# THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS IN WEST AFRICA AND ITS SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR GHANA

**BY**
**SAMUEL NII APAI ABORHEY**
**(10695460)**

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# DECLARATION

I, Samuel Nii Apai Aborhey, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research work, conducted under the supervision of Dr. Ken Ahorsu. It has never been presented in part or in whole at any other University for a degree. Except for inadvertent omissions, all borrowed sources in the preparation of this work have been duly acknowledged.

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| **SAMUEL NII APAI ABORHEY** | **DR. KEN AHORSU** |
| **(STUDENT)** | **(SUPERVISOR)** |
| **DATE:…….** | **DATE:…….** |

# DEDICATION

*I dedicate this dissertation to my family.*

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AU | - | African Union |
| CHS | - | Commission on Human Security |
| COCOM | - | Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Strategic Controls |
| ECCAS | - | Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOSAP | - | ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme |
| ECOWAS | - | Economic Community of West African States |
| EU | - | European Union |
| FN | - | Forces Nouvelles |
| GAFCSC | - | Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College |
| IDPs | - | Internally Displaced Persons |
| KAIPTC | - | Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre |
| MTCR | - | Missile Technology Control Regime |
| NACSA | - | National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons ( |
| NCSALW | - | National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons |
| NDC | - | National Democratic Congress |
| NGO | - | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NPP | - | New Patriotic Party |
| OAU | - | Organization of African Unity (), now |
| OSCE | - | Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe |
| PCASED | - | Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Program for Coordination and Assistance on Security and Development |
| RMCS | - | Royal Military College of Science |

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|---|---|---|
| RUF | - | Revolutionary United Front |
| SADC | - | Southern Africa Development Community |
| SALW | - | Small Arms and Light Weapons |
| SSA | - | Sub Saharan Africa |
| TRC | - | Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Sierra Leone) |
| UNDP | - | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNSC | - | United Nations Security Council |
| VOA | - | Voice of America |
| WMDs | - | Weapons of Mass Destruction |

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# ABSTRACT

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been a major problem on the African continent for many years. It has been considered as the main driver of conflict on the continent, leading to massive displacement of people, increases in transnational crime, reversing democracy and development, and fueling the increase in criminal behavior in African states. The study is, therefore, an exploration of the proliferation of SALW in Africa, using Ghana as a case study. Relying on the concept of transnational security, the research employs such tools as interviews and extensive literature reviews to unearth the sources of illicit arms and the factors that facilitate proliferation in Ghana, the security implications of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana, and the effectiveness of legislative instruments that have been introduced to address the issue. The study finds that there two main sources of small arms in Ghana: from Local Manufacturers and from Imported Weapons. Factors like porous borders and corruption facilitate the proliferation of SALW in Ghana, leading to such security problems as threats to some aspects of human security, tensions during elections, and the escalation in communal conflicts. The study also finds that the policy interventions by government, including the Arms and Ammunitions Act, as well as the establishment of NACSA have not been effective in addressing the issue, leading several recommendations to address the problem, including intensifying public education and awareness, reviewing outdated legislations, working with the local gun-manufacturers, and providing adequate resources to the regulatory bodies.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

The end of the Cold War created new security issues that are mutually reinforcing: (a) An increase in the number of intrastate conflicts in sub Saharan Africa (SSA) (b) The prevalence of intrastate conflicts also fueled by the prevalence of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in West Africa.[1] The remainder of the stockpiles of arms that were used in the proxy wars in Africa found its way into the theatre of new conflicts. The collapse of the Soviet Bloc saw additional flood of small arms entering Africa as there was a ready market in need for them. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia were dotted with organized crime gangs and demagogue elites that needed arms to carry out their parochial operations.[2]

West Africa grapples with the deleterious effects of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). It is estimated that 8 million firearms are in circulation in the region and 77,000 small arms are in the hands of major West African rebel groups who engage in illicit activities such as drug trafficking, organized crime and illegal exploitation of natural resources.[3] Depending on the type, area of purchase and the seller, small arms can easily be attained. For instance, in conflict zones such as the Mano River, SALWs are readily available and considerably cheaper compared to areas that are more stable. The increased proliferation of firearms in West Africa and the ease with which they are accessed, deepens on individual's tendency to resort to violence as a means of conflict resolution.[4]

SALW proliferation has the potential to consistently instigate violent conflicts in the sub-region which causes massive human and physical destruction, hinders development, impinge on human rights and creates a prolonged atmosphere of instability and insecurity. West Africa has been plagued with waves of conflict and terrorist cells particularly, in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. In Nigeria, the radical Islamist group in the northeastern region, known as Jama'atuAhlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, (Association for Propagating the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), popularly called Boko Haram have been responsible for violent attacks. The group uses "sophisticated weapons", ranging from small arms and heavy artillery and deliberately focus on public and religious spaces. The sub-region is also battling with the issue of nomadic herders and indigenous farmers over scarce pasture and water resources in Ghana, Nigeria, Niger and Mali among others. The herdsmen and farmers use AK-47 and other sophisticated and locally made guns leading to more than 1,700 deaths in Nigeria alone.[5] In Ghana, about 1.1 million small arms are in civilian hands who deploy them for all manner of activities.[6]

Small arm proliferation in West Africa has transit and destination channels. The circulation of these arms is done illegally through cross border activities and is mainly in the hands of local militias, insurgents, criminal organizations and ordinary people. Re-circulation of old weapons accounts for the greatest proportion of firearms proliferation compared to new purchased ones. Remnants of conflicts from countries such as Liberia, Togo, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast increases SALW proliferation due to circulation. The basis of weapon proliferation is due to weak governance, porous borders, poverty, which often breeds criminality among others. Some firearms are manufactured locally; whereas, others are imported illegally into the sub-region. In West Africa, particularly Ghana, mass production of locally made arms has impacted on the proliferation

of SALW in the region.[7] The flow of illegal arms from the above states through civil wars across West and North Africa and criminal gangs apply to Ghana. Locally manufactured arms are equally common in Ghana. An emerging worry is the creation of militias and vigilante groups and the threat they pose to national security, a good case in point is a political violence recorded recently in a bye-election in Accra, Ghana, which has become infamously known as the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election incidence.

Manufacturing of guns in Ghana can be traced to several hundred years when iron working was first introduced. During the pre-colonial and colonial Ghana, guns served different purposes but were mostly deployed in the slave trade. Guns were used to coerce and enslave thousands of people and to force slaves to dig for gold or manufacture more guns. Guns were used in inter-tribal wars and subsequently became important symbols during traditional ceremonies such as festivals, installation of chiefs and funerals of important personalities. Nevertheless, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that gun production was criminalized due to its proliferation which was a source of worry to the colonial powers (the Great Britain and Denmark). Under the pretext of producing gold ornaments, trinkets and basic farm tools, blacksmiths continued to secretly manufacture small arms.[8]

The opening up of the world economy, increasing interconnectedness of people, abundance of information and communication tools has altered the nature, structure and dimensions of illicit arms trade. Arms have moved from manufacturers to extremist groups, rebel groups, secessionist movements, organized gangs who use these arms for to defend themselves against government forces, and/or use it in furtherance of their agenda.

This increase in the importation of SALW, coupled with the continued mass production of locally made arms has led to proliferation of guns in Ghana. In addition to single-barrel guns, pump-action shotguns, double-barrel shotguns, traditional Dane guns and pistols, some blacksmiths are able to manufacture the exact copy of imported AK-47 assault rifles. Crafted guns use available ammunitions which are imported into the country and it is common for gunsmiths to create the appropriate small arms based on the ammunition presented by customer. The most popular types of ammunition in Ghana include caliber cartridges and 12-bore shotgun shells. According to the Ghana Police Service, locally made weapons form about 90 percent of guns used in armed robberies in the country.[9]

The production of small arms by gunsmiths in Kpando, Kumasi, Techiman and Agona Asafo, just to mention a few are prominent sources of arms proliferation in Ghana. SALWs purchased by national security agencies such as the military and the police to be used in line of duty are sold to illegal arms dealers, ethnic militia groups, security entrepreneurs and local smugglers by some corrupt law enforcement and security agents who find this venture profitable. Some Ghanaians residing abroad also smuggle guns by shipping them with their personal effects. These guns are often not registered upon arrival to the country.[10]

Ghana is considered as a stable and democratic country in West Africa with intermittent conflicts in the northern parts of the country. As a result, the proliferation of weapons in the country and within the sub region could potentially be a threat to Ghana's democracy. There have been reported clashes among illegal miners and between anti-galamsey (illegal mining) task force and illegal miners in the country. In 2008, two illegal mining groups engaged in a confrontation which

resulted in nine persons sustaining gunshot wounds in the Upper West Region. In the Eastern Region, a gun battle between members of the anti-galamsey security task force and some illegal miners which led to the death of two people. In recent times, the emergence of political militia groups for the two main opponent political parties in Ghana (the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress) who engage in SALW fueled conflicts. The Eastern Mambas, the Hawks, Kandahar Boys, Azorka Boys, Bolga Bulldogs, Invisible Forces and Delta Forces are a few of the vigilante groups in Ghana.[11]. In most cases, it is almost difficult for these groups to be stopped by the security agencies due to their political affiliations. It is more worrying that, the weapons used by these militia or vigilante groups who also double as land guards are more powerful than the security agencies' weapons.

There have been several attempts at addressing the issue in Ghana, as the government has created policy after policy to ensure that guns are controlled. However, as will be shown in the statement of the research problem, the problem still remains, both in Ghana and in the West African sub-region. Addressing the issue holds the promise of improving both the national security and the human security situation in Ghana and in the West African sub-region.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

West Africa is considered a case of regional security complex because the security profiles of states are linked. A worsening state of security in one state has implications for the rest of the sub-region. This is due to several factors such as porous and weak border controls and gaps in governance and regulatory frameworks in tackling illicit proliferation of SALW. Although noted for its stable democracy in a conflict-prone sub-region, Ghana has become a source, transit and

destination region of illicit arms trafficking. Ghana shares borders with states that are grappling with conflict or just emerged out of conflict and, therefore susceptible to the influx of SALW. Due to the potential threats posed to Ghana's security as a result of SALW proliferation and the need to ameliorate illicit SALW, government created the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCSALW). The NCSALW's mandate is to prevent and combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and related materials in the country through advocacy, public sensitization, and formulation of appropriate policies in close collaboration with stakeholders. However, there is a cause for concern because of several developments.

A baseline research undertaken by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) unearthed that an estimated 2.3 million small arms were in circulation.[12] Almost 50% of the estimated arms in circulation, that is, 1.1 million, were possessed illegally. Out of an estimated 1.2 million registered small firearms in Ghana as of 2018, only 40,000 of holders of these firearms renew their licenses annually.[13] This is compounded because it is difficult to quantify the exact number of craft gun production in Ghana, mainly because it is an illicit activity.[14] At the sub-regional level, activities of armed groups in Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso who use SALW transcends boundaries. A worsening state of security in the countries mentioned above has a rippling effect on Ghana's peace and security.

The issue of the proliferation of SALWs in West Africa is clearly extensive and continually expanding. It has played major roles in the various conflicts in the sub-region, including in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Liberia. Of the many literatures produced by scholars on the issue, literature of the potential national and human security implications of the proliferation of

SALWs in Ghana is scanty and dated. It is, therefore, imperative to explore the potential security implications of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana, and explore the various policy initiatives that government has introduced to solve it, commenting on their effectiveness so far.

## 1.3 Research Objectives

- Explore the sources of SALW proliferation in Ghana
- Explore the security implications of the proliferation of SALW to Ghana
- Explore the various policy initiatives adopted by Ghana to curb SALW proliferation.

## 1.4 Research Questions

- What are the sources of SALW proliferation in Ghana?
- What are the security implications of SALW proliferation to Ghanaian society?
- What has been the response to the proliferation of SALW in Ghana?

## 1.5 Rationale of the Study

The purpose of the study is to unearth the ramifications that small arms proliferation in West Africa has on Ghana's internal security and the preparedness of the country's security architecture to help curb the illicit trafficking of arms. Even though there is extensive literature on small arms and light weapons proliferation in the sub-region, and even in Ghana, there is very little on its actual impact on the national and human security in Ghana.

