with Chad) captured weapons from gendarme depots, at which police armaments also were kept. After the failed coup attempt of 2002, additional depositories were ransacked.[72]

Weapons lost by African peacekeeping forces

CAR has hosted more distinct armed peacekeeping missions (four since January 1997) than any other country or conflict zone in the past ten years.[73] When one takes into account troop rotations, it is likely that more than 5,000 personnel have entered and left CAR since 1997. The four peacekeeping operations have supplied mutinous soldiers or rampaging citizens with only a few weapons. In June 1997, mutinous troops attacked a Burkinabe squad stationed in N'garagba. The mutineers seized around a dozen personal weapons.[74] During the March 2003 coup, CEMAC lost a pistol, some rifles, and two heavy machine guns, not to mention other non-lethal equipment. The rifles have since been returned.[75] Some believe that the government reclaimed the two 12.7 mm machine guns, but, as of June 2003, it had not handed them back to CEMAC. The pistol has not been reclaimed either.

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CEMAC peacekeepers in Bangui prepare to fight armed robbers in northern CAR in July 2003.

EFFECTS AND IMPACTS OF SMALL ARMS

The paucity of record-keeping and restrictions on travel due to the general level of heightened insecurity over the past few years have made it especially difficult to document the effects of small arms use on Central African society. Direct consequences, such as firearm-related deaths and injuries, are not systematically recorded, and even if they were, the figures would not be particularly revealing for reasons highlighted below. Considerably more is known about the impact that small arms (and light weapons) have had on the country's wildlife. The indirect ramifications of small arms use and availability are profound but even more difficult to document, although significant progress has been made toward understanding the very real socio-economic repercussions of small arms proliferation for CAR (Small

Arms Survey, 2003, pp. 125–67). The few examples of the indirect results of armed robberies and roadblocks, although anecdotal, illustrate the range of effects that small arms have had on Central Africans—95 per cent of whom live on less than one US dollar a day (UN OCHA, 2005).

Death and injury

Medical records suggest that small arms use is not responsible for a large number of casualties in the capital, but these statistics are misleading. Interviews conducted in 2003 with the directors of two of the four main hospitals in Bangui indicate that, even during periods of heightened insecurity and violence, such as coup attempts, very few people were admitted to hospital because of gunshot wounds. For example, fewer than 50 people were admitted to the community hospital following the failed coup of May 2001, and a similar number were admitted after the unsuccessful coup attempt of October 2002—six died of their wounds.[76] These figures likely understate the gravity of the matter. The Director of Hôpital de l'Amitié, Cecile Koyangbanda, states that such statistics are of limited utility in analysing gun-related violence and deaths, as many people bury the dead without taking the body, or reporting the case, to the hospital.[77] The cost of medical care is prohibitive for many Central Africans. Not only are the deceased rarely brought to hospital, but many people with gunshot wounds go untreated.

Many Central Africans with gunshot wounds go untreated.

Anecdotal reports suggest that the incidence of gunshot victims is a significant problem. A doctor who operates an NGO-subsidized clinic—the only such facility in the north-west part of the country to remain open during the insecurity of 2002–03—reports that she regularly sees patients with gunshot wounds, often due to cross-border conflict with armed groups and highway bandits from Chad.[78] In November 2002, at Ngola Market just outside of Bangui, 120 cattle herders (and many more cattle) apparently were killed during a battle between government troops and MLC supporters and General Bozizé's forces (UN OCHA, 2003c).

Poaching

Central Africa's wildlife has also suffered greatly because of firearm use. Poaching has been conducted in CAR for as long as people can remember. It was not deemed to be a significant problem, however, when hunters used traditional devices including spears, traps, home-made rifles, and the occasional commercial shotgun. The introduction of modern assault rifles and machine guns has had devastating consequences. Richard Carroll of WWF, who worked in northern CAR in the 1970s and early 1980s, says that poaching was always a problem in the area. Things changed dramatically, however, around 1982, when there was an influx of assault rifles and the Kalashnikov replaced the more traditional spear.[79] Sudanese poaching parties do not rely only on Kalashnikovs, but also utilize machine guns and RPGs (Lowy, 2002). According to conservationists Allard Blom and Jean Yamindou, the size of the Central African elephant population fell from 50,000 in the 1970s to around 5,000 by the mid-1990s (Blom and Yamindou, 2001, p. 14). When there were no more elephants, Sudanese poachers began to kill large numbers of buffaloes, giraffes, hippopotami, various species of antelopes, and giant elands.[80]

The trade in bush meat is another major factor in CAR's dwindling wildlife.[81] To a lesser extent, animals in the country are hunted for sport and are killed because of religious and mystical beliefs.

