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Niger-Delta Avengers, Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Its Potential Threat to Nigerian Security: Which Way Forward?

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Abstract: *This work has attempted to understand the origin and purpose of Niger-Delta Avengers insurgency in Nigeria. One of the actual obstacles to sustenance of stable peace and security in Nigeria is the existence and alarming rate in proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation stands a principal source of annihilation of human lives and properties, and worsen inter-communal clashes, resulting to serious violence. Most of the Nigerian borders are porous, therefore, giving room for easy influx, movement and exit of Arms, human trafficking and drugs. This study interrogates the threats posed by Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation to the National Security. It assesses the concerted efforts of the Nigerian Government in combating the menace with a plan to proffer solutions on how to resolve the disheartening phenomenon. The study concludes that, the failing economy, insecurity, high rate of unemployment, poverty, failure of Government to provide basic necessities of life and corruption stand as a log in the wheel to appreciate efforts and policies at arresting the menace in the country. It also submits that there is need for collaborative efforts at each level of governance; Local, State and Federal Government in Nigeria to solve the problem in addition to the imperative role of security agencies for sustenance of the Nation's peace and security.*

Keywords: *Small Arms, Light Weapons, Niger-Delta Avengers, Insurgency, proliferation, and Arms Control.*

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INTRODUCTION

In the words of Lodguard & Fund (1998) “weapons are man-portable or transportable by light vehicles and that do not require much in terms of service, logistical back up training”. Light weapons in its wider category comprise small-Calibre canons, light support weapons, combat grenades, anti-personnel mines, mortars, anti-tank weapons, anti-tank mines, etc.

The proliferation of these weapons has posed a threat to international community, thus the need to curb the menace: the essence of curbing this is to foster conflict-prevention. Conflict prevention guarantees human security. But an environment that ensures human security cannot be flowing with Arms, especially those coming in from conflict regions, thus the need for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Also to cut the flow and effects of light weapons there is also need for repatriation and reintegration of refugees and several other measures must be put in place to check this negative development.

The Sierra-Leone and Liberia civil wars were further encouraged by Arm Proliferation. In a survey assessing the distribution of arm in Sierra-Leone, common types of weapons at the time of collection as they were used in the war, were shot guns, locally made riffles, automatic assault rifle. Before the war, illicit trafficking routes were rich, structured and highly regular affairs.

The African Union (AU) has continued to make progress in the fight against illicit trafficking and circulations of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) on the continent. AU's common passion on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons was adopted in December 2000 by the Council of Ministers of the O.A.U as African's input to the negotiations on the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPOA) to prevent combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspect (UNPOA) member States under the declaration agreed to identified seize and destroy illicit weapons. It was also provided in the declaration for the establishment of measures to control the circulation, transfer and use of Small Arm and Light Weapons. Small/light arms are cheap and profitable, and are used by all combatants, state militaries, militias and insurgents. It is the prevalence – that is the widespread proliferation of the arms combined with their indiscriminate use that renders them responsible or so much of the killings. In addition, small and Light Arms Terrorist act around the world perceived imbalance within the Nigeria political structure contributed fundamentally to the atmosphere of hostility and mutually suspicious among the various components religious, tribal, class etc. which make up the federation.

The situation in the Niger Delta is symptomatic of what has been referred to as criminal social neglect and ecological degradation. The end result in the region of the country is responsible for seventy (70) percent of the country's income displays a degree of poverty which stands in sharp contradiction to the wealth it produces. This has led to a militarized youth population with access to Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

Ethno-religious animosities have led to the phenomenon of armed ethnic militias in virtually all parts of the country. While ethnic militias did exist under military rule, they were by and large kept under check. However, with the return to civil rule and the consequent expansion of political space, these groups blossomed to the extent of representing and causing threats and alternatives to state security structures (Edomwonyi, 2007).

In addition, corruption within the legal system has meant the criminal often escape justice and this has promoted a mentality "self-help" among the populace, contributing to the acquisition of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) by individuals and groups who have come to view the state as a failure (Edomwonyi, 2007). Armed robbers and other criminals have also contributed to the proliferation of these groups of weapons.

In some instances, they capture the weapons belonging to security agencies and these weapons are often put into criminal uses. Local fabricate commonly referred to as blacksmiths 'ports' have traditionally been a source of supply for (SALW) for hunters and local security men.

