



FACT SHEET SENEGAL

Weapons and Ammunition Logistics in West Africa – Austrian Activities in Cooperation with Senegal

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Due to Senegal's colonial past and the long-standing military presence of France, procedures in weapons and ammunition logistics have been strongly based on the French system or supported by France. Because of the gradual reduction of this presence, this task now falls within the responsibility of the Senegalese military.

The rapidly increasing population concentrating in the conurbations, above all in the Greater Dakar area, has a massive impact on compliance with required security regulations in the field of weapons and ammunition logistics. Donations from a wide variety of countries over the years have further complicated the situation with regard to explosives and have led to a massive surplus of partly unsafe ammunition under inadequate storage conditions. This dramatically increases the risks in densely populated areas. The Senegalese Armed Forces have been trying to compensate for the lack of suitable storage sites by adapting and using former fortifications. The conflict between the central government and Casamance, a region in the south of Senegal striving for independence, which has been ongoing since 1990, poses an additional challenge. The Senegalese Armed Forces are fully aware of these problems. Accordingly, Senegal has requested support multilaterally through the United Nations, but also bilaterally from various donor states, including the USA, France and Germany.

FACT BOX

National territory: 196.712 km²
Population: approx. 16.209.000 (2019)
Official Language: French
Capital: Dakar approx. 3.732.000 (2019)
Form of government: Republic (presidential system)
Religions: Muslims (96%), Christians (4%)
GDP: 24.2 billion USD (2018)
Currency: 1 CFA-Franc (XOF) = 100 Centimes
Defence expenditures: 348 million USD (2018), Share of GDP: 1,77%
Total strength: 13.600 (active service), 5.000 (paramilitary)
Troops abroad: Central African Republic UN MINUSCA 111, DR Congo UN MONUSCO 8, The Gambia ECOWAS ECOMIG 250, Liberia UN UNMIL 1, Mali UN MINUSMA 1,095 (2 InfBn), South Sudan UN UNMISS 3, Sudan UN UNAMID 39 (2019)

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE ENGAGEMENT

In 2014, the United States Africa Command (US-AFRICOM) approached Austria at a donor conference to consider the possibility of supplementing the training on Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) conducted three times a year by US-AFRICOM for the Senegalese Army by means of one-week courses on the safety and security of weapons and ammunition storage. An Austrian contribution to the US activities was assessed positively based on the existing bilateral cooperation agreement with Senegal and the option of expanding support in the regional context of West Africa, and was launched at the multinational level.

In view of the urgency of the issue, it was decided later on to implement ammunition logistics as an independent project under Austrian leadership. Apart from the USA, Great Britain and Canada support the implementation of this programme with instructors and financial resources, while Germany is supplementing the project with its own basic module on the safe transport of ammunition. The general objective is to counteract the described problems in the long term through targeted training activities, advising and knowledge transfer.



PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES AND OUTLOOK 2020/21

At the beginning of the engagement in **2015/16**, the focus was on general awareness raising regarding weapons and ammunition logistics in addition to the EOD training conducted by the USA.

In **2017**, the Senegalese Armed Forces requested that the programme as a whole be stepped-up and focused on the area of ammunition logistics.

In **2018**, the first phase of the project was launched: a tri-lateral agreement was signed between Senegal, the USA and Austria at a high-level meeting; furthermore, the training ammunition furthermore, the stability of the training ammunition was tested and the first basic training courses in ammunition stockpile management (*moderating*) were conducted.

In **2019**, the second round of basic training was carried out together with selected Senegalese instructors (*mentoring*), a special training course was held for Senegalese instructors and the first course on the visual inspection of ammunition (*moderating*) was implemented. In the course of their presence in Senegal, assessment visits and consultations were also held in various ammunition storage facilities.

2020 has been marked by the restrictions imposed by the global COVID-19 situation and the resulting necessary postponement of activities. The visit of Senegalese experts to Austria also had to be cancelled.

By **2021**, the basic training (*monitoring*) and the hand-over of the responsibility for the training to the Senegalese Armed Forces are planned to be completed; the continuation of the instructors training in the field of visual inspection is also scheduled. Concurrently, increased advisory activities will take place with regard to the establishment of a new school structure, the issue of handling surplus ammunition and the planned establishment of a central national ammunition depot. In addition, assessments will be made regarding a second project phase, with possible activities in the context of weapons storage safety and security as well as the exploration of possibilities for the desired regionalisation.

CHALLENGES AND SENSIBILITIES

- Great number of activities of international actors with partly overlapping interests, also in the context of a colonial past.
- Lack of financial and human resources due to diverse national and regional challenges.
- Numerous training courses abroad, including France, Great Britain, USA, Benin, Morocco, which often have counterproductive effects in terms of standardizing structures and processes.
- School structure to be established.
- Severe threat for the civilian population due to non-compliance with crucial regulations for stockpile management, e.g. insufficient safety distances and excess storage capacity.
- Challenging environmental conditions, such as the proximity to the sea (high humidity and influence of salinity in the air), dust pollution and large temperature differences.

OBJECTIVES OF AUSTRIA AND IN PARTICULAR OF THE MOD/AUSTRIAN ARMED FORCES

West Africa is one of the three priority regions according to the Austrian Security Strategy. The commitment is a concrete contribution to stabilisation in an area of great relevance to the European Union, in which Senegal has positioned itself as a key player. The focus is on preventing the illicit proliferation of weapons and ammunition in Western Africa itself, but also from Western Africa to other trouble spots, with strong overlaps in the context of migration and terrorism. For the Federal Ministry of Defence, Senegal is a stable partner stretching its influence into the region. In addition, a gender mainstreaming concept in the context of weapons and ammunition safety and security is actively supported as another current cross-cutting issue.



Practical basic training

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AUSTRIAN MOD/AUSTRIAN ARMED FORCES

Project steering at the strategic level is carried out by the Military Policy Division, project implementation is realised by the Armed Forces Logistics School/International Capacity Building Section, supported temporarily and as required by other experts from the Austrian Armed Forces Logistics School, the ammunition depots and the Armament and Defence Technology Agency as well as the Armed Forces in implementing the pool of civil-military capabilities for mission-related special tasks in accordance with the Austrian Security Strategy. With its expertise, the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management supports the dissemination of information to those interested in security policy.

METHODICAL APPROACH

- Mobile Advisory and Training Teams with temporary presence in the field.
- Implementation of the train-the-trainer approach – a sequence of one moderating, one mentoring and one monitoring phase – with the aim of transferring education and training into national ownership with permanent national training structures
- Special train-the-trainer qualification both in Senegal and in ammunition depots in Austria managed according to international standards.