Research in this area would, amongst other things, inform the Government of Ghana's plans to intervene in this issue in Ghana. A study into the actual impact of the proliferation of small arms

holds the potential to restart the conversation around the dangers of the proliferation of small arms in Ghana, drawing the attention of such bodies as the civil society of Ghana, as well as the relevant government institutions without such insight to really consider and readjust their policies to address the issue accordingly.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study is situated within the conceptual framework of transnational security. A core problem of contemporary international security is the informal and transnational nature of security threats and risks. Scope of contemporary security threats go beyond the realm of nationally-bound state system; and therefore, transcend conventional conceptions of international organization, public legislation and security.[15] Transnational security issues include non-military threats that cross borders and either threaten the political and social integrity of a nation or the health of that nation's inhabitants.[16]

Heightened concern about transnational threats in the late 20th century was a consequence of advances in transportation and telecommunications. Commercial air travel reduced dramatically the time and effort needed for criminal and terrorist networks to move operatives around the globe. Mobile telephones, e-mail and the internet made it much easier for geographically dispersed groups to communicate and coordinate their activities.[17] Transnational security concept was given scholarly attention during the immediate years after the Cold War. The pioneers of this concept are Richard Shultz, Roy Godson and George Quester when they articulated the concept in their seminal work "Security Studies in the 21st Century" in 1997.[18] They defined 'transnational security as a paradigm for understanding the ways in which governments and non-state actors function and

interact within and across state borders and affect the defense of states and their citizens. These threats include religious extremism, international organized crime, illicit trafficking in drugs, arms, humans, piracy, environmental hazards, climate change, infectious disease and illegal migration flows.[19]

The conceptualization of these threats connotes various definitions – depending on the orientation of the scholars. They are usually fuzzy concepts that provoke different definitions. However, some variables remain constant in their definitions. Religious extremism is any form of belief that opposes the rule of law, liberties, mutual respect and tolerance of any other faith.[20] International organized crimes encompasses illicit drug trafficking, illegal migration, piracy and other forms of transnational crime are harmonized through a cabal of governments, pirates, and well-resourced elites who perpetuate crimes that are globalized through legal routes.[21] The cross border flow diseases as it happened in some West and Central African States in the case of Ebola demanded a regime approach to solving these transnational threats. State and non-state actors must be harmonized around a common body rules in attending to transnational threats.

The core assumption of transnational security is globalization. The drivers of globalization in an era of transnationalism are information communication technology. The fourth industrial revolution, according to Klaus Schwab enables individuals and states move between digital domains with its corollary characteristics of data analytics, and artificial intelligence has created a time-space compression where the communication and information gap are bridged. There is availability and easy access to information that enables actors to form dense network to carry out

transnational crimes.[22] Sangiovanni argues that the abatement of the Cold War, expansion in markets, innovations in technology and networks brought it with threats that are transnational.[23] This study acknowledges globalization as an evolving phenomenon. However, the fourth industrial revolution that is catalyzed by cyber innovations, big data, faster internet connectivity, and new media presents bigger threats for nation-states. The transnational security concept is not without criticism. The concept has been critiqued by some scholars as too vague and too narrow, also transnational security proponents fail to take into account state security dichotomies in drafting transnational security plans.[24] Another critique as identified by Didier Bigo. He asserts that... the lack of effective convergence of internal security and international security issues. Bigo explains that the new transnational threats are confined to the expertise of academics and policy makers, and despite its acceptance by political elites it remains a marginal issue on the books of many.[25] "The critiques provided above does provides that the concept of transnational security ought to be strengthened through policy harmonization to capably contend the security threats such as drug trafficking, weapon proliferation, arms smuggling of the globalized Nonetheless, this concept provides a much better analytical framework in shaping this study.

The concept is relevant to the study because Ghana has been a peaceful country and yet there is the inflow of illicit small arms through porous borders from conflict zones which poses grave national and human security challenges like armed robbery, organized crime, terrorism to Ghana. It is also safe to say that, the opening up of the cyber space has provided alternative means through which these crimes are perpetrated. The transnational security concept provides the analytical scope to examine external threats that disrupts ~~o~~ the integrity of the Ghanaian state. The concept also provides possible cases of drafting a security, or strengthening one if there is existing one.

## 1.7 Literature Review

### *1.7.1 Concept of Small Arms and Light Weapons*

In the United Nations' "*International Instrument to Enable State to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons*", Small arms and Light Weapons are defined as "any man portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique small arms and light weapons or their replicas"[26]. Small arms are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns; Light weapons are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include, inter alia, heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 millimetres.[27]

The Royal Military College of Science (RMCS) Handbook on weapons and vehicles defines small arms as follows. "Man portable. Largely shoulder controlled weapon of up to 12.7millimeter (0.5inches) caliber; such weapons generally have a flat trajectory and an effective operational range of 0 to 800 meters although this varies considerably with caliber and weapon type, certain weapons can also provide neutralizing fire up to 1800meters".[28] The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs of US Department of State views SALW. "As encompassing man portable firearms and their ammunition primarily designed for individual use by military forces as lethal weapons". It

further explains that a typical list of small arms would include self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns.[29]

It is evident from the above that there is a lack of consensus in these definitions of SALW. In the views of Honwana and Lamb,

> *"There seems to be a lack of consensus in the literature with respect to identifying a small arm as opposed to a standard conventional weapon. This has led to the formulation of an alternative concept 'light weapons' which emphasizes a more technologically sophisticated category. However, despite the emergence of the light weapons concept, defining small arms still lacks clarity and even the distinction between 'small arms' and 'light weapons' is a matter of debate. There seems to be a certain amount of uncertainty as to where small arms end and light weapons begin or whether there is an overlap between the two."*[30]

Despite the diverse views held by scholars there remains a commonality of characteristics that permeates the various definitions. It is from these characteristics that, the concept of small arms and light weapons can be better understood[31].

### *1.7.2 Concept of Proliferation*

In their work *"Twenty-first century weapons proliferation: are we ready?",* Sokolski & James defines proliferation as the spread of weapons from one group of owners and users to other. They elaborated this subject since they found it to be vertical, as in the case of different actors within states already possessing particular weapons, or lateral where the acquisition involves a spread to states not previously possessing them. However, some might argue that the definition appears to

restrict the concept of proliferation of arms to such states, whereas arms transfers are known to transcend states, groups and individuals, with multifarious modes of transmission. Acquisition of small arms can be transacted through official channels or, through covert, clandestine or black-market networks.[32]

In their article "*Globalization and the Kalashnikov: Public-Private Networks in the Trafficking and Control of Small Arms*", Bolton *et. al* stress proliferation of arms is facilitated by certain intermediaries based on legal or illegal demands coming from particular lawless or restricted environments. The Geneva based organization, *'Small Arms Survey'* maintains, that "SALW do not proliferate themselves… rather, they are sold, resold perhaps stolen, diverted and maybe legally or illegally transferred several times. People-brokers, insurgents, criminals, government officials and or organized groups are active participants in the circulation of these firearms.[33] The United Nations (UN) acknowledges that massive acquisition and accumulation of arms increases proliferation. It noted in the report by the panel of Government Experts on Small Arms, that:

> *"The mere accumulation of weapons is not sufficient criterion by which to define an accumulation of weapons as excessive or destabilizing, since large numbers of weapons that are under the strict control of a responsible state do not necessarily lead to violence. Conversely, a small number of weapons can be destabilizing under certain conditions".*[34]

The SALW in government stock meant for responsible use by the military for the defense of the state and safeguarding of citizens constitutes legal holdings. There are three broadly established and conventional modes of transferring arms. Legal transfer of arms conforms to all legal formalities usually from one state actor to another or their accredited agents. The second and third

avenue is what have been dubbed grey channels or covert transfers. Grey channels, according to Pearson are arrangements by which government officials arrange through third parties for arms to be sent to foreign group and countries for profit, strategic calculation or both, while black market transfers involve "unlawful transfers by private arms dealers and smugglers.[35]

### *1.7.3 Types of SALW in West Africa*

In his work, '*Balance of Terror, Rival Militias and Vigilantes in Nigeria' Harnischfeger,"*[36] SALW in West Africa is grouped into two extensive categories which are locally manufactured SALW and imported SALW. Local SALWs comprises small bombs, firearms and grenades whereas imported SALWs include missile systems, rocket launchers, revolvers, light machine guns, pistols with automatic loading among others. About eight million SALW used in West Africa are produced locally[37]. Nonetheless, the production level differs across ECOWAS states. Pistols, short, long and double barrel guns are the most common types of guns manufactured in West Africa.[38]

Militant groups and criminal gangs are known to mostly use imported and smuggled firearms from gun producing countries like the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) comprising fifty-seven states[39]. The types of firearms commonly smuggled into the region and used by non-state actors are self-loading guns, pump action guns, AK-47, assault rifles and revolvers. Proven evidence has shown that pump action, AK-47 and sub machine guns are popular used in ECOWAS states with AK-47 being the most preferred weapon. In the cities of Cotonou, Seme and Parakou in Benin, AK-47 and M16 guns are used for armed robbery; between 1955 and 2004, pistols and revolvers were the most popular 400,000 small arms which were registered by

the private citizens in Ghana and Ak-47, long rifles and local pistols are preferred in Togo and Burkina Faso.[40]

There has been consistent smuggling of arms into the ECOWAS region which has heightened the already existing problem. An estimated, 93,000 firearms are kept privately by the citizens. Between 2005 and 2010, a handful of Kalashnikov rifles, Berretta guns, AK-47 and 28 long pistols were seized from private hands. In 2009, 10,000 ammunitions and 400 pistols were seized and these were only a portion of the reported 60,000 guns kept by non-state actors in Togo as at March 2011. Nigeria found 13 loaded containers with 120mm, 80mm, and 60mm mortars, 107mm rockets and small arms ammunition at a port in Lagos.[41] More arms are likely to be trafficked into the region than the states are able to destroy or seize. Although small arms are used by only one-person, light weapons are intended to be used by a group of people. Light weapons are deadlier and bigger and are not manufactured in West Africa. They are mainly imported into the sub-region and include anti-tank missile launchers, grenade launchers, anti-aircraft missile launchers, anti-aircraft cannons, non-recoil guns among others.[42]

### *1.7.4 Sources of SALW in West Africa*

SALW are smuggled into West Africa from diverse categorized sources such as: 1) domestic (arms produced or proliferated within a given country); 2) regional (arms trafficked from one ECOWAS country to another); 3) continental (arms trafficked into West Africa from other parts of Africa); and 4) non-African sources (arms trafficked from other parts of the world into West Africa. A large number of unsophisticated small arms are produced by and purchased from local blacksmiths form the region, particularly, from Ghana. Manufactured pistols from Ghanaian blacksmiths are

sold for as low asUS$2[43]. Due to the vigorous production of firearms by 500 known blacksmiths, Ghana was projected to have from 35,000 to 40,000 illegally manufactured guns in five of its previous ten regions (Ghana currently has sixteen regions). This figure excludes apprentices who produce guns under supervision. Taking into account that Ghana has not experienced any conflict or violence that requires the use of arms on a large scale, Ghanaian arms are most likely trafficked to conflict prone areas in the region.[44]

Production of arms are also high in Nigeria, Benin and other countries in West Africa. There are roughly about one to three million circulation of SALW in Nigeria. National Commission on SALW in Benin noted an upsurge in the production of arms in the country from 264 to 355 since 2006. This shows a yearly increase of 5.6 percent in Benin's arms manufacturing. Locally manufactured arms and sophisticated arms that are stolen from the state or imported, are easily proliferated within West Africa. There are indications that military personnel organize and carry out the theft of sophisticated weapons which are usually sold to criminal and extremists' group. For instance, in 2008, six Nigerian soldiers were sentence to life imprisonment for selling over 700 different types of arms without authorization[45]. The arms, worth more than 100 Naira million were sold to the Niger Delta militants. Further, police barracks and police officers have been raided by armed gangs solely for the collection of weapons.[46]

Armaments are trafficked into Mali and Niger from Chad, Libya, Nigeria, Algeria and Burkina Faso including Somalia and Sudan. Weapons that were hoarded by rebels during the Sierra Leonean and Liberian wars are illegally moved throughout the Mano River region. The illegal route may necessitate several modes of transports which involves land and sea points such as

footpaths, rivers and creeks from one country or region to the other.[47] The arms are usually hidden in iced fish cartons, coffins, paint buckets, cement bags and under car seats during trans-border trips by road. Illicit guns are smuggled into Benin from South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. Additionally, some tourists also bring in small arms which are unlawful[48]. There have been cases of illegal firearms that have been seized by the authorities disappearing without trace. Externally, the main countries from which SALW are used in Ivory Coast are USA (41%), Britain (19.5%), Russia (17.5%), France (7%), and China (5%).[49]

### *1.7.5 Actors Responsible for illicit SALW Trafficking in West Africa*

The primary actors responsible for SALW proliferation in West Africa are leaders of rebel groups/insurgent that were formed based on political reasons; criminal gangs security and law enforcement operatives; international oil merchants, politicians, drug traffickers, commercial arms dealers and ethnocentric or sectarian community leaders or warlords[50] In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, local and state politicians, oil merchants, local oil racketeers and security agents are the main culprits in the smuggling of SALW[51]. According to National Commission on SALW in Togo traffickers of armaments are between 20 to 40 years. During the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the late 1990s, the key arms smugglers were security agents, international firearms brokers, rebel leaders, local manufacturers. Regardless of the destination of their operations, these traffickers operate in group, like some sort of association.[52]

Illegal arms dealers in West Africa are largely not prosecuted successfully. Even in cases where ammunitions/arms have been detected, the cases are often not pushed legally to punish offenders **a**nd in most cases the authorities do not bother to investigate. A plausible example is in 2013 when

