

ARMS PROLIFERATION AND CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines proliferation of arms which no doubt remains a major threat to Nigeria's security. This is considering the fact that there has been a consistent increase in the volume of illegal arms in the country which is almost turning the country into a nation preparing for war. The paper finds out from extensive reading of related materials that Nigeria porous border, money laundering among other factors are major causes of arms flow into the country. The paper contends that all control initiatives have not worked effectively as illegal arms flow is still on the rise. The paper reveals that the proliferation of arms has created an ever expanding circle of violent conflicts and hampered sustainable development of the country as all areas of socio-economic development are affected. The paper concludes that recommendations on solution to the scourge must emphasise local content that will enhance the instrument and frameworks for combating the proliferation of arms in Nigeria.

Keywords: Proliferation of Arms, Porous Border, Money Laundering, Conflict and Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Arms proliferation in West and Central Africa is nothing more than the most visible symptom of a much deeper and destabilizing factor which is slowly but progressively affecting the security of most of African states especially Nigeria. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) have killed by far more people than biological, chemical or any other types of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). According to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/50/70, arms proliferation has contributed to insecurity in Nigeria, including cattle raiding and armed robberies, kidnapping, the intertribal skirmishes in Nigeria between the north and other ethnic groups in the south, militancy groups and recently Boko Haram insurgency. It is very difficult to say how many weapons are in the country because the weapons are everywhere in the country including hamlets, villages, towns, and the state capitals. Hazen and Horner (2007) observed that, given the difficulty in legally owning a gun, the majority of small arms in Nigeria are believed to be held illegally. Their illegality makes it difficult to track flows and possession. Weapons transit into the country across land borders and via sea ports are so enormous and difficult to trace. Okeke and Oji, (2014) concludes that Nigeria is at the same time, source/origin, transit and destination of SALW.

The causes of the proliferation of SALW is well documented in the literature, for example, crime, revolts, subversion, sabotage, religious crisis, communal conflicts, social agitations, micro-nationalism, insurrection, terrorism, insurgency, riots, militancy, electoral violence, political violence, social unrest, ethnic tensions, cross border smuggling, porous borders, black racketeering, local manufacturing, privatization of security, insecurity, poverty, economic crisis, mass unemployment, among others. However, these weapons transit into the country and into the hands of armed groups, national dealers, political and community leaders, and individuals. Sources of small arms include arms dealers, serving and retired military and police officers, returning peacekeepers, armed groups across borders, and other individual's craft production provides a domestic source of small arms. Demand is the key to understanding the trade: as long as insecurity persists, and economic and political opportunities for gain exist through the use of force, demand for small arms will continue to rise.

Against the background of the growing complexity of transnational relations engendered by globalisation, then, the scope, goal, type of actors and the ferocity of struggles involved in the conflict dynamics in Africa have broadened significantly (Bassey, 2003: 43). Realizing the destructive effects of small arms, given the numerous conflicts world over, several steps were taken to control their trafficking, proliferation and use yet, their trafficking, proliferation and misuse continue unabated as intra and international conflicts continue. The availability of arms continues not only to fuel crises but has dominant and destabilizing effects on ethno-religious crises. Globalisation is also provoking crisis in the manner in which it deepens and exacerbates the insurgency as a result of conflicts in Africa and the world at large. When a conflict flares into armed violence, its cause is linked to a neighbouring state or another external power. Such conflicts often escalate beyond the control of the initial actors.

ARMS PROLIFERATION, NATIONAL SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The presence of prohibited arms and ammunitions in a large scale in various conflicts prone parts of the world especially African countries has remained major concern to many scholars, analysts and observers of state of security in the world today

