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Influence of weak legislation and non-state armed actors on arms proliferation: Evidence from terrorism in Nigeria

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Abstract

With an aggressive illicit transnational trade along a vastly porous borderline in the North East region of Nigeria, a country not at war but highly militarized with overstretched security agencies, an outdated over six decades Firearms law and a vulnerable civilian populace seeking firearms in self-protection or otherwise; are all the tones needed for proliferations of small arms and Light weapons. It was against this background that this study leverages on State fragility theory to investigate the influence of weak legislation and prevalence of armed non state actors on arms proliferation and terrorism in Nigeria. The study engaged weak legislation and civilian acquisitions of arms to measure influence of proliferation of small arms and light weapon on terrorism in Nigeria. This study employs exploratory research design; by using content analysis of publicly available archive documents. The study relies solely on secondary data. The research is conducted by examining literature concerning arms proliferation and terrorism in Nigeria. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in connection with terrorism and arms proliferation. The study submitted that small and light weapons proliferations are extensively aggravated by weak legislation and the prevalence of armed non state actors in Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study concludes that government commitment to combat arms proliferation can only be taken serious when the existing 1959 firearms legislation is revamped and internationalized while it will take only good governance to stem the prevalence of armed non state actors. The study recommends that Federal and State Government should evolve a modern firearm law to give the outdated firearm legislation the needed bites. Lastly, the study recommends that the newly established National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and light Weapons should quickly evolve a database and tracking capability to ease the fight against arms proliferation

Keywords: Border Porosity; Non-State Armed Actors; State Fragility Theory; Weak Legislation

1. Introduction

In recent years, the civilian possession of firearms has increased significantly in some countries, particularly in fragile States in Sub Sahara Africa, mainly due to the unstable and volatile political and security situation. The emergence of Libya as the notorious supermarket for the world's illegal arms trade; after the demise of Moumar Ghadaffi, has extensively further fueled the instability of West Africa region, couple with the state of fragility in the Sahel (Duquet & Goris, 2018; EU Council Decision, 2015). Nigeria's North East region's porous border and proximity to some apparently fragile States; Niger, Chad, Mali, Sudan and Mauratwana are all the leverage needed by most of these terrorism impacted Sahelian States to proliferate Nigeria, with drug trafficking, human trafficking, jihadist incursion, transnational crime

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networks, and illicit arms; so much as, most of the weapons in use in Nigeria are sourced from former Libyan stock piles, hence the prevalence of Small Arms and Light Weapon (SALW) (Morgan, 2020; Mungadi *et al.*, 2020; GIABA, 2013).

The proliferation of arms is the uncontrolled accumulation and spread of all categories of weapons which have a devastating humanitarian impact and strategically destabilising consequences on the socio-economic development of a nation. The alarming rate of small arms trafficking and proliferation nationwide has contributed to changing the face of conflicts and crimes in Nigeria. Thus, the internal proliferation of arms has threatened the internal security of the country with more violent crimes ranging from terrorism to insurgency, violent crimes, kidnapping, banditry, and drugs trafficking with involvement of both Nigerians and foreign mercenaries across the borders in illicit arms trade. In the same vein, the capacity of local arms manufacturers and dealers to produce and sell arms within Nigeria is increasing by the day with spike in demand for firearms by the civilian populace under the guise of protections, vigilante services, hunting expedition, which has also exacerbated domestic violence and homicide within the country (Okiro, 2005).

The influencing effects of factors aggravating proliferation of SALW, spike in demand for civilian possession of firearms for self-protection; politicians seeking protections from opponents and imaginary enemies, Vigilantes and Neighbourhood Watch jostling for forms of firearms to earn the confidence of the community, cultists and warlords amassing weapons for supremacy status (Rufa'i, 2021). Private Guards Companies bear pump actions and other sophisticated firearms to jostle for juicy contracts in securing pipelines as Pipeline surveillance contracts awarded by oil companies and government agencies, these Surveillance contractors are tasked with monitoring sections of oil pipeline, identifying any breaks and wading off vandalism. However, this misnomer is politically influenced by politicians as a form of political patronage (Stakeholder Democracy Network, 2018). This Pipeline surveillance contracts is not limited to Niger Delta alone as could be seen virtually all over the country NNPC has oil pipelines. All these firearms in circulation are hardly regulated not mopped of and its remains in the public domain outstrips security agencies stockpiles, hence the more the civilian populace desire for more firearms, the more arms proliferations is extensively influenced.

