



Introduction

This report supplements and updates the Small Arms Survey's Working Paper No. 16, *The Headstamp Trail: An Assessment of Small-calibre Ammunition Found in Libya* (Jenzen-Jones, 2013). It examines an additional 21 examples of small-calibre ammunition documented in Libya in 2011, 2012, and 2013 (see Annexe 1). Sources include information and photographs gathered and submitted to the author by journalists, experts, and organizations, as well as some open-source material such as online arms marketplaces.¹ Most of the source images were taken in Tripoli and Zawiya, with additional material from Bani Walid, Mizdah, Sebha, and western Libya. Some images were taken in unconfirmed locations and are marked accordingly.

This additional set of documented cartridges expands the knowledge base on the headstamps of small-calibre ammunition in circulation in Libya. The report features cartridges produced in countries such as Algeria, Portugal, and Turkey, which had not been identified as countries of manufacture for any of the ammunition reviewed in Working Paper No. 16. All but one of the identified cartridges were manufactured during the cold war, illustrating the continued circulation of old ammunition in Libya.

The report reviews recent developments in the general availability of ammunition in Libya and the broader sub-region, before analysing the newly documented ammunition.

General Availability

Small-calibre ammunition remains readily available in Libya, especially within the capital, Tripoli.² One of the trends identified in the Survey's previous publication on small-calibre ammunition in Libya was an increasing civilian preference for concealable handguns over the long guns preferred during the period of open conflict (Jenzen-Jones, 2013, p. 13). This continues to hold true and, as a result, means that prices for handgun ammunition remain high.³

This preference has also led to a change in the market availability of some types of ammunition. For example, a range of PAK (Pistole Automatische Knall) blank cartridges for use in blank-firing handguns (so called 'gas alarm guns') have recently become widely available in Tripoli.⁴ While present before and during the revolutionary conflict in small numbers, the increased demand for handguns has led to a significant increase in the number of blank-firing handguns and, consequently, the availability of ammunition for these weapons.⁵

Online marketplaces

As a result of the continuing civilian demand for small arms and light weapons, online marketplaces have been openly selling arms and ammunition on social media networks. Several of these—the most prominent of which appears to be the Libyan Firearms Market (the Market) (سوق الأسلحة النارية الليبية)—operate on Facebook (Libyan Firearms Market, 2013a). The Market's Facebook page describes itself as part of the 'Shopping & Retail' category of this site and gives the location of the business as Tripoli, even providing a cellular phone number for contacting the proprietor. As of late October 2013 the page was still active and had received almost 14,000 'likes'. Several other Facebook pages have also been set up after the end of Libyan conflict, and some claim allegiance to powerful non-state armed groups (Kibrisli, 2013).

On the Market's Facebook page a variety of arms and ammunition are offered for sale. The page also posts requests for items sought, along with the purchase prices offered for these items. For example, the page listed a

request for .38 S&W calibre ammunition, also known as .38/200, after a common British loading. According to one source, this ammunition is highly sought after for use with an Enfield No. 2 Mk I or Webley Mk IV revolver, both of which are known to be in Libya (Jenzen-Jones, 2012). Enabled by the social media platform, the Market has attracted posts and comments from several other users looking to sell weapons or ammunition of their own. It appears that some of these users have set up Facebook accounts solely for the purpose of buying or selling arms (e.g. Guns Mark, 2013). According to a source in Tripoli who purchased items from the Market site operator, the purchase process was simple and the transactions were made in person, with cash exchanged only after he had seen the merchandise.⁶

Proliferation of small-calibre ammunition in the region

Small-calibre ammunition has proliferated out of Libya to various countries in the region. The UN Panel of Experts on Libya investigated illicit transfers of weapons—which in most cases were either known or thought to include small-calibre ammunition—from Libya to 12 countries in the 12 months preceding March 2013 (Raad et al., 2013, pp. 5, 24–39). These countries include Libya’s immediate neighbours, as well as several countries in West Africa, the Levant, and the Horn of Africa. Information on illicit transfers of small-calibre ammunition out of Libya includes the following:

