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ASSESSING THE IMPLICATION OF UNCONTROLLED PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS USED FOR KIDNAPPING AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has become one of the most urgent security and developmental challenges globally. However, in Africa, the uncontrolled proliferation and widespread availability of small arms is a development that is affecting virtually every country within the continent and poses threats to domestic or national security. The objective of this work is to examine the implications of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons for kidnapping as a national security challenge in Nigeria. This study approaches the study from the state fragility theoretical perspective. Secondary method of data collection was employed. The finding from the research points to the fact that one of the major reasons for arms proliferation in Nigeria is the porosity of the borders. This is because the border security is compromised and there is a lot of shady dealing between the personnel and smugglers. The issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons through the porous borders will continue to pose serious challenge to the Nigeria's national security due to the fact that there is always interagency rivalry at vast border points. Another finding is that most of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons into the country are from neighboring countries and they used to exacerbate kidnapping in the country.

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Based on the above, the paper recommended that the Nigerian government should adopt the application of technology in her national security policies. E-border management and other advanced surveillance mechanism should be introduced by the government; patrol vehicles and other scientific materials should be procured for monitoring of both governed and ungoverned vast border area.

Introduction

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has become one of the most urgent security and developmental challenges globally. However, in Africa, the uncontrolled proliferation and widespread availability of small arms is a development that is affecting virtually every country within the continent and poses threats to domestic or national security. The problems posed by small arms proliferation are complex and multidimensional in character. They are entangled with other broad security and societal issues such as conflict prevention and resolution, poverty, gender, cultures of violence, governance issues, criminal activity and links to terrorism. It also has serious implications for human rights and humanitarian activities (Ogaba, 2005: 9-10).

From records by the Okoli and Orinya (2018), assert that there are approximately 500 million assorted firearms in West Africa. And out of these 500 million, 70%, approximating 350 million of them are in Nigeria. And, of course, we know for a fact, that quite a large consignment of weapons are being smuggled, or have been smuggled from North Africa, in particular, Libya, as a consequence of the crisis in that country. The evidence of proliferation of SALW is an extreme concern. Out of the 650 million SALW circulating globally, some estimated 7 million are in Nigeria, and 77,000 small arms are in the hands of insurgent groups (Ocheoche, 2021). On June 14, 2006, the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons was transformed in to a convention and became the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

Since independence, Nigeria has been witnessing the manifestations of different forms of security challenges. All the geo-political zones in Nigeria have their own peculiar security threats and challenges. North-Eastern Nigeria is been ravaged by the scourge of terrorism and insurgency, North-Western Nigeria is grappling with the issues of banditry, cattle rustling and kidnappings, North-Central is grappling with the challenge of Farmers-Herders conflict, South-East is facing issues of kidnappings and secessionist agitations and South-West is also facing the challenges of ritual killings and kidnapping. All these security threats and challenges are not unconnected to the availability of illicit arms in the hands of non-state actors.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

> There are guns everywhere. We do not produce guns here. They are all smuggled into our community. Guns are cheap. It can be easily hidden. The insurgents, kidnappers and militant can lay their hands on them. Anyone with a gun can do whatever he wants. The insurgents were spurred by the possession of guns and other dangerous instruments. We are displaced. Our farms have been mined. We cannot farm or feed ourselves any more. We are at the mercy of the insurgents, poverty and hunger (Okodolor, 2015:34).

The proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria is both a cause and manifestation of diverse conflicts that are internal and/or external to the country, and are driven by the forces of demand and supply, predicated on weak structures that sabotage pre-emptive conflict management mechanisms. In particular, arms control enables governments and institutions to mobilize and enhance their capacities in addressing the free flow of arms among unauthorized persons. Such mechanisms have been adopted in several instances in the continent with little or no gains. Rather, states and organizations working on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) among other exercises pay for new weapons as ex-combatants practically use the proceeds of old weapon submitted to exchange for newer ones waiting outside the arena ((Badmus, 2015).

