

## PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND INSECURITY IN AFRICA

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### Abstract

*This paper examined the proliferations of Small Arms and insecurity in Nigeria. The proliferation of small Arms and insecurity in Nigeria has immensely contributed to conflicts and caused catastrophic damage to both human and material resources in almost the thirty-Six States. Today, insecurity ranging from Kidnapping, Banditry, Armed robbery, ESN, IPOB, Boko Haram pervades the country. The menace has not spared any region ranging from the South-south, South-east, South-west, North-west, North-central and North-east. This study further showed that there is currently intensity of the phenomenon of small arms and light weapons related criminalities in Northeast, Northwest and Southeast. In the Northeast, the activities of Boko Haram are ravaging communities. In Northwest, the activities of Fulani militias/invasors have resulted to killings, kidnappings, abductions and displacement of communities. While, in the Southeast, there is Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) militia wing called Eastern Security Network (ESN. The study is a descriptive survey and depended on secondary data to develop the paper. Regulative capability analytical framework, which is an aspect of Almond's General Systems theory, is adopted to guide the discussion of the proliferation of small arms and insecurity in Nigeria. Findings reveal that porous borders Poverty and corruption are some of the causes for the proliferation of arms in Nigeria. One of the recommendations made was that Nigeria governments must collaborate with countries in the African Sub-region to combat the proliferation of small arms. Also, Nigerian government must combat Poverty by providing basic needs of its citizens and also fight both Malignant and benign corruption.*

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Insecurity, Proliferation, Small Arms

### Introduction

The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) has become a major threat to national security, peace and stability in Africa. Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the hands of non-state actors are commonplace thereby, challenging the security of lives and property. Although arms proliferation is a global issue, available data on Small Arms and Light Weapons showed that out of the 640 million 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 Small Arms and Light Weapons 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 Guardian, 2018 cited by Umaru, 2021). The relationship between small arms and insecurity has been the object of contentious debates among scholars. While some scholars argue that small arms are the direct cause of insecurity, others maintain that small arms are merely trigger of insecurity or precipitating factor. Despite this seeming apparent disagreement, both scholars commonly agree that the proliferation of small arms poses serious challenges to the sustenance of peace and stability of any society (Osimen & Akintunde, 2015). The proliferation of small arms sustains and exacerbates armed conflicts. It endangers peace keepers and workers. It undermines respect for international humanitarian laws. It threatens legitimate but weak, governments and it benefits terrorists as well as the perpetrators of organized crime (Kofi, 2010). Some of the old threats that assumed new dimensions include small arms and light weapons (SALW) proliferation, armed robbery, ethno-religious conflicts, militancy, assassinations, cultism, human trafficking, terrorism and kidnapping (Osimen, & Akintunde, 2015).

In contrast to the conventional view inherited from the cold war era, emerging violence attest to the role of weapons as stimulus to insecurity and a harbinger of massive human rights violation and humanitarian crisis. In many cases, the availability of weapons has engendered national insecurity, which otherwise may not have occurred. The accessibility of small arms has been made an issue of choice. Illicit arms transfer is not a particular country's problem, nor does the spread of deadly weapons stop at national borders. Guns and small arms are no longer the preserves of militias and police force but have fallen into the hands of ordinary criminals, terrorists, ethnic militias and death squads around the world. What is noteworthy is that while leaders and nations, given the experience of two world wars had concentrated on placing restrictions on the sale and transfer of big and conventional weapons, small arms proliferation was tragically ignored (Osimen & Akintunde, 2015). The paper is divided into sections, first is the conceptual clarifications, theoretical framework, the effects of small arms and light weapons in Africa, framework for control of these small Arms in Africa then conclusion and recommendations.