Conflict Armament Research, a UK based NGO that monitors the movement of arms identified 10 cases of the circulation of ammunitions in illegal markets through a released report. The ammunitions were traced to nine countries– Cote d' Ivoire, the DRC, Guinea, Niger, Kenya, South Sudan, Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda. Nevertheless, none of these countries questioned the findings, made an effort to validate to persecute the perpetrators or nullify the research findings.[53] This could be due to corruption, weak governance structures, and economic interests of political parties.[54]

### *1.7.6 Funding and Proceeds of Illicit Firearms Trafficking*

SALW smuggling and proliferation plays a prominent role in generating money through criminal activities such as the kidnapping of civilians, drug trafficking, illegal mining and export of solid minerals, oil bunkering and illegal sale of cash crops. Like cocoa, kola, coffee. It also includes, money from politicians used in arming the youths for political reasons (common in Nigeria); firearms dealers who directly fund firearms smuggling for purely commercial reasons and funds from community leaders, used in financing communal conflicts (common with rebel groups in Niger and Mali)[55]. On the shorelines of Niger Delta, militants engage in barter trade criminal dealers by exchanging stolen oil for weaponry. Even though the introduction of an amnesty program by the government restricted such exchanges, firearm trafficking is reportedly flourishing in the region.[56]

Cote d' Ivoire produces 30 percent of the world's cocoa. The government and rebels during the 2000-2004 Ivorian crisis are reported to have partly funded their purchased armaments by selling stolen cocoa. 300,000 tons of cocoa which represented 20 to 25 percent of the country's total cocoa production were smuggled out of the country. According to a Global Witness report in 2007, rebel

groups gained more than 15 billion CFA (more than USD30 million) annually from unlawful cocoa trade, beginning in 2004. The rebel groups also procured funding from illicit export of other natural resources which includes diamonds, cashew nuts, wood and cotton.[57]

Rebels in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the civil wars in the late 1990s extracted diamonds through illegal mining in order to make money for arms purchases during the civil wars in both countries. About 250-300 million USD worth of diamonds were produced between 2001 and 2006. However, the official figure was USD26-125 million. The difference was cornered by armed groups and used to purchase weapons, fund their operations, and enrich their leaders. Undeniably, various testimonies in Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) confirmed that, earnings from trade in gold, diamond and other natural resources were used to facilitate illegal arms importation into the country during the civil war. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) gained between USD25-125 million yearly as proceeds from illicit trade in diamond during the civil war. A portion of the funds was used to purchase ammunitions, weapons, equipment and food.[58]

### *1.7.7 Impact of SALW Trafficking and Proliferation in West Africa*

Isumonah[59] argues that social unrest, communal violence and civil wars that involve heavy use of arms have inflicted intense human and material wounds in West Africa. An estimated 2.2 million loss of lives were recorded in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and other countries in West Africa through civil wars. In only the Sierra Leonean civil war, 30,000 people were amputated and more than 200,000 women were victims of sexual violence[60]. These numbers do not include the

women who refuse to reports cases of sexual violence due to the loss of trust in the state to protect them.[61]

By the same token, there has been a huge collateral damage due to high usage of SALW in conflict prone zones in West Africa. This is evidenced in the countless forced displacement, countless deaths, and no healthcare access among others. The destruction of communities and properties; loss of income; deprivation of right to family; psychological trauma and creation of a large number of refugees who are dependent on humanitarian aid are serious effect of SALWs fueled conflicts. Resettling refugees and internal displaced persons in disposed conflict areas are almost unachievable. Many displaced persons during the civil war in Sierra Leone became homeless and economically and socially perplexed. "Accordingly, the extent of small arms-related devastation dwarfs that of all other weapons systems- and in most years greatly exceeds the toll of the atomic bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as weapons of mass destruction."[62]

As of March 2011, refugees fleeing the fighting in the second Ivorian Civil War entered Ghana. In total, some 116,000 Ivoirians fled to eight West African countries, including Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Liberia, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Ghana received 3,129 new refugees, mainly from the Ivorian capital of Abidjan and its suburbs. 5,778 refugees fled from Liberia to Nigeria in 2010. Thousands of Nigerians were internally displaced, at frequent intervals, due to religious and communal conflicts in mainly north-central and north-eastern parts of the country. Moreover, governance systems have been in shambles with the populace losing confidence in them due to SALW-fueled conflicts. More importantly, SALW trafficking and proliferation has not been

curbed. This continues to pose serious threats to the rule of law and economic growth and development in West Africa.[63]

## 1.8 Sources of Data and Methodology

The research is an exploratory research that employs qualitative research methods to analyze its findings to arrive at a viable conclusion. The choice of this methodological approach is informed by the nature of the study which mandates the researcher to undertake an in-depth assessment of the state of the proliferation of SALWs in Ghana.

Data gathered for this study are of both primary and secondary data. Secondary data sources are primarily gathered through extensive literature review, the use of official documentation from government agencies and sub-regional organizations, including the Ministry of the Interior, the Ghana National Commission for Small Arms and Light Weapons, Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Center, and ECOWAS. Other secondary sources of data include the library resources of the University of Ghana, including the Balme Library and the LECIAD Library.

The primary data would be sourced through semi-structured interviews, conducted with purposively sampled experts in the areas of International and national Security, National Security, Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation, and so on. The purposive sampling method is utilized because of the specialized nature of the research, which requires specialized scholars that the researcher has access to. Some snowball sampling is also used to identify potential human resources and scholars that the researcher was previously not privy to. Some respondents interviewed for the purpose of the study includes, Dr. Vladimir Antwi-Danso, Dean of Students,

Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFSC); Dr. Kwesi Aning, Director of Academic Research, Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Center (KAIPTC); Mr. John Pokoo, Head of Conflict Management, (KAIPTC); Mr. Peter Nantuo, Volta Regional Commander of the Ghana Immigration Service; and Mr. Gyebi Asante, Senior Programmes officer of the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms. Some information were also gathered from respondents who would prefer to remain anonymous which, in line with the ethical considerations established under University of Ghana research, was duly respected by the research.

The data collected during the interview, through thorough transcription to fish out the vital data for the study, is analyzed within the framework of transnational security. The analyzed data informs the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## 1.9 Limitations of the Study

During the conduct of the study, it faced a few obstacles that, even though served as limitations against the conduct of the study, did not impact the viability of the findings, its conclusions or recommendations. The limitations of the study are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

The study was limited by the amount of time and financial resources available for the conduct of the study. Even though the researcher was faced with strict time constraints, having to pair the conduct of the study with academic work and examination over a space of a few months, in addition to the very little financial allowance for the conduct of the study, the researcher still managed to conduct the study pristinely to arrive at relevant conclusions and recommendations that are achievable.

Again, some resources contacted for interviews for the conduct of the study failed to respond, thereby, depriving the researcher of potential information sources that could have positively impacted the conduct of the research. The resources that responded and granted interviews, however, proved adequate and proved valuable information that informed the conduct of the study.

## 1.10 Arrangement of Chapters

The work is organized into four main chapters.

Chapter one is the introduction. It provides a background to the study, a statement of the research problem, the research objectives and questions, as well as the rationale of the study. This chapter also reviews pertinent literature on small arms and light weapons, and its proliferation in the West African sub-region. It explains the conceptual framework that is used in the study, as well as the study's methodology.

Chapter two presents an overview of illicit arms trade in Africa, and West Africa specifically, providing the necessary background to situate a discussion of the proliferation of illicit arms trade in Ghana.

Chapter three is the empirical chapter, providing a discussion on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and its security implications for Ghana.

Chapter four summarizes the findings of the study. Based on the findings, a conclusion and recommendations are provided at the end of the chapter.

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# CHAPTER TWO

# OVERVIEW OF ILLICIT ARMS TRADE IN AFRICA

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter conducts an in-depth overview of illicit arms trade in West Africa. To this end, the chapter presents a brief overview of legal and illegal arms trade in Africa. On this foundation, illegal arms trade in West Africa is explored, giving special attention to where the arms come from, who is buying them and for what reason, along with measures to remedy the crisis in the world, the African continent, and the West African sub-region. The chapter caps off with an overview of illicit arms trade in Ghana.

## 2.1 Cold War and Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

Mark Phythian attributed the demand for arms at the state level through illicit channels to post-1945 world actions such as the application of embargoes or restrictions on the flow of certain categories of equipment to target states.[1] These actions served as Cold War foreign policy tools for states like the United States of America and the Soviet Union. For instance, Western powers, during this era, established the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Strategic Controls (COCOM), which was responsible for restricting the export of wide-ranging military and related equipment to the Eastern Bloc. It is, however, important to note that up until the 1950s, trade in illicit arms was restricted to light weapons, with the "zero sum nature of the Cold War calculations [pointing to the belief] that the vacuums into which illicit arms will flow rarely emerged".[2] It was the application of international arms embargo on South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as the

outbreak of the Biafran War in the 1960s which fueled the development of a growing trade in illicit arms, components and technology in Africa.[3]

During the Cold War, arms served as valuable currency for strengthening rebel groups. This tactic, even in instances where rebel groups had very little chance of success, served as a tool to ensure that the rebels continue to be a nuisance for the target government.[4] For instance, the US supply of arms to Chinese nationalists in Burma in 1949, and the US supply of arms to the anti-Sukarno forces in Indonesia in the late 1950s, amongst others, only sought to ensure continued uprising against non-democratic governments. In Africa, Eastern European arms were smuggled into states like Congo and Mozambique through other African states including Egypt, Algeria, Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania to further the activities of rebel groups against their central governments[5]. Illicit arms trading in the Cold War and the post-Cold War era, however, differ when one considers the nature of the trade in both periods. During the Cold War, it was relatively easy for interested parties to acquire weapons, and, in some cases, weapons were provided for subversive activities by the two Great Powers in the Cold War, namely, the United States and the Soviet Union, towards achieving their ends, as has been explained in the previous paragraphs.[6] In the post-Cold War era, however, there are two parallel developments in respect of the illicit arms trade. The first is heightened regional conflict, which comes with its increased arms embargoes, thereby increasing the need for the parties in the conflict to engage in illicit arms trade.[7] The second is that the Cold War depoliticized illicit arms trade, and, thereby, creating the necessary political space to address the issue.[8] However, despite the latter development, some states and governments, still support the illegal arms trade sector within their borders. This gives them the capital and the weapons to fight their wars to achieve their own ends.

Among the reasons why the illicit arms trade has been particularly difficult to fight in the post-Cold War era is the fact that Western governments, who share some of the blame for beginning the phenomenon in many countries in and outside Africa, have largely relied on supply-side control of the illicit arms trade even though they condemn them constantly. There are also issues of questionable companies engaging in licensed production of firearms across the world with no say by host governments as to where the goods end up. This, in addition to the fact some western governments actually want the trade to continue as to end it would bring into question some of their own practices in the "legal" arms trade spectrum, have contributed immensely to the difficulty in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the world.[9]

## 2.2 Post-Cold War Era, New Wars and Illicit Proliferation of SALW

The post-Cold War era brought with it several phenomena, including globalization and the new wars. These new phenomena have affected the proliferation of SALW both positively and negatively. These are explored in this section.

Globalization can be defined as "the diminution or elimination of state-enforced restrictions on exchanges across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a result." [10] What globalization essentially does is advocating for free market forces and open trade, leading to the elimination of customs barriers and regulations, tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and other forms of trade liberalizing measures. These conditions, however, creates the avenue for illegal trade in arms to thrive.[11] With dwindling percentages of container checks, coupled with the increasing abilities of smugglers to fake documents required in the shipment procedures like the bill of lading and end-user certificates, it

has become easier for black market traders in small arms to conduct their business.[12] This, for instance, was demonstrated in 2002 when traffickers were able to smuggle about 5000 AK-47s from the Yugoslavian army stock to Liberia, under the guise of a legal transaction with Nigeria[13]. The prevalence of black-market fuels conflict and creates conditions for terrorist cells in countries such as Nigeria and the Sahel regions of West Africa.

Political and economic integration institutions, including the various regional integration communities in Africa such the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), have also instituted lesser restrictions on the movement of people between member states, creating the perfect conditions for small arms and light weapons to move between states unchecked, using escape to non-extradition countries as a means of getting away with their crimes.[14]

Again, banking reforms and the increasing ease of capital mobility has aided in the expansion of illicit arms trading around the world.[15] The international financial market is very well linked due to globalization, creating new opportunities for monies used in the illegal arms trade to easily flow from one state to the other, as well as creating offshore markets and tax shelters through banking regulations. An example of some innovations making illegal arms trading easier is e-money.[16] The ability to digitize money provides avenues for money to be carried from one location to the other quite easily, as well as proving to be quite an effective tool in barter trade. Linked to e-money is e-banking, which has allowed for sinister activities like money laundering, and credit card fraud, linked to the illegal arms trade, to be carried out with ease.[17]

Other contributors to the proliferation of illicit arms as a result of globalization include the improvements in global communication, which has allowed for arms dealers to communicate with each other across very long distances; and the expansion of commercial airlines and the freight industry, which has allowed for the possible movements of large shipments of guns and ammunitions into conflict zones; and so on.