However, with the downturn in the economy of the country, it has become extremely difficult to cushion the proliferation of these weapons. However, the problems of availability of these weapons lay mainly on the manufacturing and its accumulation. It is observed that over eighty-five (85) percent of States in the world produce various arms and ammunitions. The major source of supply of arms are said to have come directly from the manufacturers to private groups and government (Addo, 2006).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NIGER DELTA AVENGERS

The **Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)** is a militant group in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The group publicly announced their existence in March 2016.

The NDA have attacked oil-producing facilities in the delta, causing the shutdown of oil terminals and a fall in Nigeria's oil production to its lowest level in twenty years. The attacks caused Nigeria to fall behind Angola as Africa's largest oil producer. The reduced oil output has hampered the Nigerian economy and destroyed its budget, since Nigeria depends on the oil industry for nearly all its government revenues.

The NDA's declared aims are to create a sovereign state in the Niger Delta and have threatened to disrupt Nigeria's economy if their aims are not met. The NDA claims its members are "young, educated, well-travelled...and educated in east Europe". The group have criticized the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, for having never visited the delta and his detention of the Biafran independence activist Nnamdi Kanu.

Niger Delta Avengers	
Dates of Operation	January 2016 – present
Headquarters	Delta State (allegedly)
Active regions	Niger Delta
Ideology	Regionalism
Allies	Red Egbesu Water Lions Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force Niger Delta Red Square Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate ^[citation needed]
Opponents	■ ■ Nigeria
Battles and wars	Conflict in the Niger Delta

Organization

The leadership of the organization is not understood, as many local leaders have acted as the spokesperson to the government. This has made it

difficult for the government to make meaningful contact with the group. Nigerian officials are also disorganized when speaking with the members, as many have found it their duty to make contact (DiChristopher, 2016).

Additionally, many Niger Delta militant groups have sprung up in the wake of the NDA's 2016 actions. These copycat organization have contested claims to various act against numerous oil companies originally attributed to the NDA (Ovie Okpare, 2016). The most prominent of these splinter groups has been the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers (RNDA), whose similarity of name has caused confusion both inside and outside the country but is not affiliated with the NDA. (Findlay, 2016)

Timeline of Activities

2016

- January 14 - Several gas pipelines and oil installations located in Warri South West were blown up following orders issued by a Nigerian High Court in Lagos to arrest the ex-militant leader Government Ekpemupolo.
- February 10 - At approximately 1:30 am NDA militants blew up the Bonny-Soku Gas Export Line.
- February 14 - NDA militants destroyed Shell's underwater Forcados 48-inch Export Pipeline at the Forcados Export Terminal.
- February 19 - At approximately 3:30 am NDA militants blew up Eni's Clough Creek-Tebidaba Pipeline in Bayelsa State.
- May 4 - NDA militants attacked and heavily damaged the Chevron Valve Platform located at Abiteye, Warri South. This platform is reportedly Chevron's most significant platform as it serves as a connecting point where all of Chevron's other Niger Delta platforms link-up.
- May 4 - Shell's underwater Forcados 48-inch Export Pipeline was once again blown up by militants shortly after repairs commenced following the February 14 attack.
- May 5 - The Escravos-Lagos Pipeline System, linking Warri to Lagos was blown up by NDA militants.
- May 5 - The NDA's *Strike Team 4* launched a coordinated attack on several Chevron oil installations located in Abiteye, resulting in the destruction of Chevron Well D25 and several other major pipelines in the area.
- May 6 - The crude oil pipeline linking Warri to Kaduna was blown up by the NDA's *Strike Team 7* as well as a gas line that supplies both Lagos and Abuja with electricity.
- May 6 - Oil pipelines located near the villages of Alero, Dibi, Otunana, and Makaraba were blown up the NDA's *Strike Team 7*.
- May 9 - 3 Nigerian soldiers were killed during a shootout with NDA militants in the village of Foropa, Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa.
- May 13 - The Chevron pipeline at Makaraba was blown up for a second time in 7 days following repairs done by Chevron.
- May 20 - The Escravos-Lagos Pipeline System was once again blown up by NDA militants following the commencement of repairs being done on the pipeline following the May 5 attack.
- May 25 - NDA militants blew up Chevron's main electricity feed pipeline, located at the Escravos Tank Farm at Ciera Creek.
- May 27 - At approximately 2:15 am NDA militants blew Eni and Shell's pipelines 1, 2, and 3 located at Nembe, Bayelsa State.
- May 27 - At approximately 11:45 pm NDA militants blew up several gas and oil pipelines belong to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation located near Warri.
- May 30 - NDA militants were forced to retreat from the villages of Gulobokri and Eweleso, Brass following a series of clashes with Nigerian soldiers, resulting in the deaths of approximately 20 civilians, 2 police officers, and an unknown number of militants/Nigerian soldiers.
- May 31 - At approximately 3:44 am Chevron's Oil Wells RMP23 and RMP24 located near the village of Dibi, Warri South-West, Chevron's highest producing wells in the Niger Delta, were blown up by NDA militants.
- June 1 - Five boats loaded with heavily armed militants attacked a houseboat near the village of Ijere, Warri South, where Nigerian soldiers were reportedly stationed. 2 Nigerian soldiers and 4 civilians were killed during the attack. The NDA claims they were not behind the attack and stated they will "bring the culprits to book".
- June 2 - At approximately 2:00 am NDA militants blew up the Ogboinbiri-Tebidaba and Cough Creek-Tebidaba pipelines, belonging to Eni, in Bayelsa State.
- June 3 - At approximately 3:00 am NDA militants blew up Shell's Forcados 48-inch Export Pipeline for a third time following a series of repairs done by Royal Dutch Shell.
- June 3 - At approximately 3:30 am NDA militants blew up Eni's Brass-Tebidaba oil pipeline in Bayelsa State.
- June 8 - At approximately 1:00 am NDA miliatans blew up Chevron's Well RMP20, located 20 meters from the Dibi Flow Station in Warri North LGA.
- June 9 - At approximately 8:00 pm NDA militants blew up the Chanomi Creek oil facility, belonging to Royal Dutch Shell, near the village of Ogidigben, Warri South West.
- June 10 - At approximately 3:00 am NDA miliatans blew up the Obi Obi Brass trunk line, belonging to Eni. It is one of Eni's most significant crude oil pipelines in Bayelsa State.

