



SMALL AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The escalating use of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has wreaked havoc across West Africa. SALWs, especially those used by Nigeria, are to blame for the carnage, criminality, and violence in that country and elsewhere in Africa. There is an increase in insecurity across Nigeria as a result of weapons proliferation. This study was motivated by the necessity to analyse the causes, implications, and solutions to the spread of Small and Light Weapons. The study was predicated on a combination of the theories of relative autonomy of the state and the theory of failed states. Data was collected through the use of secondary sources such as books, academic journals, and other publications. The study found among others that Illegal arms proliferation fuels crime, militancy, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and insurgency. Homicide rates could rise as a result of an increase in the availability and accessibility of firearms. Many innocent Nigerians have died as a result of ethnic and religious clashes and violent robberies involving SALWs. Based on the above findings appropriate recommendations were made on how to mitigate the proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria

Keywords: Proliferation, Security, Weapons. Light Weapons, Small Arms.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, governments have become concerned. Even the most recent directives and incentives for illicit weapons owners have not succeeded. People still have a lot of these illegal firearms in their possession. The National Commission on Small and Light Weapons, which was established to keep tabs on and regulate the spread of these weapons, also fell short of expectations. There is a strong likelihood that so many of these firearms

are still in use and being used to perpetrate crimes and other security breaches. Ever since the Cold War ended, the threat of SALW proliferation has been a major concern. These are issues that have plagued leaders around the world, including those in Africa. AK-47s and M-16s are the most widely available and visually appealing of these weapons. SALWs, especially those used by Nigeria, are to blame for the carnage, criminality, and violence in that country and elsewhere in Africa. Because of the large quantity of deadly weapons in circulation, many citizens are alarmed.

Over a billion Small Arms have been sold over the world as of this writing; (Akaogun, 2018). National security is in jeopardy because of arms and ammunition, as this shows. Over half a billion illicit firearms are believed to be in circulation around the world, with the majority of these being located in sub-Saharan Africa, where eight to ten million of these firearms are located, and 77,000 of these firearms are in the hands of West African rebel groups. Access to low-cost small guns is commonplace. The escalating use of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has wreaked havoc across West Africa. According to Sesay (2006), small arms and light weapons proliferation has contributed to the rising costs of international peacekeeping missions by the United Nations (UN) in terms of both human and material resources around the globe. Leaders in Africa are deeply concerned by these figures. There are 857 million small guns and small arms in circulation worldwide, with nearly 80 percent of them being illegal, according to an analysis of the numbers. In addition, 100 million of these people live in Africa, with around 10 million of them residing in Nigeria... (National Centre for the Control of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria, 2019). There is little doubt that the increase of hostilities in Nigeria as a result of a proliferation of armaments has exposed Nigeria's squalid state of affairs.

Small guns and light weapons distribution, particularly in poor nations, play a crucial role in practically every conflict's upliftment, strengthening, and resolution. As a result of the proliferation of such weapons, conflicts and lapses in national security are on the rise. As armed conflict in Nigeria has risen, tiny guns have played an increasingly important role. In this way, the situation in Nigeria poses a threat to the country's



stability, security, and long-term growth. Today, insurgency, armed organisations, Boko Haram, and Islamic fundamentalist terrorist actions using these illegal weapons pose the greatest threat to the country's security. With SALWs proliferating, violent conflicts have intensified, which has led to an increase in the proliferation of weapons, which is bad for Nigeria's security position in the long run. For the first time, the unlawful movement of arms and ammunition is now being acknowledged by states on a national, regional, and international level as a serious security issue that must be addressed. Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation has long been known to worsen conflicts, making them more violent and resistant to non-violent solutions. Violence and insecurity including both rich and poor countries are exacerbated by the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). To that end, this article examines the impact of the spread of small and light weaponry on Nigeria's National Security.

Statement of the Problem

Several security issues have plagued Nigeria in recent years, including homicide, kidnapping, banditry, hostage-taking, terrorism, and retaliatory secessionism. SALW's accessibility has facilitated most of these security breaches. SALWs have been used in the majority of recent violent robberies. They might be seen in the few that were found on suspects, as well as the testimonies of the victims. The spread of small arms and light weapons enables criminals to carry out their activities more easily and makes it harder for law enforcement to effectively manage crime. The rise in crime in the United States is particularly destructive in Nigeria. Violence and rebellion have been driven by the massive spread of small arms and light weapons in the hands of jobseekers across the country. Small and Light Weapons could have a negative impact on national security, peace, and development if they are available to everyone. There is an increase in insecurity across Nigeria as a result of weapons proliferation, including banditry in the country's North West, the Boko Haram insurrection in the east, and kidnappings and other forms of homicide elsewhere. This study was motivated by the necessity to analyse the causes, implications, and solutions to the spread of Small and Light Weapons.

