The Politics of Arms Control and Internal Security in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract:

The attempts of many countries to ensure peace and stability in their territories have continually seemed to be inefficient due to the growing rate of violence, terrorism, conflict in many regions of the world and Nigeria in particular. This is predominantly due to the proliferation of small arms and weapons of war circulating freely in the hands of unauthorized persons. Some of the objectives of the study were to ascertain the presence of weapon control laws in Nigeria as well as to examine the effect of arms control on internal security of Nigeria and also to determine the impact of the proliferation of fire arms on the internal security of Nigeria. Theoretically, the study adopted the Failed State Theory as associated with the Weberians. Methodologically, the study also made use of the secondary sources of data collection and analyze same through content analysis. Using the above stated methodology, the study found the presence of some weapon control laws in the country both international and local. Following from this, the study concluded that though these laws are there, the operations have proven ineffective in the management of arms in a turbulent country like Nigeria and therefore recommended that, in order for the government's security agencies to be able to effectively fight the spread of armaments across the nation, more advanced and automated logistical support should be made available to the security agencies.

Keywords: Politics, Arms Control, Internal Security.

Introduction

The continent of Africa is so blessed and rich in both human and natural resources. The region is home to the great majority of the world's countries with the lowest levels of economic development. A great number of African republics are characterised by pervasive poverty, youth discontent and unemployment, and high rates of illiteracy; all of these factors add to the already abysmal social and economic situations on the continent. Warfare between governments, tribal and communal battles, armed revolt, and the recent proliferation of terrorist organisations are all common events in the region. In addition, the region has recently seen an increase in the number of terrorist organisations. "Terrorism, trafficking in guns, narcotics, and people, and other transnational forms of organised crime are jeopardising stability in Africa's vast Sahel area," said Antonio Guterres, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. This quotation is demonstrative of the obstacles that are faced by Africans and of the issues that the United Nations is seeking to solve in an effort to help them.

Despite this, armed politics have been a persistent problem throughout Africa. The continued use of violent means is necessary for the upkeep of these political structures. Especially in the last several years, it is unsettling and horrifying to witness the kinds of weaponry that have been carried into and made in Africa. Having access to these weaponry, however, fosters a culture of increased militarism and arms politics. There is mounting evidence that shows handguns and other types of firearms are becoming more accessible throughout Africa, particularly in Nigeria.

It is unfortunate that the significance of weaponry and armament to politics is generally minimised. This is one area where this oversight may have serious consequences. Academics have a propensity to concentrate on the outcomes of political processes while downplaying the mechanisms that maintain them and, depending on the circumstances, either incentivize or prohibit the use of force in political processes.

Following from the above, a study of armed politics in Nigeria need a considerable attention on the topics of armament since they are fundamental elements of armed conflict. In addition, the Nigerian military forces are receiving more advanced weapons in order to combat the sectarian violence and Boko Haram insurgency in the northern part of Nigeria and other crimes perpetrated with armaments in other regions of Africa.

It would seem that there has been a growth in the acquisition of weapons in Nigeria, with at least some of the increase being attributable to the country's desire for a larger capability for national defence. As things stand, it is safe to argue that there are far too many firearms in circulation in Nigeria, which could eventually lead to a situation in which a sizeable portion of the population possesses firearms illegally and uses them carelessly. Multiple studies have shown a correlation between the availability of weapons and an increase in the death toll caused by firearms. According to Boseley (2013), out of the 27 industrialised countries, the United States has the highest rate of private gun ownership (10.2 per 100000 guns per person) as well as the highest number of deaths caused by firearms (the highest rate overall). Meanwhile, despite having one of the lowest gun rates per capita, Japan has some of the safest gun regulations in the world, as well as the lowest gun-related fatality rate on the whole globe.

The proliferation of conventional weaponry throughout Africa has been linked to a number of negative outcomes, including protracted conflict, violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as dangers to national and regional security. In Nigeria, a rise in armed conflict, terrorism, community clashes, armed robbery, and kidnapping have all been linked to the proliferation of illegal weapons of war and the usage of small arms and light weapons. This research therefore tries to evaluate of the struggle for the internal security of Nigeria through the politics of weapon control.