- June 16 - At approximately 4:00 am NDA militants blew up a crude oil pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in Oruk Anam LGA, Akwa Ibom.
- July 1 - At approximately 9:15 pm NDA militants blew up a crude oil trunk line belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation linked to the Warri refinery.
- July 2 - At approximately 11:26 pm an NDA "Strike Team" blew up two major crude oil trunk lines belonging to the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company, located near the Batan flow station in Delta State.
- July 3 - At approximately 1:15 am NDA militants blew up Chevron Wells 7 and 8, located near the Abiteye flow station in Warri South West LGA.
- July 5 - At approximately 10:00 pm NDA militants blew up Chevron Well 10, located near the Otunana flow station.
- July 5 - At approximately 11:15 pm NDA militants blew up a manifold belonging to the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company, located near Banta, as well as two crude oil trunk lines belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Company.
- July 6 - Between the hours of 10:50 pm and 11:10 pm an NDA "strike team" blew up Chevron manifolds RMP 22, 23 and 24 in Delta State. These manifolds are major convergence points for numerous crude oil pipelines operated by Chevron Corp.
- July 8 - Between the hours of 3:00 am and 5:00 am NDA militants blew up Nembe pipelines 1, 2, and 3, belonging to Shell and Eni, in Bayelsa State while simultaneously blowing up the Brass-Tebidaba trunk line in Rivers State.
- July 11 - At approximately 7:30 pm NDA militants blew up ExxonMobil's "Qua Iboe 48" crude oil pipeline.
- July 12 - Late on the night of July 12, NDA militants blew up a natural gas pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation located in Ogijo, Ogun State.
- July 13 - Heavily armed NDA militants hosted a function in Delta State in which they came face-to-face with soldiers of the Nigerian Army. One militant announced "I want to hand over our request to our Ogba Pata today. You'll go and give it to the governor." before telling a Nigerian officer the group's demands. After the short speech, the crowd was wild with jubilation as the militants began shooting their assault rifles in the air while singing and dancing to the song "Fada Fada" by Phyno ft. Olamide.
- July 18 - At approximately 12:05 am NDA militants blew up a crude oil trunk line belonging to Shell located near the Batan Flow Station in Warri South West LGA.
- July 24 - At approximately 11:30 pm NDA militants blew up a natural gas pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation located in Nsit-Ibom LGA, Akwa Ibom.
- July 31 - At approximately 1:00 am militants blew up the *Trans Ramos* crude oil pipeline, owned by Royal Dutch Shell, located near the village of Odimodi, Burutu LGA, Delta State.
- August 30 - The Nigerian Army announced the commencement of military operations against militants in the Niger Delta, nicknamed Operation Crocodile Smiles.
- August 30 – September 3 - 20 Nigerian soldiers were killed in action by heavily armed NDA militants during the first 4 days of "Operation Crocodile Smiles", 16 were killed along the River Ethiope while the other 4 were killed in the creeks of Bayelsa State.
- September 10 - The Niger Delta Avengers released a photograph showing 4 freshly captured Nigerian Army soldiers being rowed in a boat manned by a single militant to an undetermined location somewhere in the Niger Delta creeks.
- September 23 - At approximately 8:40 pm NDA militants blew up the Bonny 48-inch crude oil pipeline, owned by Royal Dutch Shell, located at the Bonny Export Terminal.
- October 25 - At approximately 3:45 am the NDA *Strike Team 06* blew up the Escravos Export Pipeline, owned by Chevron Corporation, located offshore from the mainland. Prior to its destruction, the pipeline transported hundreds-of-thousands of barrels of crude oil each day from offshore oil fields to the Escravos GTL petroleum refineries, located on the mainland, to be refined into gasoline, kerosene, and diesel fuel. The NDA spokesman, Mudoch Agbinibo, warns that any attempt to make repairs to the pipeline will immediately halt their peace negotiations with the Nigerian government.
- November 7 - On the night of November 7 heavily armed NDA militants attacked a group of Nigerian surveillance personnel in charge of securing the Forcados Export Pipeline near the village of Batan, Delta State. Reports state that militants in speedboats opened fire on the surveillance personnel with assault rifles and machine guns, forcing them to flee for their lives. The militants then sped off into the creeks without detonating any explosives.
- November 8 - At approximately 10:45 pm the NDA *Strike Team 06* blew up the Forcados Export Pipeline less than 24 hours after their attack on Nigerian surveillance personnel in Batan. Locals reported feeling the shock-wave