Mutinies and coup attempts

Army mutinies and coup attempts result in much more than loss of life and political turmoil. They invariably involve massive displacement of populations, and a slew of other problems that remain long after the situation is reported to

be 'calm' and even after those who fled have returned home. This was certainly the case with respect to the three mutinies of 1996 and the ensuing unrest throughout the first half of 1997 in the capital (see Box 11.3). Similar problems, though, manifested themselves following the shorter upheavals associated with the May 2001 and October 2002 coup attempts. For example, Amnesty International (2004) found the practice of rape to be widespread, with hundreds of women sexually assaulted at gunpoint by MLC members as well as by Central African fighters between October 2002 and March 2003. In addition, small arms use has had repercussions for people's livelihoods. The livestock sector, which, according to the Association of Livestock Farmers, is responsible for generating 35 per cent of rural earnings, was especially hard hit. The association estimated that its members lost as much as 50 per cent of their cattle during the fighting of October 2002–March 2003 between pro- and anti-government forces (UN OCHA, 2003c).

Box 11.3 The impact of the 1996 mutinies on the Central African economy and civil society

'The mutinies in the CAR resulted in 70,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), 130 destroyed industries and businesses, and 3,000 lost jobs resulting from the closing of industries and commercial enterprises. According to sources at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, in 1996, these conflicts increased inflation by 3 percent, decreased per capita income by 3 percent, decreased exports by 16 percent, decreased imports by 23 percent, and decreased state revenues by 33.6 percent. These changes caused a dramatic increase in external debt, a decrease in overall security in the country because of the breakdown of law and order and spread of military weapons, a serious decrease in medical services, and shortages of even basic medical supplies. In a country that already had extremely limited medical services, at least three health centers were destroyed during the mutinies. Funeral services were limited during this time, and people were buried in backyards, causing serious health hazards. Finally, very little schooling occurred during the period (1996 and 1997).

'Embassies and international organizations closed, leading to the suspension or permanent closure of projects, such as those concerned with the AIDS campaign [...], primary health [...], and blood transfusions [...]. The offices of at least 12 donor-financed projects were ransacked or completely destroyed [...]. Of these, some closed down permanently, while others had to start from scratch and relocate to new offices in Bangui once the situation returned to normal.'

Source: Blom and Yamindou (2001, pp. 13–14)

Armed robbery

Criminals routinely use firearms. Several interlocutors spoke of 'five or six' armed robberies committed on an average night in Bangui after the October 2002 coup attempt. The prevalence of armed robbery is believed to be much greater than reported. A sense of futility, more than fear of retaliation, appears to account for why many armed robberies go unreported.[82]

Interestingly, it is perhaps the *fear* of armed robbery and not its *occurrence* that has a stronger impact on the community. Even if statistics showing a decline in the number of armed robberies could be trusted, there is reason to believe that stress related to insecurity in Bangui—specifically the fear of armed robbery—remains widespread throughout the populace. The director of an NGO working in CAR noted that staff members were clearly operating well below their level of ability. He attributed the decline to fear of armed robbery, and noted that events surrounding the coup of March 2003 had exacerbated the situation. People were on edge, not listening, and making careless mistakes.[83]

Roadblocks

Armed highway robbers and roadblocks impede transport throughout the country, causing the price of goods to rise, posing a danger to drivers, and reducing hunting safari tourism, which generates considerable revenues for the state

and local communities (see Box 11.4). Besides lamenting the dismal state of repair of the country's roads, the head of a transportation company in CAR detailed the prevalence of roadblocks throughout the country. He said that, on all of the main arteries, there are roadblocks every 20–40 kilometres. At each blockade, his drivers are habitually asked to pay bribes of 500–3,000 CFA Francs (USD 1–6). The people demanding money—often those employed by the state, such as police officers or soldiers—are frequently armed with Kalashnikovs and RPGs. They are more dangerous and unpredictable when they have been drinking. One of the company's drivers was shot while transporting a load for UNHCR in 2003.[84]

Box 11.4 Lost revenues from the downturn in hunting safaris in 2003

By all accounts, safari hunting enthusiasts are not easily dissuaded from pursuing their hobby. Political tensions in the capital often have little bearing on their decisions, as tour operators frequently go to great lengths to ensure the safety of their clients. Private planes and first-class treatment can mitigate or circumvent many of the usual annoyances and inconveniences. But they come at a price: a typical two-week safari costs in excess of USD 20,000 per person.

Revenues generated from safari hunting in CAR are not inconsequential and represent a significant income stream for communities in very remote locations far from Bangui and other major towns and cities. 'Trophy fees'—rates that governments charge to hunters for the animals they kill or injure—can range from a few hundred to several thousand US dollars per animal. Various supplemental charges are based on trophy fees, such as a taxidermy and trackers tax, and a community development tax, each typically a ten per cent surcharge. Additional costs include daily game park and veterinary fees. One should note that this list is far from a complete.

Mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that monies generated from this activity benefit the local communities surrounding the wildlife reserves. These funds finance development projects and pay the salaries of government workers who otherwise would go unremunerated.

In 2003, however, the armed conflict made it very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to resupply the lodges in many of the country's wildlife reserves. The result was a sharp downturn in safari hunting tourism.

ARMS RECOVERY AND DISARMAMENT EFFORTS

Since 1997, there have been numerous initiatives to recover weapons in the Central African Republic. Government forces, such as the police and forest rangers, have recovered hundreds of weapons. Many more weapons have been retrieved through internationally supported programs. The one thing all these initiatives have in common is that relatively few weapons collected have been destroyed.

Relatively few weapons collected in CAR have been destroyed.