Statement of the Problem

The increase in circulation of illegal small arms and light weapon constitute a great security challenge and threat to socio-economic development, human security, peace and the stability of nations globally including Nigeria. It has caused an increase in armed conflict throughout Africa, which threatens the continent's political stability and has had disastrous effects on civilian populations and the safety of governments. Considering the situation in Nigeria, it is clear that the rise in terrorism, communal confrontations, arm robberies, and other societal menaces can be traced back to the widespread availability of illegal weapons of war. The rising rates of violence, terrorism, and war in many parts of the country make it appear as if the efforts of both federal and state governments to maintain peace and stability in their domains are perpetually futile. The widespread availability of small guns and other weapons of war in the hands of criminals is a major contributing factor. Therefore, the study is set out to look at the politics of arms control and how it enhances the internal security of Nigeria. To this end,

the following research questions were stated to guide the study:

1. What are the existing arms control laws in Nigeria?

2. What is the impact of the proliferation of fire arms on the internal security of Nigeria?

3. What are the effects of arms control on internal security in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to appraise and interrogate arms control and internal security in Nigeria, taking particular look at its Challenges and Prospects. The specific objectives however are:

1. to ascertain the presence of arms control laws in Nigeria.

2. to determine the impact of the proliferation of fire arms on the internal security of Nigeria.

3. to examine the effect of arms control on internal security of Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study centers on the contributions it will generate in enhancing the proper understanding of the need, roles, and prospects of international security of Nigeria. This paper will also be helpful in providing detailed and baseline information on basic arms control laws in the country. Also, it will help to critically review and examine the workings of these arms control laws, bringing to limelight there prospects and the challenges confronting their successful implementation. It will also serve as a reference point for public policy making and implementation in the country.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Politics

The chancellor Bismarck told the German Reichstag that politics is not a science but an art. In other words he believed that politics was the art of government. This classical interpretation of politics was evolved from the original meaning of the term in Ancient Greece. (Heywood, 1997) The word politics comes from the Greek word polis, meaning everything that concerns or belongs to the polis, or city-state. Since the city-states no longer exist, the modern form of this definition is what concerns the state. Thus, politics can be defined as the study of the state, its aims and purposes the institutions by which those are going to be realized, its relations with its individual members and with other states. Politics is also defined as the study of the government a collection of officers who make, interpret and enforce rules for the whole community. This definition of politics offers a highly restricted view of politics. According to this definition politics takes place just within the government departments, cabinet rooms and legislative chambers. This means that politics is the matter of politicians, civil servants and lobbyists. According to this view the vast majority of the people are not involved in politics. All the institutions that are not engaged in running the country are regarded as non-political. (Heywood, 1997).

Politics therefore, encompasses all of the activities of cooperation, negotiation, and conflict that take place within societies as well as between societies. These activities are how people organise the utilisation, production, and distribution of human, natural, and other resources in the course of the production and reproduction of their biological and social life. It is hence apt to argue that politics is a particular type of governance in which people engage together via institutionalised processes to settle conflicts, to conciliate conflicting interests and values, and to establish public policies in the pursuit of shared objectives.

The Concept of Armament

The term "armament" originates from the Latin word armare, which may be translated as "to arm" or "to furnish with weapons." The English word "armament" indicates the same thing. Armament may be either the total military force of a nation or the process of preparing oneself for combat by amassing a variety of weapons, as defined by Merriam-Webster (2014). According to Zanders (2013), the concept of "armament" refers to "the systematic process of boosting the quantities of weapon holdings; replacing existing weapons with new ones" Armament, according to the definitions described above, is the collection or expansion of different kinds of military weapons and equipment. Armament may also refer to the development of an existing armament. Armament is described by Macmillan Dictionary (2014) as "the process of providing the armed forces with weapons to fight in a conflict. Armament may also refers to any equipment that is used for resistance, whether it be by the military, a group of people, or an individual. This can be the case regardless of who is doing the resistance. Providing oneself refers to the act of preparing oneself for an offensive or defensive encounter or combat by arming oneself with firearms and other weaponry. In addition to that, this is a broader reference to weapons in general. In a nutshell, for the purpose of this work, the term "armament" will be taken to mean the production of weapons and military equipment by military forces, as well as the legal or illegal production and/or acquisition of arms by groups or individuals for either self-defense or aggression. In other words, the term "armament" will refer to both the production of weapons and military equipment by military forces.

Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria

Before European colonization, small guns, rifles, and other types of armament were introduced to African countries by Europeans as a result of the unlawful slave trade that occurred between European nations and African nations. After then, Europeans used guns and other armament, ammunition, and weapons to realize their imperial objectives by defeating African resistance to European invasion, conquest, and colonization. This was accomplished by using firearms and other weaponry, ammunition, and weapons. The British government often resorted to the practice of gunboat diplomacy in order to convince African chiefs to sign a variety of treaties with them (Edwards, 2005).

In order to put down the British-Anglo War that took place between 1901 and 1902 and other forms of resistance across Nigeria, West Africa, and the rest of Africa, the British authorities of the period sent the West African Frontier Force, also known as the WAFF. It is essential to have an understanding of the role that the British government and the United African Company (UAC), which was once known as the Royal Niger Company, played in the use of force to suppress rebellious communities throughout Africa (Chuma-Okoro, 2011). Africans may have obtained these rifles during the colonial period and put them to use in their usual rural hunts.

As quickly as they became status symbols, guns and gunpowder were repurposed as ritual weapons and employed in native ceremonies like as funerals, burials, and festivals. These weapons included firearms and gunpowder. Not only were they meant to deter would-be assailants, but they also served as representations of both individual and national pride. These days, weapons are useful for a wide variety of activities beyond than just hunting, safari, and adventure. The purpose of weapons, their lethality, complexity, ubiquity, and the intents of their owners have all changed throughout the course of history. They are being put to use as instruments of the criminal underworld as well as weapons of illegal activity (Chuma- Okoro, 2011). The Firearms Act was enacted in 1959 by Nigeria's legislative body in an effort to curb the proliferation of firearms during the country's transition to independence. The incapacity of the government of Nigeria to carry out a comprehensive disarmament and armaments destruction campaign following the civil war contributed to the worsening of both the illicit trafficking of weapons as well as the proliferation of guns (1967–1970).

Later on, Nigeria turned into a hub for the import and sale of small arms and light weapons, which are utilised in a wide variety of criminal and illegal activities, such as uprisings, sabotage, religious crises, communal conflicts, social agitations, internal insurrections, terrorism, insurgencies, riots, militancy, electoral violence, political violence, social interest, ethnic tensions, cross-border smuggling, and black marketeering. These It is believed that Africa is home to 100 million small arms and light weapons (SALW), with 30 million in sub-Saharan Africa and 8 million in West Africa alone, out of a total stockpile of 640 million throughout the globe. In West Africa, Nigeria is home to about eight out of every ten illegal guns recovered in the region (Osman, 2010 p.155). Because of the porous borders that it shares with countries like Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger—all of which are known for being transit locations for illegal guns entering Nigeria—Nigeria has challenges that are very similar to those faced by other African countries. Cameroon is a key point of passage for illegally acquired firearms, which are sometimes hidden among equipment component shipments or gasoline tankers when they are transported through the country.

It is believed that illegal weapons are being transported from Gabon and Guinea-Bissau to Nigeria through a number of other countries (Ojudu, 2007 p.228). According to recent reports, the countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, South Africa, Turkey, and Ukraine, in addition to Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Serbia, have all been used as suppliers of illegal weapons and ammunition (Davis et al, 2005 p.3).