### **Conceptual explanations**

#### **Proliferation**

According to Ocholi and Eze, (2023), proliferation implies rapid expansion, abundance or multiplication. Within the context of SALW, arms proliferation in general implies the spread of weapons from one country to another or from one group to another. The term proliferation may mean different thing to different people depending on the context with which one is using it. To the Biologist, it is the process of an individual organism growing organically from a single to a more complex level (Abdullahi, 2016). To the legal minds and the sociologist, it may mean, a rapid increase in the number (especially a rapid increase in the number of deadly weapons. It may also mean a process of becoming larger or longer or more numerous or more important. However

the context in which the term proliferation is used is in relation to rapid increase in the number of deadly weapons as in small and light weapons. To Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary General conceptualized arms proliferation as: “A method in which arms and weapons are sold to private citizens especially in conflict zones” (Kofi 2010) cited in Ocholi and Eze (2023). Article 2 of the Draft International and Firearms Protocol comprehensively defined illicit firearms proliferation and trafficking as:

The importing, exporting, acquisition, sale, delivery and movement or transfers, their parts and components and ammunition from across the territory of one State party to that of another State

Party without the authorized or in violation of the legislation or regulations of any one of the States Parties concerned (Green 2011) cited in (Ocholi and Eze (2023: pp 66-67).

According to Omidoyin (2021), Proliferation simply refers to rapid increase in the number or amount of something, growth, multiplication, spread, escalation, expansion or excessive spread. Proliferation is likewise synonymous to multiplicity, which simply means rapid increase in the amount or quantity of something or a large number of a particular thing

### **Small arms**

According to Muoemenam and Okafor, (2022), Small arms are obviously very rampant in Nigeria. It has moved beyond being used by government security agencies, assassins, armed robbers, etc, to become veritable tools for aggression and domination by certain groups within Nigeria. No doubt those small arms have become a serious factor that has enhanced insecurity in Nigeria. Its efficient nature, easy handling with limited training has exacerbated indiscriminate usage. The associated result to this situation is the trails of deaths, displacements, devastation, destructions and as well damages it has caused to the people and the economy of the nation.

According to Abdullahi, (2016), like jurisprudential terms, small arms have defied a universal definition. For example the United Nations Governmental Experts that explored the issue of small arms and light weapons in 1997 put forth definition that included clubs, knives and machetes, though most of the subsequent regional and international instruments have narrowed the definition used to focus exclusively on firearms. Until recently therefore, much of the works on small arms and firearms have proceeded in separate tracks with extensive discussions concerning the destruction of “illicit firearms and small arms” and the definition of “illicit trafficking”. The United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small arms also defined Small arms as “Revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns”.(Abdullahi, 2016) .

The group therefore focused on preventing the weapons made to military specifications and measures aimed at reducing illicit state to state transfers in violation of international treaties and code of conduct. In contrast, the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (1998) is focused on reducing the availability of firearms in the context of crime,

particularly transnational organized crime. These firearms include military and non-military weapons. Small arms were thus defined as:

Small arms are broadly speaking weapons designed for personal use. They include inter-alia revolvers, and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns. Abdullahi, (2016, p 24).

Small arms are equally light weight and “person-portable” weapons including revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, light machine guns sub-machine guns (the UZI), and assault rifles (the AK-47). It includes hand grenade, landmines and Small mortars. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) defines Small arms to include:

All crew-portable direct fire weapons of a caliber less than 50mm and which will include a secondary capability to defeat light armor and helicopters. Abdullahi, (2016, p 24).