Another major effect of globalization has been the advent of "New Wars", which are markedly different from wars of the 20th Century.[18] According to Mary Kaldor, such wars typically take place in authoritarian states that have been weakened as a result of opening up to the international system (globalization).[19]As both a cause and consequence of the new wars, there is generally a break down in clear distinctions between state and non-state, public and private, external and internal, economic and political, and even war and peace.[20] As Mark Pythian puts it, there is a "blurring of the distinctions between war, organized crime, and large-scale violations of human rights", as well as the involvement of several transnational connections which blurs the boundaries between internal and external, and aggression and repression.[21]

In accounting for the difference between the wars of the 20th Century (old wars) and the new wars, it is essential to look at the stark distinctions that can be found in terms of actors, goals, methods and forms of finance. Actors in old wars were regular armed forces of the states, whiles new wars employ a varying combination of networks of state and non-state actors. New wars employ the regular armed forces, in addition to private security contractors, mercenaries, jihadists, paramilitary groups, war lords, and so on. The goals of old wars were largely along the lines of geopolitical interests and ideology. However, new wars are mostly fought along identity political

lines, aiming to gain access to the state for a particular group in the state instead of pursuing policies and programs in the broader national interest. Old war methods involved battles and capturing territories through military means. However, new wars rarely battle, as territory is captured through political means (controlling the population). One of such means is population displacement, where those with dissenting views or different identities are forcibly removed from the state or from one part of the state to another. Finally, as opposed to the state-financed old wars through taxation or outside patrons, new wars largely rely on private financing such as looting and pillaging, taxing humanitarian aid, Diaspora support, kidnapping for ransom, smuggling commodities for sale on the black market, etc. These methods are utilized by new wars economies because they are mostly weak states with falling tax revenues. According to Mary Kaldor, "new wars are a part of an open globalised decentralized economy in which participation is low and revenue depends on continued violence."[22]

Especially for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the impact of these new wars in terms of the proliferation of illicit trade in SALW has been great. The regionalization of these new wars on the continent has made the application of arms embargoes difficult to apply, as porous borders make it easy for states to find various new ways to smuggle illicit arms in and out of conflict zones on the continent.[23]For example, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) brought out several embargo-beating routes into the country, which was utilized by neighboring states such as Angola, Chad, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe to smuggle guns into the conflict zone.[24]

The increase in arms embargoes has also been attributed to the proliferation of SALW in Africa, even though in the wake of the regionalized nature of these new wars, arms embargoes have been

proven to be less effective than it was during the Cold War era.[25]The application of UN, OSCE, EU, and others' embargoes has created "the necessary preconditions for illicit arms trade to thrive, [as] embargoes are the life-blood of the illicit arms trade".[26]Because these states and parties in the conflict have been barred from buying guns openly, they have resorted to relying on the black market to get the weapons they need for their wars, thereby leading to a proliferation of illicit SALW on the continent.[27]

## 2.3 Licit Arms Trade in [West] Africa

Although statistics differ, global SALW trade is worth an estimated US$ 3-10 billion.[28] National regulations are largely responsible for facilitating arms trading, relying mostly on export and import licensing.[29] In Africa, for instance, South African arms exporting companies are required to apply for sales transactions, as well as a license to market and export military.

On the whole, the trend is that commercial arms are licensed by the importing and exporting governments. The export license usually requires end user certificates signed by the governments of the importing states. There are, however, exemptions to this rule across the globe, where states like Canada do not require export license to transact with the United States in arms trading. Also, arms trade between governments does not require licenses.[30]

International law is usually enforced in cases of arms trade between or with states with arms embargoes on them. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and other international organizations, in addition to individual great powers like the United States of America (USA), the

United Kingdom (UK), Germany and others can impose arms embargoes on other states for a myriad of reasons bordering on human rights abuses, suspicion of terrorism, suspected support of guerilla activities, amongst others.[31] There are also numerous international regimes that govern the export of different types of arms and technology that could be used to produce arms or Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). These regulations, such regimes include, Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) or the Nuclear Suppliers Group, make it extremely difficult, almost impossible, to produce or distribute the technology that would make it easier for such weapons to be produced. Regimes that regulate the trading of small arms are rarer.[32]

The UN protocol against the illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components, and Ammunitions, introduces some minimum standards for the legal trade in small arms. The UN Protocol addresses the transit systems, focusing on governments' requirement of exchange documents whenever arms shipment enter, transit or leave the country, thereby creating documentary evidence of the transaction and the movement of the arms.[33] It also requires states to mark indelibly firearms, and enforcement of sanctions in case of violation of the Protocol's stipulations.[34] State parties to the UN Protocol are obliged to comply with documentation requirements such as invoices, air waybills, letters of credit, customs entries, delivery receipts, flight plans, shipper's certificates for dangerous goods, and transfer manifests. Falsification of these documents is considered criminal.

There have been other multinational mechanisms to check international arms trade, significant of which is the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Transfer. The Code has two vital elements: the first is that states consult and inform each other when providing licenses for arms transferred. The second

is a non-binding code of conduct in which EU member states agree not to export arms according to certain criteria, including human rights abuses, prolonged armed conflict, or disturbing regional peace and security.[35]

## 2.4 Illicit Arms Trade in [West] Africa

This section presents an overview of the proliferation of illicit arms in Africa with emphasis on the West African sub-region, focusing, among others, on the sources of the illicit arms that are in circulation on the continent and the sub-region.

Illegal arms trading in the world, according to the Small Arms Survey, is worth over a billion United States Dollars, representing between 10-20 percent of global trade.[36] Because of the illicit nature of this trade, it is very difficult to confirm these estimates. Very few countries in Africa have the capacity to produce arms. Out of these countries, South Africa tops the list with less than ten weapons manufacturing companies as at the early 2010s.[37] Even with the few weapons that are produced in Africa, regulations around its dissemination are so tight that citizens rarely get the chance to use weapons manufactured by their own states, or on the continent. Because so few countries in Africa have the capacity to produce weapons, the question then remains, "where do the arms involved in the illicit trade come from?". The answer to this question requires delving into the sources of arms in Africa, as is done in the following paragraphs.

Linda Darkwa, in her work "The Challenge of sub-Regional Security in West Africa: The Case of the 2006 ECOWAS Convention in Small Arms and light Weapons", identifies three main sources of small arms in Africa. They are; Existing Stocks that are Recycled, New Imports, and Local

Production. The sources of SALW discussed in the paragraphs that follow can all be grouped under these three main sources.[38]

Major sources of SALW in Africa are government-produced arms.[39] Guns produced by African manufacturers regulated by host governments rarely find their way onto the black market because of the heightened security around possessing such guns. However, despite all the security, small arms produced by African manufacturers can sometimes find their way onto the black market through stealing from government forces or looting from state armories. Corrupt politicians and military officials also sell small arms and light weapons to willing buyers on the black market within African states. In other instances, private gun owners are robbed of their guns, while peacekeepers are also relieved of their arms by force. There have also been some instances where peacekeepers have willingly sold their weapons. These arms often end up in rebels' arsenals to propagate violence.

Another major source of SALW are rebels and other armed groups.[40] For instance, small arms trade in Somalia is usually between Somali militias in the local black markets. There is also unauthorized gun production by local gunsmiths. In Ghana, unlicensed gunsmiths have the capacity to produce about 200,000 guns a year, most of which are of similar quality to factory-produced guns.[41] These weapons are often traded between individuals, and can potentially end up in rebel arsenal in neighboring countries.

Governments and armed groups in states bordering conflict-ridden countries are also sources of illicit small arms.[42] Schroeder argues that it is because conflicts in African states usually quickly

turn into regional wars. Consequently, neighboring states sometimes provide material support to rebels or governments or other parties in the conflict, sometimes in the form of small arms.[43] This, however, contributes to the circulation of illicit arms as witnessed in countries such as Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Liberia, Sudan, and Sierra Leone.

There are also instances of cross-border arms trafficking by members of armed groups due to inefficient border patrols and porous borders.[44] An instance is Liberian rebels crossing the porous borders to Cote d'Ivoire to trade in small arms and light weapons during times of conflict in both states. The Forces Nouvelles (FN) in Cote d'Ivoire also smuggled guns into Ghana and Mali to trade for food, medical supplies and clothing.[45] Traffickers also come from beyond the continent- Europe, North and South America as, according to Shroeder most of the illicit arms used in African states come from countries like China, Israel, and more than 20 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) member states.[46] They are supplies from the "massive sanctions-busting shipments organized by the so-called merchants of death – the globe-trotting arms brokers who specialize in clandestine delivery of weapons to war zones and dictators."[47] Shipments like these, according to the UN, have ended up in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The largest source of illicit small arms in Africa is, however, from during the Cold War era in the 1970s and the 1980s, shipped into the continent by the Soviet Union, the United States and their allies to instigate their proxy wars on the continent.[48] The small arms and light weapons that were shipped into African states to fight in the proxy wars, fell into the hands of civilians and rebel groups due to several reasons. These include the breakdown of state structures, lack of control over

state armories, and poor service conditions of the military which compelled some personnel them to adopt corrupt including the illicit sale of arms for survival.[49]

West Africa is plagued with the proliferation of SALW. For a region that is largely considered unstable, generally due to the activities of terrorists and rebel groups in countries like Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali, illicit weapons trade seriously compounds its problems. According to Alex Vines, conflicts in West Africa have been fueled by unemployment amongst the youth, as well as easy access to light weapons and small arms.[50] Estimates show that illicit small arms and light weapons in West Africa number over eight million. It is estimated that about a million of these weapons are in Nigeria alone.

The estimated number of SALW in circulation, however, may have reduced over the years due to improved mechanisms to retrieve illicit SALW and the dwindling numbers of insurgents that actually use these small arms.[51] Alex Vines claims that the level of violence in the sub-region is perpetrated by fewer weapons being used by thousands of people.[52]

The proliferation of illicit arms in the West African sub-region is made possible by much of the same reasons as has been discussed earlier on the sources of small arms in Africa. Past and current conflict zones, corrupt law enforcement and military personnel, and the growing artisan production from countries like Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria all contribute immensely to the proliferation of illicit arms and light weapons in the sub-region.[53] Again, just like in Africa as a whole, smuggling is an efficient means of making sure that these arms get to their destinations, and, for the West African sub-region, established trade routes that existed long before independence, are being used

to traffic these weapons efficiently. This is made easier by the ineffectiveness of law enforcement officials and porous borders in West African states.

## 2.5 Proliferation of SALW and its Security Implications for [West] Africa

Africa as a continent faces many issues with which it battles every day. One of such battles is the impact of SALW proliferation on the security of the continent. The consequences of this phenomenon is seen and heard on the news in Africa every day, as individuals, specific groups or an entire country or region on the continent faces challenges and complications that have been sourced through the continued proliferation of SALW among various parties in a conflict or individuals for protection, thus leading to a continued cycle of SALW proliferation on the continent.

"The persistence and complications of wars in Africa are partially due to small arms proliferation."[54] The full impact of the proliferation on Africa due to international conflicts, rebel group activity, mercenary groups and armed gang activities have yet to be measured, however, armed conflict in Africa is said to cost the continent about 18 billion US Dollars each year, and about 300 billion US Dollars between 1990 and 2005. Suring this period, 23 of the 55 African states experienced armed conflict, including Algeria, Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, and so on.[55]

Although the proliferation of small arms and light weapons makes a lot of money for manufacturers and dealers, it heavily disadvantages the African continent and the people on it, largely because of the lack of accountability on the continent about the manufacture, sale and use

of small arms and light weapons on the continent.[56] Governments outside of the African continent, such as Russia, China, the United States and the United Kingdom export the weapons onto the continent but does not reflect very much on how these weapons are utilized on the continent. Their weapons, thus, contribute immensely to the abuse of human rights in Africa and elsewhere, as they are sold to irresponsible governments who lose them to corrupt individuals in the state or are used by the governments themselves on their citizens to get them to submit.[57]

Essentially, therefore, the biggest threat that the continent faces with the proliferation of firearms and light weapons on the continent is the use of these weapons in armed conflict, whereby countries such as DRC, Nigeria, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, and so on have greatly been affected by.[58] Again, transnational crimes, which is crimes that are committed across borders in two or more countries, are a great risk, as some of these guns are smuggled into other territories and used to destabilize governments and affect the security of the people living in them.[59] Other potential impacts of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa is its tendency to propagate communal conflicts and allow it to fester, reverse the development of the state through civil wars, and unravel the democracy of African states by destabilizing its electoral processes.[60]

The proliferation of SALW, largely as a result of the surplus arms that fueled the Cold War proxy wars between the Soviet Union and the United States, the increased flow of weapons from Central and Eastern Europe, the loosening of control of arms industry as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union[61], the accelerated pace of globalization which facilitated both legal and illegal cross-border trade in arms[62], and an up-surge in intra-state conflicts which created a demand for the SALW, has negatively impacted the security situation in West Africa.[63] Among the various

security impacts of the SALW proliferation on the West African sub-region are opportunities for money laundering activities and terrorist financing, electoral violence, civil wars, and a reverse of development as a result of the previous security impacts.