Additionally, (a) weapons seized during conflicts with the Nigerian military and police; (b) weapons sold to militias and illegal arm dealers by the bad eggs in the Nigerian military; (c) weapons provided by political parties for the purposes of electoral violence and intimidation; (d) weapons provided in exchange for stolen oil off-shore; and (e) weapons purchased from ex-military men stationed in Bakassi and other places, and foreign/local smugglers (Abiodun, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The paper is anchored on the Failed State Theory. People often say that a state has "failed" when they think it hasn't done some of the most important things that a sovereign government should do. Social and political structures are broken in a failed state (Anyanwu, 2005). On the social, political, and economic levels, it is a failure. A weak or ineffective central government that doesn't have much control over most of the country is a common sign of a failing state. Other signs include a lack of public utilities or services, widespread corruption and crime, refugees and forced population movements, and a sharp drop in the economy. Anyanwu (2005) says that the breakdown of the power structures that keep law and order in a country is always the cause of a failing state. Most of the time, violent acts in the country start and continue this process. The end of government, the end of law and order, and general banditry and chaos are all caused by the breakdown of state institutions, especially the police and the court system. Not only does the government stop working, but government property is destroyed or stolen, and experienced government officials are killed or leave the country.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research approach to analyze "The Politics of Arms Control and Internal Mobile Security in Nigeria." Data were collected from a diverse array of secondary sources, including international media outlets like Cable News Network and Al Jazeera documentaries, as well as textbooks, scholarly journals, government publications, and newspaper articles. The gathered data were meticulously analyzed through content analysis, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the themes and patterns concerning arms control and internal security within the Nigerian context. This method facilitated a deep understanding of the intricate dynamics and challenges inherent in Nigeria's security policies.

Discussion

Evaluation of some weapon control laws in Nigeria

There is no legal document in Nigeria that defines the words "fire arms and light weapons" in any precise way, despite the fact that the National Security Framework was designed to provide a picture of how the country's security system would function. However, the "Fire arms Act" defines the word "Fire arms" in a way that encompasses the category of weapons "contemplated by the definition of SALW under the Convention; it is also in conformity with the definition of "Fire arms" under the United Nations Fire Arms Protocol." Therefore, under the laws of Nigeria, SALW are controlled the same way as firearms. The issue of firearms is included on the "Exclusive Legislative List" in the Constitution of 1999, which indicates that only the federal government has the authority to pass laws regulating their use and possession. The Firearms Act is the primary piece of national law that regulates SALW in the United States. In addition, there is the Defense Industries Corporation of Nigeria Act, the Robbery and Fire Arms (Special Provisions) Act, the Criminal Code Act, and the Penal Code. NATCOM, the Courts, and the Police are the primary institutions responsible for enforcing or carrying out the requirements of these laws. (Police Gazette, 2016).

The Fire Arms Act

The provisions of Nigeria's Fire Arms Act date back to 1959 and, despite this, have been subject to little revision throughout the years. Firearms are defined as "any lethal barreled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged," which includes "any prohibited firearm, any personal firearm, any muzzle-loading firearm of any of the categories referred to in Parts I, II, and III respectively of the Schedule hereto," and "any component part of any such firearm."

Artillery, apparatus for the discharge of any explosive or gas diffusing projectile, rocket weapons, bombs, grenades, machine guns, machine pistols, military rifles, revolvers and pistols, short guns, sporting rifles, humane killers, flint-lock guns, Dane guns, cap guns, and any other firearm not specified in Part II or Part III of the Schedule are all considered Fire Arms. To be clear, "ammunition" refers to "ammunition for any weapon and any component part of any such ammunition, but excludes gun powder or trade powder not intended or used as such a component element."

Under the Act, everyone but a selected few are prohibited from keeping firearms or ammunition in their hands without first obtaining a license from the appropriate authorities. Also, it makes it illegal for anybody other than licensed dealers to buy, sell, or trade firearms or ammunition. Sections 17 and 20 are also noteworthy since they limit who may bring in or take out banned firearms and ammunition.

If you want to bring a firearm into or out of the country, you need to notify the appropriate official upon arrival or departure, and you may do this even if it's a personal weapon. The manufacturing of firearms is addressed in Section 22, which states that, with the exception of public armories and arsenals created for the purposes of the armed services with the assent of the President, no weapon or ammunition may be manufactured, assembled, or repaired. However, the Inspector General of will ultimately decide whether or not this happens.

Any individual who wishes to engage in the business of manufacturing and/or repairing Firearms listed in Part III of the Schedule to the Act must first get a license from the Police. (Assault Weapons, 1959) The Act not only makes it illegal to violate its terms, but it also imposes harsh punishments for anyone who do so, including up to ten years in jail without the possibility of a fine, or two years in prison, or a fine of one thousand Nigerian naira, or both. Members of the armed services and law enforcement are

excluded from Section 38's regulations on the use of firearms for official reasons. Guns provided to members of the armed services and the police force are exempt from the regulations regulating transfer, sale, and other trading in.