METHODOLOGY

The technique of data collection for this study is content analysis, which is done through the use of secondary sources such as books, academic journals, and other publications or materials that are linked to the subject under investigation.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs)

According to the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the International Trading Instrument (ITI) on December 8, 2005, Small Arms and Light Weapons are defined as: "any man-portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expels or launches, or can readily be converted to expels or launches a shot, bullet or missile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique Small Arm and Light Weapon or their replicasy. In the United States, the legal definition of small arms and light weapons will be determined by case law. No small arms or light weapons created after 1899 will be considered antiques. Generally speaking, small arms refer to weapons that are intended for use by a single person.. Include revolvers and self-loading pistols, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns; Light Weapons are broadly defined as weapons designed for use by two or three people operating as a crew, but some can be carried and used by a single person. There is a wide range of weapons available, including general purpose or universal MGs; medium and heavy machine guns; rifle grenades; under-barrel grenade launchers and mounted grenade launchers; portable anti-aircraft guns; anti-tank guns; grenade-launching systems; and mortars with a calibre of less than 100 millimeters, among other things.

Proliferation (Arms)

Simply said, this can be defined as the quick multiplication and increasing dissemination, or the continual increase in the quantity of weaponry and weapons in large quantities within a geographical region. It is the spread and unlawful use of these weapons that has resulted in the deaths of millions that is considered to be arms proliferation. It had also constituted a severe threat to state and human security throughout the world, particularly in African countries, and particularly in Nigeria. As a result of the widespread availability of these weapons, they keep attracting both



international attention in an effort to reduce their negative impact on humanity. Small arms, in particular, are intended for state security personnel but find these weapons getting into the hands of ordinary citizens and armed groups as a result of the widespread availability of these weapons. Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation is defined as the abrupt increase in the quantity of Small Arms and Light Weapons beyond what is required for legitimate security purposes in the context of this research. This conduct is carried out by both identifiable and unidentified groups, and it serves either commercial or political objectives (Hazan and Horner, 2007).

Security

As defined by Paul, D. Williams (2008), security is concerned with the "alleviation of risks to esteemed values; notably those that, if left uncontrolled, jeopardise the survival of a specific referent object in the near future. "Security is about anything that has to be secured: the nation, state, individual, ethnic group, the environment or the planet," states Barry, Buzan (2009) in the world in which we live today. "Security" is defined as "the accumulation of additional power," according to the same source (Balding, 1997). Justice and the protection of human rights are also important considerations. The absence of threats, both internal and external, is the essence of security. Balding, (1997) argued that "security is an intrinsically contested notion; consequently, it deals with themes like human rights, economics... drug trafficking... diseases... crime or social inequality" in addition to "the usual preoccupation with protection from external military threats". The spread and transmission of SALW constitute an internal security threat to nations, and Nigeria inclusive. Economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security are the "seven pillars of human security concept" identified by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1994. The report identifies two key aspects of human security: protection from starvation, disease, and repression, and protection from the destruction of human life, property, homes, workplaces, and communities, which are all classified as dangerous dangers to human existence. In the context of national security, "freedom from hazardous threats to life that may come as a result of individual actions or inactions or a calamity, such

as a famine, drought or disease" could be a fair definition of security (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), (1994).

Theoretical Framework

The notion of relative autonomy of the state and the theory of failed states were used in this study. The notion of state relative autonomy describes the degree to which the state refused to fulfill its constitutional tasks, such as bargaining and resolving inter- and intra-class conflict or competition. According to the theory, there are two competing forces in a state or political community: the primary and secondary contradictions. The primary contradiction explains why there are conflicting interests in a society between the wealthy and the poor, or between leaders and followers. Conflicts within the ruling class or society's leaders, or between several opposing factions of the ruling class, are examples of secondary contradictions in society. "The history of all known existent society is the history of class struggle," wrote Karl Marx (1977:2) in his work titled "Communist Manifestoes." In societies where a small number of people have amassed a large amount of wealth, the state's relative autonomy can range from low to high, depending on how much wealth is concentrated among those few. State intervention in domestic economic activity is absent, and hence the few wealthy prosper when they enter into social relationships that depend on exploitation of the working class to produce their goods. Regulating as an impartial and unbiased arbitrator, the state serves as an arbiter to reconcile inter and intra-class rivalry through class interest harmony. Leaders in Nigeria can only end up spending that has been appropriated by the state. The low performance of the Nigerian state implies that the state is more concerned with class rivalry than with its constitutional responsibilities or obligations. The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons (SALW) contributed to the breakdown of order in Nigeria's north-east.