of the blast followed by the sight of huge fireball that could be seen for miles around. The NDA spokesman, Mudoch Agbinibo, says that it is yet another warning to oil corporations not to repair blown pipelines.

- November 15 - At approximately 11:45 pm the NDA *Strike Team 03* blew up the Nembe 01, 02, and 03 crude oil pipelines, operated by Eni, Oando, and Royal Dutch Shell. The 3 major pipelines supplied the Bonny Export Terminal, located in Bayelsa State, with 300,000 barrels of crude oil everyday prior to their destruction. NDA spokesman Mudoch Agbinibo stated that these attacks are in response to the Nigerian military's so-called "Operation Sharkbite", launched on November 4.

2017

- November 4 – NDA spokesman Murdoch Agbinibo stated that the NDA will withdraw from the Pan Niger-Delta Forum (PANDEF) and end the cease fire agreement with the federal government. The NDA also took the opportunity to disavow any connection with the RNDA and questioned their legitimacy.

2018

- January 17 – last official update on the official Niger Delta Avengers website.

2019

- NDA endorses presidential candidate Alhaji Atiku Aububakar over the incumbent, President Muhammadu Buhari. Aububakar vowed to increase the amount of oil revenue to the delta region as well as increase its standard of living. While President Buhari won the re-election, the NDA has not responded or retaliated.

Factors Aiding Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

Several factors contribute to the proliferation of small arms. One of such factors is the privatisation of security. In countries such as Angola, Guatemala and Nicaragua, where official peace has come, poverty, insecurity and fear still plague different levels of society (Rupesinghe, 1998). In a situation where a state cannot provide for her citizens, ownership of weapon becomes essential for survival, as noted *inter alia* both as protection and as an economic asset. It is believed that the possession of lethal weapon at personal level alleviates the insecurity but it in turn encourages the spread of violence. The privatization of state armies is another factor aiding proliferation.

Rupesinghe (1998) notes that in "the absence of external patronage, conscript armies, or what is left of them are known to sell their arms, equipment or services to the highest bidder." Rupesinghe argues that even in places like Ethiopia officers were found to be selling arms and ammunition during the closing years of

the war. The case was worst in Zaire as some military commanders ran what was similar to personal fiefdoms. "The soldiers were not paid regular salaries, but were encouraged to loot and pillage local villages, demand contributions at arbitrary road blocks and commit sexual violence against local women" (Rupesinghe 1998). Such privatization of state army in Congo (Zaire) arose because of Mobutu's repressive and kleptomaniac regime. Mobutu reduced the state army to an insignificant number, consolidating his power on fear and oppression through a network of security personnel that are best described as secret police and army.