There are a number of ways in which the Act is supplemented by the Firearms Regulations promulgated under Section 32 of the Act. It specifies, among other things, the length of time a license is valid for and how often it must be renewed, as well as the marking and stamping of firearms (Sections 7 and 42)

The Robbery and Fire arms (Special Provisions) Act

Punishments for crimes committed with firearms are also outlined. A punishment of N20,000 or ten years in jail, or both, may be imposed for the unlawful possession of a firearm in accordance with the Act. The Act also stipulates that anyone convicted of robbery while armed with a firearm would be executed by hanging or firing squad, and those convicted of attempted robbery while armed with a firearm will be sentenced to life in prison. The primary legislative laws on Firearms in Nigeria are broad enough to include SALW.

But the Act isn't sufficient in other areas, and it doesn't meet modern international standards for controlling and discouraging the spread of illegal arms. Corruption and a lack of institutional ability have hampered efforts to implement these prohibitions, as seen by the paucity of successfully prosecuted cases involving those found in possession of illegal firearms. Some provisions seen as crucial by the international community in the fight against the prevention of illegal Arms proliferation are also absent from the Act.

The Impacts of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons on Nigeria's Internal Security

People are in desperate need of safety and protection, which makes it one of the most essential things. Without it, they are incapable of being successful in any endeavour. Abraham Maslow, in his seminal work on human wants, placed safety and security at the very top of the hierarchy of human needs, directly after the satisfaction of one's physiological demands. The protection of people and their belongings has historically been the duty of the government; nevertheless, the current state of affairs in the globe makes it abundantly evident that security is everyone's responsibility (Abolurin, 2012 p.14).

However, academics seem to have reached a consensus on what exactly internal security entails. According to Hare (1973) and Ray (1987 p.23), it is about coping with threats to peace in the community, although Ray argues that it is more about the desire and ability to protect oneself.

Brennan (1961 p.11) acknowledges that maintaining national security is about ensuring the country's continued existence, but he presents the idea in a more nuanced manner. According to Subrahmanyam (1973 p.2), ensuring national security entails safeguarding the unity of the state and preserving the fundamental principles that form the foundation of national identity. Wilson (2014), on the other hand, explained what the term "national security" implies by referring to its many components. These components are referred to as "political security," "economic security," "security of energy and natural resources," "security of the homeland," "security of cyberspace," "security of humans," and "security of the environment." In spite of the fact that Nigeria has struggled with small arms and light weapons for a very long time, access to these weapons has improved significantly over the last decade. This has helped stoke a fire that has resulted in a spate of insurgencies, ethno-religious wars, cross-border banditry, abduction, terrorism, drug and people trafficking, armed robbery, and other forms of violent crime.

The accumulation of arms has resulted in bloodshed in many places of Nigeria,

particularly amongst communities who share the same religion or ethnicity. Between the years 1999 and April 2010, Nigeria was the site of at least 187 religious and ethnic battles, which resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people (Osman, 2010). These weapons contributed to the lengthening of conflicts, the migration of large numbers of people inside their own nations, the disruption of social harmony, and the destruction of the means by which individuals and communities earned their livelihood. Because of the recurrent violent wars that have taken place, Nigeria is forced to cope with a variable but always considerable number of individuals who have relocated inside their own nation (IDPs).

For instance, as a direct result of religious or ethnic violence, about 1,713,306 persons were compelled to relocate during the years 2000 and 2002. As of June 2013, it was estimated that over 1.6 million Nigerians were living in internally displaced communities. In January of 2010, more than 40,000 people were forced to flee their homes as a result of an emergency in Jos, which is located in the state of Plateau. People are less safe when they are displaced inside their own country, both on an individual and a communal level. IDPs are often at danger for violent crimes such as robbery and rape, and they have a higher chance of contracting infectious illnesses due to the unsanitary conditions of the settlement centres where they are housed (Nte, 2011). Both the financial losses generated by wars and Nigeria's issue with small arms and light weapons (SALWs) have an influence on human security. There were around ten significant religious confrontations in Nigeria between the years 1999 and 2004, each of which cost the government over 400 million naira, which is equivalent to $2.86 million US.