and arms proliferation is a function of conflicts both in terms of cause and effects (Bassey, 2003; Vine, 2005; Kelli, 2008; Giaba Report, 2013; Edeko, 2013). Thus, arms proliferation no doubt has great implication on national security. National Security as a concept is initially predicated on the military force, whereby the state is militarily strong enough to declare war standing by itself. It has however being observed that overwhelming military strength does not always result in security for the states with such strength. This is exemplified in the cases of the United States of America and former USSR now Russian federation during the cold war in Vietnam and Afghanistan respectively and Israel in her wars against the Arabs (Barash and Webel, 2009:324-325). Although there is often a legitimate military dimension to national security, it must be emphasized that national security cannot be measured by military parameters alone. It is also a function of economic strength, political cohesiveness, social equity and integration, cultural outreach, racial harmony and environmental soundness. National security is diminished if the populace is inadequately housed or fed and also if medical care is insufficient (Barash and Webel, 2009:328). This informs the following observation that,

the narrow perspective of national security has given way to a more comprehensive and broad definition that reflects the multi-dimensional nature of security, and takes cognizance of economic, cultural, technological, political, environmental and military variables" (Onuoha Freedom. Blessing Gaya and Rhoda Namri, 2010).

Thus, the following definition captures the true essence of national security in the sense that national security is defined "as the freedom from danger or absence of threats to the multidimensional elements that may affect the nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and national interests, as much as promote and boost the well-being of its peoples" (Onuoha Freedom, (2008). It is at this point that Sustainable development of any country including Nigeria under reference is affected by arms proliferation. This is precisely because sustainable development, according to the World Commission on Environment and Development, refers to "a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It is an approach that holds out the promise of maintaining the standard of living somewhat similar to that which we possess today, while recognising that we cannot continue to exploit the global environment as we have in the past. From the World Summit on Sustainable Development, three basic areas of sustainable development were recognised: economic, social and environment sustainability. Economic sustainability means generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity, with emphases on viability of enterprises and activities and the ability to be maintained in the long term. Social sustainability not only refers to respecting human rights and equal opportunities for all in the society but also to an equitable distribution of benefits, with a focus on alleviating poverty. There is an emphasis on local communities, maintaining and strengthening their life support systems, recognising and respecting different cultures and avoiding any form of exploitation. It must be maintained that all the aforementioned areas of human existence are severely affected by arms proliferation and conflicts and violence that they engendered in any society.

ON SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Proliferation of illegal arms and ammunitions threatens world peace. The increase in the imported arms that entered the shores of Nigeria has serious implication and creates tension which is suggestive of the descent of the country into another

round of civil war. Nigeria is divided along ethnic and religious line and if care is not taken the level of illegal possession of arms and ammunitions may see the country witnessing disintegration. .The proliferation of small arms has been as a result of prolonged poverty and instability in the country. Nigeria like many other Africa countries is laced with various conflicts especially since the advent of democracy in 1999.Nigeria's example has shown that the impact and the threat posed by the growing of proliferation arms are grave. Edeko (2011) observes that in Africa, the proliferation of small arms is increasing in proportion. Small arms proliferation is a chief result of the remnants of conflicts in Mozambique, Angola, Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, Sierra Lone etc. as well as licensed weapons being stolen or lost, have played a major role in exacerbating crimes and armed violence in Nigeria. Eke (2013) opined that the rate at which arms and ammunition, especially the prohibited ones - weapons of mass destruction (WMD) makes nonsense of the fire arms law in Nigeria would cause one to infer that there exist in the society a state of normlessness.

Not surprisingly, out of the 640 million small arms circulating globally, it is estimated that 100 million are found in Africa, about 30 million in sub-Saharan Africa and 8 million in West Africa, alone. The majority of these SALW about 59% are in the hands of civilians, 38% are owned by government armed forces, 2.8 % by police and 0.2% by armed groups. The inevitable is about to happen, the unfolding events in Nigeria dictate the direction our country is going right now, the use of chemical weapon by herdsmen in Benue is a pointer that Nigeria should be on the alert. Nothing best encapsulates the oddity in Nigeria's approach to large number of arms amid the internal security challenge in Nigeria. Since the advent of democracy in 1999 there are links between proliferation of arms, conflict and development that has been witnessed in Niger Delta militant struggle, Boko Haram and currently Fulani herdsmen attacks. It is therefore glaring that sustainable development is threatened by insecurity. The illicit circulation of arms has hampered meaningful development, engender poverty and enhance human insecurity. Keili (2008) observes that the presence of small arms creates an atmosphere of fear that affects the resumption of normal economy activities in everyday life. He stated further that it does prevent people from conducting business, leading to reduction in trade and foreign investment; small arms proliferation is it due to crime or conflict related has had a particular significant impact on tourism in West African countries.