Interestingly, the inability of government to bring to justice, perpetrators and traffickers in SALW could be the weakest point in the fight against proliferation of SALW so much so that those involved in this racket are aware that there exists a weak legislation, since the country still depends on the inadequacy of the Firearms Act of 1959 as a major framework to deal with proliferation and its emerging contemporary threats in accordance with global standards. The failure of the country to key into the ECOWAS Convention on Small arms and Light Weapon of which the establishment of a National Convention on Small Arms for all member states is a vital requisite and of which Nigeria is yet to establish a National Commission instead a Presidential Committee on Small Arms is operational and this committee lack statutory backing and the needed bite to stem the tide of proliferation (Egbuta, 2019).

The nexus between proliferation of small arms and light weapon and drug trafficking runs deep as studies have also shown that terrorists do not operate alone; but in conjunction with other criminal networks in society. The relationship is such that traders in illicit goods as drugs may exchange their hard drugs for arms and ammunitions at the borders. Similarly, terrorists who specialise in the trade of some of these illicit goods can exchange them for arms and ammunition at the borders (Onuoha, 2013; Curtis & Karakan, 2002). One of the strategies adopted by the Cameroonian government in 2016 in its war against terrorism and Boko Haram extremism was to cut off the sources of financing of the sect especially its sale of illicit goods at its borders with Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Unfortunately, the prevailing situation in Nigeria has all the encouraging features which proliferation of SALW thrives upon and this further threatens the national security of the nation particularly the internal and human security in the country. Poor interface with both regional and international treaties against proliferation of SALW coupled with an outdated Firearms Act of 1959 is even more worrisome for a country that is presently rated third as most impacted by *terrorism*. (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). The SALW are today the weapons of choice for all warring parties around the globe; with Nigeria not exempted—whether they be government armies, rebel forces, insurgents, militias, farmers-herders clash, armed robberies, kidnapping, banditry or terrorism – because they are cheap, accessible, extremely lethal, simple to use, durable, portable, concealable and tradable.

The academic space is replete with cross countries and country specific studies on effects predicting proliferation of small arms and light weapons on terrorism (Ehiane, 2019; UNODC, 2017; Kamwesiga, 2016) but none to the best of knowledge of this study has examined the relationship between weak legislation and prevalence of Non State armed actors on proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapon on terrorism in Nigeria. It is from this approach that this study will fill the gap and further expand the frontier of knowledge. This study provides answers to the following research questions;

- How does weak legislation influence proliferation of SALW and terrorism in Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between non state armed actors and proliferation of SALW and terrorism in Nigeria?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Framework

2.1.1. Outdated Law and Legal Provisions

The 1959 Firearms Act is Nigeria's principal law for combating illicit trafficking in SALW. The law regulates the possession and dealings in firearms and ammunition including muzzle-loading firearms, and matters ancillary thereto. It further prohibits the possession and use of any firearms by any person in Nigeria, except members of the armed forces or police, unless such persons are granted licenses to possess and use the firearm. It also prohibits importation, exportation, and dealing in firearms in Nigeria except with a license granted by appropriate authorities. The Act also criminalizes the manufacture or repair of firearms without prior authorization from the appropriate State agency.

The 1959 Firearm Act has been largely criticised for being too old to signal any seriousness on the part of government to combat arms proliferation, the penalties so stipulated therein are faulted to be too weak to deter crime committal neither does the penalties reflect present economic reality. The inability of the government to domesticate into law, the Firearm Act of both the regional and global anti proliferation instruments so as to correspond more with international best practices in controlling proliferation, further shows the poor resolve to tackle proliferation headlong. The aged long unwillingness of the country to set up a National Commission for control of small and light weapons despite being signatory to many Regional and international Conventions, further typifies the lip service of government to the issue of proliferation. On the 2nd May, 2021, Nigerian Government established the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW), to replace the defunct Presidential Committee on SALW and serve as the institutional mechanism for policy guidance, research and monitoring of all aspects of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Nigeria (The Guardian, 2021).