According to Samuel, (2021), and Isa, Luka and Philip, (2024), Small arms are equally seen as a term of act used by armed forces to denote infantry weapons an individual soldier may carry. The description is usually limited to revolvers, pistols, sub-machine guns, carbines, assault rifles, battle rifles, multiple barrel firearms, rifles, squad automatic weapons, light machine guns and sometimes hand grenade. Short guns, general purpose machine guns, medium machine guns and grenade launchers may be considered as small arms or as support weapons depending on the particular armed forces. In the United States of America Small arms typically do not include infantry support weapons, small arms refer to handguns or other firearms less than 20mm in caliber and including heavy machine guns typically 50mm caliber or 12.2mm in United States Service. Notwithstanding that small arms have defied a universal definition, the international community most frequently uses the United Nations definition of small arms as referring to revolvers, and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, Sub-machine guns and light machine guns. (Oluwadare, 2014; Abdullahi, 2016). To Nte, (2011) and Osimen, and Akintunde, (2015), ‘Small arms’ refers to arms used by one person, and which include firearms and other destructive arms or devices such as exploding bombs, incendiary bombs or gas bombs, grenades, rocket launchers, missiles, missile systems or landmines; revolvers and pistols with automatic loading; rifles and carbines; machine guns; assault rifles; and light machine guns.

To Jibrin, (2018) Small arms refers to arms used by one person and which include firearms and other destructive arms or devices such as exploding bombs, incendiary bomb or gas, grenades, rocket launcher, missile system or landmines, revolvers, pistol with automatic loading, rifles, machine guns and landmines. From the United Nations "Report of Government Experts on Small Arms," cited by Soetan, (2017), Small arms include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifle and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns. Light weapons include heavy machine guns, hand-held underbarrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems and mortars of calibres less than 100 mm.

### **The meaning of Insecurity**

Achumba, Ighomeroho, and Akpor (2013) define insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. People engaged in business activity, either directly or indirectly, to satisfy unlimited human wants (Rosenje, Adeniyi & Peju-Rosenje, 2020).

Some of the perspectives from which security has been described include absence of safety, dangerous situation, hazardous periods, risks or uncertainty, absence of confidence (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013; Rosenje, Adeniyi & Peju-Rosenje 2020: Elezar & George, 2022). Physical insecurity is easily noticed. This type of insecurity can lead to other types of insecurity such as anxiety, fear, and economic insecurity, social and political insecurity.

### **Literature review**

#### **Links between Small Arms and Light Weapons and Insecurity in Nigeria**

The linkage between Small Arms and Light Weapons and insecurity in Nigeria has been a reoccurring debate among various academic scholars. While some scholars believe that proliferation of SALWs is the main reasons for the problem of insecurity in Nigeria, other scholars are of the opinion that proliferation of SALWs is not the main reason but a contributing factor. But the two groups seem to agree that the proliferation of SALWs poses a security threat to any country. Gofwan, Ishaya and Ado (2019) explain that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is often one of the major security obstacles currently facing Nigeria, Africa and indeed the world in general. The trafficking and wide availability of these weapons fuel communal conflict, political instability and pose a threat, not only to security, but also to sustainable development of any country (Gowfan, Ishaya and Ado, 2019).

The Increased proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria and the corresponding increase in their accessibility deepens the tendency of the average person to resort to violence as a means of dispute resolution, increased the potential for violence and violent conflict, armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, farmers/herders clashes, cattle rusting, in Nigeria and by extension, threatens to retard development, instability and insecurity in the country. Caleb and Okafor, (2015) in their assertion posit that, the different forms of security challenges plaguing Nigeria as a country are multiple- from those of armed robbery to kidnappings, from ethno-religious and farmers-herders crises to outright terrorism and insurgencies against the State. These states of insecurity according to them have connection with the massive proliferation of small arms and light weapons. According to Ngang, (2007), cited in Gofwan, Ishaya and Ado (2019) opined Small Arms and

Light Weapons are widely used in domestic and gender related crimes, help facilitate violent crimes and thus has contributed directly to greater insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity associated with SALWs proliferation in Nigeria is evident in the present clashes between farmers and herders, the frequent attacks by the dreaded Boko Haram, kidnappings, militancy in the Niger Delta, armed robbery, cultism and political violence (Gofwan, Ishaya and Ado, 2019).