Alusala (2018) submits that uncontrolled accumulation and spread of SALW poses a threat to peace and security and has reduced the prospects of sustainable development throughout the sub-region of West Africa and Nigeria as a country. Free cross border activity coupled with relatively weak administrative legislative and regulatory measures on weapons within the country have contributed to the indiscriminate proliferation of SALW from abroad and from within the sub-region. Recognizing the indiscriminate proliferation of weapons fuelling these conflicts had a negative impact on regional development and human security, ECOWAS member states adopted a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa at the 21stSession of the meeting of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS on 30thOctober, 1998 for a renewable period of three years; It was renewed successively in 2001 and 2004 (Nwoye, 2020).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has become one of the most urgent security and developmental challenges globally. However, in Africa, the uncontrolled proliferation and widespread availability of small arms is a development that is affecting virtually every country within the continent and poses threats to domestic or national security. The proliferation of SA and LW in the country has many sources. These

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

sources are isolated and interrogated accordingly. They chiefly include smuggling, arm-theft, Bakassi Boys, MASSOB, yandaba and yan Banga, local fabrications and Peace Support Operations. The first is smuggling; Nigeria shares a total of 4200 km land borders with Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon as well as nearly 700 km of Atlantic coastline (Ocheoche, 2021). This length of border is dotted with numerous in-routes which are barely policed against smuggling activities. Ogun State which lies in the South-West of Nigeria for instance, has more than 50 unmanned in-routes from the Republic of Benin (Nigerian Ports Authority Handbook, 1995:3). The situation is the same in the North-Western States of Adamawa, Yobe and Borno.

These porous borders are therefore, usually exploited by smugglers to bring arms which are eventually diffused into the Nigerian society. This argument is corroborated by a summary of smuggled but intercepted arms and ammunition in Lagos state from 1999-2010. The data further indicates that there is a mix of automatic and non automatic weapons in circulation. It is estimated that there are about 1000 smuggling routes which form a network of roads around the borders. In 2017 alone, a total of 21, 548, 608 arms and ammunition were smuggled into Nigeria (Badmus, 2015).

Arms theft is another source of the proliferation of SALW in the country. The snatching and theft of SALW from members of security agencies and their armouries have been a common practice in the recent years. There are some instances whereby armed robbers and armed gangs attacked policemen as well as police stations and took away their weapons. Supporting this line of argument, Raymond Y. Ustaha shows that a total number of 196 weapons were reported lost by the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) from 1998-2000. On the 13 and 15 April 2007, three police stations were attacked by unknown persons in Port-Harcourt and Kano respectively, stealing undisclosed quantity of arms. However, loss of weapon is not common to the police alone. In Owerri, the arms store of the NCS was broken into on 10th of April 2002 and large quantities of arms were stolen by unknown persons.

Similar incidence occurred in Yenagoa where armed robbers invaded Agudama Police State in July, 2019. The robbers killed 5 NPF and made away with their weapons (Kenneth, 2017). In April 2018, Offa Police Station was attacked and 9 NPF were killed. The robbers also made away with all their weapons (Badmus, 2015). Such incidences are too numerous to discuss here as a result of lack of space. The state of loss arms to unauthorized persons is therefore a cause for a serious concern to the general public (Isaac, 2019). The problematic of his work therefore is to attempt an assessment on how the proliferation of SALWs has worsened the continuous flow of illicit weapons into Nigeria and how same has worsened Nigeria's national security.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective is to investigate the causes of the proliferation SALWs as a national security challenge in Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

i. To assess the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons' contribution to kidnapping as a national security challenge in Nigeria;
ii. To examine the causes of proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in relation to Nigeria's national security;

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

State Fragility Theory

For the sake of this paper, the state fragility theory which explains that the reason the Nigerian society has not curbed the proliferation of the SALW is because it is fragile. The theory of state fragility lies on the inability of a state to coordinate its affairs well. The leading proponent of this theory is propounded by Rotberg (2009). In his work, Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators, he expresses that, nation-state fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to the citizenry. Sovereign states are expected to perform certain minimal functions for the security and wellbeing of their citizens as well as the smooth working of the international system. The implication is that the state has been amputated in controlling the affairs of its citizens. Failed states are those whose power grids have experienced frequent, sustained, and massive breakdown, such that the state authorities are no longer able to project real power on a consistent basis (Ghosh and Mukerjee, 2019). The theoretical framework upon which this research is adopted was based on the relevant postulations made by prominent scholars on the variables; proliferation of small and light weapons and Nigeria's national security (Giddens, 2019). It is good to mention from the outset that Nigeria is not a failed state. However, Nigeria is gradually failing in its responsibility and that is why it can be conveniently referred to as a failing state and to that extent the theory is relevant to this research in that it is best suitable to discuss the proliferation of SALW on Nigeria's national security.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Kidnapping

Kidnapping consists of unlawfully or intentionally depriving a person of his liberty of movement or, in the case of a minor, depriving a parent or recognised guardian control over the child. The emphasis is on the individual's right to personal freedom and the violation of this right through force, threats or fraud. Robertson (1968), views kidnapping as a crime of seizing, confining, abducting or carrying away of persons by force or fraud often subjecting him or her to involuntary servitude in an attempt to demand a ransom or in furtherance of another crime. In criminal law, kidnapping is defined as taking away of a

person by force, threat or deceit with intent to cause him/her to be detained against his or her will (Asuquo, 2009).