The command lines of his secret personnel are frequently changed to enable him control the security system, (Emizet, 2000). Rupesinghe (1998) argues that Mobutu's strategy was to suppress the national army, reduce its number to only 20,000 and provide little equipment or training. As noted above, Mobutu concentrated on creating a series of covert special strike forces, formed and dissolved in quick succession. Oppressive regimes encourage the formation of militia groups which will no doubt lead to small arm proliferation. Another factor that aids small arm proliferation is the use of children as soldiers. "Young recruits and children as young as eight has been evident in a number of long term conflicts, especially where there is shortage of personnel. The child soldiers have fought in battle frontline and this is not removed from the fact that there is the availability of cheap, light and easy to use automatic weapons (Rupesinghe, 1998). Hence children are recruited and more arms required, as small arms require little or no training and coupled with the fact that children are obedient and disciplined, they are used. The end result therefore is arm proliferation and increase in the possibility of violence.

The presence of mercenaries is another factor aiding small arm proliferation. When the army of a state is disintegrated during conflict, it gives room for the resurgence of mercenaries and bounty hunters. The worst is that such groups have no interest or concern in the countries or regions which they fight. The groups have no motivation or incentive to end the conflict. Rupesinghe (1998) observes "From Sierra Leone to Angola, Sri Lanka, the Middle East and Papua New Guinea, the presence of mercenaries, heavily armed, highly trained, protecting and preserving ramshackle regimes or factions." Such activities not only proliferates arms, it prolongs and intensifies conflicts. The avarice of such groups is always the interest. They may have their eye on oil, gold, diamond and other precious minerals within the region of those who contract them. The primary objective of such organization is to make money and they require arms to accomplish their task, so illicit trade continues to grow and arms- small arms- keep proliferating.

Greed and grievances have also been explored by several scholars as a motivation for groups to rebel.

Most groups attempt to have access to resources. Most times, the motivation are the benefits “that may accrue through activities such as pillage and looting during conflicts” (Collier & Hoeffler 2002). The frustration-aggression mechanism as a response by regimes ignites violence. When regimes are oppressive, then violence is the last result. Again, in such state most times, the struggles for democratic governance often lead to violence perpetuated with the use of arms- small arms. Several other factors aid small arms proliferation. Some of the weapons are locally made, while some are stolen from government armory. There are transfers between sub national groups, others captured from government agents, some are taken from demobilized soldiers and so on. There are several ways of proliferating small arms. The production and export of small arms are increasing by day.

Dhanapala (1998) adds that small arms and light weapons are being currently manufactured in over 70 countries which are almost twice as many as the manufacturers of other categories of weapons. In Dhanapala’s words, “there are at least 20 known types of pistols available in close to 200 models, which mean that 400 varieties are being manufactured. Over 40 models of rifles are being manufactured to at least one dozen specifications, the better known AK-47 being just one of the 500 known varieties.

Score Card of the Nigerian Military in Fighting Insurgencies

The escalation of the insurgency in early 2010 caught the government flat-footed. It initially believed the violence would peter out. Sustained attacks, however, ushered in more sober responses. Since 2012, it has tried to address the challenge on multiple tracks but especially by increasing the defence budget from 100 billion naira (\$625 million) in 2010 to 927 billion naira (\$6 billion) in 2011 and 1 trillion (\$6.25 billion) naira in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Much of these increases was to combat Boko Haram. Other measures include strengthening anti-terrorism legislation, boosting the capacities of the military and other security agencies, exploring dialogue with the insurgents and military operations and civilian vigilantes. Results have been limited.

Strengthening Anti-Terrorism Legislation

President Jonathan signed the Terrorism (Prevention) Act in 2011. It was amended in 2012 to designate the Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) as the national coordinator for anti-terrorism, in order to prevent in-fighting among security agencies (The Guardian, 2013). The government proscribed Boko Haram and 9 Ansaru, describing their activities as terrorism, and warned that any persons associated with the two groups was liable to prosecution. It is prosecuting hundreds of suspected Boko Haram and Ansaru members and collaborators (The Guardian, 2013). Mohammed Bello Adoke, the attorney-general

and justice minister, reported that eleven convictions of Boko Haram members were obtained in 2013.