DIMENSIONS OF ARMS PROLIFERATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria remains vulnerable to transnational crime that threatens her national security and corporate existence as a result of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Nigeria border towns serve as hub for nefarious activities such as arms, human and drug trafficking, kidnapping perpetrated by criminals who crisscross the borders after committing the crimes. Nigeria borders have various footpaths that are linked directly to Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Benin and most of these paths are not manned, protected or fenced, even because these arms are small and collapsible makes it very easy to move by nomadic herdsmen through donkeys, camels and cows unsuspected and undetected. Nigeria water ways and seaport provide heaven for arm trafficking through ships and speedboats on high sea and the use of canon in the creeks. The porosity is compounding by inadequate personnel and all other security gadgets to monitor the waterways, all these led to increase in the proliferation of small arms especially in the Northern part of Nigeria.

Nigeria like any other developing countries has no human intelligence capacity to guarantee the security of life and property of her citizen. Nigeria has about 250 ethnic groups and with each ethnic group feeling marginalised and underdeveloped often

takes to arms and send wrong signal to other ethnic groups thereby encouraging arms traffic. Effective border management is vitally important for the preservation of national security. All these transnational crimes have been exacerbated by Nigeria porous border with her neighbour. The porous borders have continued to engender transnational crime and instability in Nigeria owing to lack of both human and material machinery for monitoring of movement and other activities at the border post. Akinyemi (2013) stated that "Nigeria lacks boarder protection and much importance has not been accorded to our national boarders as evident in vulnerability of threat posed at our border such as trans - border activities and the movement terrorist attack that can befall the country resulting in unregistered influence of migrant through the routes ".Nigeria border security is porous and it continues to encourage various illegal transactions and transnational crimes. The use of dried tree, oil drum and rims of tyres to demarcate our border in this age of complexity of crime shows clearly that Nigeria's border is not properly manned and secured. Many routes are not known; even the ones that are known are not properly manned. Corruption of security operatives, inadequate manpower logistic and lack of motivation also make Nigeria's boarder permissible for all sort of contraband and small arms and light weapons. Proliferation of small and light weapon in Africa continues to pose a systemic and pervasive threat to peace especially in Nigeria.

The 2004 UN Secretary-General's Report on ways to combat sub-regional and cross border crimes in West Africa identified major cross-border problems including the continued weakening of the security sector, proliferation of road blocks, youth unemployment, environmental degradation, social exclusion, explosive remnants of war (ERW), mass refugee movements and forced displacement. Inequitable and illicit exploitation of natural resources, weak national institutions and civil society structures and violations of human rights, including the rights of women, were also identified as other serious problems afflicting the sub-region. Nigeria share porous border with West and Central African countries some that are politically not stable and have undergone various armed conflicts such as Liberia, Serria Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and many others. These borders which include land and waters are characterised by inadequate manpower to patrol the land and water ways, this has encouraged the influx of arms to the shores of Nigeria. Proliferation of arms has thus increased the magnitude and intensity of ethnic crises, political rivals, local wars, human right abuses and crime and this continue to have a devastating impact on development and governance. Violence arising from the proliferation and widespread use of small arms in Nigeria serve as challenge to human existence. The wide availability of these weapons fuel instability, conflict and pose a threat, not only to security, but also to sustainable development. The widespread proliferation of small arms is contributing to alarming level of armed crime, in both the rural and urban areas and the incessant killings in the Plateau communities by Fulani herdsmen.