Thomas and Nta (2009) define kidnapping as robbery of the highest rank. According to them, it is an organized and systematic robbery which is not as deadly as armed-robbery, but more profitable than the former. The profitability has encouraged those that indulged in it to carry on with the act although there is a law prohibiting it. Goldberg (2000) argues that kidnapping is a criminal act involving seizure, confinement, abduction, subjection, forcefulness, acts of threats, acts of terror and servitude. Similarly, Ngwama (2014) define kidnapping as false imprisonment in the sense that it involves the illegal confinement of individuals against his or her own will by another individual in such a way as to violate the confined individual's right to be free from the restraint of movement.

According to Ottuh & Aituf (2014) kidnapping is the wholesale taking away or transportation of a person against the person's will usually to confine the person in false imprisonment without legal authority. They state that this act may be done principally to extract ransom or in connection with a child custody as a fall out of marital dispute. Such kidnapping or abduction of a child is often labeled "child stealing" and "parental kidnapping", particularly when the act is carried with the intention of keeping the child permanently as against collecting a ransom or other things the 'child stealer' is agitating for.

Concept of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs)

The concept of SALWs is amenable to different definitions advanced by scholars, policy makers and practitioners in the areas of defence, international relations and strategic studies. Okoli and Orinya (2018):2) defines small arms as:

> Small arms and light weapons are man-portable weapons made or modified to military specifications for use as lethal instruments of war. Small arms are broadly categorized as those weapons intended for use by individual members of armed or security forces. They include revolvers and self-loading pistols; rifles and carbines; sub-machine guns; assault rifles; and light machine guns. Light weapons are broadly categorized as those weapons intended for use by several members of armed or security forces serving as a crew. They include heavy machine guns; hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers; portable anti-aircraft guns; portable anti-tank guns; recoilless rifles; portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems; and mortars of calibres less than 100 mm.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

The idea put forward by the Okoli and Orinya is quite apt because the categorization has made the concept easier to understand. A quick take way is that the concept of small arms implies those weapons intended for use by individual members of armed or security forces. Again the second aspect of the conceptualization is that light weapons are those weapons intended for use by several members of armed or security forces serving as a crew.

Ogionwo and Eke (2019) view small arms as weapons that can be carried by an individual. This includes everything from revolvers and pistols to machine guns, light anti-tank weapons and shoulder fired surface –to-air missiles. Small arms are weapons that can be carried and used by an individual, for example, revolvers, pistols, rifles, shotguns, sub-machine guns and assault rifles. Light weapons are weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person.

Light weapons include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 mm (Okodolor, 2015). The perception of Okodolor is clear because all the weapons listed are what constitute light weapons.

Article 1 of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW defines Light Weapons as Portable arms designed to be used by several persons working together in a team and which include notably: heavy machine guns; portable grenade launchers, mobile or mounted; portable anti-aircraft cannons; portable anti-tank cannons, non-recoil guns; portable anti-tank missile launchers or rocket launchers; portable anti-aircraft missile launchers; mortars with a calibre of less than 100 millimetres;

The same Article 1 of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW also defined Small Arms as Arms used by one person and which include notably: firearms and other destructive arms or devices such as an exploding bomb, an incendiary bomb or a gas bomb, a grenade, a rocket launcher, a missile, a missile system or landmine;- Revolvers and pistols with automatic loading; rifles and carbines; machine guns; assault rifles; light machine guns.

While appreciating the divergent opinions on the concepts of SALWs, Ochoche (2002) identities some common elements that reoccur in so many definitions of SALW as follows:

> First, the focus is on lethal equipment, i.e. weapons and their ammunition, generally used by military and paramilitary forces, excluding items such as knives and hunting rifles. Second, the emphasis is on weapons that are man-portable or transportable by light vehicles, i.e. on the weight and size of the equipment. Third, this equipment is easy to maintain, can function without much logistical back-up and

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

> requires light training for use. Fourth, to be militarily and politically relevant, the definition comprises weapons that are in frequent use, i.e. weapons that really kill.