Empirical Literature

A survey of related literature can help to reveal any holes in the current body of knowledge and provide a springboard for additional research into potential solutions. Scholars' views, opinions, and contributions on the origins, transit, and final destinations of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the implications for North-East Nigerian security will be



debated critically in evaluating relevant material. As a source, transit and destination of small arms and light weapons, Nigeria is an important player (SALW). Some scholars focus on the supply factors of SALW, like those who are willing to sell illegally to the illegal buyers. Many innocent Nigerians have died as a result of the widespread distribution and usage of small arms and light weapons (SALW) during ethnic religious confrontations, post-election mayhem, terrorism, and aggravated robbery. Small and light weapons (SALW) are responsible for the majority of the injuries and disabilities sustained by the victims.

North-East Nigerian warfare has escalated in recent years due in part to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), according to Nte (2011). Proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) have hampered development in the state and caused problems for Nigeria on numerous occasions, both directly and indirectly. National security "as a lack of risks to life that may inflict injuries, death, or misery as a result of human action or inactions, or from a natural calamity such as flooding, disaster, starvation, famine," the same author further described. There is a strong focus on national security because of the sanctity of human life, the ubiquity and integrity of human rights, and the existence of individual safety in the face of multiple threats. As Christopher (2011) defined it, "Security activities ensure the protection of a country from both internal and foreign dangers, individual safety, and the property of the community against threats, danger, and any undesirable incidents." National security, according to Badmus (2012), is "as the physical protection and defence of a country's citizenry and territory from threats and the promotion of economic activities and prosperity of Nigerians in a peaceful and secure environment that encourages the attainment of National goals and those of its neighbours. Because "security means protection from dangerous and harmful disruptions in patterns of daily activities in our homes, working places, and environments," Ngang (2012) argues that "peace is related to positive and negative peace, development and safety of human life and property, happiness, as well as absence of human life-threatening threats".

In addition to Usman, et al (2019) North-East Nigeria's Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Proliferation and its Security Implication in

North-East Nigeria, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a major security concern. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) trafficking and distribution by non-state entities in the region fuels violent conflict. The author made a connection between the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the resulting threat to national security. According to the study, SALW proliferation was fueled by the Nigerian government's inability to address or curtail demand or supply factors for SALW. The paper's goal was to provide a deeper understanding of how the weapons end up in criminals' hands. Scholars in the field of security conduct a systematic review of the available literature. Based on secondary data gathered from textbooks, academic journals and related resources found on the internet, this study's methodology relied on the utilisation of secondary data. An empirical and analytical analysis and justification of the study was based on a Neo Marxist political economics methodology. It detailed how SALW originates, where it travels to, and where it ends up. Scholars, students, and policymakers will find the research useful, as will government officials, security personnel, civil society organisations, and academics. The study a void in the literature and stimulates further study in the field. Finally, a conclusion is reached.

Adedayo, (2016) investigated, illegal weapons in Rivers State, Nigeria. He observed that the State has been plagued by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (salws) and armed warfare. The nature of proliferation of arms in Rivers State was examined in this paper, as well as its sources, roles within armed conflict, and the factors that contribute to their proliferation. The paper also assessed the challenges of combating small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Rivers State, as well as its impact on human and national security, as well as the role of SALWs in escalating armed conflict. The study relied on primary and secondary sources for its data. The questionnaire and interviews were used to gather the bulk of the main data. This meant that information from textbooks, media, the Internet as well as academic journals was used to gather secondary data on the subject researched. The study found a strong correlation between the increase of violence and conflict in Rivers State and the spread of small arms and light weapons in the state, according to a new study. Existing levels of poverty and unemployment, as well as



environmental problems caused by oil exploration, marginalisation, and an endemic level of corruption, were all factors contributing to the Niger Delta people's anger and hostility, as well as their proclivity for violence. Efforts to bring about good and functional peace in the Niger Delta, which has been the actual cause of the people as the remedy to the conflict, were highlighted in the study.