In addition, governments invest a significant amount of money on security measures both during and after a crisis of this kind. Following the Jos crisis in the beginning of 2010, the federal government provided the Bauchi State government with 135 million (US$900,000) in order to assist in the resettling or integrating of approximately 30,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had fled to Bauchi State from the neighbouring state of Plateau (Christopher, 2011 p.19). Additional severe dangers to national security that the Nigerian state is now confronted with include the following:

Terrorism is a significant issue in Nigeria at the moment, particularly in the North-Eastern region of the nation. Boko Haram is the name of the terrorist organisation. The country's fragility has been more apparent over the course of the last six years as a result of acts of terrorism, criminal activity, and political unrest. Worrying events include, but are not limited to, the destruction and destruction of several towns, villages, churches, mosques, Police Stations, schools, and other public institutions with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) bombs and small arms and light weapons (SALW) by Boko Haram insurgents in Niger, Bornu, Adamawa, Kano, Bauchi, FCT Abuja, Kaduna, Plateau, and Yobe states respectively. These states are located in Nigeria (Abiodun, 2016 p.145).

It is difficult to think that the government of Nigeria is making every effort to put a halt to the issue of armed violence in the country given the recent trend of increased use of firearms and the proliferation of tiny and light weapons. The frightening pace at which small arms and light weapons are being utilised and disseminated poses a significant risk to Nigeria's national security. The growing bravado of the "Boko Haram" sect after the attacks in Eagle Square, Abuja, on October 1, 2010, in which 12 people were killed; the Nyanya Motor Park bombing on April 14, 2014, in which more than 75 people died and dozens of others were injured; and the bombing of the UN Building in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and abductions of UN staff is still evidence of the spread of Islamic extremism and domestic terrorism in Nigeria's North-East region.

Armed Robbery

Furthermore, another threat to the nation's safety is armed banditry, which may be perpetrated with a broad range of pistols, rifles, shotguns, and other sorts of light weapons. Just recently, a new trend of robbery that was quite different in outlook occurred at Ogolonto area of Ikorodu, Lagos State, when a lady reportedly led the gang to the banks and stayed outside while the two-hour operation lasted. This particular heist took place at a bank that was located in Ogolonto. This specific robbery took occurred in a bank in Ogolonto, which was the location of the robbery. It was stated that the leader of the gang arrogantly sat down in front of the bank and bragged, but no law enforcement officer was able to approach her. She was able to get away with it. It was found out that the band of criminals that carried out the robbery comprised of around 15 young people, all of them were in their early 20s at the time of the crime. Robberies committed when one or more people are armed have reached epidemic proportions in various parts of the country and have integrated themselves fully into the fabric of daily life. Aside from public institutions like banks, which are their main targets, major routes all throughout the country are not spared as travelers are often beaten and robbed of their belongings. Their primary targets are public institutions like banks. The majority of their attacks are directed at public organisations such as banks. (This article first appeared in the April 18, 2016 edition of The Punch)

Militancy

Nigeria is still working on building its democracy, and ethnic militias have always been a source of trouble there. Nigeria went back to democratic rule on May 29, 1999. This marked the start of a new era in the country, which was marked by the rise and growth of armed vigilante groups, ethnic and sectional militias, and secessionist or separatist groups armed with a wide range of guns and other weapons. Some of the most well-known of these groups are the Bakassi Boys, the Egbesu Boys, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) 2000, the Ijaw Militia and Itsekiri Militias (1999), and the Militia arm of Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) 1992. The Bakassi Boys are a vigilante group that was set up by the governments of (Analyst, 2010). One of the most recent things to happen is that a group of militants in the Niger Delta called the "Niger Delta Avengers" got together. The "Niger Delta Avengers" (NDA) have kept attacking major oil sites in the oil-rich Niger Delta with a variety of weapons, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and ammunition that they control (The Vanguard, 13 April, 2016).

Cultism

There are cult organisations in more than 300 colleges and universities in Nigeria right now. These cult groups "strike" on our campuses with small guns and other light weapons. In the past few years, Rivers State has seemed to be the centre of cult activity all over the country. Reports say that at least 19 people have been killed in cult fights that have taken place in different parts of the state (Reports from Channels TV News).