ARMED CONFLICTS AND ARMS PROLIFERATION IN NIGERIA

Armed groups are not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. There are numerous armed groups of varying character and intent ranging from one ethnic group to the other operating in the country since the advent of democracy in 1999. However, the armed groups are better armed, better educated, and increasingly sophisticated in their approach compared to what obtain before the advent of democracy in 1999. Nigeria has been enmeshed in recurrent incidence of armed conflict and anarchy from OPC, MASSOP, Niger Delta militant, kidnapping, terrorism, and Fulani's invader and inter community clashes as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. However it is not only the transnational nature and ethno-religion coloration to the conflict that has made it to be multifaceted in terms of its pattern, and impact thereby making it difficult to

tackle .The immediate threats to human security and the violence related to organised crime as currently most obvious in Boko Haram better explain the dangerous dimension to proliferation of arms. The unfettered and unlimited access of Niger Delta militants to stock piles of sophisticated weapons is a result of labyrinth network of creeks and rivers that facilitate the flow of small arms into their area. The Yar'adua administration (2007-2010) in order to end the insurgency in Niger Delta had strike an unconditional amnesty deal with the militants to submit their weapons. In terms of quantity and quality of the weapons that were submitted, Nigerians could not but wondered whether or not the country was under another civil war. The question which naturally follows this display is that has the Federal government blocked all porous borders both on the water ways and land boarders to stop another round of stock piling of arms? Arms business is a multibillion dollar business and there is even exchange of crude oil for arms by those stealing the country's crude oil. Christiana and Aaron (2013) agreed that Nigerian crude oil is being stolen on an industrial scale. Some of what is stolen is exported .Proceeds are laundered through world financial centres and all the proceeds are used to buy arms. In Nigeria, politicians, military officers, militants, oil industry personnel, oil traders and communities profit, as do organized criminal groups. The trade also supports other transnational organized crime in the Gulf of Guinea. When looking at the enormous income incurred through small arms trade, it is an enticing and lucrative business especially for countries that benefit the most from the continued sale of small arms. In addition to that is the Fulani invasion that has been another source of stimulating arms flow, livestock keeping among the Fulani is a viable occupation, their nomadic nature in searching for greens land and access to water often lead to conflict between them and farmers in the host communities across. This has contributed to the increased demand for small arms. One can note that the traditional practice of bow and arrow to protect the herdsman and their cattle has metamorphosed to the use of assorted rifles and other dangerous weapons. All these negative developments can however be traced to the inability of the police and other security agencies to provide law and order in the country, and the resulting insecurity among the population, has led some individuals and communities to acquire small arms for protection.

MONEY LAUNDERING AND PROLIFERATION OF ARMS IN NIGERIA

GIABA report 2013 said that illicit trade in firearms generates vast sums of money both directly and indirectly, with an estimated annual value of \$53 million. This trade inflicts immeasurable human costs throughout the world. There is an emerging nexus between money laundering and financing arms trade, hiding under globalisation of trade and technology in transferring fund. Thus, there is an increased likelihood of terrorist financiers using fraudulent trades, capital mobility and linkages. Globalization worldwide has a greater impact on the financial market, the linkage between the financial institution and internet has created new challenges in the efforts to reducing the illegal activities taking place through internet banking. Thus, there is therefore room for increase in the proliferation of arms deal through electronic transactions most especially in country like Nigeria where cyber crime is on the increase. FATF (2006) notes the potential exploitation of the international trade system by terrorist financiers and criminal organisations by way of generating vast sums of money through false invoicing of imports and exports. Both criminal groups and terrorist organisations take advantage of the environment in which they operate. However, money laundering, use for terrorism and other transnational crimes including illicit trading of arms are far different activities. In most cases the money is clean, such as donations to charities or gathered through religious tithing, and will be put to use to fuel the terror operation in some manner. Therefore, the laundering operations are slightly different in scope and activity, although no less complex and hard to detect. Unless put under the search light of

financial forensic experts. Both criminal groups and terrorist organisations take advantage of the environment in which they operate.

CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE CONTROL OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN NIGERIA

Nigeria as a failing state characterised with weak and corrupt judicial structures and a high level of corruption among other pathologies has contributed greatly to undermine the sustainable control of the scourge of proliferation of small arms. The fight against proliferation of arms should be holistic in the sense that all initiative controls should also include fighting money laundering, terrorism and proliferation of light weapons and weapons of mass destruction; this will help in countering financing proliferation of arms. There is urgent need to bridge the gap between proliferation of arm and money laundering. Though Nigeria has a law on anti money laundering but having legislation is not synonymous with enforcement .The need to fight against money laundering is important to stem down illicit trafficking of arms. Transnational organized crime is heightened as clandestine companies and agents play crucial roles as middlemen between warlords in plundering resources, arms trafficking, money laundering and smuggling (Mair 2003: 21-22). The rise of information and communication technologies in the past decades has facilitated major economic development. Zerzan (2010) observed that "safe and sound regulation is important by bringing confidence to the markets". Poorly regulated financial channel can risk economic non-sustainability and may be abuse by criminals". However, it is difficult to estimate the amount of money laundered by organized crime each year is about 1 to 2billion US Dollars. Illicit drugs form only one part of this revenue stream, which is also fed by tax evasion, weapons smuggling, human trafficking and other activities of organised crime, because they are fed largely by an unaccountable and predictable black market.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established with the objective of serving as catalyst for economic cooperation and development among the West African countries. The need for economic cooperation required free movement of people, goods and services and this led to establishment of ECOWAS protocol of free movement of people and good services. The protocol ensure movement of people within the same sub region without visa, this eroded the control and regulation of cross boarder activities and has continued to engender cross boarder crime such as smuggling of arms and other contrabands. Kelly, (2008) observed that "the conflict ridden west African sub region is a show case of uncontrolled arms and light weapons proliferation, vast quantity of arms have flooded the region despite their rampant misuse by state and non state actors alike, He stated further that "the wide spread of availability of small arms to abusive actors poses a threat of unprecedented magnitude to West African far greater than that of HIV and AIDS in terms of its socio economic and human consequences". Thus, ECOWAS heads of states on 31st of October 1998 made a declaration of a moratorium on the importation and exportation and manufacture of light weapon in West Africa, the aim of the moratorium is to sustain a regional approach to control of proliferation of arm in the region, the moratorium was followed by Code of Conduct in Lome summit in December 1999 that gave room for National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NATCOMs). However in 2003 ECOWAS at his meeting in Senegal looks at the possibility in transforming the moratorium into a convention and by 2006 the convention adopted and sign by the ECOWAS Head of States .Going by the above one will agree that arms are not supposed to be imported illegally into West Africa as member nations signed not to import, export or

manufacture arms, the weakness of the moratorium is obvious in Nigeria and other West African countries as arms proliferation continues unabated.

In the same vein, Nigeria enforces local laws on proliferation of arms and also a signatories to UN Arm Trade Treaty (ATT) adopted in 2013 this is to ensure that arms are not imported illegally to Nigeria. Nathan, A. Sears (2012) observed that ATT has the potential to strengthen the international system of control over SALW proliferation, thereby reducing the frequency and severity in which these weapons are employed in war, armed violence, crime, terrorism and repression. However signing international treaty is one thing, domesticating the treaty to control proliferation of arms is another thing, though United Nation had used targeted sanctions on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa, this sanctions are employed to achieve major objectives; to induced a given target to change or modify its behavioural pattern that is considered a threat to humanity and unacceptable under the international law; to discontinue the situation from further harms that have bedevilled the sub region is to enable the sanction party to refrained from what is considered abhorrent. However United Nation in the quest to curb proliferation of arms in West Africa imposed number of sanctions, a sanction was first proposed on Sierra Leone in 1997 (see Security Council Resolution, 1132). United Nation also sanctioned Liberia and Cote d Voire. Vines (2005) submitted that transactional criminal group have thrived in West African and neither the ECOWAS moratorium nor UN sanction have had much impact on their trade, in the same vain Tostensen and Bull (2002), argued that porous border and lack of required personnel, equipment needed to enforce sanction and political constraints are factors hindering the effectiveness of sanction in West African. Okereke (2008) observed that uneven implementation of regional agreement leaves loophole that arms trafficker can utilize for their nefarious trade, recent proliferation cases have demonstrated the critical importance of effective domestic measure.