### **Framework for the Control Small Arms in Nigeria**

According to Malami, (2019), Nigeria is a signatory at broader global level to the ATT, ITI and other UN Resolutions for the control and regulation of the Small Arms and Light Weapon. It is equally obligated under regional instruments and its local enactments towards establishing a legal regime that complies or is in tune with international and regional standards. These obligations include the establishment of robust institutional arrangements such as National Commission on Small Arms Light Weapons. Recently, to check the proliferation of Small arms and light weapons in Nigeria, the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) was established on 3rd May 2021 by an Executive directive of the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR. This is in line with the Article 24 of ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW, 2021). The center is under the office of the National Security adviser to the President. The center is headed by a retired deputy inspector general of Police. The center performs the following functions;

- i. Implementing strategies, plans, policies for eradication of proliferation of small arms and light weapons
- ii. Supervise the implementation of the strategies, plans, and policies for the eradication of proliferation of small arms and light weapons by law enforcement agencies and other agencies in Nigeria
- iii. Receive police force reports of activities and registration and licensing of fire arms and ammunitions for the purpose of updating the national data base
- iv. Register and securely store or destroy small arms;
  - a. Collected from the Nigerian Police, the Armed forces and other Security agencies.
  - b. Seized or recovered from criminals, terrorist, insurgents, and other persons in possession of illegal small arms and light weapons.
- v. Organize programme of action to prevent, control, combat, and eradicate the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons
- vi. Liaise with ECOWAS, AU, UN in all matters relating to the eradication of proliferation of small and light weapon at the regional, continental and global levels
- vii. Conduct periodic research, studies and surveys to gather accurate information on impact of interventions to track the mutating dimension of the problem of small arms and light

weapons and lesson learned and use such information, and perform such other function that may be assigned to it by the federal government of Nigeria (NCCASLW, 2022).

### **The impact of small arms and light weapons proliferations in Nigeria**

The impact of the proliferation of SALWs is felt across the world. It is pertinent to note that, of the 500,000 people killed every year across the world, an estimated 300,000 of them are as a result of small arms. In Africa, an estimated 50 percent of illicit weapons that proliferate are used in internal conflicts, armed robbery and drug trafficking. Availability of small arms outside the formal security structures had contributed greatly in creating continuous cycle of violence and instability in which particularly women and children are brutalized (Dukobo, 2003) cited in Samuel (2022).

However, the impact of the proliferation is being felt across the length and breadth of Nigeria given the myriad of security challenges. In the Northern part of Nigeria, the ungovernable spaces have been taken over by insurgents and bandits who daily inflict pain on the hapless civilians (Okoli, 2019). In the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, Boko-Haram terrorists group who has been fighting since 2009 to establish an Islamic state, had killed more than 37,000 people, and displaced more than 2.5 million in the Lake Chad region, and rendered nearly 244,000 refugees since May 2011, in their campaign of terror (Global Conflict tracker, 2020). Hence, they are described as the most deadly terrorists group (Global terrorist Index, 2015) cited in Samuel, (2022). Their operations have caused acute food shortages, thereby creating food insecurity in Nigeria as farmers are either being killed, displaced, or their livelihoods destroyed. Infrastructural facilities on the other hand, as well as businesses have not been spared of the devastating impact of the Boko-Haram insurgency (Uwakwe, Chijioke and Susan, 2020).

In the North-Western part of Nigeria, armed bandits have taken over the vast forests killing people in different communities of Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger state without any cause. In Sokoto state for instance, bandits took over communities and even appointed Judges [23]. Millions of people in these states have been exposed to insecurity from activities of bandits. Thus; the people have become hopeless as they are daily being killed in their numbers (Sahara Reporter, 2020; ACAPS, 2020) cited in Samuel, (2022, 14). Providing a historical background to banditry in the area, it was posited that:

Banditry began in 2011 and intensified between 2017 to 2018 to include cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and killings. The discovery of gold mines and the activities of illegal miners competing for control of gold reserves have served to further intensify the existence and activities of armed groups in the North-West, most especially in Zamfara state.