2.1.2. Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapon

The term “proliferation” encompasses the acquisition, supply and use of technology, goods, software, services or expertise, or of intellectual property. The technology, goods, software, services or expertise may have a legitimate use as well as being capable of use in proliferation it is the manufacture, acquisition, development, export, transshipment, brokering, transport, transfer, stockpiling or use of – small and light weapons, chemical, biological, radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) weapons or weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and their means of delivery and related materials (including technologies and dual use goods), in contravention of either, or both, domestic law (including anti-terrorism and export control laws); and/or international obligations. Proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been described as a lucrative venture globally due to their unique characteristics because they are compact, mobile, distinctive and concealable, also easy to move around with undetected. Largely across a larger part of Africa, there are increasing belief that the well-being and survival of the individual and the state can only be guaranteed by the possession of SALW (Nojeem, 2009).

2.1.3. Small Arms and Light Weapons

These are arms used by one person and which include firearms or devices such as explosives, 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; machines guns; assault rifles and light machine guns. These include, but not limited to revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, submachine guns, and light machine guns. Small arms are different from light weapons in that the former can be used by only one person whereas the latter, though portable, are designed to be used by a group of persons working together. Light weapons are bigger and deadlier than small arms and are not produced in West Africa. They are imported into the region the use of imported firearms is common among militant groups, although there is emerging evidence that some criminal gangs also use them.

2.1.4. Non State Armed Actors

Placing a definition of non-state armed actors (NSAA) has proven difficult due to their varying characteristics. Generally speaking, non-state armed groups are defined as distinctive organizations that are enthusiastic and capable to use violence for pursuing their objectives and are not integrated into formalized State institutions such as regular armies, police, or special forces. These attributes, thus confer on NSAA, certain degree of autonomy with regard to politics, military operations, resources, and infrastructure. They may, however be instrumentalised by state actors either

secretly or openly sometimes for ideological reasons, political career, corruption, family or clan ties, clientelism, and profit (Hofmann & Schneckener, 2011). Uptick in the engagement of Private Military Security Companies, known as Mercenaries, by fragile States is also another pressure point on proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons as the flood of former/veteran/unemployed soldiers to the military market after the Cold War

NSAA ranges from armed rebel groups, 'freedom fighters', paramilitaries, or warlords; Paramilitaries, Civilian, militia including communal groups, regional agitators, militants for resource control, secessionist groups, and militias, civil defence forces, Criminals and criminal groups, including black market arms traders, vigilante groups and other NSAs closely associated with state agencies; Terrorists and terrorist organisations, Political parties and associated political groups, Private military companies. On the other hand, they are often the expression of social problems because they see themselves as representatives of distinct interests and may build on broad support within communities. Most of these groups also rely on corrupt elements with formalized government structure to access arms and ammunitions from the loosely controlled government stockpile as there exist no reliable databases or tracking system

2.2. Factors that Trigger Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

2.2.1. The proximity of Nigeria to Conflict Zones

The proximity of Nigeria to conflict zones in West Africa region, its loose creeks in the south-south where there is access to international water ways not to mention her porous borders with Chad in the North, Benin Republic in the West, Niger and Cameroon in the East, makes Nigeria a major destination for SALW. The migration of some Nigerians into fragile neighbouring countries to be trained as foreign terrorist fighters further widens the networks of arms proliferation. Arms and light weapons also brought from peace keeping operations and the illicit trade of most security personnel either selling or leasing their weapons. All these reflect a system that condones non-state actors dealing and trafficking in arms hence the free flow of SALW in Nigeria (Rufai. 2021; Ogunbare & Elijah, 2010).

2.2.2. Prevalence of Informal Security Outfits

In a for communities or neighbourhood to protect itself from bandits, armed robbers, ritualist, kidnappers and other violent crimes and criminality, the country, Nigeria has witnessed an uptick in the growth of Vigilantism of all shades. The more sophisticated the weapon bear by members of the Vigilante the brighter the chance of securing the Watch of a neighbourhood. Recently, an emerging group tagged Hunters Group of Nigeria (HGN) recently signed a MOU with the National association of Proprietors of Private Schools. This growth has also put pressure on both local and foreign firearms, particularly pump action and other sophisticated weapons in the hand of untrained civilians, so concerning is the fact that most of these illegally possessed arm bearer majorly depends on formal security system for ammunitions and bullets sold in retail for.

