

SALW Guide

Global distribution and visual
identification



Sterling L2A3

Fact sheet

<https://salw-guide.bicc.de>

Sterling L2A3



Sterling submachine guns , were purchased in more than 70 countries. However, it must be noted that these weapons were rather popular among British troops because of their relatively compact size, adequate firepower and accuracy and good reliability. Special "high power, submachine-gun only" ammunition was procured by British army for Sterling submachine guns. This ammunition was

absolutely safe in Sterling submachine guns, but can cause extensive wear to many 9mm pistols designed for commercial 9x19mm ammunition.

Technical Specifications

Category	<i>Submachine Guns</i>
Operating system	Blowback-operated, select-fire, fires from open bolt
Cartridge	9mm Parabellum (9 x 19mm)
Length	481 mm
Feeding	Box magazine

Global distribution map



The data on global distribution and production is provided primarily by the *BwVC*¹, but also from national and regional focal points on SALW control; data published by think tanks, international organizations and experts; and/or data provided by individual researchers on SALW. It is not exhaustive. If you would like to add to or amend the data, please use the website's feedback function.


1. *Bundeswehr Verification Center*


Distribution

Global distribution list

The **Sterling L2A3** is found in **66** countries according to our data.

Argentina (ARG)		G	Malta (MLT)		G
Australia (AUS)		G	Morocco (MAR)		G
Bahrain (BHR)		G	Myanmar/Burma (MMR)		G
Bangladesh (BGD)		G	Namibia (NAM)		U
Barbados (BRB)		G	Nepal (NPL)		G
Belize (BLZ)		G	New Zealand (NZL)		G
Botswana (BWA)		G	Nigeria (NGA)		G
Brunei (BRN)		G	North Korea (PRK)		G
Bulgaria (BGR)		U	Oman (OMN)		G
Canada (CAN)		G	Pakistan (PAK)		G
Chile (CHL)		U	Papua New Guinea (PNG)		G
Cuba (CUB)		U	Philippines (PHL)		G
Cyprus (CYP)		G	Portugal (PRT)		G

Democratic Republic of the Congo (COD)		U
Dominican Republic (DOM)		G
Egypt (EGY)		U
France (FRA)		U
Gabon (GAB)		G
Ghana (GHA)		G
Guinea (GIN)		U
Guyana (GUY)		G
India (IND)		G
Iran (IRN)		U
Iraq (IRQ)		G
Jamaica (JAM)		G
Jordan (JOR)		U
Kenya (KEN)		G
Kuwait (KWT)		G
Lebanon (LBN)		G
Lesotho (LSO)		G
Libya (LBY)		G
Malawi (MWI)		G
Malaysia (MYS)		G

Qatar (QAT)		G
Sierra Leone (SLE)		G
Singapore (SGP)		G
Somalia (SOM)		G
South Africa (ZAF)		U
South Sudan (SSD)		U
Spain (ESP)		G
Sri Lanka (LKA)		G
Sudan (SDN)		G
Swaziland (SWZ)		G
Tanzania (TZA)		G
The Gambia (GMB)		G
Trinidad and Tobago (TTO)		G
Tunisia (TUN)		G
Uganda (UGA)		G
United Arab Emirates (ARE)		U
United Kingdom (GBR)		G
United States (USA)		U
Zambia (ZMB)		G
Zimbabwe (ZWE)		G

Explanation of symbols



Country of origin



Licensed production



Production without a licence

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- G** *Government:* Sources indicate that this type of weapon is held by Governmental agencies.
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- N** *Non-Government:* Sources indicate that this type of weapon is held by non-Governmental armed groups.
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- U** *Unspecified:* Sources indicate that this type of weapon is found in the country, but do not specify whether it is held by Governmental agencies or non-Governmental armed groups.
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It is entirely possible to have a combination of tags beside each country. For example, if country X is tagged with a G and a U, it means that at least one source of data identifies Governmental agencies as holders of weapon type Y, and at least one other source confirms the presence of the weapon in country X without specifying who holds it.