Unilateral national initiatives

The OCRB, the police unit in charge of combating banditry, has routinely seized weapons. Before 1996, it used to recover largely pistols and locally crafted hunting rifles. In recent years, however, it has seized rifles, machine guns, and even the occasional mortar. By late December 2003, the OCRB had recovered 51 small arms and 14 grenades.[85] These numbers, which are slightly elevated in comparison to previous years, belie the changing scope of the problem. The police service believes that bandits are more numerous and better armed than before. At the same time, the strength of the OCRB has been substantially reduced. Whereas there were 130 OCRB police officers in February 2003,[86] the number had fallen to 45 by December—with only one vehicle to pursue robbers.[87]

The Government of CAR has recovered thousands of weapons along its international borders at times of heightened alert (using ad hoc patrols and deployments). President Patassé's presidential guard allegedly confiscated weapons from more than 4,000 FAZ troops who crossed into Mobaye in April 1997.[88] In 1999 alone, for instance, President Patassé acknowledged recovering 3,328 weapons from FAC personnel (UNSC, 2000, para. 26). Given the much larger quantities of weapons that are likely to have been transferred across the border, and the disincentive for national authorities to provide a full and accurate account, the true number of armaments seized is likely to be significantly higher.

The weapons were stored at Camp Béal in Bangui. In October 2002, President Patassé's supporters took them to defend the capital following the launch of General Bozizé's coup attempt. The weapons were not returned.[89]

Internationally assisted initiatives

Anti-poaching efforts (1988)

Anti-poaching projects have included efforts to recover small arms and light weapons.

Foreign-funded anti-poaching projects have established various kinds of working relationships with the government vis-à-vis the recovery of small arms and light weapons. For example, the Programme de développement de la région nord (PDRN) operated under an arrangement whereby it kept commercially manufactured weapons that it seized from foreign poachers, but returned any arms collected from Central Africans to the national authorities. Home-made firearms, regardless of ownership, were destroyed. The PDRN's successor, the Programme de développement des zones cynégétiques villageoises (PDZCV), operating under the EU-funded Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale (ECOFAC) programme, adheres to the same rules.[90]

Eco-guards in the Ngotto Forest have confiscated more than 200 long-guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition since 1997. Approximately 60 per cent of them are hand-crafted. Factory-produced 12-gauge shotguns include French, Russian, Belgian, and Italian models. German Mauser rifles, including .375 and .458 models, have also been recovered.[91]

MISAB and MINURCA programmes (1997–2000)

In 1997, the CAR government initiated a concerted arms collection programme with international assistance. As part of the agreement concluded between the government and the army mutineers in January 1997, MISAB was to undertake a major arms recovery effort. A small financial incentive was offered to individuals to entice them into relinquishing their weapons with no questions asked. (UNSC, 1997b, paras. 7–10) Inducements ranged between USD 13 for a pistol, sub-machine gun, or rifle and USD 123 for a 120 mm mortar system, assuming that the weapons were in good condition.[92] Smaller sums were offered for *matériel* handed over in a mediocre or poor state. As further encouragement, those who failed to turn in their weapons within a stipulated (short) amount of time were to be pursued through the courts. MISAB's last report to the UN Security Council stated that 1,373 small arms and a little under 118 light weapons were recovered (UNSC, 1998b, para. 14).[93] MISAB also stated that it had collected 464,604 munitions rounds and 26,714 explosives and detonators (UNSC, 1998b, para. 14). It is likely that the final numbers were somewhat higher, given that MISAB continued to patrol Bangui for an additional five weeks before MINURCA replaced it.

Undoubtedly, the recovery of so many arms, along with the equally important political dialogue that took place alongside the initiative, helped to stabilize an explosive situation that had resulted in significant loss of life. Tensions remained high in the capital after the signing of the Bangui Accords in January 1997, and many people died in major flare-ups in late June 1997 (USDOS, 1998).[94] The significance of the recovery programme, however, has been consistently

misrepresented. Claims that more than 90 per cent of heavy weapons and more than 50 per cent of light weapons were retrieved during the MISAB operation are routinely made. These percentages, though, are based on a comparison of the total number of weapons recovered and the number seized from Kassaï barracks. Yet this was just one component, albeit an important one, of the disarmament programme. President Patassé's government had every interest in promoting this viewpoint, as it took the pressure off the government of having to account for weapons that it had provided to the militias. MISAB, meanwhile, may have been motivated to highlight an 'uncontested' success when other aspects of the peace accords were not going so well. Whatever the underlying factors, one thing is certain: such a characterization is at best inappropriate and at worst disingenuous. Worryingly, the UN has perpetuated this myth.[95]

The disarmament effort was implemented selectively and not in the spirit of the accords, focusing primarily on the arrondissements that were home to the mutineers. Faltas (2000, p. 90) reports that 'while weapon collection took illegal arms off the streets, it increased the bitterness, frustration and insecurity of the population in the rebels' quarters by disarming the mutineers, but not their adversaries.'