2.2.3. Growth in Cultism and Crime Rate

One damaging and worrisome dimension to the proliferation of small arms in Nigeria is the growth of cultism in Nigeria tertiary institutions. So numerous and fledging are these cults that their networks transcend across the nation as most these cultism are being used by politicians for their own selfish end. In addition to unleashing campus terror, they are also known to maintain ties with gangs of armed robbers, kidnappers, drug networks and other violent criminals. Thus they are glaring manifestation of the criminal dimensions of SALW proliferation in Nigeria.

The rise in crime rate viz a viz spate of kidnapping in Nigeria also fuels demand for small arms and light weapons. Individuals use arms as a means of communicating supremacy and also for personal defence. The stable demands and usage of small arms only increases the intensity and sustainability of violent crimes, banditry, insurgency and terrorism. The proliferation of small arms in Nigeria is characterized by a substantial trade in simple weapons that can be handled by virtually anybody than other types of conventional arms.

2.2.4. Growth of Ethnic Militias

The emergence of ethnic militias, secessionists and regional agitators across the nation, also triggers the demand and proliferation of small arms and light weapons across the porous borders and loose creeks. Ethnic militias are youth groups formed to promote and protect the socio-political and economic interest of a specific group. They are groups of armed individuals operating across and beyond state borders (Yacubu, 2005). Ethnic militias in the context of this study are not rebel movements; they are not seeking to take over the reins of political power; though they sometimes operate like the terrorist groups, but they serve as pressure group on the government. These groups in Nigeria include Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND), Movement for the Actualization

of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). The recent activities of these militias have blurred the line between activism and terrorism with the carnage and loss of lives seen in the South East, Nigeria.

2.2.5. Domestic Agitation for Resource Control

Mineral deposits or wasting resources such as oil, diamonds, gold etc. are essential commodities on the international market to keep the wealth of the producing country going and satisfy human needs (Onigbinde, 2008). One factor that has always led to ceaseless agitation for resource control in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria where SALW is uncontrollably traded and used across the porous water ways and creeks is the way in which oil resource is managed which creates stagnation and breeds violence. The long years of neglects by the government no doubts have mid -wife what Nigeria government often called youth restiveness among various groups, evident in the clashes between the government and the various militias vying for the control of resources in the area. The use of military to diffuse the flames of these insurgencies inversely made the people to resentfully resist the military and seek means to be adequately armed thus exacerbating arms proliferation in region.

2.2.6. Drug trafficking

Drug trafficking is a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. UNODC is continuously monitoring and researching global illicit drug markets in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their dynamics. Nigeria is reported to have featured prominently among West African states that produce and export cannabis to countries in Europe (Daily Sun, 2009). Some of these drug traffickers are deeply involved in transnational trade in which illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are also traded along with drugs (International Narcotics Control Board, 2012).

2.2.7. Unemployment and poverty

Unemployment and poverty is a major triggering issue in the proliferation of SALW because of its negative impact on the sustainability of development in Nigeria. Arguably, unemployment and poverty is considered to be at the base of the proliferation of SALW in Nigeria. There are many jobless, poor and disgruntled able bodied young men and women alike who are readily available to be trained and armed to presumably defend the interest of their groups even to battle an assumed failed state. Arguably the unemployed youths are readily available for use by the politicians who recruits and equipped them with small arms to fight their political opponents. Their recruitment to these politicians is regarded as a form of employment, and they are meagerly remunerated of which light weapons used for this operations are never retrieved but remains in the public domain.

2.2.8. Incessant Electoral Violence

The incessant electoral violence in the country encourages the drive to amass arms against both visible and invisible opponents in bid to stay in power or to take power. A nation's democracy heightens the country's democratic value and credentials in the comity of nations which also strengthens the framework for addressing and possibly resolving the various ethno-religious and civil unrests threatening its socio-political and economic development. The more transparent the system is the more the socio economic development possibilities. The increasingly militarized nature of politics, the use of violence as an electoral tool to stay in power and the inculcation of a culture of violence in the society heightened by armed violence, and proliferation of small arms and light weapons (Ginifer & Ismail, 2005).