Also, disarmament programs have varied greatly by and the cultural context in which the small arms issue exists. DDR is the process of demilitarizing both officials and unofficial armed groups by controlling and reducing the possession and use of arms, disbanding non-state armed groups, and reducing the size of state security services, and assisting former combatants to reintegrate into civilian life. However, locally, Nigeria has adopted amnesty as a strategy to mob-up all arms and the strategy yielded result given the sophisticated nature of the arms brought out for submission by the Niger Delta militant which are superior to those that are in the possession of security agents. However, the reality of amnesty is that it entails expensive and prolong prosecution giving the number of the militants that are in possession of arms. Slye (2002) observed that amnesties have been granted at times of great social stability and at times of great social unrest. We may therefore scrutinise amnesties from the basis of their intentions or morality. However, the most scrutiny of amnesty comes from the domain of law, especially international law. Recently, Nigeria has adopted amnesty to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate the Boko Haram that are willing to renounce terrorism and laid down their arms. The declaration of Amnesty by the Federal Government of Nigeria was acknowledged as the needed roadmap to stop the menace of terrorism. It was expected to draw out the insurgents for skill acquisition training and rehabilitation, end the incessant bombing and pave the way for a comprehensive development of Nigeria. Given the experience of the Niger Delta amnesty which eventually turned to a jamboree, Awotayo (2013) has observed that "the federal government should not see amnesty deal as a quick win solution to the Niger Delta problem but look beyond and avert the occurrence of the past". It is obvious that, some citizens usually trade in their old weapons, receive the incentive or benefits of returning their weapon in the amnesty, but generally keep their newly purchased

weapons. One will agree that insurgents generally buy newer small arms that are on the market, and trade in their older weapons that are no longer needed for the benefit of the amnesty. In the light of the above, a comprehensive and sustainable legislative and robust framework that will holistically address the issues of small arms and light weapons which includes stopping locally manufacturing and illegal importation, distribution and brokering, mark and tracing, registration and licensing regime and criminalizing of all illegal activities. However having laws in place is not enough but presence of the political will to actually enforce it matters. The continue proliferation of arms have been connected with weak control initiatives and mechanism to reduced the ever rising proliferation of arms in the country.

CONCLUSION- TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE ARMS PROLIFERATION CONTROL MEASURES FOR NIGERIA

In recent past, the impact of proliferation of arms has continued to generate an -ever expanding circle of violent conflict that has taken its toll on the socio economic well being, development and security situation in Nigeria. This has also affected the co-existence of the polity given the sharp divisions of the country along ethnic and religion lines. This is the more reason why the government should adopt local content in its control initiatives by thinking globally and act locally. The paper discovered that proliferation of arms is encouraged by unabated conflicts both intra and inter ethnics militancy and terrorism, porous border, money laundering. It also reveals that various initiatives failed to curtail the high increase in the level of illegal arms flow in the country. Therefore it could be said that Nigeria security is threatened by continuous increase in illegal arm flow given the high risk the proliferation of arms pose to the co existence of Nigeria, more so, that there has been latent fear that the country may disintegrate. There is a need for urgent and specific measure to control the ugly trend. The following recommendations are made for effective control of proliferation of arms; there is need for inter agencies co-operation among the security agencies on intelligence and information gathering and sharing, also there is the need to improve control through technology on our borders both on land, waters and airports, government should monitor legal arms from becoming illegal by device an effective means of marking and tracing arms, strengthening of the national borders and enhance the capacity and capability of the immigration personnel to detect and interdict illegal arm flow to the country and the anti graft agencies should be strengthen to fight money laundering as most of the money laundered are used to finance arms trade. There is urgent need to revisit the ECOWAS free trade and movement protocol. Finally there is the need to domesticate all international and regional treaties and protocols signed by Nigeria to control arm proliferation and include the local content for it to work effectively. It is by addressing all these concerns that human lives can become more meaningful in the country as all areas of human existence including economic, social and the environment can become more productive and sustainable. All the above can only be made possible within an enabling political environment that is devoid of political violence and conflicts which in some cases are linked to arms proliferation in the country.

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