To explain the relatively low rate of recovery of light weapons, MISAB emphasized the ease with which small arms could be transported out of Bangui or successfully hidden. Furthermore, it acknowledged that a demand for these weapons still existed, complicating recovery efforts. It hypothesized that rebels may have hastily discarded an unknown quantity of armaments in the forest or the Ubangui River following encounters with MISAB during the June 1997 armed confrontations. Finally, it reported that some 130 rebels never returned to their barracks and were believed to have absconded with their small arms, many to another country (UNSC, 1997b, para. 13).

No weapons collected during MISAB's tour of duty were destroyed. The arms collected were transferred to the UN mission in April 1998.[96]

Weapons collection continued under MINURCA, but on a limited scale. Although its mandate did not contain an explicit reference to weapons collection (UNSC, 1998c), UN peacekeepers did pursue leads on weapon caches. According to MINURCA Force Commander General Mouhammad Hachim Ratanga, they retrieved weapons from throughout the capital—the force did not concern itself with whether a particular quartier was perceived as pro- or anti-government.[97] According to the UN, MINURCA recovered 128 small arms, 21,724 rounds of ammunition, and 243 explosives between December 1998 and early October 1999 (UNSC, 1999b, para. 38).

Very few of these weapons were destroyed. MINURCA destroyed some obsolete ammunition, and in a public ceremony on 16 July 1999 burnt 158 obsolete small arms (Faltas, 2000, p. 90). A second public ceremony took place on 11 January 2000, during which the remaining 'unserviceable' arms collected by MISAB and MINURCA were destroyed (UNSC, 2000, para. 26). It was not possible to determine the exact number of weapons involved, but Demafouth said that most were MAS-36 bolt-action rifles, plus a few Kalashnikovs.[98] The remainder of the recovered armaments had been transferred to the CAR government the previous week (UNSC, 2000, para. 25). The small number of weapons destroyed suggests that most of those collected were in good condition.

National Programme for Disarmament and Reintegration (2002–03)

In 2002, the CAR government launched a new programme to recover arms and to provide marketable skills. The principal objectives of the National Programme for Disarmament and Reintegration (Programme national de désarmement et de reinsertion, or PNDR) were to recover around 10,000 small arms and light weapons and to offer livelihoods training to 2,000 individuals who opted to participate (UNDP, 2003a, p. 1). Political and military developments in CAR,

however, made it difficult to implement the programme as planned. The failed coup attempt of October 2002, the heightened instability that followed in its wake, and the successful coup of March 2003 greatly complicated matters. Despite—or perhaps because of—these challenges, the PNDR was fully funded. In January 2003, USD 1.96 million had been secured from donor countries and the UN. Canada, Germany, Italy, and Norway together contributed more than 55 per cent of the necessary funds, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) covering the shortfall (UNDP, 2003b, p. 10).

The PNDR recovered approximately 1,100 weapons. The data includes so many inconsistencies that it is impossible to determine with any certainty what actually occurred. Reports of the PNDR, UNDP, and the UN Secretary-General contain different figures. Of these three sources, the PNDR, which bears primary responsibility for implementing the project, is considered authoritative as it has the most details. Within the reports of the PNDR, the figures believed to be most accurate come from its detailed accounts of individual weapons recovered. Based on PNDR data, in an early report, the CAR government enumerated 891 small arms and 14 light weapons collected between 23 January and 31 May 2002, supplying serial numbers when possible (CTD, 2002, pp. 2–21). In a May 2003 document, the PNDR similarly listed additional firearms collected since the first destruction ceremony on 15 June 2002 (see below): 135 small arms and 3 light weapons (PNDR, 2003a, sec. VI). Eighty-four weapons collected in Bangassou and Mobaye were not included, as they were to be destroyed on site for security reasons (PNDR, 2003a, secs. IV and VI). The total number, therefore, is 219. Only 59 of these 84 additional weapons are mentioned in the May 2003 document, and not in the same level of detail as the other 135 (PNDR, 2003a, sec. IV). Apparently, 25 of these 84 weapons were transferred to Bangui separately.[99]

Information on ammunition collected under the PNDR is even more difficult to acquire with any confidence. The PNDR reported that it recovered 134,832 rounds of ammunition and 1,444 explosives. In addition, more than 859 magazines were turned in. Other *matériel* received included binoculars, uniforms, and communications equipment (PNDR, 2003a, sec. VI). Part of the confusion arises from the fact that some of the weapons the government seized during the failed coup attempts of May 2001 and October 2002 appear to have been added to PNDR statistics. There is considerable disagreement between the Comité technique de désarmement (CTD) and PNDR officials as to the origin of the weapons stored in the three containers at Camp Béal, in Bangui. Three officials extremely familiar with the programme provided very different accounts of what took place.[100] It does not seem plausible that the PNDR collected 135,000 rounds of ammunition from fewer than 1,000 people. Rather, it seems that most of the ammunition recovered from the two mutinies has been grouped with the weapons recovered by the PNDR, calling into question the programme's record-keeping.

Two hundred and twenty individuals who participated in the project (UN OCHA, 2003d) were selected to receive training.[101] The amount of money that a recipient received for relinquished weapons and ammunition determined eligibility. The minimum was 8,000 CFA Francs (USD 14). The rationale behind this figure was that it would reward those who gave up weapons in good condition. No one who turned in a weapon in an average or poor state would reach this threshold.[102] There is no indication that former combatants—the programme's target audience—received the lion's share of the training.