### *2.5.1 Civil Wars*

Conflicts after the Cold War has, among others, been fueled by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons like hand guns, carbines and assault rifles.[64] This is because they are cheap, accessible, durable, and lightweight. It has transformed the state of warfare into an anarchic form from its formal uniform-wearing format, making it easier for groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Qaeda in Mali and Burkina Faso to easily attack state actors. This has become the nature of modern warfare as states fight against non-state actors, made easier by the proliferation of small arms acquired through illicit trade.

In West Africa, armed conflict assumed an endemic proportion since the early 1990s, affecting countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone.[65] These countries came to the point of collapse after their civil wars. The impact of the Liberian violence alone caused devastation and conflicts for neighboring states in the Mano River area like Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ivory Coast where much of the violence spread to.[66] Countries like Ghana have managed to maintain its general stability in terms of security within the West African sub-region despite the proliferation of SALW since the end of the Cold War. Using Liberia and Sierra Leone as case studies, the impact of SALW on the security of the countries in the sub-region is explored in the following paragraphs.

Liberia was founded in 1987 and serves as Africa's oldest republic. It served very important roles in international politics, serving as one of the founding members of the League of Nations and a very influential party in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU).[67] The country maintained strong relations with the United States, leading to several diplomatic benefits as the establishment of the Voice of America (VoA) transmitters in its territories, the establishment of a regional maritime navigational station within its borders, as well as granting staging rights to the United States Military.[68]

These deepening relations with the United States who used to be its oppressors, created such radical thinkers like Samuel Doe who relied on populist emancipation reforms, and, upon gaining power, turned to despotism, arbitrariness and policies that were contrary to his ideals. These issues, in addition to worsening economic conditions, created the opportunity for about six separate coups attempts to overthrow his administration that failed. With the end of the Cold War and the withdrawal of US support for Doe's administration, his seeds of ethnic alienation bore seeds of disgruntled groups who were easily swayed by a young Charles Taylor, who eventually played a significant role in the Civil Wars that broke out in the country. Similarly, the Sierra Leonean civil war also saw the impact of the proliferation of SALW to perpetuate a conflict and worsen it, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), with support from Liberia's Charles Taylor, fought to prevent the overthrow of Joseph Momoh, the leader of Sierra Leone at the time.

Before the start of both conflicts, the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the West African sub-region was already a topical issue of concern in maintaining regional security.[69] However, due to the problems of porous borders, a lack of political will to tackle the

situation, and the absence of effective regional mechanisms to address the situation saw that, especially the Sierra Leonean civil war, major weapons deployed were the small arms and light weapons, and used to its most destructive capacity.[70] Weapons such as AK 47 rifles, Chinese assault rifles, Soviet and Eastern origin, Belgian FN-FALS, German G3s, and so on were used in the civil war, to abuse the rights of Sierra Leoneans who would have dissenting views, compared to the government's views.[71] Women, children, and the elderly were particular targets of the conflict in both countries. The proliferation of the SALW during these conflicts served as massive impediments to ending the conflicts in the region. People who wielded these weapons felt they had the power and could abuse this power by taking the lives, or freedoms.

According to Rachel Stohl and Doug Tuttle, "the threat and use of small arms can undermine development, prevent the delivery of humanitarian and economic aid, and contribute to refugee and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) populations".[72] The millions of IDPs living in Africa are at risk of dying through armed conflict, disease transmission, hygiene-related diseases, and so on, due to the fact that the largest portion of small arms and light weapons on the continent are in the hands of civilians.[73] According to Stohl and Tuttle, some African countries see a rise in criminal armed violence following a conflict, with even peaceful countries like Ghana experiencing bouts of criminal armed violence, due to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the continent.[74]

### *2.5.2 Transnational Crime*

It also increases transnational crime, as it has become easier for transnational criminal networks to access small arms and light weapons and transports them across porous state borders in the West-

African sub-region.[75] There is now documented evidence of cross-border arm sales between criminal elements, as well as "capacity building" by capable weapons manufacturers for criminal elements across borders. The focus on transnational crime, for the purposes of this study, is the money laundering, terrorist financing and piracy in the West African sub-region and Africa as a whole.

Money laundering entails "cleaning" money that has been made through criminal and illicit means such that it appears to have been sourced from an honest day's labor or legal activities.[76] Proceeds from the sales of SALW in the West African sub-region are laundered through shell companies through which the sales of the contraband goods are made, through investments in real estate, through small business investments, and through the use of the Hawala System which involves moving the money to safe locations.[77]

Crimes that are perpetuated using the small arms and light weapons, including armed robbery, oil bunkering, illicit mining, and kidnapping, amongst others, lead to the acquisition of criminal mind, which, through money laundering activities, are "legitimized" for free use by disguising the origins of the money.[78] A typical money laundering operation takes the form of routing and re-routing money through various financial systems at the international level or within the financial system of one country.[79] The process can also be completely avoided by doing a barter trade, which prevents the dealers from having to deal with the financial system of the state. However, the majority of all the money laundering activities go through the financial system in the sub-region. In Cote d'Ivoire, where an estimated 40% of the world's cocoa is produced, both government and rebel forces were reported to be financing the purchases of their illicit arms with money from the

cocoa industry, selling off about 300,000 tons of cocoa which represents between 20-25% of the total cocoa production in the country to purchase cocoa.[80] The cocoa was smuggled outside of the country to be sold with rebel forces in the country selling about 30 Million Dollars' worth of cocoa to finance their activities.[81] In Sierra Leone, as well, rebels and government forces smuggled about 250 to 300 million Dollars' worth of diamonds outside the country to be sold to support their activities.[82] These monies, because they were illegally attained, cannot go through the formal, monitored financial system, and so are laundered through weak financial systems like Nigeria and other foreign banks who do not ask a lot of questions concerning the owner of the accounts or the sources of funding.[83] Laundered monies perpetuate civil wars on the continent, and negatively impacts the security of the states and the citizens in the West African sub-region.

Illicit SALW proliferation is also connected to terrorist financing in the sub-region.[84] In West Africa alone, countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, and other have been known to host several terrorist elements including Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and so on. These non-state actors need financing to be able to achieve their goals in the regions they are based, and sometime, illicit SALW are used to finance their operations.

Militant groups in the Niger Delta raise funds through oil bunkering, the Tuaregs raise funds through arms smuggling, ransoms from kidnappings, hostage-taking, cigarette smuggling and illicit drug trade. They also receive funding from external terror groups in other parts of the world including the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in the Middle East.[85] Using Boko Haram as a case study, how these terrorists are financed through SALW is through countries like Niger, Chad and Cameroon, countries that share borders with Nigeria on the northern side. The group smuggles

firearms from these countries to disrupt government activities and terrorize the citizens in the north of the country. Guns that are not indigenous to Nigeria like AK-47s, as well as locally manufactured guns, are smuggled into the region to finance their activities.[86]

These methods of financing and money laundering makes it easier for the terror groups to gain enough finances to carry out their activities, which affect the security of the people in the regions they operate in terms of embarking on their economic activities, or ensuring their food security.

With the continued proliferation of small arms on the continent, brings with it the problem of piracy, with states like Somalia being well-known around the world as having faced this problem intensely.[87] In 2008 alone, 293 cases of piracy were reported to the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center as having occurred in the world. About of the 293, 111 occurred off the coast of Somalia or the Gulf of Aden, with 40 occurring off the coast of Nigeria.[88] Piracy is a serious security threat, affecting international shipping interests and international trade as a whole. Small arms proliferation has contributed to the rise of this canker on international waters. States have lost a lot of money through ransom payments demanded by the pirates for the release of their goods and personnel.

### *2.5.3 Impact on Development*

The increased crimes and destruction negatively impacted the development of the states in the sub-region. Liberia, for instance, destroyed its transport, communication and public assets in the violence and mayhem that accompanied the civil war, which was further fueled by the proliferation of SALW in the state.[89] Much of the destruction that befell the state diminished any hope of rapid recovery. The violence also created a refugee situation that affected neighboring countries like

Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, including highly skilled professionals and young people who would have driven the economy of the state forward.[90] The exoduses affected the production of the state, and robbed it of its labour force. The few resources that the country had were also plundered by the warring factions and directed towards the procurement of illicit arms and light weapons towards fuelling the war in the state and perpetuate more violence.

Soon, Liberia started to resemble a failed state, bearing such qualities as incapable and ineffective public institutions, reversal of development progress, and a huge hit to the Human Development Index (HDI) when measured by the end of the war (dropping to 0.276 on a scale of 1.0).[91] The HDI at the end of the war represented one of the lowest in the world, only managing to beat Sierra Leone which was also heavily afflicted with violence on account of its ongoing civil war. The HDI of Liberia prewar stood at 0.311. Also, at the end of the war, access to social services was rated to be less than 30% of prewar levels, in addition to in increasing prevalence of HIV, at 8.2%, which was attributed largely to the collapse of health institutions and an absence of a nationally coordinated program.[92]

Poverty levels measured immediately after the conflict indicated that over 80% of the people in Liberia were living on less than 1 dollar a day, which is below the poverty line per the definitions of several international development and financial organizations.[93] Liberia, thus, became the poorest country in the region, with its GDP in 2002 standing at 500 Million US Dollars, as compared to its prewar level of a billion US Dollars. In other sectors of the economy like agriculture, which accounted for about 23% of GDP in Liberia's prewar economy, there was a significant decline during the conflict, with yields from the once flourishing timber and rubber

industry significantly reducing during the war period. Food production, also, as compared to the period before the war, dipped 70%, leading to an increase in food importation and foreign donation, threatening food security in the country.[94] As at 2006, food imports amounted to about a third of imports into the country. The country's mining sector was also affected by the conflict, devastating the sector and providing a source of financing for the different sides of the conflict for the payment of SALW amongst others.[95] Liberia's export trade sector experienced a very steep decline at the end of the war period, as well, affecting the exports of products like timber, iron ore, cocoa and coffee. The drop was from prewar levels of about 460 million United States Dollars to about 108.7 million United States Dollars by 2003. Imports were also affected, as the official numbers from the prewar and post-war period given as 481 million United States Dollars and 400 million US Dollars, respectively. The conflict also affected the provisions of social amenities like electricity, where the mount coffee hydro power plant was destroyed during the conflict, where, in the post conflict period, businesses that survived the war were put out of businesses because of the lack of productivity as a direct consequence of the disruption in power supplies.[96]

The health sector was also affected by the violence in Liberia during the civil war immensely. Before the war, the government had an estimated 325 health facilities that were operating at various capacities. However, at the end of the period, over 95% of these facilities had ceased to exist.[97] The physical structures that served as health facilities were destroyed in attacks along with the equipment that were in these facilities. The health workers who also worked in these health facilities were killed for their work, or were forced to migration to escape the violence in the country. As a result, the population that existed after the war lacked major health facilities that could improve their abilities to be productive members of the society through the work.[98] The

inadequacies in the health sector led to increased infant and maternal mortality rate, and increased HIV/AIDS infection rate. The devastation in the health sector is similar to the devastation in the educational sector where, according to the UNDP, about 75% of the educational infrastructure in the country was destroyed and for the entirety of the period of the conflict, schools stop operating so children of school-going age could not receive an education[99]

These developments, as described, in the times before and after the Liberian Civil War is very indicative of the consequences of an SALW-fueled war in West Africa. The human security of the citizens of Liberia was threatened to the point where they had to leave their own country and seek refuge elsewhere. This establishes the link between the proliferation of SALW in the West African sub-region and its impact on the human growth and security in the region.

The proliferation of SALW has also dramatically affected the post-conflict development process in Africa due to the dwindling percentages in investment into the continent.[100] During conflict, there is large-scale destruction of the state's infrastructure which, the country counts on being constructed post-conflict through development assistance and investment into the state. However, with so many small arms and light weapons free on the street, possibly in the hands of potentially violent groups within the state, it raises security concerns that prevent outside investors from venturing into the state. Various studies, including a 2007 Oxfam study into 23 countries on the continent, a World Bank study, and others have confirmed these assertions by Stohl and Tuttle.[101]

### *2.5.4 Other Impacts of SALW in [West] Africa*

Other problems have included long-term societal suffering due to loss of family members, children, and parents, thereby, eliminating a certain support system that could have contributed to developing economically relevant human resources for the development of the state.[102]Again, children have been used in the conflict cycle due to the proliferation of small arms on the continent, which has resulted in the continent's big problem of child soldiers in countries like the DRC and Liberia during the civil war.[103]

These problems that the African continent faces due to the proliferation of SALWs have contributed immensely to the labeling of many African countries as insecure and inhospitable for both foreigners and indigenes. As has been explained earlier, its greatly affects the development of African states for the benefit of the people living on the continent.