3. Empirical Review

3.1. Weak Legislation and Proliferation of SALW on Terrorism in Nigeria

Egbuta (2019) in a country specific study, thematically investigated the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in escalations as a nexus to uneven threats in Nigeria. Study adopted review of scholarly publications, literatures and news report for in-depth analysis. Findings from analysis established that nation's weak legal provision is too inadequate to battle arms proliferation except when totally overhauled. Study submitted that weak legislation has not deter proliferation of small arms and light weapons possible as armed non state actors employed both locally manufactured and imported devices to inflict havoc on the society which weakens the national security system of the country. Study was limited to both prevalence of violent crimes and weak legislation as prediction proliferation while this study captures construct of civilian acquisitions of firearms on terrorism in Nigeria.

Malami, *et al.* (2018) engaged qualitative study to investigate nexus between legal contests and the proliferation of small and light weapons in Nigeria. The study empirical studies cut across legal publications and extant literature of secondary disposition. Findings from the study showed that there exists lacuna in the legal and institutional frameworks of the

present Firearms Act 1959 coupled with the inability of the government to establish National Commission on SALW as a major clog in the country having a far-reaching effect in the strides against proliferation of small arms. The study, though country specific did not consider the outstripping demands by civilians for firearms which this study intends to consider.

Ayuba and Okafor (2015) empirically explored the connection between the massive flow of small arms and light weapon and the revolutionary Arab spring and the Maghreb. Findings established that indeed small arms and light weapons within Africa countries and this extensively ignites and sustain violent conflicts within once peaceful national territorial entities. Study concluded that the need to come up with a strong judicial system to criminalise all criminality acts of gun running such that governments can no longer afford to pay lip service to fortifications of her border. The study is a cross-country study and results that emanated from it cannot be used for country specific study like Nigeria because the operational environment differs in terms of regulation, supervision and operation.

3.2. Armed Non State Actors and Proliferation of SALW on Terrorism in Nigeria

Baran (2020) leveraged on exploratory study to analyse the spike in the engagement of private military and security companies (mercenaries) by fragile States particularly by those in the Middle East and Africa as States are seen outsourcing one of their essential functions which is the monopoly on the use of force due to cost efficiency, political non-liability or quicker and more qualified military service procurement. Mercenaries are hired as pilots, co-pilots or flight engineers for the transport of weapons, as arms salesmen in the field or as instructors in the use of the weapons and military material that have been sold, and to train troops or paramilitary groups, which in many cases comprise raw recruits, persons with little training or knowledge. All these further exacerbate proliferation of arms as most of these arms are left in loose hands. The study focused on non state armed actors alone while this study extends to weak legislation as a predictor for arms proliferation in Nigeria

Chilaka *et al.* (2019) employed theory of structural functionalism to investigate nexus between firearms proliferation and Vigilante administration in Dunukofia, Local Government Area (LGA), of Anambra State. The study employed triangulation method of research design using qualitative method as well as ex-post, data collected through Focused Group Discussion and extant literature respectively were analyzed using descriptive analysis and content analysis. Findings from the study submitted that the establishment of vigilante groups in Dunukofia LGA engendered firearms proliferation which further increased conflicts involving firearms, with emphasis on illegal pump action rifles used by the vigilante. Study was State specific hence the need for country specific investigations using more constructs than non state actors and firearms

Kamwesiga (2016) investigated the nexus between causes and effects of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Uganda. Study engaged terrorism-related document; government reports, policy documents, and other strategic policy approaches in existence to tackle the threat of terrorism. Findings from the study showed that porous border has significant effect on the proliferation of small arms and light weapon despite concerted government efforts to make it difficult for potentially disruptive groups to access the country, the heavy deployment by military, immigration and police personnel to control illegal entries, and technical systems that identify individuals known as Personal Identification Secure Comparison System. The study was done in Uganda of which result emanating may not be compatible to Nigeria due to difference in cultural, political and social factors.