Instruction was offered in a number of skills over a four-month period. Training began in August 2003 and lasted until December 2003. Skills were provided to those seeking employment as carpenters, electricians, mechanics, and tailors, as well as in other trades and professions (UN OCHA, 2003d). Each trainee received a reintegration package,

including tools appropriate for their chosen occupation, valued at up to USD 500 (UN OCHA, 2003d). The project was scheduled to conclude at the end of January 2004.[103]

Two arms destruction ceremonies took place under the PNDR. The first was held on 15 June 2002, during which 705 small arms and 9 light weapons were set ablaze (PNDR, 2003a, sec. I). No ammunition or explosives were destroyed because of the inability of the PNDR to dispose of them safely. A second ceremony was convened on 25 July 2003 (PNDR, 2003b). The PNDR reported that it destroyed 209 small arms and 3 light weapons, as well as 134,352 rounds of ammunition, 1,361 grenades, 27 mortar shells, 54 rockets, and 1 anti-personnel landmine (PNDR, 2003b, p. 3). The PNDR also stated that, during this time, it destroyed 11 additional small arms (eight Kalashnikovs, two MAT-49s, and one MAS-36), 41 canon and mortar shells (eight 107 mm canon shells and 22 60 mm, two 81 mm, and nine 82 mm mortar shells), and 1,582 rounds of 7.5 mm, 7.62 mm, 9 mm, and 12.7 mm ammunition, among other military equipment (PNDR, 2003b, p. 3). For the reasons discussed above, there is cause to question this breakdown. Of the many possible explanations for the discrepancies between the number of weapons reportedly recovered and those subsequently destroyed, the most plausible is that the government would have sought to keep collected *matériel* that was in good working order.

CONCLUSION

Between 1996 and 2003, a series of events significantly transformed Central African society. The government itself has been responsible for some, but over others it had no control. The state's ability to regulate weapons among civilians is essentially non-existent. The massive influx of arms into large parts of the country represents a threat to national security and to law and order.

The state's ability to regulate weapons among civilians is essentially non-existent.

Regardless of President Bozizé's political skills, the proliferation of small arms throughout CAR will further complicate an already challenging situation. CAR today is a tinderbox, but there is still hope that tensions can be defused. The country has enjoyed a mostly peaceful history—independence from France came without an armed struggle—and small arms were not prevalent among civilians until 1982. Recent years have not been as kind to the country, with a succession of mutinies and coup attempts roiling the nation and conflicts in various neighbouring states spilling across its borders. These developments have contributed to a lack of security in CAR. Zaraguinas roam the roads with seeming impunity outside of the capital and armed robberies occur frequently in Bangui and elsewhere.

Disarmament efforts to date have been largely a waste of money, as evidenced by the recirculation rather than the removal of arms. In some ways, disarmament initiatives exacerbated tensions within the population, because the apparent selectivity with which schemes were implemented hardened differences between groups. Nevertheless, disarmament is still a hugely important endeavour worthy of international support; but the programme must be designed and implemented more competently. Future initiatives ought to target the numerous armed groups that Patassé created, Chadian Zaraguinas, and Bozizé's Liberators. The focus ought to be on collecting assault rifles and light weapons rather than antiquated bolt-action rifles (USE). Weapons and ammunition collected should be destroyed.

It is hoped that the study's findings will aid policy-makers in devising new security-sector reform and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes, both in CAR and in other places. For the problems that ail the Central African Republic—a weak central government, regional conflicts, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, to name but a few—are, unfortunately, not unique to CAR.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFDL	Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre
CAR	Central African Republic
CEMAC	Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale
CNRI	Centre national de recherche et d'information
CTD	Comité technique de désarmement
DGRE	Direction générale de la documentation et des enquêtes
OCRB	L'office central de répression du banditisme
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOFAC	Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des ecosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale
EU	European Union
FAC	Forces armées congolaises
FACA	Forces armées centrafricaines
FAN	Forces armées du nord
FAR	Forces armées rwandaises
FAZ	Forces armées zaïroises
FORSDIR	Force spéciale de défense des institutions républicaines
MINURCA	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic
MISAB	Mission interafricaine de surveillance des accords de Bangui
MLC	Mouvement de libération du Congo
MLPC	Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PDRN	Programme de développement de la région nord
PDZCV	Programme de développement des zones cynégétiques villageoises
PNDR	Programme national de désarmement et de réinsertion
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade (launcher)
SCPS	Société centrafricaine de protection et de surveillance
SDU	Self-defence unit
SERD	Section d'enquête, de recherche et de documentation
SSR	Security-sector reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defense Forces
USP	Unité de la Sécurité Présidentielle
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

ENDNOTES

[1] This chapter is a based on a longer manuscript to be published by the Small Arms Survey.

[2] Elements of the army mutinied on three separate occasions in 1996: in April, May, and November (McFarlane and Malan, 1998, pp. 49–51).

[3] Author interviews with knowledgeable sources, Bangui, June and December 2003.