## 2.6 Control Initiatives against Illicit Arms Trade in [West] Africa

The spread of illicit arms and light weapons in the sub-region has led to a myriad of problems threatening democracy and the security in the sub-region. Amongst others, it has worsened transnational crime by expanding transnational networks in almost all ECOWAS countries. Steps have been taken to address the prevalence of illicit SALW. The first of such remedies is the UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts, and Components and Ammunition, known simply as the UN Firearms Protocol.[104] The Protocol functions as a supplement to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Protocol promotes, facilitates, and strengthens cooperation among states in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts,

components and ammunition.[105] The Protocol only applies to the prevention of illicit arms manufacturing, and to the investigation and prosecution of offences established in accordance under the Protocol, where the offences are transnational in nature.[106] It, however, does not apply to state-to-state transactions or to state transfers where the action was necessary to protect national security. The Protocol permits legislative and other measures to establish criminal offences such as illicit manufacturing, and illicit trafficking. It makes provisions for confiscation, seizure and disposal of firearms, record keeping, making firearms under international regulations, and deactivating firearms that do not conform to local legislations and the general requirements for the export, import, transit and other authorizations for firearms trade, amongst others. Many ECOWAS member states have already signed this protocol, indicating a general willingness to fight proliferation of illicit small arms trade and use in the sub-region.[107]

Further actions that demonstrate the willingness of the sub-region to fight the problem is the signing of the Bamako Declaration. According to Alex Vines, the declaration is "as a result of a ministerial conference at the end of 2000, which recommended national action, including the coordination of agencies working on small arms issues; destruction of surplus stocks and confiscated weapons; and conclusion of bilateral arrangements for small arms control along borders".[108] According to the Declaration, member states of ECOWAS resolved that "in order to promote peace, security, stability and sustainable development on the continent, it is vital to address the problem of illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in a comprehensive, integrated, sustainable and efficient manner".[109] It sought to achieve this by ensuring transparency in the trade in arms industry, promoting measures to restore peace, security and confidence between member states, strengthen democratic structures, promote

conflict prevention measures, enhance the capacity of member states to identify, seize and destroy illicit measures to control the circulation, possession, transfer and use of firearms, and institutionalize national and regional programs for action to prevent, control and eradicate illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, amongst others.[110] To this end, the declaration recommended that, at the national level, member states of ECOWAS should establish national coordination agencies, along with the institutional infrastructure for policy guidance on curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, along with its accompanying problems.[111] It also recommended capacity-building for national law enforcement agencies to address the problem that comes with the trade in small arms, adopt legislative measures to curb the problem, and to develop and promote national programs aimed at responsibly managing licit arms, voluntarily giving up illegal arms, identifying and destroying surplus stocks of arms, and rehabilitating the youth who previously possessed and used illegal arms.[112] Other recommendations included awareness programs on the dangers of illegal arms proliferation, national legislations to check against breaching international arms embargoes, and establishing measures to control arms transfer, amongst others. At the regional level, the declaration recommended that mechanisms to coordinate and harmonize efforts to address the illicit proliferation be created.[113] It also recommended the codification and harmonization of legislation, strengthen regional and continental cooperation among police and other law enforcements officials, and ensure that violators of international regulations regarding the trade in small arms and light weapons are sanctioned.[114]

One of the key initiatives by far is the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, which was produced in 1998.[115]

With this agreement, the region became the first in the world to seriously tackle the problem of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons even though it is a worldwide phenomenon.[116] Signed in Abuja in October, 1998, and subject to renewal every three years, the Moratorium has three main instruments, including; the Moratorium Declaration, the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Program for Coordination and Assistance on Security and Development (PCASED), and a Code of Conduct, which made provisions for the establishment of national commissions (NatComs), periodic reporting, a regional arms register, harmonization of legislations, declaration of weapons and ammunition used in peacekeeping, and so on.[117]Almost all the ECOWAS states created the national commissions as at January, 2005. However, most of the commissions had weak capacities in terms of qualified personnel and financial resources to ensure the full implementation of their duties. Again, the arms register did not fully materialize, as many of the states failed to comply with the terms of the Moratorium due to a lack of political will to comply with the provisions. For instance, the provisions in the Code of Conduct to help track arms shipments to create transparency were also sabotaged by signatory members to serve their national interests, including states like Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Liberia faking end-user certificates in order to smuggle arms out of their states into neighboring states, as well as many states failing to utilize the exemptions clause or misrepresenting their intent when travelling with firearms across borders.[118]Regardless of the many shortfalls that the implementation faced, the agreement served as gateway for the creation of the Protocol Regarding the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The implementation of the Moratorium has been criticized as being impaired by the fact that its implementation was voluntary, and it lacked enforceable sanctions.[119]Therefore, with the support

of civil society groups in West Africa, a campaign was launched in 2004, where the next renewal of the Moratorium was to occur, to put in measures to improve compliance and implementation of the Moratorium. These groups, organized as the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA), with the support of the international community, advocated for the stricter regional mechanisms for regulating the small arms and light weapons flows in the sub-region.[120] Their activities led to the creating of the legally-binding document known as the "ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials" in 2006. It came into operation in 2009, after Benin deposited its instrument of ratification, per the provisions of the agreement.

The agreement defined small arms, light weapons, ammunition, other related materials, as well as what it means by "illicit". The objectives of the convention, per the agreement, is to prevent and fight the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as its effects, within ECOWAS states; to continue efforts to control small arms and light weapons in the sub-region; consolidate the gains of the Moratorium and its Code of Conduct; promote trust between member states through transparency; build the institutional and operational capacities of member states to address the problem of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons; and to promote the exchange of information and cooperation among member states.[121]The agreement made provisions for the banning of transfer of small arms and light weapons with both state and non-state actors, and restricted defining small arms and light weapons as goods in line with Article 45 of the ECOWAS revised treaty.[122] It, however, left space for some exemptions, including for national defense, support peace operations under the UN, AU or ECOWAS and other regional or sub-regional bodies in which the state in question is a member.[123] To this end, an effective system of

import, export and transit licensing for the transfer of the weapons were provided for in the agreement. The agreement laid down the procedures for exemptions, as well as the circumstances under which exemptions could be denied. On the manufacturing of the small arms and light weapons by member states, the agreement directed member states to institute local legislations that can regulate and limit small arms and light weapons manufacture, in addition to provisions to report the specific product and quantities manufactured to the Executive Secretary in ECOWAS.[124]It advocated for national databases and registers of small arms and light weapons, dialogue with weapons manufacturers, as well as provisions for the prevention of and fight against corruption, towards promoting transparency and exchange of information among member states. It also addresses the harmonization of national legislative provisions and strengthening border controls, in addition to a myriad of other provisions all geared towards strengthening the sub-region to fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.[125]

The adoption of the convention led to the creation of the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP) to "build capacities of the 15 ECOWAS member states in combating the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms in West Africa.[126] According to Darkwa, since the ECOSAP came into existence, it has succeeded in "facilitating the establishment of the NatComs, provided them with the support in terms of capacity building and resources and coordinated their activities at the regional level, including linkages with international partners and processes".[127] It has maintained partnerships with WAANSA, while cultivating other partnerships with the UNDP, EU, Spain, Sweden, France, Japan, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, etc. The main challenge of ECOSAP has been ensuring compliance by member states, especially

considering the level of destabilization caused by illicit SALW proliferation in ECOWAS member states, such as Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali.[128]

## 2.7 Conclusion

The chapter presented an in-depth overview of the illicit trade of small arms in the West African sub-region, providing the necessary background for the study in the increasing rate of arms trading in Ghana, which is explored in the following chapter.

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# CHAPTER THREE

# THE PROLIFERATION OF SALW IN GHANA

## 3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the proliferation of SALW in Ghana. It conducts an in-depth overview of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana, highlighting the major sources of proliferation as well as the factors that facilitate the proliferation of illicit arms in Ghana. It discusses the potential security implications and challenges that Ghana faces with the illicit arms proliferation, as well as some suggested solutions based on the findings and discussions done in this chapter to address the proliferation of illicit arms in Ghana.

## 3.1 Overview of SALW Production and Illicit Trade in Ghana

Gun manufacture in Ghana dates back hundreds of years, to pre-colonial times. Guns then were mostly used in the slave trade to terrorize and enslave people, and to force them to work for gold which were used to fund more gold digging and slave raiding. In the mid nineteenth century, however, guns were criminalized by the British and Danish colonial powers, as they feared that the proliferation of these small arms served as a threat to their power in the West African sub-region. However, this action drove the gun producers underground, with Ghanaian gun producers posing as ordinary blacksmiths but producing the, now more profitable, guns in secret.[1]

Today, guns that are made in Ghana are revered for their competitive prices, reliability and accessibility across the continent.[2]Some of the guns produce include pistols, single-barrel and double-barrel shotguns, pump-action shotguns, traditional Dane guns, and even imported AK-47

assault rifles. Gun manufacturers also produce ammunition for these guns, though most of the ammunition used are imported. In some cases, customers request for guns to be produced to fit their ammunitions, demonstrating how advanced gun production in Ghana has become.

Statistics show that 30 percent of gun-related crimes in Ghana being perpetrated with Ghanaian-manufactured guns.[3]Vigilante groups, armed guards, and land guards, are the main users of Ghanaian-manufactured firearms. Chieftaincy disputes have also caused contributed to the proliferation of SALW when feuding parties in the disputes use SALW to commit or perpetuate crimes.

Throughout the sub-region, rising insecurity and instability has necessitated the purchase of Ghanaian firearms and Ghanaian capacities to produce these firearms in states like Togo, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso.[4] This has resulted in increased prices of these Ghanaian weapons, as well as reducing their likelihood of confrontation with the national security apparatus in Ghana. The latter can be explained as crossing the border to produce guns and ammunition in the destination states, taking payment, and leaving the state without the guns mean that the authorities are none the wiser about the illicit activities of the cross-border gun manufacturers.

Despite these worrying trends in the Ghanaian arms industry, data availability and reliability is very low.[5] It is impossible to tell the actual extent of illegal gun production in the country because it is illegal. Therefore, researchers largely use ~~on~~ estimates to arrive at their conclusions and recommend actions to be taken by the government. It is estimated that Ghanaian manufacturers have the capacity to produce over 200,000 guns per year.[6] Because of increased crime and violence

in Ghana and the sub-region, the manufacturers have increased the prices of these guns to increase their profit margins, thereby serving as enticement for the unemployed youth to break into the gun-manufacturing industry in the country.

The production process and actors involved in the production are diverse, encompassing a guild, who coordinate the whole process and sets rules and sanctions for rule-breakers; the locksmith and the blacksmith, who manufactures the gun by assembling the parts, repairs and services old guns and provide the gun accessories; the carpenter, whose job it is to shape the stock of the gun, the machinists who engrave the stocks and barrels, and design the triggers; the mechanics, who provide the springs for the guns; and the middlemen, who identify potential buyers, take charge of the sale of the products and introduce the different actors mentioned to each other or the guild.[7]In many cases, these different actors do not know each other, thereby limiting the possibility that the entire operation is dismantled after a single member is arrested. Again, due to increasing demand for the guns, membership in these networks has shifted from the traditional father-to-son or uncle-to-nephew apprenticeship to include non-family members under strict secret procedures.[8] The manufacturers in Ghana have created a regime for themselves, complete with rules and regulations and sanctions against rule breakers.

The actors usually operate under the cover of legitimate businesses, such as a mechanic shop, a carpentry shop, or different forms of smithing shops, as a front to hide their illicit activities. They have no connections to the government's legislature, executive, judiciary or diplomatic service, and, therefore, seek no representation in these areas. However, these establishments do have links

to local law enforcement, which are reluctant to arrest them because of their social links and their lack of immediate threats to society.[9]

Some of Ghana's best gunsmiths are located in the Volta and Oti Regions of Ghana, in places like Kpando, TafiAtome, and Ho towns.[10] Gun manufacture in this region is highly embedded in their colonial history, and the communities in which these gunsmiths reside protect them and accept them and their professions. Oral tradition suggests that a man named Asamoah was the first manufacturer of guns in the region, where different tales point to him learning his trade from either the Europeans or by some divine teaching.[11]Conflicts between the Nkonya and Alavanyo people have worsened the manufacture and the proliferation of small arms in the region. Today, the region's inhabitants produce pistols that (klisasa or tutkpi in their local dialects), single-barrel shotguns (aprim), double-barrel shotguns (nueze), pump-action shotguns (gadoe) and traditional dane guns (nueze).[12] In the Ashanti Region as well, mechanics in the Suame Magazine area have honed their talents in gun manufacturing organized under the Ashanti Region Association of Blacksmiths (ARAB), with each manufacturer making over a hundred weapons a year.[13] Suame Magazine is considered the technological hub of Ghana, and Techiman, in the Bono East Region of Ghana, is the regional trading center of guns. Buyers from all over the West African sub-region purchase their guns from Techiman because raw materials are cheap and the retail prices are favorable, but still high, making the manufacturers a lot of money. Other gun centers of Ghana include Agona Asafo in the Central Region, Tamale and Kumbungu in the Northern Region, Kasoa in the Greater Accra Region, Nsawam in the Eastern Region, Takoradi in the Western Region, and Bolgatanga and Bawku in the Upper Regions of Ghana.[14]

## 3.2 Proliferation of SALW and its Security Implications for Ghana

This section assesses the security implications of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana, focusing on its potential to cause or worsen communal conflicts, its relationship with human security, its effect on the development of the state, and its potential to worsen transnational crime across the sub-region.