By March 2020, more than 21,000 people have been internally displaced. More than 35,000 refugees have crossed communal borders to Maradi in Niger Republic by the beginning of March 2020. These refugees are hosted in Madaou in Tahaoua region, Dan Dadji, Makaou, Garin Kaka and Guidan Roudmji (Samuel, 2022).

According to Malami, (2020) today, some high ways in the North-West are abandoned by motorists for fear of kidnappers. Most people travelling from Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory to Kaduna prefer to use the train as the road has become a den of merciless kidnappers who use SALWs in their operations. Also, the bandits in this part of the country are so daring that they send advanced notice to communities about their impending attacks. More often than not, these criminals make good their promise, as the security personnel can do little or nothing to secure the people, as they are not spared either. Therefore, the people are grappling with how to secure themselves from incessant attacks by these criminals who carry these heinous acts with impunity. The people are left to rise up to the occasion to defend themselves as the Nigerian state has failed to protect lives and properties.

In the North-Central part of Nigeria, the proliferation of SALWs has led to incessant clashes between herders and farmers. The states that are worst hit in this region are Benue, Plateau, and part of Taraba, Nasarawa and Southern Kaduna. One has lost count of these clashes as they have become recurring decimal, given the fact that there is hardly any month without an ugly report of wanton destructions of lives, properties and livelihoods. It is instructive to note that the North-Central region is the food basket of the nation. Today, this is under a very serious threat as farmers have abandoned their communities to safe havens. Ethnic conflicts also abound in the North-Central region where ethnic militia are formed and armed by different ethnic groups to protect their socio-economic and political interests (Samuel, 2022). Thus, at the slightest provocation, people who have co-existed for a very long time would rise against one another leaving behind deaths and destructions. This is the case between Tiv and Jukun ethnic groups in Taraba state, as well as Fulani and Berom alongside Anaguta ethnic groups in Plateau state respectively. Also, Nasarawa state too has its fair share as the state has witnessed bloody ethnic conflicts between Ibira-koto and Bassa in recent times. All these conflicts are recurring due to the availability of illegal SALWs in the hands of civilian population (Samuel, 2022).

The South-East and the South-West regions are somewhat homogenous with less record of ethnic conflicts. However, these regions are notorious for kidnapping, armed robbery and the activities of area boys, Oodua People's Congress (OPC) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-East and South-West respectively. In the South-South, otherwise known as Niger Delta region of Nigeria where oil is produced, the region has been an epicenter of violence prior to the Amnesty Programme of 2009 (Sameul, 2022). The region is known for violence emanating from the activities of oil insurgents who claimed that oil wealth from the region is transferred to other parts of the country for socio-economic development while the region lies in ruins (Fage and Alabi, 2017).

The activities of the militants over the years have almost brought the mono cultural economy of Nigeria to its knees as the insurgents destroy oil installations and kidnap oil expatriates (Owonikoko, 2016). These have been a major challenge to national security in Nigeria. For



instance, by the end of the Amnesty period in October 2009, 20,192 ex-militants (and nonmilitants) had surrendered their weapons consisting of 2, 760 arms of different classes and calibre, 287, 445 ammunitions, 3,155 magazines, 1090 dynamite caps, 763 explosives and sticks of dynamite, and 18 gun boats to the Amnesty Committee (NNSS, 2011) cited by Samuel, (2022). Apart from destruction of oil installations and kidnapping, these SALWs were used in armed robbery, cultism and general crimes in the Niger Delta (Owonikoko, 2016). Today, criminality involving small arms has become a daily occurrence across Nigeria.