[4] The brutal methods employed by government forces during the Bokassa era may have cowed opponents from taking up arms.

[5] One group, the Mouvement centrafricain de libération nationale (MCLN), was created in 1979, but initially received training and equipment outside of CAR. It was quickly uprooted and neutralized after an attack in Bangui in 1981. The Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain (MLPC), a CAR-based political party, began to receive arms after the 1981 general election (in which it was not successful in its bid to capture the presidency). See the section on Small arms flows and trafficking in this chapter.

[6] The acronym 'AK-47' refers explicitly to the Kalashnikov AK-47. Because the term is often used to refer to a variety of weapons that are derived from the basic AK-47 design, the term 'Kalashnikov' is used here to refer to these derivatives and not a specific model or country of origin.

[7] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in 2001 that 1,250 former FACA troops crossed into the DRC after the failed coup (UNHCR, 2001b). Around 80 per cent went to a town some 100 kilometres from Zongo, across the Ubangui River from Bangui. The other 20 per cent or so remained in Congolese villages along the river (UNHCR, 2001a).

[8] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 3 September 2003.

[9] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 3 September 2003.

[10] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Geneva, 9 April 2003.

[11] Author interview with Ernest Latakpi, general director, Police Administration, Ministry of Interior, Government of CAR, Bangui, 19 December 2003.

[12] Author interview with Louis Mazangue, Director, OCRB, Ministry of Interior, Government of CAR, Bangui, 18 February 2003.

[13] Author interview with Ernest Latakpi, general director, Police Administration, Ministry of Interior, Government of CAR, Bangui, 27 June 2003.

[14] The Gardes forestiers, Gardes chasse, and Personnels des circonscriptions minières de diamant, respectively.

[15] Author interview with Michel Bonannée, water and forest engineer, head of mission, Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting, and Fishing, Government of CAR, Bangui, 17 December 2003.

[16] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 3 September 2003.

[17] Author interview with knowledgeable source by telephone, 5 April 2005.

[18] Written correspondence with knowledgeable source, 2003.

[19] Most of these smaller neighbourhoods have a historic link to a particular region or ethnic group in the country. There are no laws or physical boundaries (other than streets) separating quartiers, but people have tended to settle among family members and, over time, the ethnic character of these areas has made them distinct. This is so even though inter-marriage is not uncommon. Patrilineal descent is prevalent throughout society.

[20] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Geneva, 8 April 2003.

[21] The SCPS provided security for logging companies, diamond mining interests, and those responsible for sensitive deliveries, such as of money. Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 3 September 2003.

[22] Written correspondence with Olivier Nyirubugara, former IRIN correspondent in Bangui, 31 March 2005.

[23] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 16 June 2003.

[24] Author interviews with knowledgeable sources, Bangui, February and June 2003.

[25] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 3 September 2003.

[26] Under an October 2002 agreement, Bangui and N'djamena committed themselves to ensuring that Bozizé would leave Chad for France and that Miskine would depart CAR for Togo. See UN OCHA, 2002a.

[27] Based on an author interview with Olivier Feneteau, Technical Advisor, Zones Cynégétiques Villageoises component, CAR Office, Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des ecosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale (ECOFAC), Paris, 2 September 2003.

[28] Author interviews with: Raymond Mbitikon, head, Zones Cynégétiques Villageoises component, CAR Office, ECOFAC, Bangui, 18 December 2003; Gérard Motkin, administrative and financial director, CAR Office, ECOFAC, Bangui, 18 December 2003; and Alain Penelon, head, Ngotto Forest component, CAR Office, ECOFAC, Bangui, 19 December 2003.

[29] Written correspondence with Olivier Feneteau, technical advisor, Zones Cynégétiques Villageoises component, CAR Office, ECOFAC, 7 August 2003.

[30] Author interview with Richard Carroll, director, Africa and Madagascar Program, World Wildlife Fund (US), 6 August 2003, by telephone.

[31] These figures are based on the following ratios: 886:555 and 61:315, respectively. It is assumed that the weapons of French personnel attached to these services were included in the totals (68 French nationals were attached to the gendarmerie and seven to the police). If these French personnel kept their weapons separately, the ratios for the Central African gendarmerie and police would rise to 1.82 and 0.20, respectively. The ratios for the republican guard and the army were nearly identical: 1.35 (907:672) and 1.34 (1,017:761), respectively. The ratio for the republican guard would not change if the two French personnel attached to the service had kept their weapons outside of the state armouries, but if this were true for the 110 French personnel attached to the army, that service's multiplier would rise to 1.56. (SHAT, 1963, pp. 34, 38, 49, 57, 62).

[32] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 11 December 2003.

[33] Interview by Nicolas Florquin with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minster of Defence, Government of CAR, 23 March 2005, by telephone.

[34] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minster of Defence, Government of CAR, 23 March 2005, by telephone.

[35] Author interview with Lucy Jones, former Reuters correspondent, 5 August 2003, by telephone.

[36] Written correspondence with Olivier Nyirubugara, former IRIN correspondent in Bangui, 22 March 2005.

[37] Author interviews with knowledgeable sources, Bangui, February and June 2003.