History of Small and Light Weapons in Nigeria

Nigeria is inundated with the history of armed conflicts, which dates back to the 1967-1970 civil war. Unfortunately, the war ended without a proper account of SALW deployed and used during the war. The post war policy of disarmament and demobilisation was not properly implemented and managed. The concomitant increase in post war violent crimes implicated the ineffectiveness of the post war arms control policies. This marked the genesis of proliferation of SALWs. The Niger Delta conflict that ensued thereafter did not help the situation. Subsequently, a series of arms have been smuggled into the country, through illegal routes. These arms are used to commit crimes in Nigeria. There has been several cases of armed robbery on our highways, seaports and borders. In July, 2013 a truck load of AK 47 rifles and Rocket Propelled grenades, bombs and rounds of ammunition were intercepted in Kebbi State (This Day, 2017). Thereafter, about 1,100 rifles, 45 pump action guns, were intercepted. In the mid-2020, the Nigerian Customs intercepted a container loaded with firearms and ammunitions in Tin Can Port Lagos, without justification for its import. Barely a week later, the police reported that 1889 weapons and 52,577 rounds of ammunition were recovered between January to December 2021. The weapons included General Purpose Machine Guns, Rocket Propelled Grenades, variants of Automatic Kalashnikov, with the popular ones being AK-47 and AK-49 as well as locally fabricated weapons.

Internationally, a United Nations report indicated that Nigeria accounted for 350 million of 500million illegal weapons in in circulation in West Africa. This is the most frightening dimension. Unfortunately, it has been observed that lack of accountability in most security agencies added to the already bad situation. The office of the Auditor General of the Federation, reported that by the end of 2019, the Force Headquarters

could not account for 178,459 firearms out of which are 88,078 AK-47 rifles (Auditor General Office, 2021). These anomalies was attributed to weakness in Internal Control Processes with the Force. The consequences of all these on national security are enormous, and form part of what this paper is out to examine.

Proliferation and Circulation of small and light Weapon (SALW) in Nigeria

SALWs pass via Nigeria on their way to their final destination, which is also Nigeria. Many incidents, such as crimes, revolts and subversions as well as social unrest and political instability, have been well-documented in Nigeria's literature. Some examples are criminal activity, uprising and subversion, spying, as well as social unrest and sectarian strife, micro nationalism and insurgencies, terrorism, and militancy, to name just a few. One hundred million illegal SALWs are found in Africa and 30 million in sub-Saharan Africa alone. More than 70 percent of the illegal firearms in West Africa are found in Nigeria (Nigeria today, 2016). Between 1 and 3 million SALWs, including those possessed by members of the armed forces and the police, were found in Nigeria at the time of the 2002 census, according to a variety of sources. Because of the restrictions that were put in place, 80% of the SALWs in private hands are illegal. It's worth noting that SALWs don't simply move around the world, but rather where they're needed. SALWs are being produced in greater numbers because of market forces. Some researchers focus on the factors that contribute to the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), such as willing sellers, lucrateness, and open borders, while others focus on factors that contribute to SALWs' spread, such as increased demand. Most of these weapons are in civilian hands, with only a small percentage (2.8 percent) of them in the hands of the government's military and law enforcement agencies. Since 1999, more than 10,000 Nigerians have died as a result of ethnic and religious clashes and violent robberies involving small arms and light weapons (SALWs). Kano riot victims were left permanently disabled by SALWs, who accounted for 66% of the total number of casualties. A rise in the number of injuries caused by SALWs in urban Nigeria has increased ten-fold (John, Mohammed, Pinto and Nkanta, 2007; Nte, 2011).



Nigerian SALW was brought to the country by Europeans prior to colonisation and during the era of slavery. They employed force to quell any serious opposition or rebellion by the native Africans in the country when the Europeans realised that their colonial authority and aspiration was being challenged. When the British tried to persuade traditional African kings and lords to sign treaties with them, they used the term gunboat diplomacy. In 1901-1902, the British organised the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) to conduct the British-Aro conflict in West Africa. British-sponsored United African Company (UAC) utilised force to subdue native tribes and villages in the Congo. (2011). Chuma (2011:3) states that Small arms and light weapons (SALW) were acquired by Africans as part of their participation in the slave trade and colonisation, and they were afterwards used for hunting in rural areas by those who received them. SALW became a local emblem of authority, power, and strength throughout this time period. At some point in the future, SALW became a vital component of their tradition or custom when it was employed in rituals like funerals or birth name ceremonies. Additionally, they were used to identify attackers and invaders, as well as to represent people and ethnic groups within the community.

