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# Press Release

## DRC IS ENGAGED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION PROLIFERATION TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITY AND RESTORE RULE OF LAW

***Rwampara – Bunia (Ituri Province), 19 December 2015: Under the supervision of CNC-ALPC (National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Armed Violence Reduction), FARDC (DRC Armed Forces) and the technical expertise of UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service), more than 22 000 obsolete weapons, small arms ammunition (SAA) and unexploded ordnances (UXOs) illegally owned have been destroyed. Throughout this initiative, DRC meets its international obligations and prevents the potential risk of deflagration related to weapons, ammunition and UXOs stocking conditions. This destruction marks the official end of the community safety pilot project, mainly funded by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) since 2008, for the prevention of conflicts and the community recovery efforts. Other partners include: the civil authorities, police and military of Bunia, MONUSCO, Germany, Australia and the NGOs network for the security sector reform.***

For years, in North and South Ituri, Maniema and Tanganyaka, about **300 000 small arms and light weapons (SAWL)** have been owned by **civilians**.

The Province of Ituri has notably been the witness of a vicious cycle of armed conflicts, some of which, due to their ethical nature, have involved the use of thousands of weapons from armed groups and civilians. The use of weapons has led to serious human rights violations such as murders, sexual violence, instrumental use of children, looting, illegal exploitation of natural resources, ecosystems deterioration and human development infringement. As a result, the Province was plunged into chronic insecurity. Thus it was urgent to join efforts in order to achieve peace-building and reinforce State Authority in Ituri.

In this way, under the lead of **CNC-ALPC**, a disarmament campaign undertaken during 4 months since March 12, 2014 has allowed to implement awareness mechanisms throughout the training of **85 focal points of the population, of which 6 women**, as well as the collection, traceability and stock management of SAWL. **In total, 23 594 weapons as well as SAA and UXOs and have been collected in 4 sites (Bunia, Fataki, Libi and Mahagi) from 650 members of the community, of which 6 were women.** This represents **774 firearms weighting 568kg and 22 820 ammunition weighting 10 tons.** This result is 10 times more than initially expected. 142 obsolete weapons, 21 589 SAA and 444 UXO have been destroyed. The other weapons have been marked and registered to facilitate their traceability when reused.

Based on the success of this operation, partners insist on **the Government of DRC to continue its support to CNC-ALPC in terms of human resources, logistics and finance so that this pilot project can extend its actions to other regions touched by illegal weapons circulation that threatens peace-building.**

**As a reminder**, the implementation of this pilot project is the result of a study undertaken thanks to the financial support of France and the technical expertise of the “Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security”

(GRIP) and « Bonn International Center for Conversion ». This study focuses on **community safety** and was initiated in 2008 in **5 pilot communities** of Ituri (Bunia/Sukisa, Kasenyi, Mahagi, Fataki and Nizi).

Results of the research have permitted the development of this community safety pilot project in Ituri based on **three strategic intervention axes**:

- **Social cohesion and pacific coexistence**
- **Restoration of physical and legal security**
- **Means of subsistence and economic recovery**

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