Herdsmen/Farmers' Clashes

Farmers and cattle herders keep fighting, which is one of the biggest security problems in the world right now. The most recent ones were in Agatu, in the state of Benue, and Nimbo, in the Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of the state of Enugu. Many people died in both attacks, and things worth millions of Naira were destroyed. There have been a lot of suggestions for how to solve the problem that keeps coming up. Some people have suggested grazing reserves, but others say the best solution is ranches (Reports on Channels TV News).

Piracy

Between January 1 and June 30 of that year, 30 people died as a result of pirate attacks all over the world. More than half of those deaths happened in Nigerian territorial waters. Nigeria was third in terms of the number of attacks, with 13. This was after Indonesia (50) and the Malacca Straits (20) (Mukundan, 2004). Most of the attacks took place in the Malacca Straits. The problem of "increasing piracy" in Nigeria can be linked to oil, which is the country's main source of income, as well as to the widespread theft of oil and sale of it to boats that work at sea. Gangs in speedboats and barges, armed with automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, hide in the creeks, rivers, and mangrove swamps that make up the delta where the River Niger empties into the Atlantic Ocean. These creeks and rivers are part of the delta that forms where the River Niger flows into the Atlantic Ocean.

Kidnapping

Nigeria is also having a lot of trouble with kidnapping, which is a problem that is spreading quickly. A few years ago, when it started in the creeks of the Niger Delta area, no one thought it would become a nightmare. Over time, it has become a "lucrative business" for many young unemployed people in the South East, South West, and other parts of Nigeria. At first, most kidnappings in the South were of foreigners, but now "nobody is safe" because the situation is so bad. Even people who work for the government aren't safe from the kidnapping problem, because their family members, relatives, and friends have become good "targets." Strangely, armed robbers and other types of criminals are quickly giving up their jobs in favour of kidnapping, which pays better (Ojeme, 2015 p.15).

Cattle Rustling

One place where cattle thieves have been a problem is the village of Jan Birni, which is in Kaduna State's BirninGwari Local Government area. Jan Birni is right on the border between the states of Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara. AlhajiZubairMaigwari, the traditional leader of the area and the Emir of BirninGwari, should not be surprised that rustlers have completely taken over his community. These rustlers kill, maim, and rape their victims before taking their hard-earned investments. People say that rustlers have taken over the whole town. Cattle rustlers also have a variety of handguns, shotguns, and other lightweight guns to help them carry out their bad plans. The spread of small and light weapons (SALW) is putting Nigeria's national security at risk faster than anyone can stop.

The effect of arms control on internal security in Nigeria

The availability of firearms in Nigeria has surged, climbing to almost four million from a previous estimate of about one million. These weapons will be used without discrimination in order to wreak havoc in the form of fueling new conflicts and reinvigorating old ones, increasing violent crimes, intensifying the fire powers of ethnic militias in the country, and increasing the devastating attacks of Boko Haram insurgents and herdsmen's violent behaviours. The methods that have been used throughout time to regulate firearms may be broken down into three distinct categories: I the institutional framework; (ii) the legal protocol; and (iii) civil proceedings.

The institutional framework refers to the institutions that have been set up to secure the control of arms via the use of a variety of methods that are centred on the collecting of weapons. These institutions include the following:

(a) The National Body on the Proliferation and Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons: This committee was officially established in May of 2000 in the capital city of Abuja. The committee was given the responsibility of determining the origins of

weapons that were found to be in the possession of criminals and collecting information regarding the scope of the proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons both within the borders of the country and in the surrounding areas.

(b) The National Task Force to Combat Illegal Importation and Smuggling of Goods, Small Arms Ammunition and Light Weapons, or NATFORCE for short: In June of 2009, the task force was formally established. This committee was effectively given the authority to regulate weaponry in the nation by being given the right to arrest anyone who were found guilty of the offence.

(c) The establishment of Task Forces in each of the federation's 12 zones in order to collect illicit firearms and ammunition: In addition, the task force was one of the institutional frameworks that were established to cut down on the amount of circulating weapons. The operations of the task force are overseen by a Nigeria police officer who has been nominated to that position. It was anticipated that the task force would operate within their respective zones to limit the spread of weapons across the nation.