Proliferation on the other hand indicates degree of circulation in terms of quantity. Some researchers have attributed the proliferation of arms to arms race between nations. The increasing rate of arms race precipitated by the idea of national defence/security and role of power in global politics is a major factor as far as the proliferation of arms in concerned.

Concept of Security

Security is an ambiguous term that defies a universal definition. This is because it is possible to apply the term to a range of ideas that operate at many levels of analysis, and because judgments of relative levels of security vary from the objective to the subjective (Wing, 2000). The Oxford English Dictionary provides this definition:

> Security: The condition of being protected from or not exposed to danger; safety. The safeguarding or safeguarding of (the interests of) the state against danger. Freedom from care, anxiety or apprehension; a feeling of safety or freedom from or absence of danger.

The Macquarie Dictionary definition is similar: security is. Freedom from danger, risk . . . freedom from care, apprehension, or doubt . . . According to Bell (2019) security is the feeling or state of being secured. In the view of Gallie :The term 'security' has become, to use words, an 'essentially contested concept' in that, there are no assumptions of agreement as to its meaning and that this lack of agreement constitutes a widely recognised ground for philosophical inquiry (Gallie, 1995:167).

To shed light on the lack of consensus on the meaning of security, Giddens (2019) points out the importance of perceptions within the meaning of security: . . .security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. Rothschild (1995), traced the origins of the word and provides an important clue to the broad interpretation of its meaning. The original Latin noun security as referred:

> . . . in its primary classical use, to a condition of individuals, of a particularly inner sort. It denoted composure, tranquility of spirit, freedom from care, the condition that Cicero called the 'object of supreme desire,' or 'the absence of anxiety upon which happy life depends' (Bell, 2019:61).

It is pertinent to note, aside the fact that there is no consensus among scholars on the meaning of security; there also exist multidimensional trends in security. Some school of

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

thought holds on to the traditional conception of security while others, the non-traditional and a synthesis of both. International and domestic trends shape perceptions on security.

Concept of National Security

National security has been defined as threats to the human life such as natural phenomenon like climate change, environmental and health issues (Ghosh and Mukerjee, 2019). However according to Harold Brown, the former US Secretary of Defence, national security is the ability to preserve a nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders (Goode and Hart, 2019).

Similarly, Goodall (2019:521) defines national security as:

> The measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance, that can be indexed by computation, empirically or otherwise, and is extendable to global security by variables external to it.

National security has also been defined from the prism of physical security and political security: physical security is associated with the military capacity of a state to manage physical threats, it involves the capacity of a state to mobilize military forces to protect its borders, successfully wade off aggression or threat to peace by non-state actors such as terrorist groups.

On the other hand, Jordan and Korb (2019) argue that national security depends on political security and political security depends on the rule of international law, effectiveness of international political institutions as well as diplomacy and negotiation between nations and other security actors.

Giddens (2019) defines national security as, "the policy enacted by government to ensure the survival and safety of the nation state, including but not limited to the exercise of diplomatic and military power in both peace and war". Kenneth (2017) in their treatise "Conflicts in the International Strategies against Terrorism" asserts that national Security involves the measures taken by state actors to safeguard the nation from real or potential threats. It is that aspect of government policy which creates enabling atmosphere necessary for the protection and promotion of vital national interest and values against known or potential enemies. Consequently National security should be concerned with both domestic and foreign interests of a state. This definition is relevant to the study

because it touches on on the protection of national interest and values of a nation against known or known enemies.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study is the qualitative research method. Data was sourced from documents which help in the critical analyses of the issue under investigation. At the same time throw more light not only on the theoretical aspect of the research problem, but on empirical evidences. The historical research design was adopted and it involves interpretation of the records in such a way that conclusions reached amount to an interpretation or re-interpretation of the past events and consequently reconstruction of the national security challenge to Nigeria. This data is however purely secondary in nature, largely gathered from government organizations and international agencies.