1. In January 2012 the Permanent Mission of Egypt informed the UN Panel of Experts on Libya that Egyptian forces had intercepted 1,132,411 cartridges and 567 weapons when they disrupted an attempt to smuggle these into Egypt (Raad et al., 2012, para. 117).
2. In late 2011 authorities in Niger reported the seizure of military materiel from an armed convoy in transit from Libya to Mali (Raad et al., 2012, para. 133). Along with a variety of small arms and light weapons, the following small-calibre ammunition was seized:
 - 2,067 7.62 x 39 mm cartridges;
 - 5,910 7.62 x 51 mm cartridges;
 - 1,961 7.62 x 54R mm cartridges;
 - 547 12.7 x 108 mm cartridges; and
 - 260 14.5 x 114 mm cartridges.
3. Tunisia also reported confiscating small-calibre ammunition originating in Libya in 2011 and 2012: 26,842 rounds of small-calibre ammunition, of which roughly half (13,131 cartridges) were 7.62 x 39 cartridges, were documented in a list provided to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya in January 2013 (Raad et al., 2013, Annexe 10). A published image of captured small-calibre ammunition can be seen in Photo 1.
4. In April 2012 Lebanese authorities seized a shipment of arms and ammunition aboard the Sierra Leonean-flagged vessel *Letfallah II*. Media reports indicated that the materiel originated in Libya and was bound for opposition forces in Syria (*The Daily Star*, 2012; Raad et al., 2013, para. 171). Among the materiel documented were 566,684 rounds of mixed small-calibre ammunition (Raad et al., 2013, Annexe XIII).

The security situation in Libya remains fragile, with state security forces still limited in their capacity to enforce border controls (Raad et al., 2013, p. 5). While a number of non-state armed groups active during the revolutionary conflict have since been integrated with state security forces, most brigades retain control of their own weapons. Civilian weapons ownership also remains at a much higher level than in pre-revolution Libya.⁷ Compounding the delicate security situation, there have been reports of organized smuggling by groups affiliated with extremist organizations such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Raad et al., 2013, para. 124). The proliferation of unsecured military materiel and the diversion of material under the control of state or auxiliary forces remain ongoing concerns.

Photo 1 Inner packaging (so-called ‘spam cans’ or ‘sardine tins’), each containing 440 rounds of 7.62 x 54R ammunition. Visible markings show some of the packaging contains light ball (LPS) cartridges produced by Arsenal in Bulgaria in 1987, while some contains tracer (T-46) cartridges produced by Novosibirsk Low Voltage Equipment Plant in the former Soviet Union in 1970.⁸ The open tin and cardboard packaging contain some 7.62 x 39 cartridges.



Photo: Tunisian MOI (2013)

Additional small-calibre ammunition identified in Libya

Most of the additional ammunition identified in this report is of the same calibres as ammunition previously identified in Libya. The exception to this is the one newly observed brand of 9 mm P.A. (PAK) cartridge for use with the blank-firing ‘gas alarm guns’ described above. This new type was seen in the image of a box of 9 mm P.A. cartridges produced by Özkursan in Turkey that were offered for sale on Facebook (see Photo 2).

Photo 2 A box of 9 mm P.A. cartridges produced by Özkursan in Turkey.



Photo: Libyan Firearms Market

Boxes of 7.65 x 17SR mm (.32 ACP) cartridges produced by Sellier & Bellot in the former Czechoslovakia were seen for sale on Facebook (see Photo 3).⁹ This ammunition is not of recent production and is likely at least twenty years old. Other handgun ammunition was also documented, including 9 x 19 mm brass-cased cartridges produced by Sellier & Bellot in the Czech Republic, and a 9 x 19 cartridge produced in 1977 by FN Herstal in Belgium.

Photo 3 Boxes of 7.65 x 17SR mm (.32 ACP) cartridges produced by Sellier & Bellot in Czechoslovakia.



Photo: Libyan Firearms Market

Both NATO and Eastern Bloc calibre ammunition are included in this report. A 5.56 x 45 mm cartridge produced in 1979 by Fábrica Nacional de Munições de Armas Ligeiras (FNMAL) in Portugal was documented in Zawiya in 2013, as were 7.62 x 51 mm cartridges produced in 1977 by FN Herstal in Belgium and in 1972 by Igman Zavod in the former Yugoslavia.¹⁰ A box of 1,000 unidentified 7.62 x 51 cartridges was offered for sale in Libya on Facebook (see Photo 4). Also observed was a 7.62 x 51 mm cartridge produced in 1975 by FNMAL in Portugal.¹¹ A single 12.7 x 99 mm (.50 BMG) cartridge produced in 1983 by FN Herstal was also recorded.