SALW are no longer just a symbol of opulence or employed for sporting or celebratory purposes; rather, they are used in terms of its functions, danger, competence, and the purpose for their ownership. Lawlessness, violence, fear and control of the criminal underworld have all evolved from the weapons of the criminal underground. To slow down the spread of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria prior to independence, the same author claims that the 1959 gun ban was passed. As a result of the Nigerian government's inability to put in place a disarmament, reduction and destruction programme following the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970, small and light weapons have become more commonplace (SALW). It was estimated that between 1-3 million small arms and light weaponry were in circulation in Nigeria as of 2002, based on various reports and committees. This included both security forces' weapons and civilians' guns. Most small arms and light weapons (SALW) in civilian hands were obtained illegally as a result of the country's overly restrictive gun laws. According to some estimates, the majority of Nigeria's small and light weapons (SALW) are illegal. More than a few of these illicit small

arms and light weapons (SALW) have been used in violent wars such as ethno-religious crises (such as community disagreements over religion or ethnicity), sectarian violence, cults, insurgency and militancy, and criminal acts such as kidnapping and abduction.

In addition to affecting every element of the Nigerian community, SALW are in great supply by individuals who use them to achieve their selfish personal and egocentric goals. Factors like consumer demand have a direct impact on the proliferation and distribution of small and light weaponry (SALW). Small and light weapons (SALW) trafficking and distribution in Nigeria have been checked or limited by the government, but these efforts have not focused on the demand side of the major and urgent causes for SALW proliferation in Nigeria. As a means of preventing small arms and light weapons (SALW) proliferation and illegal circulation, the Nigerian government in 2000 established the Commission for the Control of the Proliferation and Illegal Circulation of SALW (NATCOM), which used to be initially a normatively contractual relationship on the importation, exportation, and manufacture of SALW but later became legally binding in 2006. Small arms captured by Nigerian security forces were destroyed a year later by NATO-led multinational force in July 2001 by SALW Commission for Control of Proliferation and Illegal Circulation (NATCOM). According to Aderinwale, (2005) the National Defense Command (NATCOM) was granted permission in September 2001 to request the cancellation of an approval for the transportation of firearms by civilian escort. To ensure the agreement's acceptance, Nigerian authorities played a key role after signing the agreements on small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Abuja. In addition, the Nigerian government has entered into agreements with neighbouring countries for mutual cooperation in the field of health care. As a result of these efforts, cross-border cooperation and security at the border crossing points have been boosted.

Causes of Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation

The causes of the security situation in the Niger Delta could be classified under the impact of multinational oil companies' activities and the Federal Government of Nigeria insensitivity and long years of neglect.



The various flaring points emit gas daily while crude oil sometimes escaped from worn out or vandalized pipe lines. Consequently, the toxic waste and chemicals of these spill and flares pollute the land, rivers and the entire atmosphere destroying the soil nutrients and fish. Farming and fishing as the only livelihood of the people is this made almost impossible. Oil spillage and gas flares are a great threat to the ecology of the Niger Delta. In addition to job creation, the communities expected the oil companies or government to provide amenities like pipe-borne water, roads, electricity, health and educational facilities. The inability of government to sincerely address this underemployment and poverty constitutes another major reason for the Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation and persistent crisis in the Niger Delta, especially in Rivers State. There are also incessant complaints that the Niger Delta region is politically marginalized. The people cry out that considering the enormous contribution of the region to national economy growth, they should have a significant national political participation.

Effects of Small Arms and Light a Proliferation on National Security

The incessant reports through the media of violent crimes involving people and properties, police stations and attached, leave huge amounts of weapons unaccounted for and circulating within the country. The consequences of all these on national security need not be overemphasized. This is because the availability of these SALWs facilitates the perpetuation of various types of crime. In fact, it motivates criminal behaviour and tendencies among all who possess it. Illegal weapons promote violent conflict, militancy, terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping, all of which undermine national security. The uncontrolled proliferation of SALWs causes death, destruction of property, and displacement of several citizens in situations of civil strife. The availability of SALWs remains a critical factor in conflict, organised crime, and terrorism. It facilitates conflicts and frustrates peace and reconciliation efforts. There is, therefore, a nexus between the availability of SALWs and the nature and complexity of conflict in Nigeria.