### **Factors encouraging the Proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria**

According to Onuaha, (2012) in Gofwan, Ishaya and Ado (2019) proliferation of SALWs derive principally from the internal socio-economic and political factors in Nigeria compounded by globalization. He further identifies the following as factors that necessitate the proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria, which is listed to include;

**Globalization:** The challenges of containing SALWS proliferation is compounded by contradictions inherent in Globalization (Gofwan, Ishaya and Ado, 2019; Shaibume & Akuul, 2018). The process of globalization has congealed both time and space, making it easier for ideas, goods, persons, services, information, products and money to move across borders with fewer restrictions.

**The crude nature of Nigeria's politics:** The stake in Nigerian politics is incredibly high, making politicians desperate in the quest to win election at all costs.

**Porosity of Borders:** The porous borders contributed and continue to encourage the cross border crimes and instability in the region. Also, promotes the increasing number of illegal trade such as smuggling of contra bands goods- adulterated drugs, stolen cars including cars that have exceeded the permissible age limit prescribed for use in Nigeria and other goods like shoes, poultry products and many more (Shaibume & Akuul, 2018).

**Poorly patterned Borders:** Nigeria borders are artificial creation from colonialism which continues to pose a serious threat to the country. The demarcation of the borders were done by the colonial masters without considerations to the culture of the people as can be seen in the cultural ties of marriages, celebration of religious festivities, language and many more (Shaibume & Akuul, 2018).

**Corruption and Poor Governance:** Corruption and Poor governance are the bane to small arms proliferation in Nigeria. The other side effects of poor governance and corruption are unemployment and poverty in the country. These elements have contributed significantly to arms proliferation in Nigeria. It is either those in powers are siphoning money or they are arming thugs for personal reasons. Governance system in Nigeria has created much problem than it can solve. (Paul & Achoba, 2023).

**Insecurity:** The inability of the Nigerian state to provide adequate security for its citizens demonstrates visible weakness in controlling the use of violence within its territory. As a result, its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence is increasingly up for grabs by criminals, militants, warring communities and other forms of non-state actors (Gofwan, Ishaya and Ado, 2019).

**Governance failure:** Onuoha (2012) identified governance failure as a contributing factor to SALWs proliferation in Nigeria. The inability of state actors, agencies and institutions to use public resources and authorities to ensure the protection of lives and properties as well as delivery of public goods resulting to mounting poverty and unemployment among the Nigerian populace.

**Institutional Framework:** ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of People, Goods and Services was established by the ECOWAS Member States in 1979. The main aim of this Protocol is to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and services within West Africa without Visa; this simply means that any ECOWAS citizens who possess valid travelling documents and International Health Certificate can traverse the entire region without a visa. Thereby, compelling all member states to abolish the use of visa in order to ease the movement of people in the region. However, in spite of the positive pronouncement of this protocol, it has its own negative effects. This protocol allows the movement of criminals to move across the border and also engage in cross border activities under the pretext of this protocol (Shaibume & Akuul, 2018).

### **Theoretical framework**

This paper adopted the regulative capability analytical framework, which is an aspect of Almond's General Systems theory. According to Almond and Powell (1966) cited in Lamorde, (2018), the system's capability framework is an analytical construct designed as a basis for comparing different political systems in terms of their capacities to fulfill certain functional prerequisites necessary to ensure the maintenance, adaptation and survival of the political system. The notion of systems capabilities defines the extent to which the system can as Easton (1953), has noted that: "Some demands can be challenging to the system and the system has to possess the necessary elements and mechanisms to meet them in order to survive". Essentially, the Almond and Powell's systems capability scheme consists of five capabilities-the extractive, the regulative, the distributive, the symbolic, and the responsive; the fulfillment of which are necessary to ensure systems adaptation, change and survival. It is really the "regulative capability" that is our concern here, but it is necessary that we first briefly explain what the others involve. The extractive capability addresses the issue of the ability of the political system to obtain the relevant resources, both from within and outside the system, to sustain itself. The symbolic capability addresses the need and ability of the political system to create, develop and maintain relevant and adequate symbols with which to attract to itself and its institutions the support, loyalty and affection of its citizens.