Photo 4 Box of 1,000 7.62 x 51 mm cartridges offered for sale in Libya on Facebook.



Photo: Libyan Firearms Market

Both 7.62 x 39 mm and 7.62 x 54R mm ammunition were also observed. 7.62 x 39 cartridge cases produced in 2005 were documented from Barnaul Cartridge Plant CJSC in the Russian Federation and from State Factory 31 in the People's Republic of China (PRC), produced in 1974. 7.62 x 54R cartridge cases produced by Uzina Mecanică in Romania in 1975 and by State Factory 352 in the PRC were documented.¹² For the latter, the date marking typically present was omitted from the headstamp. Also observed were a 7.62 x 54R cartridge case produced in 1983 by Arsenal in Bulgaria, documented in Sebha, and a 7.62 x 54R cartridge produced by Sellier & Bellot in the former Czechoslovakia.¹³


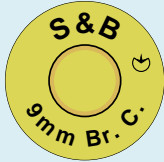



One additional 12.7 x 108 mm cartridge produced in 1976 by the Novosibirsk Low Voltage Equipment Plant in the former Soviet Union was observed, as was a 14.5 x 114 mm cartridge produced in 1987 by an unknown manufacturer in Romania.¹⁴ Also observed was a 14.5 x 114 cartridge case produced in 1981 by Ulyanovsk Machine Building Plant SPA in the former Soviet Union.¹⁵

Several shotgun cartridges and cartridge cases were documented. The UN Panel of Experts on Libya inspected a shipment of shotgun shells seized by Maltese authorities in September 2012 (Raad et al., 2013, para. 111). The shipment consisted of 112,500 12 gauge cartridges produced by Bornaghi Srl in Italy. At least some of these cartridges were from Bornaghi's 'Super 34' basic line, containing 34 g of number 5 shot. Such cartridges are far better suited to sporting pursuits than combat. A 16 gauge shotgun cartridge produced by Office National Des Substances Explosives (ONEX) in Algeria and a 12 gauge shotgun cartridge produced by Imperial Metal Industries in the UK were recorded in Tripoli in 2012.¹⁶ Also observed was a 12 gauge shotgun cartridge case produced by Società Nazionale Industria Applicazione S.p.A. in Italy.¹⁷

Annexe 1 Additional small-calibre ammunition identified in Libya¹⁸

Calibre	Country of manufacture	Year of production	Production facility	Headstamp information ¹⁹	Headstamp diagram or photograph
5.56 x 45	Portugal	1979	FNMAL	FNM 79-7	
7.62 x 39	PRC	1974	State Factory 31 ²⁰	31 74	
	Russian Federation	2005	Barnaul Cartridge Plant CJSC	17 05	
7.62 x 51	Belgium	1977	FN Herstal	77 FN	
	Portugal	1975	FNMAL	FNM 75-19	
	Yugoslavia ²¹	1972	Igman Zavod ²²	IK-72 7.62MM	

Calibre	Country of manufacture	Year of production	Production facility	Headstamp information ¹⁹	Headstamp diagram or photograph
7.62 x 54R	Bulgaria	1983	Arsenal ²³	10 83	
	PRC	Unmarked	State Factory 352 ²⁴	352	
	Czechoslovakia	Illegible	Sellier & Bellot	bxn ? ^{25*}	N/A
	Romania	1975	Uzina Mecanică ²⁶	22 75	
12.7 x 99 (.50 BMG)	Belgium	1983	FN Herstal	.50 F.N.B. 83	
12.7 x 108	Soviet Union ²⁷	1976	Novosibirsk Low Voltage Equipment Plant ²⁸	188 76	
14.5 x 114	Romania	1987	Unknown	87	
	Soviet Union ²⁹	1981	Ulyanovsk Machine Building Plant SPA ³⁰	3 81	