### *3.2.1 Threats to Human Security*

The Commission on Human Security (CHS), in 2003, defined Human Security as the "the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance freedom and human fulfillment, Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations."[15] The concept of human security is a shift away from the traditional notion of security, which is largely premised on the notions that the state is the primary provider of security in the state, threats are directed at the state and not the citizens in the state and the threats are of military nature.[16] Challenges to the thinking behind the traditional notions of security, including a shift in what qualifies as a threat from the more military-leaning options to mostly social, economic and health-related threats to humans contributed to the rise of the concept of human security.[17] Other challenges include the realization that these non-military threats specifically affected the people across borders, challenging the notion that the state is the primary target, as well as the realization that the state can also be the threat against the people or are too weak to protect the people against actual or perceived threats.[18] To this end, possibly security threats to a person came to include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political.[19] These different avenues for insecurity can all be affected negatively with the proliferation of SALW in Ghana.

According to Kwesi Aning, "weapons availability and misuse lead to a range of indirect impacts, many with life threatening potential".[20] Among the various kinds of impacts are the displacement of citizens, and the eventual militarization of refugee camps; erosion of sustainable development; restriction of access to health services, education, and food security; land denial; restricting access to humanitarian assistance; as well as threatening the lives and well-being of communities as a whole.[21] These consequences are an Africa-wide problem, and especially for West Africa, where Ghana can be found.

The inadequacies of African governments to ensure the security of its citizens, which forces them to take their security into their own hands through the use of SALW establishes the link between the proliferation of SALW and Human Security in Africa.[22] Because a state that is on the verge of collapse, amongst other things, "loses its power to demand loyalty from its citizens and does not serve as a cohesive force; as a territorial entity, cannot guarantee its sovereign control over its territory and its peoples; and as the authoritative political expression, loses its validity to control and administer its affairs", citizens expectations from such a state reduces, and societal insecurity increases.[23] This leads to a situation where sub-state groups operating outside the powers of the state begin to exercise control over certain aspects or territories of the state to protect their own interests, as well as protection and security for other citizens who many require it.[24]

Many African states have lost control of varying proportions of their territories to civilian control, thereby significantly reducing the responsibilities of the state to protect its citizens and ensure their security. According to Kwesi Aning, this lack of control on the part of the government has led to an increase in firearms-related crimes in countries that have been affected, affected the economic

activities and improvements on the areas that have been impacted, resulted in the increase of private security companies in the countries that have been effected which brings with it several security challenges of its own, and increased the chances of mob violence under the guise of mob justice in affected areas.[25]

In Ghana, the proliferation of SALW has posed several security problems for the state. First, firearms-related crimes, as a security usually take the form of robberies, land disputes in which land guards are involved to protect the land of individuals or organizations, chieftaincy disputes, identity and citizenship struggles, violence during festivals, inter-relational disputes, carjacking, and struggles of resource exploitation.[26] Civil insecurity and crime using firearms have increased dramatically in Ghana, with the rise of burglary, robbery and murder affecting people of all classes in urban areas.[27] According to the Ghana Police Service, robbery rates have been increasing in Ghana since the late 1990s, in addition to the land guard phenomenon where locally made pistols and revolvers are used to "protect" the lands of individuals or organizations against encroachers.[28] Despite the increasing levels of firearms-involved robberies and land guards activities, hospital records show, however, that there is not a significant portion of deaths or injuries that were caused by small arms and light weapons, especially in urban areas like Accra where gun violence is concentrated.[29] Of course, the Ghanaian population has tried to accuse foreigners of perpetrating these firearm-related crimes, however, research shows that only about 20% of those arrested turn out to be non-Ghanaians, dispelling rumors that these activities are the result of an influx of immigrants, legal and illegal.[30]

These armed robbers and burglars target the rich and poor, and the vulnerable people in the society, which is why their activities impact the economic activities of the people in the state. Tourists, traders, and other people involved in different kinds of trade and economic activity in the country are targeted by these gun-wielding criminals, which negatively impacts their sense of security in the state. Most women traders who normally leave their houses at dawn to go to work have adopted different habits which entail waiting until clear morning and closing early before dark in order to feel a sense of safety.[31] This simple change is costing these traders about four (4) to (5) working hours a day, which translates into reduced income, and a kick against their livelihoods. These losses are difficult to measure, however, Kwesi Aning noted that the market women's "fears of firearm-related crimes negatively impacts their resources and productivity". Other sectors like tourism is also affected, with information gathered from the hoteliers and tourists sites indicating that about 21,000 tourists refrained from visiting Ghana in the early 2000s due to the increased levels of gun-related violence that were being reported in the news.[32]

Individuals and corporate institutions have responded to the rising number of robberies and insecurity in the communities and cities, thereby further worsening the situation of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana. There has been a rise of both formal and informal militant community groups that respond to the menace in the various communities.[33] This is as a result of the constraints in manpower, resources and financial constraints of the Ghana Police Service addressing some of these challenges at the community level; and the perceptions about the police as being corrupt, inefficient, poorly armed and under-resourced to adequately respond to this canker in their communities.[34] These responses is directly responsible the prevalence of mob violence in the country, as the perceived impunity of criminals because of a supposedly corrupt police service

leaves citizens with the choice to take matters into their own hands.[35] It has gotten so bad that Ghanaians mostly do not consider mob violence as a crime.

Another citizens' response to the proliferation of SALW that potentially negatively impacts the human security situation in the state is the rise of private security companies and contractors. Now, both individuals and corporate bodies have resorted to private security companies with gun-wielding personnel to provide personal security for them. This is a privatization of the work of the police because the citizens in the state have lost faith in the national security agencies to ensure the security of the people in the state.[36]

### *3.2.2 Impacts on Elections*

Another potential impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is on elections and the potential for violence. People's sensitivity to the outcome of elections is a very potent trigger of electoral violence in Africa.[37] Several African countries have experienced intense violence as a result of election outcomes since African countries gained independence. Examples include Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Sierra Leone, Kenya, and so on. Because of the security situation in West Africa in terms of prolonged internal conflict, there has been a heavy concentration of small arms and light weapons in the region. Its dissemination has been made easy with the porous West African borders, leading to an estimated seven to ten million illicit small arms and light weapons in the sub-region.[38]

Abusing small arms and light weapons during elections has the potential of undermining the credibility of the elections and "tottering efforts aimed at democratic consolidation".[39] Ghana has

been a relatively successful democracy on the African continent since the early 1990s. This success has been due, in a large part, to the conduct of frequent and, according to several international observers such as the EU, free and fair elections that the country undertakes. The introduction of small arms and light weapons in Ghana's elections is not news, as the recent parliamentary elections to replace the fallen Member of Parliament of the Ayawaso West Wuogon constituency, which saw the attack of some voters by supposed national security persons who wore ski masks and held firearms.[40]

Activities such as voter registration or the compilation of a credible voters' register are affected by the abuse of small arms and light weapons.[41] During campaign season, while voters have hired protection officers and body guards who wield firearms to protect them, radical opposition members may also decide to attack them and remove the competition before elections day to ensure that their candidate win. During these campaigns as well, potential candidates could be intimidated by firearms-wielding thugs and then decide against running or call for the postponement of the elections. On elections day, voters may be intimidated by unscrupulous persons using small arms and light weapons, causing fear and panic and causing eligible voters to avoid casting their votes and expressing the constitutionally mandated rights as citizens of Ghana.[42] Supporters of political parties may also arm themselves on elections day when they suspect that their opponents may rig the elections in their favor. This may potentially lead to violence and negatively impact the security of the state.

Besides the 2019 incident at the Ayawaso West Wuogon constituency elections, other incidents in Ghana such as the by-elections in Atiwa, Chereponi and Akwatia constituencies which witnessed

violence of some kind, in addition to the gun-related incidents at polling stations and communities during the 2012 biometric voter registration exercise demonstrates the potential decisions of people to resort to the use of small arms and light weapons or violence as a way to express their frustration, suspicion and dissatisfaction with the outcome of elections in Ghana.[43]

### *3.2.3 Communal Conflicts*

Communal violence is "a form of violence that is perpetrated across ethnic or communal lines, the violent parties feel solidarity for their respective groups, and victims are chosen based upon group membership".[44] The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Ghana has the potential to cause communal violence or perpetuate already existing communal conflicts in the outback of the country.[45] A perfect example of this is the popular Alavanyo-Nkonya Conflict in the Volta Region of Ghana.

In about 1905, there was a confrontation between the Alavanyo and the Nkonya regarding land encroachment. The Nkonya people complained to the German Colonial Administration at the time at Kpalime, which ended with the cartographic work on the Togo Plateau Forest Reserve in 21913. They prepared a map that showed the boundaries of six communities that surrounded the Togo Plateau Forest Reserve, including communities like Alavanyo, Nkonya, Gbi, and others. The map was printed, and each head chief was given a copy for their community. In 1923, however, a new leader, Kwasi Addae of Nkonya-Tayi led an assault wielding machetes and clubs to invade the Alananyo-Kpeme Paramount Chief's palace, compelled him to accompany them to the bus to demarcate the boundaries, and injuring the linguist of the Paramount chief in the process. Kwasi

Addae, along with his goons were tried and convicted in June 1923, and after serving their sentences, the conflict began.

Over the years, there have been several conflicts between the two communities, with firearms playing a huge role. Several individuals have been killed over the years, with reports of killings being received as late as January 2019. Two people were reported to have been shot and killed with several injured in the process, as community members clashed with the military in the community.[46]

The conflict has been made worse with the proliferation of SALW in the community, as there have been numerous reports in the media regarding the manufacturing of weapons in the community or the stashing of weapons by individuals residing in the community.[47] The casualties have also increased as the proliferation of the SALW became more pronounced, and even though the Government of Ghana is trying its very best to contain the situation, its solutions does not seem to work, as casualties are still being reported.

## 3.3 Policy Interventions to Address SALW Proliferation in Ghana

In response to the many gun manufacturers and the proliferation of guns in Ghana, the government of Ghana has responded with legislation and various government initiatives, law enforcement operations, as well as support for civil society initiatives. Over the years, government legislations have targeted illegal gun manufacturing and trading, including the Arms and Ammunitions Act of 1962 banning local manufacture of small arms, the 1972 Decree on Arms and Ammunition which reinforced the provisions of the 1962 Act, as well as the Locksmiths Act of 1994[48] and the 1996

amendment of the 1962 Act, which reinforced the ban on the local manufacture of small arms.[49] The government also, through an Act of Parliament established the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in addition to launching campaigns like Etuo Mu Ye Sum Campaign in 2001. In 2003, however, legislations allowed for the Minister of the Interior, at his own discretion, allow for local manufacturing of guns.

### *3.3.1 Arms and Ammunitions Act*

Act 118 of the Constitution of Ghana, in 1962, represents the first government policy intervention to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Ghana. The Act addressed the import of arms and ammunition into Ghana with the Ghanaian authorities serving as a supervising body, maritime supervision of the importation of arms and ammunition into Ghana, and provided for other necessities like licenses, prohibition of dealing in arms and ammunitions, protection of public officers, what constitutes as offences when issues of arms and ammunitions come into play, and public services expected.[50]

In the legislation, the government allows for the Minister of the Interior alone to provide the necessary permit for the export or import of small arms and light weapons for the purposes of war.[51] The same rule applies to the export of arms and ammunition for other purposes, requiring permission from the authorities of the state.[52] In terms of possession of these firearms, the government required that citizens acquired permits for the firearms provided by the government of Ghana.[53]

The law also outlawed keeping private warehouses full of firearms, arms of war, munitions of war, and so on without proper licensing from the government.[54] The government also provided, in the legislation, to provide oversight responsibilities over the persons in charge of the warehouses, registration and stamping of the firearms, the transport and transfer, the manufacture and assembling of firearms, and establishments that repair faulty firearms.[55] Details were also provided on the type of shipments that imported firearms into the country, including in what shipping vessels, attaining licenses for wielding firearms, regulations that governed dealing in firearms in Ghana, and the use of the private arms that people owned.