[38] In January 1979, government troops employed deadly force to suppress protests against President Bokassa's order that students wear school uniform. Some 200 civilians lost their lives. In April 1979, security forces rounded up elementary and high school students, resulting in the massacre of more than 100 young people. President Bokassa is widely believed to have participated in the killings. See O'Toole (1986, pp. 53–54).

[39] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Bangui, June 2003.

[40] Author interview with Richard Carroll, director, Africa and Madagascar Program, World Wildlife Fund (US), 6 August 2003, by telephone.
[41] Interview by Louisa Lombard with knowledgeable source, Bangui, June 2003.
[42] Klieman (1985, p. 139) states that Israel is 'regarded' as having provided military assistance to CAR, but offers no further information. Beit-Hallahmi (1987, p. 71) writes that Israel provided arms to the Central African army during the Bokassa regime.
[43] Author interview with knowledgeable sources, Bangui, February and June 2003.
[44] France was concerned that President Bokassa was prepared to grant Libya a military base in CAR, as well as access to uranium deposits, in exchange for financial and military aid, and that Libyan President Moammar Qaddafi appeared amenable to such a deal. France viewed such a strategic relationship as a threat to its access to uranium deposits in CAR. Moose (1985, p. 81).
[45] Author interview with Col. Patrice Sartre, military adviser, Secretary-General of National Defence, Office of the Prime Minister, Paris, 18 June 2003.
[46] Allegations of French military support for the failed coup of May 2001 appear to be unfounded. President Patassé accused France publicly of involvement, and displayed weapons that he claimed his forces had retrieved from Kolingba's residence (see, for example, Jones, 2001). France did not refute that the weapons were of French origin, but denied any connection to the coup. It said that the weapons were intended for CAR's gendarmerie. As a former head of state and minister of defence, Kolingba could have stored weapons in his residence, as there was little to no oversight of his actions. Moreover, additional weapons could have been obtained from the area of Mobaye, where Kolingba is from and from where he derives substantial support. 'Proof' offered to date has not supported the claims.
[47] Qaddafi offered training in Libya to several hundred members of the MCLN, headed by Rudolphe Iddi Lala. In 1979, Qaddafi sent MCLN cadres to Chad to fight on behalf of his ally, Goukkoni Weddeye. Iddi Lala eventually made his way back to CAR, where he orchestrated the July 1981 bombing of a Bangui cinema. The MCLN was rooted out and shortly after the blast ceased to be a coherent force or threat. Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Geneva, 8 April 2003.
[48] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Washington, DC, 2003.
[49] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Washington, DC, 2003.
[50] Some analysts value the *matériel* at more than USD 1 billion (see Foltz, 1995, p. 29). Iraq purportedly benefited most from this windfall. Author interview with William J. Foltz, H.J. Heinz Professor of African Studies and Political Science, Yale University, 25 August 2003, by telephone.
[51] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Bangui, February 2003.
[52] Author interview with Maj. Namboro Kette, cabinet chief of the head of the general staff, Bangui, 27 June 2003.
[53] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Bangui, February 2003.
[54] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Bangui, February 2003.
[55] Indeed, Bangui denies having used or possessed mines (UN OCHA, 2002b).CAR signed and ratified the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use Stockpiling Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction on 8 November 2002.
[56] CAR would have taken notice of China's lack of enthusiasm for the proposed UN peacekeeping mission in Guatemala. China originally vetoed the resolution—Guatemala maintained diplomatic relations with Taiwan. China subsequently relented and approved the mission, but ensured that it would be small in scale and in existence for a short period.
[57] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Geneva, 9 April 2003.
[58] According to Buijtenhuijs (1998, pp. 22–23), in Chad, the 'north' commonly refers to some three-quarters of the country's territory, while the 'south' comprises just the five southern-most prefectures. Citizens' relative adherence to Islam largely influences this definition. The populations of these two regions are roughly equal.
[59] For background on the conflict, French and US military support for Habré, and Libyan assistance to Goukouni, the head of a 'transitional' government that ruled Chad from 1979–82, see Lemarchand (1985, pp. 239–56).
[60] Only slightly more than 5 per cent of the country's inhabitants live in Haut-Mbomou, Haute-Kotto, and Vakaga prefectures (UN OCHA, 2003b, p. 9). Moreover, Jones (2002) reports, for example, that the citizens of Mboki, a town in Haut-Mbomou prefecture, have not received any mail since 1974.
[61] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Geneva, 8 April 2003.
[62] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Geneva, 8 April 2003.
[63] The MLC troops were in CAR fewer than two weeks (UN OCHA, 2001).
[64] The number of MLC troops sent to CAR has been reported as high as 3,000. See UN OCHA (2002c).
[65] Author interview with peacekeepers, UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Mbandaka, February 2003.
[66] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Paris, 16 June 2003.
[67] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Bangui, June 2003.
[68] Author interview with Richard Carroll, Director, Africa and Madagascar Program, World Wildlife Fund (US), 10 June 2003, by telephone.
[69] Author interview with UNHCR official, Bangui, February 2003.
[70] Author interview with ex-FAR officer, Bangui, December 2003.
[71] Author interview with UNHCR official, Bangui, December 2003.
[72] Author interview with Maj. Namboro Kette, cabinet chief of the head of the general staff, Bangui, 27 June 2003.
[73] Mission interafricaine de surveillance des accords de Bangui (MISAB), 1997–98; La Mission des Nations Unies en République centrafricaine (MINURCA), 1998–2000; Peacekeeping force of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), 2001–03; Peacekeeping force of the Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC), 2003 to date.
[74] Author interview with Lt.-Col. Dominique Kouerey, former Head of Plans, Headquarters, MISAB, Libreville, 22 June 2003.
[75] Author interview with Rear-Admiral Martin Mavoungou Bayonne, Force Commander, CEMAC, Bangui, 26 June 2003.
[76] Interview by Louisa Lombard with official, community hospital, Bangui, June 2003. Statistics for the March 2003 coup were not available at the time of the interview.
[77] Interview by Louisa Lombard with Cecile Koyangbanda, director, community hospital, Bangui, 26 June 2003.
[78] Interview by Louisa Lombard with Ione Bertocchi, director, Ngaoundaye Hospital, Bangui, 27 August 2004 (used with the permission of the United Nations Development Programme, Bangui).
[79] Author interview with Richard Carroll, director, Africa and Madagascar Program, World Wildlife Fund (US), 10 June 2003, by telephone.
[80] Written correspondence with Fred Duckworth, professional hunter, Safaria, 12 September 2003.
[81] For all intents and purposes, the distinction between 'poaching' and 'bush-meat trade' is a question of political correctness. The term poaching has a negative connotation, suggesting heartless people who prey on defenceless animals for crass commercial gain. Those trading in bush meat, meanwhile, are often viewed as impoverished, kind-hearted village folk trying to eke out a living. This difference, of course, is lost on the animals.
[82] Many victims of criminal activity, including armed robbery, choose not to file a report, as they believe that the police and the state are powerless to do anything about the problem. Interview by Louisa Lombard with knowledgeable source, Bangui, June 2003.