Calibre	Country of manufacture	Year of production	Production facility	Headstamp information ¹⁹	Headstamp diagram or photograph
7.65 x 17SR (.32 ACP)	Czechoslovakia ³¹	Unknown	Sellier & Bellot ³²	Not sighted*	N/A
9 x 19	Belgium	1977	FN Herstal	77 FN	
	Czech Republic	Unmarked	Sellier & Bellot	S&B 9mm Br. C.	
9 mm P.A.	Turkey	Unknown	Özkursan	Not sighted*	N/A
16 gauge	Algeria	Unmarked	ONEX	O? ³³ 16 ALGERIE 16	
12 gauge	Italy	Unmarked	Società Nazionale Industria Applicazione S.p.A. ³⁴	SNIA 12 ITALY 12	
	United Kingdom	Unmarked	Imperial Metal Industries ³⁵	ELEY – KYNOCH 12	

* The precise date and location of the photo could not be verified.

- ¹ The author is particularly grateful to Alexander Diehl, Nicolas Florquin, Hans Migielski, Hassan Morajea, and Damien Spleeters for providing both information and feedback.
- ² Written correspondence with confidential source CS1, September 2013.
- ³ Written correspondence with confidential sources CS1 and CS2, September 2013.
- ⁴ 'P.A.', 'PA', 'P.A.K.', and 'PAK' are used by different manufacturers to designate this kind of ammunition.
- ⁵ Written correspondence with confidential source CS1, September 2013.
- ⁶ Written correspondence with confidential source CS1, September 2013.
- ⁷ Written correspondence with confidential source CS2, September 2013.
- ⁸ Now LVE Novosibirsk Cartridge Plant JSC, located in the Russian Federation.
- ⁹ Now the Czech Republic.
- ¹⁰ Now IGMAN d.d. Konjic in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ¹¹ Unfortunately, this image could not be published.
- ¹² In general we have a good idea of many of the factories that produce ammunition in China and typically know what is expected of at least some of their production; however, as in this case, we do not know the name or location of the factory in many cases. Thus, while we may know a great deal about the ammunition produced by State Factory 352, we only know it by that code.
- ¹³ The Bulgarian cartridge was observed in 2013. Sellier & Bellot is now called Sellier & Bellot JSC and is located in the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, these images could not be published.
- ¹⁴ Now LVE Novosibirsk Cartridge Plant JSC in the Russian Federation.
- ¹⁵ Now OJSC Ulyanovsk Cartridge Works. Unfortunately, this image could not be published.
- ¹⁶ Imperial Metal Industries is now Imperial Metal Industries PLC.
- ¹⁷ Unfortunately, this image could not be published.
- ¹⁸ It is important to note that shotgun cartridges (including both 12 and 16 gauge cartridges) are particularly difficult to identify from headstamps alone, because a range of third-party producers can be involved in the supply of cases and, occasionally, their components to the manufacturers of complete cartridges. Many shotgun cartridges supplied on military contracts follow commercial marking practices, making them difficult to distinguish from cartridges used for civilian purposes.
- ¹⁹ Clockwise from top, with a '|' separating each portion. Headstamp information includes only manufacturer and year data, and calibre markings where available. Symbols (such as stars) are not included. See headstamp photos and diagrams for other symbols or text, as well as actual layout.
- ²⁰ The comment regarding State Factory 352 in note 12 also applies to State Factory 31.
- ²¹ Now Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ²² Now IGMAN d.d. Konjic.
- ²³ Now Arsenal JSCo.
- ²⁴ See note 12.
- ²⁵ Illegible.
- ²⁶ Now S.C. Uzina Mecanică Sadu S.A.
- ²⁷ Now the Russian Federation.
- ²⁸ Now LVE Novosibirsk Cartridge Plant JSC.
- ²⁹ Now the Russian Federation.
- ³⁰ Now OJSC Ulyanovsk Cartridge Works.
- ³¹ Now the Czech Republic.
- ³² Now Sellier & Bellot JSC.
- ³³ Remaining letters in the 12 o'clock position are illegible, but likely 'NEX'.
- ³⁴ Confirmed as the manufacturer of the case only.
- ³⁵ Now Imperial Metal Industries PLC.

Abbreviations and acronyms

FNMAL	Fábrica Nacional de Munições de Armas Ligeiras
ONEX	Office National Des Substances Explosives
PRC	People's Republic of China
The Market	Libyan Firearms Market

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