Secondary data collection involves intense library search and internet browsing. The implication for the study is that ample library search to collect and processed data has been done. Books and journal articles, unpublished theses, government publications, and all other processed data collected have been able to complement, validate, or reject certain claims in primary data and other literature.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons' contribution to kidnapping as a national security challenge in Nigeria

One of the major problems orchestrated by the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons which is a threat to Nigeria's national security is kidnapping. Kidnapping is the process of taking an individual against his/her will. Kidnapping is fast gaining notoriety across the globe, some cities and countries have been described as the "kidnapping capital of the world," Mexico, Columbia and Brazil are among the cities once named the world leaders in reported kidnapping (Goode and Hart, 2019). One wonders if that "championship title" is coming to Nigeria. Nigeria's Niger Delta region especially the south east and south- south States have at some point become characterized by heightened insecurity, and an increase in crime wave. Today, almost everyone knows someone who has been kidnapped, fear and panic grips the populace, as no one knows who will be the next victim. People now have to make several calls, security arrangements and get regular updates before travelling to the next town. Things have gone very bad, the presence of heavy security operatives.

It has not always been this way. Prior to the 1990s, kidnapping for ransom was not a major issue in Nigeria, though it may not be entirely true to say it did not exist. People had been kidnapped and sold into slavery during the 18th and 19th centuries, others were

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

kidnapped from their homes and assassinated as a result of quarrels over farmlands, child-napping was also not uncommon as children were abducted and used for money-making rituals (Gomme, 2017). Kidnapping in Nigeria before the 1990s was so minimal that there was no mention of incidents in Nigeria in the eighth United Nations survey on crime trends and operation of criminal justice systems conducted in 2002 by the United Nations office on Drug and Crime (Giddens, 2019).

As mentioned earlier, kidnapping especially for ransom is a recent trend in Nigeria, this is not to say the there have not been incidents of kidnapping, we pointed out that in the slavery era of the 18th and 19th centuries, people were kidnapped and sold into slavery and children and virgins were abducted and murdered for money making rituals (Ghosh and Mukerjee, 2019). Kidnapping for ransom started in the Niger Delta as a means of calling government attention to the neglect and underdevelopment of the areas by oil companies. However, the Democratic era of the 1990s and the early twenty first century heralded the dawn of an unprecedented upward surge in kidnapping and other violent crimes. The 1999 return to democratic rule and the struggle by politicians to secure power to control petroleum production and ensure personal advancement and group security led to the heightened state of insecurity (Gallie, 2019).

In like manner, the over 30.6 million people living in the six affected states face increased protection concerns due to the continued escalation of the crisis. Since 2016, almost daily attacks by bandits have been recorded in Katsina's Jibia border prompting the Nigeria government to institute various security operations in the northwest. There are risks of getting kidnapped specifically for ransom (Badmus, 2015).

Women and girls are susceptible to kidnap, sexual violence, and abuse, including rape. As banditry attacks have continued, the affected population has expressed a lack of trust towards the army and police and their ability to prevent the reoccurrence of this ugly development. Residents and survivors in affected states have complained that response from the police and army were slow, and sometimes non-existent when they are attacked.

Causes of proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and its Impact on Nigeria's national security

In West Africa, particularly Nigeria, some schools of thought have argued that the ECOWAS Convention on free movement of Persons, Goods and Service is the major reason for insecurity and threat within the Sub-region and in Nigeria to be precise. Armed groups and militias are able to cross borders easily in conflict zones, and cross-border shipment of arms and ammunition is generally on the increase. Smugglers also exploit irregular sea routes in an effort to conceal the transportation of weapons, making it difficult for security forces to detect the movements. Terrorist and violent extremist groups, such as Boko Haram and al-Shabaab, also operate across borders using irregular

routes and taking advantage of poorly secured border points to smuggle weapons (Isaac, 2019).

Some international borders in Africa pose a considerable challenge to law enforcement in Nigeria. These constitute borders located in ungoverned spaces, and which are therefore prone to corruption, conflict and political instability. Weak state capacity also makes it difficult to monitor cross border proliferation of arms, which occurs insidiously (Badmus, 2015). In West Africa and Nigeria in particular, the evidence of proliferation is an extreme concern. Out of the650 million SALW circulating globally, some estimated 7 million are in West Africa, and 77,000 small arms are in the hands of major West African insurgent groups (Small Arms Survey, 2003: 82).

The inability of the Nigerian state and security agencies to manage and regulate the use of and spread of SALWs has further aggravated the threat to her national security. The nation has become so unsecured that one begins to wonder whether the state still reserve the sovereignty and their coercive powers. In Nigeria, non-state actors are challenging the authority and policies of the state because they have as much fire-power as the state and in some instance can challenge the state effectively in the event of war. For instance, the Nigerian military has been unable to effectively and efficiently counter Boko Haram terrorist group for over eleven years. The Niger Delta militants have also challenged the Nigeria Military in several occasions. In Darfur, South Sudan, Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia etc the situation is almost the same where militias, rebels, bandits and militant groups have constitute themselves as a government in government i.e a state in another state. Some states in Africa have been described as failed states because of the inability of the state to exert its powers.