(ii) The term "Legal Protocol" refers to pre-existing legal rules that have been set up to control the circulation of weapons inside the nation. Included in the legal codes are:

(a) The Nigerian weapons Acts of 1959, as revised in the year 1990: The unlawful possession of guns, as well as their transfer, production, assembling, and trade, are all in violation of this legislation. In addition to this, it is illegal to trade guns in any way other than via licensed dealers, and it is also illegal to bring firearms and ammunition into or out of the country through land, sea, or air. In addition, the Act mandates that anybody caught illegally importing, exporting, manufacturing, or repairing guns must serve a minimum penalty ranging from five to ten years in prison, depending on the seriousness of the underlying crime.

(a) The Anti-Robbery and Firearms Decree of 1984: According to this decree, illegal possession of firearms in the country is subject to a harsh punishment in the country. The order significantly increased both the number of gun-related offences and the associated penalties.

(iii) Civil activities are actions that are carried out to promote knowledge and enlightenment via programmes that are intended to encourage people to recognize the need for the control of guns in the nation. These programmes may take the form of marches, rallies, or other public demonstrations. They are as follows:

(a) The Organization of National and Local Workshops on Techniques on Guns Control: The goal of these workshops was to devise methods for curbing the spread of small arms. The National Committee on Arms Proliferation was able to be established thanks to the assistance of one of the national workshops. The committee was given the responsibility of discovering the origins of the guns as well as those that were in the hands of unlawful individuals inside the nation. The Nationwide Survey on Small Guns and Light Weapons Proliferation initiated a national public discourse in the year 2010 with the goals of raising awareness, developing a better knowledge of the problem, and determining how arms may be regulated inside the nation.

(b) Publicity: Information on small arms proliferation has been carried out publicly through the pages of newspapers and magazines, as well as on television shows, in order to create the required understanding and the penalty associated with dealing with arms. This information has been carried out in order to prevent the proliferation of small arms. People have been given access to the knowledge they need via this platform, which will hopefully assist in the fight against the heinous problem of the spread of small guns throughout the nation.

(c) The involvement of state governments: In addition to the efforts that the federal government is making through its agents to get rid of illegal weapons that are in circulation, the state governments are also working hard through state channels to check the proliferation of small arms through legal means, operation war on terror, buy -back programme, arms destruction, and supporting security agents (at federal level) to combat the proliferation of arms in their respective states. Amnesty exercises have been organised in a number of states, including Imo, Rivers, Ondo, and soon, as part of state-based programmes designed to recover weapons obtained via unlawful means.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The history of Nigeria is rich with examples of violent confrontations between various groups. Since the democratic system was restarted in 1999, several of the country's long-standing disputes have been given fresh life, while others have taken their place. The political space has been dominated by violent conflicts such as ethno-religious clashes, communal crisis, farmer-herder clashes, electoral violence, Boko Haram insurgency, militancy, and the herdsmen crisis. These conflicts have exacerbated insecurity, which has led to a desire to acquire arms for the purpose of self-protection. Equally as important, the expanded routes of conflict emission into the polity, as well as the challenges of politics, injustice, porous borders, and high incidence rates of crime, have all contributed tremendously to the proliferation of weaponry in Nigeria. Also, the promotion of aggressive ethnic and religious patriotism, which has led to inequity, injustice, discrimination, and favouritism, has resulted in the murder of trust based on suspicions that have arisen from these ideologies. Resulting from these, the urge to foster peace and its amenities has been perverted as a result of the overwhelming availability of weaponry.

From the findings made so far, the study therefore make the following recommendations.

(1) In order for the government's security agencies to be able to effectively fight the spread of armaments across the nation, more advanced and automated logistical support should be made available to them.

(2) The nation requires the establishment of a National Commission on Control of Small Arms to address the issue of gun control. The panel will be in charge of establishing strategies and methods to control the spread of small arms and light weapons throughout the nation. In a similar vein, the commission will ensure the coordination of all programmes pertaining to the control of weapons throughout order to ensure their effective execution in the country.

(3) There should be an acceptable level of response and monitoring at the border. For the sake of improving border security, which is absolutely necessary for effective weapons control in the nation, there should be substantial collaboration with neighbouring countries that border the country. These countries include Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin, among others.

(4) The manufacture of firearms inside the country need to be subject to stringent regulations, and everyone participating in the manufacturing process ought to be required to register in order to maintain some semblance of order within the sector in which they operate.

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