On 4 December 2013, the defence headquarters recommended the immediate trial of over 500 suspects arrested in the north-eastern states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa. They were among almost 1,400 detainees in Maiduguri, Yola and Damaturu screened by a joint investigation team. Among those recommended for trial were paramilitary personnel and a medical doctor who allegedly offered the militants direct logistical support; others who trained them in weapons handling; and those who confessed that they were trained in Mali and other countries (The Guardian, 2013).

Boosting the Capacities of the Military and Other Security Agencies

The military had not anticipated the insurgency and was not prepared for its bombing campaign, as the late National Security Adviser Owoeye Azazi admitted in August 2011. Over the last two years, the government has sought to improve the capacities of the military and security services to respond to the challenge, particularly by improving training, equipment and coordination. More emphasis has been placed on retraining personnel in urban warfare, counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency (Vanguard, 2012). Personnel management and training is also prioritised, as well as equipment for close quarter combat, intelligence and amphibious operations, demolition and explosive breaching, tactical communication and civil-military relations.

In September 2015, the Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Centre in Jaji, Kaduna graduated 316 personnel, its ninth class. According to its commandant, Brigadier-General Tijani Golai, the army has trained over 7,000 from the army, police and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Seeking to strengthen counter-insurgency capacity, the army recently built the country’s first indigenous armored personnel carriers (APCs) and now produces other protective gear, such as bullet-proof vests. On 17 December 2013, President Jonathan unveiled the first drone designed and constructed by the air force. Senior security officials are first to admit, however, that their agencies are ill prepared for today’s challenges, especially terrorism. Factors blamed include under funding, lack of training and equipment, poor intelligence, corruption, complicity, inter-agency rivalries and lack of effective political leadership (Vanguard, 2012).

The Galtimari Committee, established to analyse the security challenges in the North East, noted in September 2011 that “on the part of the security forces, there are palpable operational lapses, service rivalry, under-funding, under-equipment and lack of collaboration”. This perhaps explains why the

inspector-general of police said in December 2011 that all suspected Boko Haram militants arrested were mere “foot soldiers; that the security agencies lacked evidence to apprehend the leaders of the sect”. The police force is ill-equipped to address the Boko Haram threat and enjoys little public confidence. It has been grossly underfunded – less than 5 per cent of the budget – since military rule ended in 1999 and needs reform.

The 2012 budget allotted 1.6 million naira (\$10,000) per soldier but only 870,000 naira (\$5,400) per police officer (Punch, 2013). At current levels, police colleges “can only turn out demoralised, frustrated and dehumanised policemen”. Many residents accused police of selling informants’ identities to Boko Haram. Given the urgency of the situation, the police are in no fit state to answer the Boko Haram challenge, but to truly achieve stability in the long term, Nigeria will need to address the shambolic state of law enforcement and carry out systematic police reform (Punch, 2013).

Exploring dialogue with the insurgents

From the insurgency’s onset, the government has said it is open to dialogue with Boko Haram, but it has often wavered in seeing this through. At times, officials speak of ongoing indirect negotiations; on other occasions they deny this. On 2 August 2011, the government set up an eight-member committee led by Usman Galtimari, its former envoy to Chad, to study the Boko Haram security challenge and advise on ending the violence. Its report, submitted on 26 September 2011, recommended talks and amnesty for sect members who renounce violence. On 16 September 2011, former President Olusegun Obasanjo held talks in Maiduguri with Boko Haram members, who laid out conditions for a temporary ceasefire. These were and remain an end to arrests and killings of sect members; compensation for families of members killed by security personnel; and prosecution of police responsible for Yusuf’s extrajudicial execution. In a televised interview on 18 November 2012, President Jonathan contradicted repeated claims by officials of behind-the-scene negotiations. On 17 April 2013 and under mounting pressure from northern elites, including the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar, Jonathan set up a 26-member amnesty committee headed by Special Duties Minister Kabiru Tanimu Turaki.

Military operations and civilian vigilantes

Starting in early 2011, the government deployed some 3,600 personnel to Maiduguri and other major north-east towns as part of the Joint Task Force (JTF), a special formation of military, police and SSS units. They were supplemented by small contingents from Chad and Niger, members of a Joint Multi-National Task Force (JMNTF) initially created to combat smuggling (see above). The troops, however, were stretched too thin to control the large region. 203

On 11-12 May 2013, the government sent 2,000 additional troops, accompanied by heavy military equipment including fighter jets, to Maiduguri. On 14 May Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the North East (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe). In a national broadcast, he ordered the troops to “take all necessary action ... [to] end to the impunity of insurgents and terrorists”.