Note: This application is a living, non-comprehensive database, relying to a great extent on active contributions (provision and/or validation of data and information) by either SALW experts from the military and international renowned think tanks or by national and regional focal points of small arms control entities.

Ammunition

The following ammunition can be used by the **Sterling L2A3**.

9mm Parabellum (9 x 19mm)

Bullet diameter	9 mm
Case length	19.15 mm
Overall length	29.69 mm



No information available.

Annex

Tagging of Sources

We believe that our Guide should be as transparent as possible without endangering the confidentiality of our sources. Rather than name the exact source for each unit of data, we have created tags so that users can at least know whether the data comes from a primary or secondary source, and by which medium it can or has been found. All incoming data is validated and then tagged by the project team at BICC before it enters our database.

Sources are tagged according to the following criteria:

1. Primary Sources:

These are presentations of facts. They are proof of an SALW event (e.g. a transfer, sighting, misuse, etc.) because the source was created at the time of the event itself. Primary sources are usually original documents such as transfer authorizations, firearms legislation, or academic journals presenting results of a study on SALW holdings in a particular country, for example. However, they can also be information offered by a person with direct knowledge of an SALW event or who has documented an SALW event at the time that it happened.

2. Secondary Sources:

These are interpretations or evaluation of facts. Secondary sources contain commentary and analysis of SALW events that are documented in primary sources.

Sources are also tagged according to the dominant medium of delivery:

A. Written - the source is based on written words.

B. Oral - the source is based on spoken words.

C. Visual - the source is based on seen events or optical images.

These criteria make our tags two-dimensional. While the process of classifying sources is a primarily subjective one, the project team at BICC has developed the following table to serve as an example of possible sources within each category.

Table: Examples of sources on SALW distribution

	Primary	Secondary
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Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact books • Weapons Transfer authorizations • End-user certificates • Transcripts of interviews, legal proceedings, speeches/ presentations, meetings, conferences or symposia • Newspaper articles • Written correspondence (e.g. letters, emails, text messages, etc.) • Blogs • Peer-reviewed journal articles • Treaties, constitution, laws • Records of organizations (e.g. annual reports) • Surveys, questionnaires <p>Etc...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wikipedia • Literature reviews • Training or safety manuals on gun control, ammunition, physical stockpile security management) • Minutes of meetings, conferences, symposia • Indexes (e.g. Global Militarization Index) • Newspaper articles <p>Etc.</p>
Oral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with experts, including radio or telephone • Legal proceedings • Speeches or interventions by experts or national representatives in government or international meetings <p>Etc ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeches, panel presentations, etc. on data provided by experts <p>Etc...</p>
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artifacts (e.g. the weapons themselves, ammunition) • Photographs of weapons, ammunition, etc. • Videos (e.g. YouTube, those recorded by mobile phone) • Television documentaries, news reports <p>Etc ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentations on results found by experts <p>Etc...</p>

Table: Example tags

Source (sample)	Type of source	Medium of delivery
IHS Jane's Weapons Infantry (2015-2016)	primary	written
Panel discussion of weapons use of non-state armed groups	secondary	oral
Documentary on paramilitaries in Colombia	primary	visual

About the Guide

The Interactive Guide on **Small Arms and Light Weapons** is an open access tool, designed to build knowledge on how to identify different types, makes and models of commonly used SALW in organized violence; to collect data on the global and country-specific spread of these SALW; and to describe some of their visual and technical specifications.

The guide is not an exhaustive list of all SALW that are used around the world.

Global SALW control relies on, among other things, data and knowledge of the weapons themselves. Our aim is that the Guide will be used to support national reporting duties on SALW holdings; facilitate and ameliorate the collection of data on SALW; and increase general knowledge of global distribution of SALW.

The interactive Guide was developed by **BICC** in close cooperation with the **Bundeswehr Verification Center** (BwVC), and with the generous support of the *Federal Foreign Office, Germany*.

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