Basiru and Osunkoya (2019) thematically examined the contributions of Vigilantism in Nigeria under a democratic dispensation in conduct and practice – conform to principles of rule of law and constitutionalism. The study engaged an exploratory research design approach of existing literature. Study submitted that with many state governments legalizing vigilante groups to bolster the security of lives and properties in the states, there has been cases of extra-judicial measures by vigilante groups whether reported or not, not only impinging on the human right sector, but the unregulated adoption has further exacerbated the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the country as these groups, including those that have recently sprung up, have been the greatest patronizers of illicit arms. Study focused on vigilante and arms proliferation while this study extends to weak legislation as a driver to arms proliferation

3.3. Theoretical Framework

3.3.1. Failed State Theory

A failed state is a term that refers to nation-states that have failed at some of its basic conditions and responsibilities as a sovereign government. In other words, a failed state is one that has feeble and flawed institutions like the police and judiciary as this invariably leads to a partial or complete breakdown of law and order, poor performance by the executive as well as the legislature in addition to the bureaucracy, and the armed forces that must have lost their

capacity and professional independence. It also suffers from crumbling infrastructures, faltering utility supplies in all sectors, deteriorating basic human-development indicators such as high infant mortality and illiteracy rates, while at the same time creating a perfect environment for corruption and negative growth rates to thrive and flourish.

A failed state lacks the ability to minimize internal conflict as it cannot formulate and implement public policies to provide and deliver effective services to its citizenry. It is overridden by political, social and economic failures with apparent under socioeconomic development which are predictors of being able to deliver good governance to the governed, hence such states are no longer able to provide physical security, productive economic environment and stable political system for its citizens.

These and much more have been the standard and still is the norm as witnessed in Nigeria – the wanton destruction of lives and properties by unknown gunmen or herdsman, the inability of the police and other security agents to act proactively, the inability of security agencies to quell such situation has always been a source of worry as the high number of casualties in such situations are always alarming and above all the inability of security agents to bring suspects or those found guilty to book as has been noted overly. All and many more are present thus indicating that Nigeria is a failing state and that this theory best applies to the study.

4. Methodology

This study adopts exploratory research design; it tries to investigate the influence of weak legislation and civilian acquisitions of firearms on terrorism in Nigeria. Proliferation of Small arms and light weapons is assessed with weak legislation and civilian acquisition of firearms as they relate to Proliferation of Small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. The study employs content analysis of publicly available archive documents. The study relies solely on secondary data. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in term of Proliferation of Small arms and light weapons.

5. Discussion

The review of literature reveals that weak, outdated and overstretched proliferation legislation is out rightly incapable of deterring modern and globalised trends of arms proliferation neither will such weak legislation will be compatible with emerging regional and international Conventions structured to combat and stem the tides of arms proliferation in the 21st century. The rational for this finding could be that most outdated Firearm legislation are too weak, hence no structured and formal agency can use such weak legislations to meaningfully prosecute arms proliferation even as fines and charges under such weak legislations could be too weak and not deterrent enough. The finding is in tandem with the findings in the previous works of Egbuta (2019); Malami, Abdullah and Yusoff (2018); Ayuba and Okafor (2015) who found that weak Firearm legislations and absence of formal anti proliferation agencies aggravates proliferation of Small arms and Light weapons.

The result gotten from empirical literature is that the prevalence in the activities of non State armed actors is negatively aggravating proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. This is because non state armed actors also amass arms to show strength and force with little or no regulation from formal authority. This finding is consistent with the findings in the previous work of Baran (2020); Chilaka *et al.* (2019); Kamwesiga (2016); Basiru and Osunkoya (2019).

6. Conclusion

The study concludes a revamped and modernised Firearm legislation that duly conform with international standard have the potential to bring about sanity and deterrence and lessening the effect of arms proliferations on human security in Nigeria. a deterring consequences with political will and prosecution by the newly established National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and light Weapons will send the needed cautioning signals to all illicit players in the proliferation of SALW.

The study equally concludes that activities of non-state armed actors can only be drastically checked through evolvment of good governance to counter narratives of some of the armed agitators. There is a well-established poor correlation between the absence of non-state armed actors and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made;

- The study recommends that Federal and State Government should evolve a modern firearm law to give the outdated firearm legislation the needed bites, conform to internationalized standard and deterrent enough to curb arms proliferation.
- In the light of the results of this study, the study recommends that the newly established National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and light Weapons should quickly evolve a database and tracking capability to ease the fight against arms proliferation while government should focus on good governance to counter the narratives and prevalence of armed actors.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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