The next day, fighter jets began bombarding Boko Haram camps in northern Borno, and a day later troops sealed parts of the borders with Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Phone networks were taken down on 16-17 May in Yobe and Borno and remain down. On 19 August, a new army division, the 7th, codenamed BOYONA and headed by a major general, took over counterterrorism operations in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Since the operations in Maiduguri have been supported by civilian vigilantes, youths from city neighbourhoods who initially organised themselves into groups to patrol streets in search of Boko Haram. They stormed homes of known, and suspected, members, hacking them to death or manhandling and then handing them over to the military. Armed with machetes, axes, bows and arrows, clubs, swords and daggers, this “Civilian JTF” (CJTF) became instrumental in the anti-insurgent campaign.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion so far, it could be inferred that the inability of the law enforcement agencies to check the supply factors of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) worsened security situation in Nigeria. That the inability of law enforcement agencies to check the supply factors of SALW worsened security situation in Nigeria.

That the inability of the Nigeria borders to deal with the demand factors heightened the proliferation of SALW. Small arms and light weapon had never been considered strategic to global security as have weapons of mass destruction, and they have never been subject to any systematic and traceable transfer regime. This was the case until the end of the cold war, then asymmetric warfare in the world’s walker states, terrorism, drug trafficking, and banditry threatened to tear states apart.

There is no doubt that the accumulation of small arms and their diffusion into society are both causal and symptomatic of the governance. The opportunity cost of arms accumulation is the promotion of sustainable security, based on the provision of basic needs and rights. Finding a common solution to the SALW pandemic, however, is not easy, given the specific status of this category of weapons. SALW may facilitate and exacerbate conflicts and promote banditry, but they do not cause them. Quite unlike the successful campaign to anti-personnel landmines, which are also most unanimously acknowledge as inhumane, it is

practically impossible to ban the production and transfer of SALW.

They perform legitimate functions in the governance process and widely used by the rural community in hunting to supplement the unusually starch based diet in the sub-region. Besides, discourse about SALW invariably touches on state security and national sovereignty. Consequently, in the end, only governments can make and implement agreement on arms transfers. With this in mind, it is imperative that the growing anti-proliferation campaign adopts strategies that be capable of producing results without alienating government a delicate balancing act. Indeed.

Whatever tactics are adopted, however, the objectives should be two fold. Firstly the operators of the SALW pipelines into the sub-regions – cash – strapped rogue exporting states mainly from eastern and central Europe, clandestine western supplier brokers, and private military entrepreneurs –as well as the recyclers and trans-shippers within the sub region itself must be exposed and sanctioned. Secondly, there is a need to combine weapons elimination from society with effective measures to diffuse societal tensions.

Because of this issues effect on development, sustainable security and programming need to confront the challenge of small arms proliferation head on. Limiting illicit arms proliferation and removing excess and potentially destabilizing arms from circulation should be both a security and development priority for the present administration. Small arms initiatives should also be built into security assistance and development programs. Programs that focus on security sector and judicial sector reform must address small arms proliferation and misuse. The United Nations should also support programs that address the demand for weapons.

Such reforms would built public confidence in security, reducing the incentive for people to obtain and keep weapons, and would also help governments and international agencies to incorporate weapons collection programs into peace-building strategies – both as post – conflict disarmament programs as well as long – term projects aiming to remove as many surplus and illegal weapons and ammunition from circulation as possible.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations appear very necessary:

- Intensive policing and efficient monitoring mechanisms of the Nigerian Borders should be enhanced.
- Government should identify the saboteurs in the military and other security agencies.
- Improvement in employment and working conditions of law enforcement agencies.

- National Arms Control Strategy (NACS) and implementation of National policy on SALW should be adopted.
- Conduct Regular Verification Exercise and Record-keeping of weapons in Nigerian Armory.
- Improve Intelligence capacity on the part of Nigerian security agencies.
- Improve National Orientation and Employment opportunities.
- Promote Peace Building Initiatives.
- Robust funding and procurement of modern equipment, Arms and Ammunitions should be enhanced.
- Government should engage the Niger Delta citizens in an objective and win-win dialogue

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