Recent increases in the prevalence of crime, herdsmen activities, kidnapping and insurgency are consequences of the unregulated availability of SALWs in Nigeria. According to Morgan (2020), between

May 2019 and April 2020, an enormous inflow of illegal arms and weapons caused mass atrocities against victims of conflict and mass migration. Specifically, the study observed that conflict situations in the North Central and North West Nigeria between farmers and herders were facilitated with illegal weapons. These conflicts have disastrous consequences, including mass killings of innocent citizens and community displacements. Furthermore, the conflict situation in the South East region has increased the trade in small arms and light weapons in such places as Araria Market in Anambra State. In the South West region, a lack of economic activity, except in Lagos, has contributed to high youth unemployment, which makes crime more attractive. This has given rise to violence and arms proliferation among youths. In the Niger Delta region, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has remained unabated, even after the amnesty program. In this region, SALWs had a significant impact on the violent operations of arms groups engaged in oil bunkering or self-determination and resource control. All these have negative impacts on sustainable development and national integrity within the community of nations.

Nigeria has been designated by the international community as a very unsafe and insecure destination. This not only affects our international image, it also affects the flow of direct foreign investment (FDI). The implications of these on the national economy are grave and enormous. It is important to observe that the government has made considerable and commendable efforts towards stopping the flow of illegal arms. The government understands that SALWs facilitate and sustain conflict. It is believed that the government, through several statutory provisions, should be able to stem the tide of proliferation.

Security Implications for Proliferation of Small arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria

Ogaba, (2005) asserts, that "While national security refers to the protection of people and property from harm and the absence of pervasive forms of fear, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) poses a direct danger to those values that are most prized and guarded". Proliferation of weapons weakens the authority of states that lack or have inadequate national institutions. Individuals and organisations in a



society can change their behaviour and views as a result of gun ownership. Homicide rates could rise as a result of an increase in the availability and accessibility of firearms. On the other hand, Japan, which had just 0.30 firearms per 100,000 residents, reported just 0.07 percent deaths from firearms in 1998, according to a Small Arms Survey (2001) assessment on the availability and prevalence of guns in industrialised countries. There are more firearm homicides in the United States in one day than in the country as a whole in a year because of a high prevalence of handgun ownership. Since the 1960s, the widespread availability of firearms in the United States has had terrible results, with about a million people dying as a direct result of firearm-related injuries.

This conflict has been fueled by the proliferation of small and light weapons (SALW) in North-East Nigeria, as well as criminal activities such as ethno-religious disputes, cross-border banditry, abduction and aggravated robbery in the region. It is estimated that thousands of people have been killed and vast amounts of property destroyed because of illegal weaponry stockpiling. "Boko Haram" conflict has caused a lot of hardships for the affected communities by making them Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). SALW aids in extending civil conflict, displacement of population, peace, law, and order is subverted, commercial activity of individuals and communities are devastated (IDP). Violence including robbery, rape, and the spread of communicable diseases are all threats to the IDP's well-being at the displacement camp. The conflict's financial losses show the security implications of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

Violent military conflict not only costs the government a lot of money, but it also causes loss of life and property for the average person. People in the impacted area were even more destitute as a result of the loss of property. Many children have been orphaned since their parents have passed away. Wives without husbands, when a family unit is dismantled, children are deprived of sufficient and good parental care, many others will end up as juvenile delinquency or a social problem to the society and engage in violent criminal activities, any individual killed or injured in violent armed conflict as a result of small and light weapons (SALW) is mentally and physiologically retarded and economically affected in the

event of a violent conflict. Women, children, and the elderly were particularly hard struck because to their vulnerability in the face of brutal warfare. SALW proliferation has led to an upsurge in violent crimes that threaten human security, such as rape, cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, and the insurgency in Nigeria's North-East region. In order to understand the ramifications of the insecurity in Nigeria on a broad scale. It is important to ask whether the security situation in some States in Nigeria, has any impact on the security of Nigerian state, residents and the overall well-being of the country. Secondly, I have identified some consequential effects that proliferation of arms may have on the relative, human security of citizens and the overall well-being of Nigeria. Since wars and violence have trans repercussions that have regional and international impacts beyond the conflict area, arms in the Nigeria are always rented out for criminal operations and armed theft in other regions of the country.