Buttressing the above Jordan and Korb (2019) posit that the fragmentation of the political and economic space in West Africa has shaped the availability and circulation of SALW. The deterioration of many West African states' capacity to enforce the rule of law has blurred the boundaries between legal and illicit markets, enabling a thriving trade in SALW. Politicians have even been known to acquire weapons from illegal dealers to arm security personnel during election season.

For Okoli and Orinya (2018) failure of the Nigerian state and its security agencies to guarantee security has transformed security from a public good provided by the government to a private necessity which individuals and groups have to provide for themselves through various means. This largely explains the proliferation of private security companies, vigilante groups, etc. these goes to show how the failure of the state can propelled the spread and proliferation of illicit arms and weapons.

Stockpiling of arms by state-actors and some non-state actors like military industrial complexes constitute another springboard for the spread of SALWs in Nigeria. Stockpiling of SALWs can be interrogated within different context and different

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

perspectives. One factor that has over the years encouraged the stockpiles of arms and weapons is tied to the realist orientation of international politics especially its emphasis on the role of power in global politics. Arms race between States within the international system has encouraged stockpiling. States believe that their security is determined by the nature and degree of arms at their disposal.

There is however a nexus between legal and illegal stockpiling of arms and weapons. Licit stockpiles are one of the main sources of illicit arms flows in Nigeria. Diversion of legal arms refers to their entry into the illicit market, or the unauthorised use or export of arms or ammunition without the consent of the legitimate owner or original exporting state (John, 2013). In Nigeria, this diversion of weapons occurs in several ways. One way is for armed militias or rebels to overrun government forces and raid government arsenals. Another is the case where rogue soldiers trade arms opportunistically with rebels. The latter is most rampant in cases where the state's forces are poorly paid (Isaac, 2019).

The illicit arms market involves various actors, from the manufacturer to the end user, and usually a number of illicit brokers along the supply chain, who often conceal their activities in a highly complex transnational criminal network (Oche, 2015). Examining the rate of illicit arms flow in relations to markets, Ogaba claims that:

> It is evident that the licit and illicit arms markets are separated by a very thin line. Several factors enable weapons to enter the illicit supply chain. To help prevent this, there is need for greater transparency at three critical points – the manufacturing, brokering and end-user(recipient) markets. Arms traffickers use various processes to abet illicit arms flows (Ogaba, 2015:5).

According to Obasi (2021) syndicates exploit the grey market by disguising themselves as 'employees' of legitimate corporations, or by fronting entities that pass themselves off as those corporations. This way, they are able to make grey-market transactions using a false flag. This is why most grey-market arms transactions are dominated and controlled by large, legitimate companies.

Summary of Gaps in Literature

There are evidences that scholars like Okoli and Orinya (2018), Okodolor (2015), Nwoye (2000), Badmus (2015) and Oche (2015) have worked on ECOWAS convention on Small Arms and Light weapons but most of these literature center more on how this convention has promoted security within West Africa and literature on Nigeria do not situate their analysis within the context of the security challenges such as banditry, kidnapping, terrorism, herders-farmers conflicts that Nigeria is grappling with. This work therefore does not just fill this gap but analyzes the impact of proliferation of Small and Light Weapon on Nigeria's national security.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The finding from the research points to the fact that one of the major reasons for arms proliferation in Nigeria is the porosity of the borders. This is because the border security is compromised and there is a lot of shady dealing between the personnel and smugglers. The issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons through the porous borders will continue to pose serious challenge to the Nigeria's national security due to the fact that there is always interagency rivalry at vast border points.

Another finding is that most of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons into the country are from neighboring countries and they used to exacerbate kidnapping in the country..

Based on the above, the paper recommended as follows:

i. The Nigerian government should adopt the application of technology in her national security policies. E-border management and other advanced surveillance mechanism should be introduced by the government; patrol vehicles and other scientific materials should be procured for monitoring of both governed and ungoverned vast border area.

ii. In addition, there are many things not envisaged in the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods. As such, the Nigerian government should put mechanisms in place to monitor the character of community migrants. The government has to be proactive in dealing with issues of security threats occasioned by the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods.

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