The distributive capability focuses on the ability of the political system to adequately and equitably distribute “values” goods and services to, and among its citizens both as individuals and as social groups throughout the society. The responsive capability focuses on the capacity of the political system to respond adequately and vigorously to the demands made upon it both from the domestic and international environment. In short, the responsive capability addresses the issue of the need and ability of the political system to make available to its citizens, both in their individuals, and group capacities, those characteristics of democracy which they desire. The regulative capability which this study predicated analysis on, addresses the issue of the capacity of the political system to penetrate and exercise control over individuals and groups throughout the society. By its nature, the regulative capability involves the issue of the maintenance and use of its military, police and other security forces to ensure the protection and defence of the society against external aggression and internal insurrection as well as the maintenance of law and order in the society. The regulative capability is so important and crucial function to be adequately fulfilled to guarantee that illicit arms are not acquired by individuals within the state. This is because it is through it that the political system responds to pressures that are likely to mar and endanger peace and security of a state. This is particularly so in a rentier state like Nigeria where politics is seen as a means of wealth accumulation and becomes a zero sum game. In such societies, as it is the case with Nigeria, the political system is confronted with not only the problem of having to strive to maintain its institutions but more importantly, it has the added problem of how to contain diverse groups that intend to use arms and violence to acquire power resources. The foregoing discussion clearly shows that there exist positive relationship between the ability of, and the degree to which, a political system adequately fulfills its regulative capability functions, and the extent to which order is maintained in the state. It therefore, follows that the Nigerian state has not been able to exercise its regulative capability function. As a result of this, arms have circulated illegally among non-state actors who use it to wreak havoc on the polity. The decision to adopt this regulative theoretical orientation for this study is predicated on its explanatory capacity as it enables us establishment a causal relationship between the ability of the political system to respond to threats and the loyalty it gets from its citizens.

### **Methodology**

The study used ex-post facto research design to examine the Proliferation of Small Arms and insecurity in Nigeria. Qualitative and historical method was also applied in analyzing the data through descriptive and historical approach. The qualitative and historical method provides a clear perspective into the research problem by providing the opportunity to understand the historical details and accurate account of the past and use it to discuss the present. The data of the study were generated from qualitative tools. This comprises of both published and unpublished materials such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazine, conference and internet materials.

## Conclusion

Reducing the degree and the level of misuse of small arms and light weapons in Africa, from the hands of combatants, criminals and terrorist there is need for a new dimension of approach with serious engagement of all stakeholders to developed a package design that suits African countries peculiarities in terms of body frameworks for regulation Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa, action program and the evaluation instrument mechanism to ensure small arms and light weapons are not in the hands of criminal or terrorist in all over the world. Lastly, the effort of fighting of proliferation of small arms and light weapons must engage civil societies group and other community structure component like religious groups to ensue peaceful and secured society. All this might come to naught if national government does not work towards ensuring a secured future for the growing number of youths in Africa. It is becoming clear that individual state resources cannot alone provide this needed secured future for the youths, hence the need for a collaborative action in the area of education especially science education and the drive towards economy development and industrialization.

## Recommendations

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) remain cheap and easily accessible to rogue groups, individuals, terrorist organizations and for participating in armed conflict, terrorism and crime. It is now a documented fact that the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons poses a great threat to governance, peace and security, development and the enjoyment of human rights by citizens. In view of this the following actions to address the proliferation of small arms in Africa is recommended.

1. Empowering security structure and border management between African countries.
2. True implementation of small arms and light control mechanism to regulate the proliferation of small arms in Africa.
3. African governments must strive towards good governance to provide for the basic needs of its citizens by fighting corruption both malignant and benign in all its ramifications.
4. There is the for pervasive intervention of global communities in fighting the menace in Africa, through the effort of United Nations by engaging various stake holders and addressing the root source of the proliferation of small arms in Africa.

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