Some of the weapons proliferated have also been traced as sources of weapons for cultist in institutions even beyond some States. Another findings shows that the illegal trade in arms which was made popular by "conflict entrepreneurs" who made profit from the sales of these arms, they have succeeded in creating a stable route for the illegal supply of weapons that has been traced to Boko haram and other notorious groups. The fear is that some shadow actors gain from oil reserves in the promoting conflict, the fact that militancy in the Niger-Delta started from some States before spreading to other areas means that the security challenges posed by proliferating arms in one area has cross boundary effects on other areas as conflict is a contagious element. People flee their homes in search of safer havens, and they bring with them diseases that are unique to their region because of the ecological composition of the area, and they spread these diseases to other areas that were previously unaffected by these diseases. When there is a situation of insecurity and people migrate to other areas for safety, or whether the government opens up or not there are tendencies for the spread of diseases. With an increase in the number of weapons and their use, environmental damage, such as the loss of forest cover as a result of attacks, makes the region more vulnerable to natural disasters. The destruction of agriculture and aquatic life as a result of the employment of high-powered weaponry such as



rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) is another consequence of conflict. It is no secret that people have been killed using small arms and light weapons some States and its surrounding areas. In addition, untrained individuals possessing lethal Small Arms and Light Weapons pose a danger to themselves and others. As a result of the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), gang members and other violent criminals in States have been observed to resort to violence and crime in every community inside the state.

Not only has the level of civil conflicts in some States in Nigeria grown to a remarkable degree, but it has also spread to a wide range of social and economic impacts. Communal disputes and ethnic manoeuvring are all part of the sequence. As a result, in some States, communal strife, devastation of towns and villages, deaths and injuries among the population, as well as inter-communal strife and brutal skirmishes, have continued to escalate. As a result of the weapons in the area, residents have developed a mutual fear of being in any danger. As a result of the expansion of weapons and armed conflict, agriculture, cattle trading, and food reserves have all been adversely affected.

Challenges towards Eradication of Small and Light Weapons Proliferation

Poor arms control laws, weak borders, incompetent security personnel, corruption in the police, corruption in security agencies, and corruption in the courts are only a few of many obstacles in the fight against proliferation of weapons. It was also noted that sabotage, partiality, and insincerity by security agents is one of the key issues of countering weaponry proliferation in Nigeria State, which was not previously mentioned. Furthermore, the security agencies in Nigeria lack adequate intelligence, are biased, and lack proper inter-agency synergy. This is in addition to the bad leadership and poor security response to intelligence and armed conflict and violent. Some of the security services have given up and compromised their efforts to fight the proliferation of weapons. Civil defence and police sometimes allege they have not received orders or directives to intervene when there is a report of violence, while the military frequently complains of running out of people or ammunition at

various times as disclosed by the security services, particularly the police and military.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proliferation of Small Arms and Light weapons has been a worrisome problem for the nations. The most common and most attractive of these weapons are the Russian AK-47 rifles and the U.S M-16. These weapons are responsible for the massacre, violent crime and conflict in African countries, including Nigeria. Nigeria's biggest security challenge is insurgency, armed groups, Boko Haram and Islamic fundamentalist terrorist activities who operate with these illegal weapons. Illegal transfer of Small Arms and Light Weapons is now recognized as a security-related problem that needs to be tackled on a national, regional and international level. The following suggestions are made in this study on the basis of the information presented above:

- To fight the flow of illegal guns into the country, government should establish a Central Coordinating Agency (CCA). To ensure effective administration and deployment of resources to combat the entry of illegal guns. It is also critical that technological intelligence and surveillance networks be modernised and integrated into the overall security network architecture and frameworks.
- For a successful response to security concerns, proactive intelligence must be utilised. An extremely effective intelligence network, that will monitor all routes via which illicit weaponry enter the country is imperative.
- A proactive approach to dealing with the predisposing circumstances that allow SALWs to enter the country should be taken by the Nigerian government during its reconstitution and reorganisation.
- In order to guide the mopping up and prevention of SALW circulation, the government should prepare a blueprint for a National Arms Control Strategy (NACS). The National Commission on the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NATCOM) should be more effective and proactive in its work, and it should collaborate with other stakeholders to accomplish its objectives.



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