[83] Interview by Louisa Lombard with a knowledgeable source, Bangui, June 2003.
[84] Interview by Louisa Lombard with Marc-André Cahlik, owner, transportation company, Bangui, 27 June 2003.
[85] Author interview with police superintendent Yves-Valentine Gbeyoro, Director, OCRB, Bangui, 19 December 2003.
[86] Author interview with Controller General Louis Mazangue, Director, OCRB, Ministry of the Interior, Government of CAR, Bangui, 18 February 2003.
[87] Author interview with police superintendent Yves-Valentin Gbeyoro, Director, OCRB, Ministry of the Interior, Government of CAR, Bangui, 27 June 2003.
[88] Author interview with Guy Guernas, Associate Protection Officer, UNHCR, Bangui, 14 February 2003.
[89] Author interview with Col. Jules Bernard Ouandé, Minister Delegate, head of security and disarmament, Ministry of the Interior, Government of CAR, Bangui, 20 December 2003.
[90] Author interview with Olivier Feneteau, Technical Advisor, Zones Cynégétiques Villageoises component, CAR Office, ECOFAC, Paris, 2 September 2003.
[91] Author interview with Alain Penelon, head, Ngotto Forest component, CAR Office, ECOFAC, Bangui, 19 December 2003.
[92] 'Taux de Recompense' courtesy of PNDR, Bangui, February 2003. The figures are based on an average value of the CFA Franc of 609.33 for July, August, and September 1997, the period when the vast majority of weapons were turned in.
[93] The figures in the document are supplied as percentages of the weapons seized from Kassaï barracks, provided in previous Security Council documents (UNSC, 1998a, p. 7).
[94] A resumption of hostilities in late June resulted in some 500 deaths and 70,000 internally displaced persons (US DOS, 1998).
[95] For example, Secretary-General Annan wrote in 2001 that, '[t]o date, 95 per cent of the heavy weapons that have been in circulation since the mutinies of 1996 and 1997 have been recovered, compared with 65 per cent of light weapons' (UNSC, 2001, para. 23).
[96] Author interview with General (ret.) Mouhammad Hachim Ratanga, Libreville, 19 June 2003.
[97] Author interview with General (ret.) Mouhammad Hachim Ratanga, Libreville, 19 June 2003.
[98] Author interview with Jean-Jacques Demafouth, former Minister of Defence, Government of CAR, Geneva, 8 April 2003.
[99] Author interview with knowledgeable source, Bangui, December 2003.
[100] Author interviews with knowledgeable sources, Bangui. February, June, and December 2003.
[101] Author interview with Harouna Dan Malam, Chief Technical Assistant, PNDR, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Bangui, 15 December 2003. The PNDR had previously reported that, as of October 2002, 826 individuals had taken part in the programme (UNDP, 2003a, p. 4) The reason for the discrepancy is not clear, but it may be that records were lost during the October 2002 coup attempt.
[102] Author interview with Harouna Dan Malam, Chief Technical Assistant, PNDR, UNOPS, Bangui, 15 December 2003.
[103] Written correspondence with Fabrice Boussalem, Recovery Specialist, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP, 15 January 2004.

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