Parts of this Act was reinforced and further updated, first, in 1972. Besides reinforcing most of the provisions that were available in the 1962 Act, the 1972 Decree, National Revolutionary Council Decree (NRCD) 9, provided that all arms and ammunitions should be registered with the government of Ghana, properly laying out the process of registration and change of ownership.[56] A time limit was also added to the period with which the license could be wielded, as well as further controls over the imports and exports of the weapons.[57] In addition to these additions, the decree also provided that firearms belonging to private individuals in the state could be seized by the state in the interest of national security.[58]

The second iteration of the Act was the 1996 update of the Act, Act 519, amongst others, inserted new sections into the legislation, and amended certain sections of the Act, while also repealing others. The legislation allow for the importation of only two categories of arms, including first class importers, who are only allowed to import between a thousand and two thousand arms a year, and the second class importers, who are to bring in fewer than a thousand units a year.[59] Many of

these guns have been shown to be just transit guns, as much fewer guns than the numbers reported to have been imported into the country per year are actually registered with the Ghana Police Service. Ghana police service has been powerless to curb the manufacturing of guns in Ghana due to the fact that guns manufacturers are accepted socially, the use of guns have traditional and cultural significance to Ghanaians, manufacturers do not pose any immediate danger to society and their knowledge about guns in Ghana are largely outdated.[60] However, civil society organizations have tried, over the years, to create a dialogue between gun manufacturers and gun owners in Ghana towards formalizing the trade to curb the proliferation of guns in the country, as well as for government to cash in on the expanding business.[61]

### *3.3.2 Etuo Mu Ye Sum*

In 2001, the government of Ghana carried out a voluntary arms collection program titled Etuo Mu Ye Sum, or as is translated in English, "The Barrel of the Gun is Dark", which introduced further campaigns.[62] The program, in an effort to reduce the number of guns circulating in Ghana, sought to appeal to the Ghanaian public to voluntarily bring the guns that they won to the government for onward destruction.

According to Katharina Wegener, the number of arms that were recollected during the period of the campaign has never come to light, with some asserting that some people within the Ghana Police Service resold the weapons to the criminals to be perpetrated in violence involving small arms and light weapons such as armed robbery, rape, and murder.[63] For instance, Chief of Police Operations Adu-Gyamfi was accused of providing firearms to robbers, and was subsequently

removed from his post and from the Police Service, as a result. These indicate the innate failings of the voluntary return program that the government started in 2001.

### *3.3.3 National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons Act*

In 2007, the government passed the Act of Parliament 736, which established the National Commission of Small Arms and Light Weapons, whose core function was to deal with matters relating to small arms and light weapons. To achieve this objective, the commission was given the power to establish programs of action to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms in Ghana; educate and sensitize the public on the dangers of the proliferation of SALWs; ensure that the ECOWAS arrangements have been complied with; advise the Minister of the Interior on policy actions; and coordinate with the Ghana Police Service to address other issues relating to the proliferation of arms in Ghana.[64] The commission was to report to the Minister of the Interior through an established governing body made up of representatives from civil society and the security architecture of Ghana, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, appointed by the President of Ghana.[65] The body is meant to serve as the foremost body on addressing the problem of the proliferation of SALWs in Ghana by enforcing the laws on the manufacturing and importation of weapons in Ghana.

Some programs that the Commission has been involved in since it came into existence in 2007, structured along its five (5) pillars or five thematic areas, include small arms control, public education and awareness, alternative livelihood schemes and skills development for blacksmiths, border control, and stockpile/inventory management.[66] The commission intends to achieve its small arms control through the formulation of appropriate policies, review and harmonize

legislations of firearms, training and capacity building for commission staff to address issues surrounding small arms control, coordinate the efforts of all agencies dealing with illicit arms in Ghana, and embark on advocacy campaigns to strengthen institutional capacity to deal with small arms proliferations effectively, amongst others.[67]

The public education and awareness also focuses on the dangers and impact of illicit arms trade on Ghana's peace and security, the responsible ownership of guns including teaching owners the best practices to avoid incidents like accidental killing or maiming, the regulations against the possession of unregistered firearms including the punishments involved, and so on.[68] These public education and awareness also involve education on the various alternative livelihood schemes and skills developments for blacksmiths to ensure that they do not produce firearms in addition to their day jobs.[69] It involves mobilizing the blacksmiths into associations to sensitize them on the dangers of producing and distributing firearms illegally in Ghana and making available to them other avenues for making livelihoods in line with their skills.

Border control programs are also very important, especially considering the porous nature of Ghana's borders that facilitate small arms and light weapons proliferation.[70] The programs include facilitating training for border control personnel, mobilizing support and logistics for the activities of border control agencies, and increasing manpower at the borders of Ghana.

Finally, stockpile management in Ghana is achieved by training security agencies in stockpile management, marking of state and civilian arms, and computerizing records of registered firearms

owners.[71] Again, firearms return and buy-back programs are an effective way to reduce guns on the street if it is implemented effectively.

Looking at the initiatives of the Commission, there are some obvious challenges that they face in the implementation of their policies and the performance of their duties. These challenges include, the inadequate and untimely release of funds, inadequate operational logistics, general public lack of confidence in their mission and abilities, inadequate data on small arms and lights weapons in Ghana, outdated nature of regulations regarding small arms and light weapons, the proliferation of communal armed conflicts, and the lack on enforceable power for the Commission, amongst others.[72]

## 3.4 Conclusion

The impact of the proliferation of SALW on the security of individuals and the states in Africa, West Africa and Ghana, as have been described and assessed in this chapter, provides an understanding of how serious this threat is to the African continent, and Ghana as a state. It is surrounded by unstable states, while it produces thousands of guns a year. Steps should be taken to address the canker in this country. The next chapter outlines the summary of the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter, first of all, presents a summary of the major findings of the study, before presenting the final conclusions. It, then, provides some recommendations based on the findings and conclusions of this study.

## 4.1 Summary of Findings

This section summarizes the main findings of the study, focusing on the sources and factors that promote the proliferation of SALW in Ghana, challenges that the proliferation of SALW pose to Ghana, and the effectiveness that Ghana's policy intervention have been towards curbing the menace.

### *4.1.1 Sources and Factors that Promote the Proliferation of SALW in Ghana*

Several sources of illicit arms have been identified in Ghana, along with some factors that aid the proliferation of SALW in the country. The two main sources of SALW identified in Ghana include, locally-manufactured arms, and arms importation. Local blacksmiths are heavily involved in gun production in Ghana, even though it is illegal per Ghanaian legislation. These guns are known across the region as high-quality firearms, with other countries like Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo making purchases of the Ghanaian guns. Manufacturers usually operate under the cover of legitimate businesses, with some of the best producers in places like the Volta and Oti regions of Ghana.

Other sources of SALW in Ghana are imported weapons, divided into first class importers who are allowed to import between a thousand and two thousand guns a year and second-class importers who bring in less than a thousand units a year.

Other sources of guns in Ghana include those that come into the country through porous borders, and guns that make it onto the street through corrupt practices by law enforcement agencies when it is sold to criminals to perpetrate crimes like armed robbery and murder.

### *4.1.2 Security Implications of the Proliferation of SALW in Ghana*

Several challenges were identified in Ghana because of the proliferation of SALW in the country. They include human security implications, negative impacts on the conduct of elections in the country, and communal conflicts.

Threats to human security in Ghana borders around issues of armed robbery, land disputes in which land guards are involved to protect the lands of individuals or organizations, chieftaincy disputes, identity and citizenship struggles, violence during festivals, inter-relational disputes, carjacking, and struggles for resource exploitation. These threats have led to the establishment of gun-wielding personal or private security companies and contractors who sometimes threaten the human security of Ghanaians more than they guarantee it.

Again, the sensitivity of Ghanaians to the outcome of elections in the country is potentially risky considering the state of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Ghana. There have been several instances of electoral violence involving SALW in Ghana, including the 2019 Ayawaso West Wuogon constituency elections, which witnessed an attack on some voters in ski masks bearing firearms, and by-elections in Atiwa, Chereponi, and Akwatia. Even though

these incidents are largely considered isolated, the proliferation of SALW in the country could worsen it, creating a level of insecurity in the country surrounding elections at both the local and national level.

Another security implication of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana is the escalation of communal conflicts. Places like Nkonya and Alavanyo that have been engulfed in conflicts with each other since the early 1900s, have been worsened by the introduction of firearms to the conflict. Now, there have been several incidents of murder and assaults committed with locally-made arms. This incident could be replicated in other feuding communities if the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Ghana is not properly addressed.

### *4.1.3 Effectiveness of Policy Interventions*

In response to the proliferation of SALWs in Ghana, several legislations have been introduced, including:

- Arms and Ammunitions Act of 1962, and the 1972 and 1996 Amendment
- Etuo Mu Ye Sum Program, 2001
- Act 736 to establish the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons

These legislations, even though have contributed to addressing some issues regarding the proliferation of SALW in Ghana, have largely proven ineffective. This is because of a myriad of factors including the inadequate and untimely release of funds for activities related to curbing the proliferation, the outdated nature of some of the legislations to address the issues, inadequate operational logistics and equipment for the Commission and Police, and so on.

### *4.1.4 Suggested Solutions to Address the Proliferation of SALWs in Ghana*

Some suggested solutions to curb the proliferation of SALW in Ghana are as follows:

- Because of the identified problem of inadequate information in the public about the dangers of the proliferation of illicit arms in Ghana, in addition to the inadequacy of information about the laws that govern ownership and production of arms in Ghana, the researcher suggests that the appropriate authorities, including the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, work to intensify the education and awareness campaigns about the dangers of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana. This can be achieved through regular meetings with stakeholders, as well as media campaigns to get the information into the public.
- In addressing the already-identified problem of outdated legislations and regulations that govern the production, sale and use of small arms and light weapons in Ghana, the researcher suggests a thorough review of the legislations in an attempt to modernize the provisions under these regulations to address the problem in the country. The review could address such issues as pertain to the sources of illicit arms and factors that facilitate its proliferation, including the use of informants to fish out the major players in the illicit arms trade in Ghana to enable justice to be served, in line with Ghanaian law, and so on; the lack of coordination and information sharing between the different security agencies that are battling the spread of illicit small arms in Ghana; the introduction of a licensing regime, which would improve the government's ability to keep track of weapons that enter the country; and digitizing the renewal process for individual gun owners in Ghana for the sake of convenience and improvement in adherence to the law.
- The major crackdown on gun manufacturing in Ghana has resulted in these illegal manufacturers going further underground. The researcher suggests that the proper

authorities adopt different strategies such as promoting the formation of unions for these manufacturers, where better opportunities could be created to monitor their activities in terms of who the manufactured weapons are sold and how it is done. This could also address the knowledge gap that exists in illicit arms trade in Ghana and the West African sub-region.

- Problems like porous borders, and the immense delay in achieving the goals of some of the regulatory bodies like National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NACSA), are largely due to the inadequacy of the necessary resources needed to implement their goals. The researcher thus suggests that the government of the day prioritizes the regulatory instruments like NACSA and the Ghana Police Service by providing them with the necessary resources that are needed to execute their responsibilities of reversing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Ghana.

## 4.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the threat of proliferation of SALW and its dysfunctional aspects are real and poses a very dire situation in Ghana which could potentially get worse in the future if care is not taken.

Despite the several ways that the government of Ghana is utilizing to address the proliferation of small arms in Ghana, the problem still persists, with the main sources of the proliferation from locally manufactured weapons and imported guns, with support from other factors such as Ghana's porous borders, the support of un culture in the country, and corrupt law enforcement officials who facilitate and sometimes sell guns to criminals for their operations. The threats of the proliferation, including the possibility of promoting or starting communal conflicts, reversing development, destroying the sanctity of some democratic principles such

as elections, and threatening the human security of citizens in Ghana have led to the possible solutions that have been suggested.

The study, therefore, concludes that the proliferation of SALW in Ghana is a serious issue that affects not only Ghana but contributes to the destabilization of its neighboring countries. It severely impacts the security of the country, and deserves to be addressed in the highest offices as soon as possible.

### 4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Because of the identified problem of inadequate information in the public about the dangers of the proliferation of illicit arms in Ghana, in addition to the inadequacy of information about the laws that govern ownership and production of arms in Ghana, the researcher suggests that the appropriate authorities, including the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, work to intensify the education and awareness campaigns about the dangers of the proliferation of SALW in Ghana. This can be achieved through regular meetings with stakeholders, as well as media campaigns to get the information into the public.
- In addressing the already-identified problem of outdated legislations and regulations that govern the production, sale and use of small arms and light weapons in Ghana, the researcher suggests a thorough review of the legislations in an attempt to modernize the provisions under these regulations to address the problem in the country. The review could address such issues as pertain to the sources of illicit arms and factors that facilitate its proliferation, including the use of informants to fish out the major players in the illicit arms trade in Ghana to enable justice to be served, in line with Ghanaian

law, and so on; the lack of coordination and information sharing between the different security agencies that are battling the spread of illicit small arms in Ghana; the digitization of weapons licensing regime, which would improve the government's ability to keep track of weapons that enter the country; and the renewal process for individual gun owners in Ghana for the sake of convenience and improvement in adherence to the law.

- The major crackdown on gun manufacturing in Ghana has resulted in these illegal manufacturers going further underground. The researcher suggests that the proper authorities adopt different strategies such as promoting the formation of unions for these manufacturers, where better opportunities could be created to monitor their activities in terms of who the manufactured weapons are sold and how it is done. This could also address the knowledge gap that exists in illicit arms trade in Ghana and the West African sub-region.
- Problems like porous borders, and the immense delay in achieving the goals of some of the regulatory bodies like National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NACSA), are largely due to the inadequacy of the necessary resources needed to implement their goals. The researcher thus suggests that the government of the day prioritizes the regulatory instruments like NACSA and the Ghana Police Service by providing them with the necessary resources that are needed to execute their responsibilities of reversing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Ghana.

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